

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

July 20, 2021

2:00 PM Meeting called to order by Selectboard Chairman, John Esposito. Also in attendance was Selectman Tim Berry and minute taker, Laurie Brown. Selectman Howard Brown was absent. Esposito led the meeting in the pledge of allegiance.

Fire Chief, Jay Wilson, MACC representative, came before the Board to discuss MACC.

He had previously asked to be able to spend \$2500 - \$3,000 of the MACC surplus and the Board had agreed. He now asking for a total of \$4,200 for the purchasing of the license for a Mont Vernon frequency.

Board agreed

Wilson said that he had gotten the revisions to the MACC 2013 IMA that the Milford Selectmen are suggesting. He does not agree that the revisions are in the best interest of the organization as a whole. Wilson believes we should simply extend the 2013 agreement for another 3 years as Milford is not in this as a partner and it is a waste of our time and energy looking at updating the 2013 IMA.

Esposito said that the agreement has to be changed so that major purchases can be paid for over a few years rather than how it is now that they need to be paid for in one year. He asked Wilson where Milford stands on that issue.

Wilson pointed out that they voted the 2018 IMA down so...

Esposito asked Milford Selectman Paul Dargie what his Board's opinion is on this.

Dargie said that his Board feels that towns should deal with their own infrastructure.

Berry stated that if the BOG decides that the MACC infrastructure needs upgrading, the equipment owned by MACC, the Town of Mont Vernon cannot afford to fund that all in one year. It seems that Milford will not support anything but the 2013 agreement.

Dargie explained that he has no authority to speak for the Milford Board of Selectmen, but his personal opinion is that Milford should go out on its own, and Mont Vernon and Wilton come in as customers.

Sean Mamone said that we have been partners in MACC for 35 – 40 years, why would you think we want to come on as a customer.

Esposito said that his opinion is that Mont Vernon never be a customer of Milford.

Berry added that Milford was unwilling to spend any money to upgrade; we would not come in as a customer; we would just go somewhere else.

Dargie said that that would be fine.

Esposito stated that he can't figure out why the Board would be setting Milford up to carry the whole expense.

Wilson offered that we should be looking into how much it will cost to run MACC without Milford for 6 months. Say that Milford gives notice – the MACC employees will be looking for new jobs right away.

Berry said that we would have to find somewhere to go ASAP.

Esposito asked who owns the tower on top of the Milford Town Hall and was told that it was originally a US Cellular tower, but now Milford owns it. He also said that, personally, he would never want to be a tenant of a Milford communications center.

Berry said that he feels the same way.

Wilson said that he was here to get the Board's permission to tell Milford's Board that he is done negotiating an IMA for 2021. We are still under the 2013 extension until the end of 2022. Right now, we (the BOG) don't have the ultimate control – the Selectboards do. The Milford BOS have to bear the responsibility of not upgrading the system.

Esposito asked Dargie what it would take for Milford to go on as is as partners in MACC.

Dargie said that there would have to be a financial benefit.

Esposito said that he personally, does not have a problem with Milford having an extra vote; they do pay 60%. He cannot believe that they cannot come together and make MACC work.

Kate Kokko said that, in sitting through the BOS and BOG meetings, she hears that the other towns don't want to pay for Milford's problems. She questioned whether that is a true representation of Mont Vernon and Wilton's positions.

Esposito said yes, Milford should be paying for their own town's infrastructure. It is not a MACC problem.

Wilson said that long-term debt should cover a phased plan; 1st phase would be the PD, 2nd phase EMS, 3rd phase FD etc.

Berry said that when MACC needs money from the 3 partners, we cannot pay for it in one year. The 2018 proposed IMA addressed that situation.

Kokko asked if Mont Vernon would be interested if the IMA was changed to allow that.

Berry and Esposito both said that they would be interested in that discussion.

Wilson said that, in dealing with votes, Milford has two votes, but only one representative. If they have 2 votes, there should be 2 representatives there.

Mamone said it would be such an easy fix if Milford wasn't so bent on having all of the control.

Wilson reiterated that, unless the Milford BOS want to look into a long-term agreement – it is a waste of time.

Eileen Naber said that we keep hearing about Milford pulling out – what would our responsibility be if we pulled out?

Wilson said that it would be the same as Milford; a 12 month notice, but we would have to get money to do so from the taxpayers so we would have to wait until Town Meeting.

Esposito said that it would cost us \$85 - \$90K to convert to somewhere else. He asked Dargie to go back to his Board and tell them that Mont Vernon is not interested in being a customer.

Wilson asked if he could put a pause on IMA negotiations until at least after budget season.

Board agreed.

2:45 PM Esposito brought up the fact that Ben Crosby, DPW Director has given his notice. He will stay through August to get us through the paving projects scheduled for this year.

Board discussed how to advertise for this position as well as for the Chief of Police.

3:15 PM As there was no further business before the Board, Berry motioned seconded by Esposito to adjourn.
All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Brown