**Selectmen’s Meeting**

**February 27, 2023**

**7:00 PM** Jack **Esposito** called the meeting to order. Also present was Howard **Brown;** John **Quinlan** was absent. **Esposito** led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board reviewed the updated library access road bid from Preston Excavation sent via email by **Quinlan.** He noted that the bid has been fully vetted by Bill McKinney, Ann Dodd and himself. Preston Excavation came in as both the lowest and best quality bid. Meridian vouches for them and it is recommended that we choose them as the winning bidder and that we add an additional $100,000 to the bond amount as a contingency to protect the town against unforeseen expenses. **Esposito** noted that it was stated at the last meeting that if this warrant passes at Town Meeting, it will take about 4 months to build the road. When would the construction start? If they would start next spring, maybe we could save a bit by putting in for the January bond bank. We won’t get any money from the bond bank until August; four months would put construction into the winter months. He went on to say that we can’t do anything with this now; we will have to increase the amount on the floor at Town Meeting. **Esposito** has been in touch with Moderator David Sturm regarding procedures for Town Meeting. Each ballot has to be open for an hour; we can do them simultaneously. We will have to set up four voting posts with two boxes at each and we have to have someone monitoring each box.

The Board reviewed the minutes from 2/22/23. **Brown** noted there had been a question from Eileen Naber. She feels the petition warrant article to change the number of the BOS should be voted on by secret ballot on Wednesday, but the Town Clerk stated it needs to be voted on Tuesday. Belinda contacted the Secretary of State’s office and it does in fact get voted on Tuesday on the ballot. **Brown** motioned to accept the minutes as written seconded by **Esposito.**

The Budget Committee meets on Wednesday night where they will deliberate on the Warrant Articles. **Esposito** noted that he cannot make the Library Presentation on Thursday because he has a meeting with the SRLD down in Brookline at the same time. **Esposito** brought up a comment made by **Brown** after last week’s meeting. He doesn’t understand what **Brown** was getting at but he wants to clear the air. **Brown** stated he felt that at one meeting **Esposito** stated he was against increases for all the warrant articles and then the following meeting he made the vote and accepted one of them. He feels that **Esposito** wasn’t being honest when he said he was against the tax increases for all the warrant articles. **Esposito** stated that he is against all tax increases anyhow, but that’s not the point. The only reason why he voted for the sprinkler was because if the building does go through, it should definitely be sprinkled. **Brown** said he’s talking about the article for the fire truck. **Esposito** stated he voted yes for the fire truck because if it goes through, it really won’t have any increase in taxes because of the money we’ve been putting into the Capital Reserve. That amount would more than pay for the interest and premium on the note. If it passes, the Fire Dept. will withdraw the warrant article for the Capital Reserve and won’t ask for it again for several years. **Esposito** has been against Capital Reserves forever because there is no interest. Inflation at 2% was bad, now it’s even worse. We are losing by putting money in Capital Reserves. **Brown** noted that we have until August of 2027 to pay off the Fire Station at a rate of 4.57%. Our contact at the bond bank says the rates for these bonds should be around 5%. **Brown** ran the numbers on 25-year vs 30-year notes. If we spread it out to 30 years, you would have the people moving into town and using the library down the road paying their fair share. **Esposito** noted that when they first wanted to build the library, we had impact fees. They wanted to use impact fees to pay for the premiums. We had to give back all the impact fees with interest. As he has said many times, he is not against a new library. He just cannot support the size of this building. He thinks the library staff has done a great job managing time and space. A building at 7,600 sq. ft. – the ongoing cost is going to be a phenomenal increase. **Brown** stated that we are lucky. We have the Trust paying for most of it. **Esposito** noted that when they first started it was said it would cost about $800,000; that’s a reasonable amount for a bond issue. 2.5 million dollars is a different case. He doesn’t understand the cost per square foot on this. If you divide the sq. footage into the 6.3 million, you are at $829 a square foot. The Board discussed the school budget. **Brown** stated Souhegan has 4 warrant articles on their budget. **Esposito** said if the budget goes through its $1.84; default budget is $1.58 per thousand. **Brown** stated that 80% of our town budget goes to the school; the town’s budget is very frugal.

**7:50 PM** As there was no further business before the Board **Brown** motioned to adjourn seconded by **Esposito.** All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Cleary