

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes May 3, 2021

7:00 PM Meeting called to order by Selectboard Chairman, John Esposito. Also in attendance were Selectmen Kim Roberge and Tim Berry and minute taker, Laurie Brown.

Esposito led the meeting in a moment of silence.

Esposito, speaking about the newest version of the budget, said that \$10,000 for new website and the money for IT services have been added to their respective line items.

Belinda Yeaton, Town Clerk, asked if her office could be included in the IT services.

Brown will get the price for her.

Roberge said that she would like to add \$75,000 to legal fees to begin the lengthy and expensive process of litigating the junk yard issues. Berry acknowledged that two residents have sent in written complaints about cleaning up certain properties.

Roberge added that the residents have been trying to remedy the situation since the 1965 Town Meeting where in Article 10 Virginia Harcovitz asked for opinion that the State junk yard ordinance be placed on our books.

There was a discussion among the Board culminating in Berry and Esposito agreeing to put the \$75,000 before the taxpayers to see if they would be willing to fund the (up to \$500,000) forced clean up of several properties in Town designated as junkyards.

Roberge said that she has attended a webinar on this issue, and there are fines we can begin imposing.

Brown agreed that \$75,000 would get us started – the total cost of litigation will not be due all in one year.

Resident Cindy Raspiller asked if we tried getting the NH Department of Environmental Services involved as they may be able to enforce some of this without us having to.

Esposito said that they had, but not on all properties.

Resident Bonnie Angulas likes the idea of fines.

Roberge said that we could also send in the Health Officer if we thought that would help.

Esposito said that the Repair and Maint. line of the Highway Garage has an extra \$20,000 added for a new generator. Repair and Maint. line of the Transfer station has an extra \$2,000 added for running electric service for a second compactor. The PD Health insurance line changed a bit due to knowing the actual figures. The PD Computer line increased due to the new IT budget.

Esposito explained that the Fire Department line for Repair and Maint. to Tanker 1 has been increased by \$34,500 to account for a temporary repair to the tank that split and to ultimately replace said tank.

Roberge would like to know where in the tank the leak is.

The Board discussed the temporary fix and decided it was worth the \$2,500 now because the new tank cannot be installed until October and the Town cannot be without a tanker for 6 months.

Esposito said that the Highway Dept. Diesel Fuel line has been reduced by \$5,000 to help allow for the purchase of the new generator. The Highway Department line for Telephone and Internet is up.

Roberge asked Brown to double check that \$4,000 is the correct number for the line.

Esposito asked everyone to remember that the income from the State Room and Meals and Highway Block grants would be substantially less this year due to Covid-19.

Resident Eileen Naber asked if Brown could have copies of the budget printed out for pick up at the Town Hall.

Brown said that she will be posting the budget and warrant on the website, and Facebook, and would, indeed have copies available at Town Hall. Individuals should come to the back door between 9 and 3 to pick up a printed copy.

Roberge suggested making some copies for the library to give out also.

Berry said that everyone will have to print out copies or come in to get them as we will not be screensharing the documents at the public hearing.

Esposito began the review of the warrant articles.

Article 02: To see if the Town of Mont Vernon will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$13,500 to finalize the design of the Town owned access road to the new cemetery and proposed library and the parking area for the proposed new library.

Berry explained that the \$13,500 came from Spencer Tate at Meridian Land Services. There are only small changes that can be made without jeopardizing the wetland permit. If we move the sidewalk to the other side of the road and make it a traditional sidewalk, it will save enough money to cover this warrant article. We will see Tate at a Selectmen's meeting before Town Meeting.

Roberge asked Brown to invite the Planning Board to the meeting Tate will attend. We will need to know how much has been spent on this project so far. How much is reasonable for the project?

Berry said that Raspiller has those figures.

Esposito and Berry support the article and Roberge said that she is willing to support it also if she gets those figures.

Article 03: To see if the Town will raise and appropriate \$15,000 for the purpose of purchasing communications Equipment.

