**Selectmen’s Meeting Minutes**

**March 7, 2022**

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

Esposito led the meeting in the pledge of allegiance.

Board went over the 4 bids for the proposed access road to the cemetery and the proposed library.

Esposito read an opinion letter from Doug Brodeur of Meridian who recommended Preston Excavating LLC for the price of: $462,005.37.

Esposito wad concerned that none of the bids contained a contingency amount.

Berry said that the engineers should have included it’ they didn’t even provide road profiles. No one dug test pits to see what was under the topsoil.

H. Brown asked if pits were dug for other new roads in Town.

Esposito said that they were all built by the owners of the subdivisions, and were built to Town specifications.

Berry is concerned that the Town does not have any other closed drainage systems. The plans were not presented to the Planning Board until it was too late to make changes to the plans. The firm that drew up the plans is out of Newburyport Massachusetts, and are not licensed to do business in NH.

Resident Michael Jennings suggested that the Town have the DPW dig test pits now.

Berry said that it is more complicated than that.

Esposito said that the Board needs to come up with a dollar figure for the contingency to add to the warrant article for Wednesday night’s Town Meeting.

Berry said that the proposed library has their parking lots situated in wetlands. The State required 2 catch basins that feed down to 2 ponds uphill from Carleton Pond. He said that he would like Meridian to locate a couple of spots in the centerline of the proposed road for our DPW to dig a couple of test pits. He also said that he will speak with Brodeur to see what he thinks of a $25K contingency.

Board agreed on adding $25,000 to the bid for the road as a contingency.

Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to award the bid to Preston Excavating LLC for $462,000. All in favor.

The dollar figure for the warrant article will be $487,000.00.

Esposito addressed a couple that lives in Town that have come back to let the Board know that the activity and automobile issues at 54/56 Weston Hill Rd. are continuing to worsen.

They say that there are many more than 2 unregistered cars, and they believe the State only allows 2 cars – registered or not.

Esposito said that the owners will get a certified letter asking them to come before the ZBA to apply for an in-home business special exception. The ZBA will dictate hours, parking etc…

The couple does not want a business run out of that residence at all.

H. Brown asked if the Board would all agree that this property is, in fact, a junkyard.

The husband said that the State is very specific on the rules of running a junkyard.

H. Brown feels that the activity alleged falls under a “nuisance” and a “fire hazard”; maybe the Fire Chief could intervene.

The husband says that the septic system will be a problem. An ADU needs to have a State recognized septic and water source.

Berry said that the homeowners said that the septic was fine, and the Health Officer didn’t find anything amiss.

The wife said that they also have no water, and fluids are seeping into the ground. The EPA should be involved.

Berry explained that, because our Zoning Ordinance is so vague, and they have been assessed as having 2 residences on the property right along, if we deny them the use of the 2nd residence, they could sue us.

The wife doesn’t believe they have been taxed in full – they have 4 bedrooms and 2 residences – they should be assessed at double what my house is.

H. Brown said that he is concerned that there may be fluids leaking from vehicles.

Berry said that there are 2 properties there, side by side, that may have vehicle leakage.

Esposito asked if they are running a chop shop.

The husband did say yes.

The Board assured the couple that they are going to take care of the issues they are concerned about.

Esposito spoke of the increase in fuel prices, and suggested that the Board take a look at the proposed budget to see if they need to increase any of the fuel lines at Town Meeting.

Account #419411 will be increased from $ 5,000 to $ 6,500.

Account #421061 will be increased from $10,725 to $13,000.

Account #422060 will be increased from $ 2,000 to $ 3,000.

Account #422061 will be increased from $ 300 to $ 500.

Account #424098 will be increased from $ 392 to $ 500.

Account #431263 will be increased from $ 7,000 to $10,000.

Board reviewed the minutes from 02/28/22.

Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to accept the minutes of February 28, 2022 as written. All in favor.

Esposito stated that fuel was the big thing at the SLRD meeting.

L. Brown asked if there was going to be a fuel surcharge this year, as they have done in the past.

Esposito said that he wasn’t sure.

Berry asked when we would be getting our new compactor.

Esposito said that we are on schedule for this spring. He also said that we are allowed to throw 5 – 10 regular automobile tires into each compactor load.

Esposito said that he and H. Brown had attende4d the webinar put on by the National League of Cities.

H. Brown asked if we belong to that association and was told that we do not.

Berry said that the application for this money is due April 30, 2022.

Esposito reminded the Board that we cannot use any of this money to buy down debt, so the Brook Road culvert project is a perfect use of these funds.

Board discussed the room set up for voting tomorrow and Town Meeting on Wednesday. Esposito said that both ballot votes need to be open for an hour, and asked if they could be done simultaneously.

John Arico, Chairman of the Budget Committee said that they could, indeed be run concurrently.

L. Brown let the Board know that she will be retiring from her positions during 2022. Board will discuss this at a later date.

**8:30 PM** As there was no further business before the Board, Berry motioned seconded by H. Brown to adjourn.

All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Brown