

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

April 5, 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, Joan Cleary.

Esposito led the meeting in a moment of silence.

Esposito let the Board know that we got our technical letter from the DOL and Paul from MV Electric came in on Thursday so that we could have him take care of all the electrical write-ups we got. He asked Paul to make a time where he could come and fix everything in one day. Highway Director Crosby is working on the rest.

Berry asked when the list needs to be complete, and was told May 8, 2021.

Roberge commented that all the buildings had something on the checklist, and asked about the paperwork that needs to be submitted. Brown explained that she has added everything they asked for in the Safety Plan and filled out the Safety Summary. Both documents were already submitted to the State and accepted. There is a copy in the office for anyone that wants to read the plan.

Esposito said that the Board needs to finalize the budget that will be presented at the budget hearing on May 10, 2021. The only change to the budget right now is the addition of money for the generator at the DPW.

Howard Brown asked that the office post a link on the website to the budget, and it was decided to have a few copies of it in the office for people to pick up.

Esposito said that Brown polled the employees regarding direct deposit of their pay. Most everyone would like to have direct deposit. The Fire Department is against it, and a few don't care, but for the most part it is popular. He asked Brown to find out the exact cost to the Town for next meeting so that it could be added to the budget.

Brown did state that Cleary would have to then do the payroll twice. Once in Quickbooks to print check stubs and then to get the money from our payroll account into the employee's accounts.

Roberge said that it should be no problem since we increased the hours to 35 per week across the board.

Esposito stated that no one wants a time clock.

Roberge said that, as long as the supervisors are approving the time cards and taking responsibility for the hours, she is ok with that.

Esposito said that Cleary had set up ZBA hearings for the two cases that are imminent; the in-home business on Franchestown Turnpike and the two single family homes on 54/56 Weston Hill Rd.

Esposito reminded the Board that they have to add enough money into the budget to cover the new website and the new vendor for IT Service.

Brown said that she was still waiting for a company in Town to give her a quote for the website and that a very large vendor said that they were not interested because of the Cemetery data base that is maintained through the site.

Berry asked if other towns have the same data base on their sites. He thinks we should get more quotes.

Roberge agreed that the Board has to put some money in there. She said that this has been going on since January. If the cemetery is causing us not to be able to maintain our site... maybe we should take that database off of our site. People could get the information elsewhere.

Berry suggested setting aside \$15,000 for the project.

Esposito said that we have to put something in there by next week.

Roberge feels that if you have to chase someone local for a quote, it doesn't bode well; it makes her nervous.

Esposito asked about the Town Hall Renovation Plan Committee and if they have had a meeting yet.

Roberge said that they are meeting this Thursday. Everyone has both plans. She had a conversation with Lucien Soucy about sitting on the committee and he is still interested. Roberge is fine with that. She said that they will send the plans to all entities that will be housed in the Town Hall so they can review the plans. 2 weeks after that they will go over the plans and ideas of those entities. She has had a conversation with Mike Farnham from DEW who will have a new number to get plans to build from for her in a week or two. She is thinking bi-weekly meetings and will be the 8th and 22nd of April to start.

Berry said that what we are looking for is design work. The engineering work is within the individual vendors listed in their estimate.

Roberge said that she asked if there was anything that could be taken out of the price.

Berry asked Roberge if she had gotten a chance to speak with the fiberglass window people and she said no.

Roberge said the guy is on vacation for 2 weeks.

Berry said that there will be some that want to know why we are not getting new windows like we did for the McCollom Building. There are no grants available for new windows; only for the restoration of the old windows.

Esposito asked about the warrant article for the windows.

Roberge said that the design work also needs a warrant article.

Berry said that last month he spoke with the Heritage Commission, and they are willing to donate \$10,000 to the window project. They are also pursuing 2 grants that they have a reasonable expectation to win. He thinks the warrant article should be for \$80,000 which will cover the windows if we don't get the grants.

Roberge asked why we don't want to put the amount that the architect gives us into the warrant article also.

Berry said that the taxpayers will think that that is overreaching. We should go to the taxpayers separately for the design work.

Roberge believes that there is no reason not to combine the two warrant articles.

Berry feels that having one article will get shot down; that it is a better strategy to have two separate articles.

Esposito feels that the design article should be at least a 2-year non-lapsing article.

Roberge said that the committee is only to be seated for 1 year. The original \$15,000 came from that non-lapsing money. We can do it however, but all of this is part of the same project.

Esposito said that he doesn't want to back us into a corner.

Berry said that he has gotten push-back that that original \$15,000 was taken out of the Building Repair and Maintenance warrant article.

Berry asked Esposito if he had spoken with Cindy Raspiller regarding the land swap idea he had had.

Esposito said he had not spoken with Raspiller.

Berry asked Roberge if she had heard anything about the emergency meeting the Library Trustees had after their meeting with the Planning Board.

Roberge said that she was not invited to that meeting and had not heard anything about it.

Esposito brought up the draft emergency office closing policy.

Roberge said that she had written something up that she believes is fair to all employees across the board.

Esposito said that he agreed with the policy except the part where the employees have to use their own sick or vacation time if the Selectmen close the office. He is adamant that that is not right and will not change his mind.

Roberge said that it would be an extremely rare situation where someone could not get into the office either in the morning or the afternoon.

Esposito said again that it should not come out of their pay.

Roberge said it could be a no-pay day. Benefits for one should be for all.

Esposito said that he believes that if the Selectmen close the office, it should be a paid day. He said that that is the way I feel and I won't change my mind.