Esposito believes that MACC will continue longer than this year, and this article can be put off until next year.

Board agreed to remove this article from the warrant.

Article 03: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 to be added to the Library Capital Reserve Fund previously established.

Raspiller, a Daland Trustee, explained that the Daland Trust would match this money.
The Board supports this article.

Article 04: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the purpose of purchasing replacement Fire Department's Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus. This special article is a special warrant article per RSA 32:3 VI (d) and RSA 32:7 V. These will be matching funds for an anticipated grant. Selectmen to be authorized to expend the funds upon recommendation of the Fire Chief and Board of Fire Wards.

Esposito explained that the current SCBA gear is at the end of its useful life.
Board supports this article.

Article 05: To see if the town will vote to authorize the selectmen to enter into an 8-year lease agreement in the amount of \$620,000 for the purpose of leasing/purchasing and equipping an All-Wheel Drive Rescue Pumper. This lease agreement contains an escape clause. Approx. \$165,000 in capital reserve funds will be used to pay the last balloon payment. First Payment due 2022.

Roberge said that she would like to see a spreadsheet of the trucks we have – age and life expectancy etc. Does what we have now adequately meet the needs of the Town? I don't have enough information to make an informed decision. Is it a want, or a need?

Esposito said that by purchasing the truck as a lease, they only need majority vote.

Berry said that, if the Town fails to fund the payment in any year, we will lose all the money spent thus far on the truck.

Roberge asked Fire Chief Wilson why we aren't bonding the truck.

Wilson said that it is easier to lease/purchase it. The last time I spoke to the Board you were more in favor of a lease.

Roberge told Wilson that she hasn't seen a spreadsheet on the phasing of equipment this year.

Wilson said that the principal payment on a 7-year lease would be approx. \$75,000 and \$68,000 for 8 years. He also explained that, if the article passes, the FD would not be asking for any Capital Reserve money while we are paying for this truck.

Roberge said that he would get the question of why the truck is needed.

Wilson said that the current 2-man truck was built specifically to fit into the 1947 fire station. You need more than 2 men suited up and responding to a call. When I joined the Department, we had 5 trucks, now we have 4.

Roberge asked that, based on the expense of the new tank for the tanker, could we forgo this for one year?

Wilson asked why she would want to do that, since the first payment will not be due until 2022.

Naber asked if we only have one tanker and was told yes. She then asked why we would not replace that truck.

Wilson said that the tanker is scheduled to be replaced in 2040 – 2045; the truck is fine, it's just the tank that is bad.

Naber asked how much the truck will cost over the life of the lease.

Wilson did not have that figure.

Naber suggested that a bond may be less expensive.

Esposito said that we could not get a bond until next year.

Roberge asked that, if this article passes, would you withdraw the article for the capital reserve?

Wilson said that the fire wards have not voted on that yet.

Angulas asked when the fire station will be paid off and Brown told her 2027.

The Board says that they may support this article if the capital reserve article was removed if the truck passes.

Roberge then says that she cannot make a decision on the truck until she has an answer on the capital reserve.

The fire wards have a quick meeting and decide that they will table the capital reserve article if the truck passes.

Roberge says that she will now support putting the article before the voters and asks Wilson to get the total cost for the 7- and 8-year leases.

The Selectmen are split on this article.

Article 07: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$70,000 for the purpose of repair and maintenance of Town buildings.

Berry explained that it will cost \$80,000 for the restoration of the Town Hall windows, with the installation of storm windows, that the Heritage Commission has pledged \$10,000 toward the project, and has applied for 3 grants. There is no grant money for new windows – just to restore what we have. There is approx. \$55K in that fund, but we do not want to use the fund in case we need that for another purpose or another building emergency.

Roberge said that, although she hates storm windows, she does support this article.

Esposito asked that, if we don't get any grant money, could we put in new windows?

Berry feels that it would cost more money.

Article 08: To see if the Town of Mont Vernon will vote to raise and appropriate the sum \$80,000 for the purpose of Town Hall Renovation Design Work. This work includes Pre-Design, Professional Cost Estimate, Design Development, and Construction Documents. This work is part of the scope of the project, not in addition to it.

