

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes February 1, 2021

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

Esposito led the meeting in a moment of silence.

Roberge read the new dates for deadlines relative to the new June 8th date for the Town election.

Berry asked how the budget hearing will happen – will we do it on ZOOM?

Brown asked how the public will be able to speak.

Esposito said that there is a graphic on the side that allows people to raise their hand.

Roberge said that there are many options: ZOOM, Outside and in the MPR.

Esposito said that we normally get 30 ish people; we can easily do that in person in the MPR.

Berry said that we don't have to decide tonight, but let's not put it off until April. The school deliberative sessions are happening this week in person.

Roberge asked Brown to reach out to the Village School to reserve May 10th at 7:00 pm for the public hearing.

Esposito reminded everyone that, if a department head asks to put in a warrant article, we don't ask for the 25 signatures. He also said that we don't have any official date for signing up for offices. It could be changed.

Berry said that Bill McKinney read the Governor's directive and feels like appointed officials' terms end in March. I read it the same way that McKinney does. He wants to be done as the Chair of the Planning Board in March.

Roberge said that the Board hasn't discussed where they will hold Town Meeting; on the Town Green or at McCollom Field.

Berry feels that McCollom Field is the best location.

Esposito asked about warrant articles from the Board.

Berry said that he asked Roberge to touch base with Matt at DEW regarding the line item for design work and what the cost would be to create a phased plan.

Roberge said, based on last year being a Covid year, and not being able to get committees together to publicize it, we have decided not to put forward a full warrant article to renovate the Town Hall. We will put forward an article to do the windows. We do know that DEW's design fees are going to be \$78,000, Milestone would be \$168,000 and Harvey's was high also. The cost of storm windows and refurbishing the windows will be \$90,500.

Berry said that he has a quote from his restoration guy that puts the project, with storms at \$80,000. We had a meeting with LCHIP as to why we didn't get the \$38,000 grant. Apparently if we already had the \$80,000, they would have given us \$20,000. If we were to start the windows in 2021, we would have to do it without LCHIP money. I think we need to ask the taxpayers for enough money to do the windows plus enough to leave in the account in case something comes up.

Berry also feels that having a warrant article for \$400,000 for the road to the library is a good way to see how the voters feel and may help the fundraising for the library. We could get a 10-year bond; interest rates are very low right now.

Roberge said that the \$400K is ¼ what we need for the Town Hall – things in there aren't even safe.

Berry said that everyone agrees the Town Hall needs attention, but everyone does not agree with funding it.

Roberge feels that doing it with a capital reserve is the way to do the road – putting it in will detract from the corn field and Carleton Pond. We don't want to do it before it is needed.

Berry feels that what ever we put into a capital reserve may be about the same as the annual payment for the bond. I also want to help the library raise the money for the new library. He asked Brown to get the bond schedule for \$400K for 10 years.

Esposito said that we need all kinds of numbers. He does not support a capital reserve because with earned interest rates so low; you lose money.

Roberge said that she wasn't suggesting a capital reserve for \$400K. We don't have any definitive time frames. We would be putting in a road, next to the pond and taking out the corn field without having a library till when?

Cindy Raspiller said that, for the gift, they have to start construction within 5 years. For the permits we have to start by 2023, 2024 is pushing it.

Esposito thought that if we have one bond for the road and library it would be the best.

Raspiller said that a pretty significant part of the lot could still be cornfield.

Bonnie Angulas asked if there has been any discussion about using block grant money for the road.

Roberge feels that the Selectmen could use some of that money.

Esposito said that, because of Covid, the block grant money will be quite a bit less than in the past. Also, we hold one year of block grant money in abeyance for emergencies.

Angulas said that she would like the bond schedule for \$2.3 Million.

Roberge said that she would like the bond schedule for \$1.7 Million.

Eileen Naber suggested that we keep the road to the cemetery separate.

There is some discussion as to how far the \$400K road goes.

Raspiller tells the Board that it brings the road to the delineation between the library land and the cemetery land.

Esposito asked Roberge if she had gotten anything back from Fieldstone regarding the Brook Rd. culvert.

Roberge said that she has been contact with the State DES and also went right to the owner of Fieldstone – Chris. They will process information from the concrete vendor and resubmit to the DES next week. They have not answered why they asked for 4 extensions, nor why they have billed us so much more than their proposal of \$7,500. We are holding 2 invoices.

Board reviewed minutes of 1/25/21. Roberge had an extensive list of changes. The Board decided to hold off accepting these minutes until they can see that the changes have been made.

Board reviewed the non-public minutes of 1/6/21. Berry motioned, seconded by Roberge to accept the non-public minutes of January 6, 2021 as written. Berry; yes, Roberge; yes, Esposito; yes.

Berry motioned, seconded by Roberge to seal the non-public minutes of January 6, 2021 as written. Berry; yes, Roberge; yes, Esposito; yes.

Berry asked to have Lou Springer invited to next week's meeting to get more information about the cemetery road. Esposito agreed to that, at Berry's request.

Roberge asked what items could be moved up from the bottom of the agenda.

Berry asked if everyone would be amenable to moving the website up to current business.

Brown apprised the Board about some trouble we are having with our IT vendor. They have also let us know that, as of the end of February, they will no longer support us. We have to get on one of their plans that start \$500 more per month than we currently pay and provide less service than we are getting. She will be entertaining two other vendors that will give us a quote for service.

Berry suggested putting off the website until next week and talk about it.

Roberge feels that the website and IT service go hand and hand. These will be tweaks to our budget that will have to go back to the budget committee. What does the Governors bill do to our budget regarding raises and spending?

Brown said that she had spoken to the NHMA about just those things. Spending can go on as if you are running on a default budget – reasonable and customary expenses. That includes the raises; because we have always given increases in March, we can continue to do that.

Angulas suggested calling New London to see who they used to create their website – it is a good one. She dropped the link for the vendor to the Zoom meeting participants.

8:45 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