Selectmen’s Public Meeting Minutes

**January 30, 2023**

**7:00 PM** Meeting called to order by Selectman John **Quinlan.** Also in attendance was Selectman Jack **Esposito** and Selectman Howard **Brown.** Eileen Naber came before the Board to submit a petition to have a warrant placed on the ballot to see if the town will vote to increase the Board of Selectmen to 5 members. If this were to pass, it would take place in 2024.

The Board reviewed the minutes of 1/24/23. **Esposito** motioned to accept the minutes as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

The Board discussed the Statutory Change to Property Tax Credits for Veterans under House Bill 1667. This change became effective 7/26/22. We need to readopt the Optional Veteran’s Tax Credit in the amount of $500 by 3/31/23 or it will default back to the standard which is a minimum credit of $50. **Esposito** motioned to readopt the Veteran’s Credit of $500 seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

Chief Jay Wilson Lucien Soucy came before the Board to discuss the SCBA equipment. They are putting in a warrant article for $20,000 for SCBA equipment (air bottles, brackets, masks, clips) and for purchasing SCBA equipment not covered by the SCBA grant. This way, if they do not receive the grant, they can at least purchase the bottles they need as they are expiring at the end of 2023. **Esposito** asked if there is a way to stagger the replacement of the 17 packs so as to reduce the cost. Soucy stated that they all need to be changed out at once; the equipment changes. We will have screw connections; some other agencies have snap on connections. For example, if you’re in an emergency situation where you are trying to buddy breathe with someone, the apparatus will not be compatible. The closing date on the grant application is Feb. 10th. They should know if they will receive the grant by June.

**Quinlan** discussed the Library Building Committee. The Committee interviewed the three finalists for construction management firms today; Turnstone, Harvey and Fulcrum. The Committee will bring their recommendations to the Library Trustees on Thursday night. **Esposito** stated that this means Monday night will be the first time that the BOS sees the cost.

**Quinlan** said the cost roughly spans anywhere from 5.5 million to 6 million for the construction. This does not include the road. It seems to make more sense to combine the road with the library into one warrant for the whole project. **Esposito** said we are looking at over a 3-million-dollar bond. He asked if they have considered scaling down the size of the building to get it to a price that people would find acceptable? **Quinlan** said no; there was a needs assessment done and that is the size we are supposed to have for this size population. **Esposito** stated that he is not against a new building for the library; he is against the size of it. A 6- or 7-million-dollar job is not going to fly. 7,600 sq. ft. is a big building for a small town and we cannot afford it. There are only 900 houses in town to pay for it. The school budget is going to come in higher than it’s ever been. The existing library is 1200 sq. ft. This building would be more than 6 times the size of what we have now. The pictures are beautiful, no question. We cannot afford it and he does not think it will fly at 7,600 sq. ft. and 6.5 million. From the beginning there has been no flexibility; this is what you get, there will be no change. It should be scaled down in size quite a bit; a 4,000 sq. ft. building would still be a fantastic building. **Quinlan** said there is no point in spending a fortune in both money and human effort to build something that is inadequate the day you open it. He agrees that it is a lot. It’s the biggest thing the town has ever done.

The Board had a discussion with the Tax Collector Sue Leger regarding raising the limits on the Elderly Exemption. There really is no way to know how many people would be eligible for this and what would be the tax impact on the remaining population in town. **Quinlan** feels we should table this until 2024. There are big things coming up this year. **Brown** agrees.

**Brown** brought up the position of Recreation Director. He said it was supposed to be a three -year term according to the open position posting in the 2016 Town Report. We need to discuss a new appointment and consider changing the position term to two years instead of three years.

**8:15 PM** As there was no further business before the Board, **Esposito** motioned to adjourn seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Cleary