Roberge said that we need this work done so that we can have a final price and documents to put the project out to bid.

Wilson asked if the Board had discussed the SCBA Equipment warrant article.

Esposito told Wilson that the Board had, and that they support it. Esposito then asked if there was a down payment due for the new tank for the tanker and was told no. He asked Wilson where, on the tank the leak is.

Wilson said that it is such that the tank can only keep approx. 500 gallons in it, and that is nothing in the case of a fire.

Esposito asked if it made sense to repair the tank now.

Wilson said yes; if it was his own vehicle, he would do just that.

Berry said that he believes we don't really have a choice.

Esposito and Roberge agreed.

Resident Howard Brown asked if the company that did the original repair had gone out of business.

Wilson said no, that the owner of the company that built the tank had died, and that they went out of business.

Roberge asked Wilson if someone had gotten back to Katherine Koko that we wanted her to do the research she suggested.

Wilson said that they would discuss that Thursday at the BOG meeting.

Esposito asked how Milford feels about this.

Wilson said he wasn't sure, but he hoped that they support it.

Esposito feels that the Chairman was not a proponent of what the BOG was doing.

Wilson said that we need that information to decide what avenue is best for us.

Roberge said that keeping up the momentum and moving it forward is important. Gary Daniels would not commit to a time frame.

Wilson said that the BOG needs to be making those decisions.

Roberge asked if anyone is tracking the dropped calls that Milford is claiming.

Milford has not notified MACC of dropped calls – if they tracked them, MACC could install repeaters, but we don't know where the dropped call areas are. Milford has to initiate this.

Roberge asked if the website interviews would take place before Town Meeting.

Brown said that they could – she will set it up.

Esposito said that he spoke with Town Counsel. The Weston Hill property is a single-family lot. The other non-conforming unit cannot be lived in without it being permitted.

Roberge said that someone had called asking if it could be considered an ADU if it was attached to the main house. She said that the building inspector would need a structural engineer to say it is habitable before that could be considered.

Esposito asked about "Transfer Station Staffing" being added to the agenda.

Roberge asked how long Buskey would be out; the highway employees have had to cover his shifts.

Esposito said that Buskey will be out indefinitely. Crosby said he would talk to the person interested to see if he would fill in.

Esposito said that the State has relaxed the mask guidelines, and we have had an email requesting that we drop the mask policy at the transfer station. The operator is not opposed to encouraging people to wear masks, but not turning anyone away that doesn't have one.

Roberge said that she would have to hear what the DPW Director has to say regarding this issue before making any kind of decision.

Esposito asked Roberge for an update regarding the Town Hall Renovation Committee.

Roberge said that the deadline for input on the plans is May 20th, and that she hadn't heard from the Town employees yet.

Esposito said that Crosby is set to rent a roller for one month, with Lyndeborough doing the same.

Board reviewed the minutes of April 5, 19, and 26. Board agreed to table the minutes of 4/5/21 until next week. Berry motioned, seconded by Roberge to accept the minutes of 4/19 and 4/26 as written. Roberge; yes, Berry; yes, Esposito; yes.

Esposito mentioned that New Boston has asked again this year if they can put up a sign for their farmers' market.

Board agreed, and Roberge asked the office to thank them for asking first.

Esposito said that in two weeks they would get together with the Police Department to go over the traffic ordinance.

Board decided to postpone next week's department head meeting until May 17th.

Esposito measured the MPR today in hopes that it would be big enough to hold Town Meeting while everyone was socially distancing. It doesn't look like that is possible.

Howard Brown said that he would talk to the Superintendent to see if it was possible to use other rooms at the Village School for overflow at Town Meeting

The pros and cons of renting a tent were discussed. No decisions were made.

9:40 PM As there was no further business before the Board, Berry motioned seconded by Roberge to adjourn.

Berry; yes, Roberge; yes, Esposito; yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Brown