Berry asked if we are including the library.

Brown said that right now, it is only for full-time people and that the Library works from home in inclement weather. They get paid.

Berry asked about the transfer station attendants.

Brown said that they haven't been getting paid as they are not full-time.

Roberge said that it is only a benefit to a few people. If you come to work and then get let out early – that would be paid in full for their day.

Berry said that he liked that.

Roberge said that the intent is for it to be for everyone.

Esposito said to add the transfer station employees and the library, but it still should not come out of their pay.

Berry said that he needs more time to think about this, he doesn't want to make a decision tonight.

Roberge said that the office could open at 10:00 or noon.

Esposito feels that it is part of the Board's job to keep morale up. We have great employees with no turnover.

Esposito asked if April 26th was good for the other Board members to meet with Milford about MACC. It was.

Berry asked Brown to find out how extensive the needed gazabo repairs are.

Brown will check with Crosby.

Roberge asked if it should be cordoned off.

Esposito stated that there are 2 people that are interested in the open Planning Board seat.

Board read a short letter from each of them.

Roberge motioned, seconded by Berry to appoint Charles Anderson as a voting member of the Planning Board with a term of 2024.

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

Mike Lewis will be asked if he would like to be appointed as an alternate.

Esposito asked Fire Chief Wilson about the funding of the proposed new fire truck.\

Wilson explained that, if they get the grant applied for, they will have to bond the fire truck. He should know by next week.

Esposito asked Wilson about the replacement of the fire extinguishers brought about by the DOL Safety Inspection. He also asked Wilson what type was needed.

Wilson said that he has that planned for the 3rd week in April, and 5 lb ABC Dry Chemical was best.

Esposito said that he thought halogen would be better in the offices.

Wilson said that halogen was not needed.

Wilson said that they have a MACC Base meeting on Wednesday and asked if the Board has anything they wanted to relay to Milford or Wilton.

Roberge asked, based on the letter from Milford, did it come across as they were asking us if we were willing to be a customer?

Wilson stated that, if they don't commit to at least a 7-year IMA, it is a waste of time.

Roberge asked if the infrastructure we have now is adequate for the Town.

It is adequate. Milford did not put any money aside for improvements this year either.

Roberge asked, if safety is their issue, did they add any money in their budget for the safety of their employees.

Wilson said that they might have added money for their portable radios.

Berry motioned, seconded by Roberge to accept the minutes of March 15, 2021 as written. Roberge; yes, Berry; yes, Esposito; yes.

Berry motioned, seconded by Roberge to accept the minutes of March 22, 2021 as written. Roberge; yes, Berry; yes, Esposito; yes.

Berry motioned, seconded by Roberge to accept the Non-Public minutes of March 22, 2021 as written. Roberge; yes, Berry; yes, Esposito; yes.

Roberge motioned, seconded by Berry to seal the Non-Public minutes of March 22, 2021. Roberge; yes, Berry; yes, Esposito; yes.

Roberge asked if Crosby had gotten back to us about the cost of the DOT hiring physicals and was told no.

Roberge asked if Crosby had installed the security cameras in the Town Hall and was told no.

Roberge asked if Andrew Baver and Alyson Miller have been sworn in yet and was told no.

Brown to check with Baver and Miller.

Roberge apprised the Board that the wetlands application has finally been approved by the State. We need to know if Crosby intends to use Block Grant money to do the work. The plan is being reviewed by the Army Corps of Engineers now. We are still holding 2 checks for Fieldstone; who should follow up on that?

Esposito said that she should finish it up since she is the one who has been involved thus far.

Berry asked if the original proposal a quote or an estimate.

Roberge looked and found that it was an estimate.

Berry made mention of several bills before the House that have an impact on municipalities:

HB108 Not in favor: would require us to keep a log of all non-public minutes and if they have been sealed.

HB111 Not in favor: would revoke immunity for all municipal employees

HB307 Not in favor: would take away the municipality's right to regulate the discharge of firearms on Town land

HB216 In favor: would allow municipalities to continue having remote meetings

Roberge asked if the Board is asking the Planning Board to review the Zoning Regulations relative to In-Home Businesses.

Esposito stated that all of our Regulations predate the internet. Right now, it is against the regulations to have any kind of In-Home Business without a Special Exception.

Roberge does not see this as a hardship to folks; the process is to keep the Town informed.

Berry said that the Planning Board has a list of action items. This is not on the list. Their main priority is to submit the Wetlands Ordinance in time for Town Meeting, but we also need to clear up the issue of In-Home Businesses.

Roberge feels that the Special Exception requirement was not put in there to make people jump through hoops – but just to keep the Town informed as to what is going on in Town.

Berry said that he doesn't want to get involved in a dispute between neighbors. There is a difference between working from home and running an In-Home Business.

Roberge said there are not many times that you can see in-store shopping when you google something here, and would like to see the history of Special Exceptions that have been before the ZBA.

Berry thinks the Board should send a letter to the latest complainant saying that we are in receipt of his complaint and are taking it under advisement.

Roberge said what she would like to know is how do we close the gap between the Assessing company adding something to the property card that isn't permitted and the change being known to the Building Inspector and Selectmen. This is mostly directed to the multi-family dwellings or two dwellings on one lot. There are some old ones, but some within the last 5 years.

Berry said that he will bring this to the Planning Boards attention. The attorney for the current case on Weston Hill Rd put together a packet that shoots our zoning ordinance full of holes,

Brown will speak with CNP, the assessing company, about this issue.

9:15 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