**Selectmen’s Meeting Minutes**

**February 5, 2024**

**7:00 PM** Selectman John **Quinlan** called the meeting to order. Also present was Selectman Jack **Esposito** and Selectman Howard **Brown.**

Kathy Marchocki, Old Wilton Road, discussed secret ballot voting at Town Meeting. We had three secret ballots last year with over 500 voters. It was a mess with the waiting in line and people were getting more and more frustrated and angry as time wore on. She asked if there is some way, without violating the integrity of the voting process, to create two lines on each side of the room to improve the process. Town Clerk Belinda Yeaton said she doesn’t see a problem with splitting into two lines. **Esposito** said he had spoken with the Moderator at the primary election and he has a plan to expedite things this year as we anticipate the same number of voters if not more.

The Board reviewed the minutes from 1/29/24. **Esposito** motioned to accept the public minutes of 1/29/24 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor. The Board reviewed the non-public minutes of 1/29/24. **Esposito** motioned to accept the non-public minutes of 1/29/24 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor. The Board reviewed the non-public minutes of 2/1/24. **Esposito** motioned to accept the non-public minutes of 2/1/24 seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**7:15 PM Quinlan** opened the public hearing and proceeded to go through the 2024 Budget lines. The Board answered questions from the public on specific line items.

**7:30 PM Quinlan** next went over 2024 Warrant Articles and the Board answered questions from the public. Kathy Marchocki noted that in June ’23, Lou Springer and Jay Wilson reported to the Board that they believe there are enough cemetery spaces in the current cemetery for three decades. Wilson responded that its well in excess of ten years. However, they will be planning in the new cemetery. They want to have it open and ready for use long before it’s needed. Tim Berry questioned Articles 5 & 6. What if the voters approve both of these large warrant articles for the construction of the new library and access road? We won’t realize any bond monies until August of this year. Has the Board come up with a strategy to expedite the start of the project without being able to build the road until August at the earliest? **Quinlan** said is not sure when the contractor would require the first payment. He assumes it would be possible to use some of the operating budget to start if we knew the warrant has passed. All we really need to do is strip the land and put in some rough gravel so heavy equipment can get up there. **Esposito** stated that he is leery about using funds that aren’t authorized for that project; we are looking at almost 2.9 million worth of bonds. There’s no guarantee we’re going to get them; he is not for spending funds where we don’t have approval to spend. He wants to wait until we have bond commitment. Cindy Raspiller stated that in the event that the library was to pass and the road did not, one of the options would be to use contingency funding in the library project to create an access for construction because the library will take a year to build; the road will take a matter of weeks to build. She feels this would be a very unusual circumstance as she would expect most voters to understand how the two are linked. They are separate articles because of separate sources of funding; the library has such a significant amount of private funding. Kathy Marchocki noted that one of the concerns raised at last year’s Town Meeting specifically by the Planning Board who felt that the wetlands were not adequately addressed. **Quinlan** noted that was one on the Planning Board; the rest of the Planning board did not agree with him. She went on to say that she doesn’t know when the road plan was designed but in the last few years, we’ve had such extreme weather events that she wonders if we have started to incorporate that type of extreme weather event into what potentially could happen by building a library and road there. Tim Berry noted that the drainage plan for the road and the parking lots is massively overbuilt. There are three separate detention/retention ponds; more than enough to keep any runoff from the site from getting into the pond. Mike Fimbel asked if there will be improvements done to Grand Hill Road to improve sight distance? **Quinlan** noted that according to the engineers, the sight lines are all good. The Board answered questions regarding the capital reserve funds recommended by the Strategic Advisory Committee. **Quinlan** explained that our Strategic Advisor Committee just completed a CIP which is a 15-20 yar snapshot of all major expenditures the Town is going to have to make from all the Departments. We have not done one of these in 15+ years and thought it was time to do some long-range planning as things are only getting more expensive over time. They are recommending a capital reserve strategy for most of the departments. **Esposito** stated that he thinks people will be shocked when they see what all of this is going to cost; between the town budget, the warrant articles and capital reserves. It’s a good plan, but we’ve got to pay for it.

**8:35 PM** Public Hearing concluded.

**Esposito** motioned to accept Warrant Article 1 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to accept Warrant Article 2 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to accept Warrant Article 3 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to accept Warrant Article 4 as amended seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to table Articles 5 and 6 until wording is finalized with DRA. All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to table Warrant Article 7 seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to accept Warrant Article 8 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to accept Warrant Article 9 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to table Warrant Articles 10 and 11 until after the CIP presentation seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to accept Warrant Article 12 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to accept Warrant Article 13 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to accept Warrant Article 14 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to accept Warrant Article 15 as amended seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to accept Warrant Article 16 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to accept Warrant Article 17 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**9:00 PM Brown** motioned to go into non-public session under RSA 91 A:3 II (a) (c) to discuss a personnel issue seconded by **Esposito.** All in favor.

**9:05 PM Esposito** motioned to come out of non-public session seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Esposito** motioned to seal the non-public minutes of 2/5/24 seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**9:07 PM** As there was no further business before the Board **Esposito** motioned to adjourn seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Cleary