**Selectmen’s Meeting Minutes**

**March 18, 2024**

**7:00PM** Selectman John **Quinlan** called the meeting to order. Also present was Selectman Jack **Esposito.** Town Clerk Belinda Yeaton swore in newly elected Selectman Mike **Fimbel**. Yeaton next swore in Sue Leger, Tax Collector; Becci Schwarz, Treasurer; Karen Mitchell, Trustee of Trust Funds; Amy White, Library Trustee; Jay Wilson, Cemetery Trustee; Juli Harvey, Welfare Officer and Randy Wilson, Fire Ward.

**Quinlan** motioned to nominate **Esposito** as Chairman of the Select board seconded by **Fimbel.** All in favor.

Howard Brown questioned comments made on social media and the Board’s opinion on them. He stated that there is hostility on both sides. He does not want outside influences and accusations affecting things moving forward. **Esposito** stated that we have a lot to get done. The library bond passed; it’s our moral obligation to do everything possible to get the library built. The most important thing we have to do in the next 2-3 weeks is get the bond application in. It is due by April 26th; there is a lot of paperwork to get completed. We are not going to get distracted by diversionary tactics or he said/she said/they said. We have about a month to get everything in to the bond bank. There is a recount on the library bond vote scheduled for Wednesday, 3/20/24 at 6:00pm. That way there will be no doubt on any side, for or against it.

Kim Roberge came to the Board regarding her husband’s resignation as Building Inspector. She

said that the Selectmen’s minutes were not really clear on some of the issues. On Tues. 2/6/24, the Building Inspector received a letter with newly formed requirements and responsibilities of the Building Inspector duties. The letter stated that the included expectations were to be adhered to by Thursday 2/8/24. That is less than 60 hours from receipt of the notice of additional requirements and expectations. The Building Inspector believed this was an unreasonable time frame for the outlying responsibilities, especially with such major changes of duties and obligations from the existing ones that have been in place for almost 15 years. So, he tendered his resignation. He did not feel that the new requirements were unrealistic; there was just no way they could be implemented within the time frame given. He believes that he would have stayed on until the town could find a replacement to fulfill all the new job duties, but he was not given that option by the letter that was sent by the Selectmen. She next spoke about the junkyard issue in town; there doesn’t seem to be an update. There has also been discussion on multiple back taxes; ones over the range of 400K. She is wondering if that is something that is going to be put on the Selectmen’s agenda as to what we are going to do about those issues.

**Esposito** responded in regard to the Building Inspector. The reason why he was called in was because we received two letters from two department heads about a disagreement in the interpretation of a zoning problem that we had. At that meeting, he was asked to basically resume the activities of having in-person meetings in the office and for him to contact the builders and contractors directly. He refused to do that. The Building Inspector was never asked to resign. He resigned on his own because he wouldn’t come in and meet the Boards expectations for the future, which is basically pre-Covid office hours. As to the junkyard issue, it is with the Town’s attorney now and in the process of filing with the Court. As for the back taxes, we have a letter going out to the family’s estate with an offer they might not be able to refuse. We will see what happens. She next asked if the Board will be discussing a policy for the amount that’s kept in the unreserved balance. **Esposito** explained that the budget is an expense budget. We don’t know what the income is going to be; it varies throughout the year. We have to subtract all the uncollected taxes because that amount shows in the surplus. We go with the guidelines from the DRA as to how much we should keep. He speculates that taxes are going to be close to a $3-$4 increase because everything passed at Town Meeting.

Zoe Fimbel stated that she received an email from Howard Brown that she read into the minutes (attached). She asked the Board if they know what the purpose of the email is. She finds it interesting that Brown has been a Selectman for three years, has lived in Mont Vernon for over 20 years and on his final day as Selectman she got this request. Everything he requested can be found in public records including Mont Vernon’s annual Town Reports. She’s been on the Commission for over 25 years and has never received anything like this. **Esposito** asked Brown what is the purpose of this request. Brown stated that they have not posted minutes in a very long time. When you look at their financials, how is anyone supposed to understand what they are doing with the money they receive? He wants to understand what the background of the Lamson Farm is.

The Board discussed term options for the bonds for the library and access road. They will make a decision by next Monday.

Becci Schwarz came to the Board with a request from the Planning Board. The Planning Board met last week and discussed permission to build on a Class VI road for two properties on Caesars Road. They recommend that the Selectmen grant those waivers to San-Ken for permission to build on Map 2 lots 53 & 54 which are related to Jay Wilson.

Fire Chief Jay Wilson came before the Board regarding the SCBA lease/purchase. They are going to use Fire Tech & Safety of New England who quoted us $27,452 for a 7-year lease. **Esposito** motioned to expend the amount of $27,452 from the operating budget to purchase SCBA equipment seconded by **Fimbel.** All in favor.

The Board reviewed the minutes of 3/11/24. **Quinlan** motioned to accept the minutes of 3/11/24 as written seconded by **Esposito.** Two for; one abstained. **Quinlan** motioned to accept the non-public minutes of 3/11/24 as written seconded by **Esposito.** Two for; one abstained. **Quinlan** motioned to seal the non-public minutes of 3/11/24 seconded by **Esposito.** Two for; one abstained.

**8:05 PM** As there was no further business before the Board **Quinlan** motioned to adjourn seconded by **Esposito.** All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Cleary