**Selectmen’s Meeting Minutes**

**May 2, 2022**

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

Quinlan led the meeting in the pledge of allegiance.

Rebecca Schwarz, Chairman of the Heritage Commission, came before the Board to request that they appoint Annette Immorlica and Andrew Stokinger as alternates to the Heritage Commission.

H. Brown motioned, seconded by Quinlan, to appoint Annette Immorlica and Andrew Stokinger as alternates to the Heritage Commission. All in favor.

Schwarz reminded the Board that she now has only one month left to apply for the $50,000 equipment grant through GOFERR. She needs the cost of the AV equipment needed to broadcast meetings from the Selectmen’s meeting room.

H. Brown stated that we have until 12/31/22 to actually purchase the equipment.

Quinlan asked if H. Brown could wrap this up within the week, and was told “yes”.

Esposito said that there is only a 10% match associated with this grant.

Jessica Pomeroy asked about website training again. She says she can get into the site, but can’t figure out how to manipulate it.

H. Brown said that he needs to make sure everyone has a sign in, and will have Becci Schwarz and Bonnie Angulas set up small training sessions.

Michael Cardoza came before the Board to let them know that the new owners of 5 Salisbury Road have turned their property into a junk yard, and wants the Board to act accordingly.

The Board said that they will look into it.

Cardoza also asked the Board to grade Salisbury Road.

Zoe Fimbel, Chairman of the Lamson Farm Commission, came before the Board asking for help getting the Conservation Commission to nominate a representative to the LFC. She has contacted the Chair of the CC, and has had no luck so far. Tom Wahle is acting as a Member At Large, but cannot vote. This leaves a 6 man Board, and the potential for ties.

Quinlan asked L. Brown to send the CC Chairman a quick email asking her to nominate someone as their representative to the Lamson Farm Commission.

Quinlan asked Autumn Grdina, PTA President and 6th grade parent, to summarize the complaint made to the Selectmen regarding the Chairman of the Recreation Committee.

Grdina said that she had reached out to the Recreation Committee regarding the 6th grade participating in Spring Gala. They were not invited to participate. They wanted to set up a Snow Cone fundraiser on the Town Green to go along with their Hawaiian theme. They were told that they couldn’t do Snow Cones since another desert was already being planned by the Heritage Commission. She reached out to the Chairman and was given a schedule of planning meetings, but there was no Zoom link posted anywhere – you had to email the Chairman to get it. If people have to do one more step – they won’t. There has been no word put out yet about the parade; this constitutes a lack of planning, communication and collaborating. We asked to do things collaboratively for Christmas and got no response then either. The PTA tries to collaborate with everyone, and it has been working, except for the Recreation Committee. If we can’t work together and welcome everyone in, we will have a hard time getting people to join in. We have been asked for favors from Rec, and have always complied.

Esposito said that the 6th grade has always participated in the parade. We are concerned with everyone getting along and having a great, inclusive Spring Gala.

Heather Kennedy, Chairman of the Rec. Committee, said that she honestly believes that this perception is isolated to the PTA and 6th grade. They did reach out, and we already had the Heritage Commission planning to do a desert on the Green. I asked them to send someone to the next planning meeting, and they didn’t. We spoke about the Snow Cones at that meeting and the Heritage Commission agreed to modify their plan so that the 6th grade could do their Snow Cones. All 6 Spring Gala planning meetings have been very well publicized. Also, the light show at Christmas – they chose to have a different weekend / day than tree lighting. It was their choice not to collaborate.

Grdina said that, if you want to attend a meeting, you must get the link from Rec.

Kennedy said that doing it that way is a safety issue.

H. Brown said that he needs to do the same thing for School Board meetings.

Grdina said that the push-back they are getting makes them not want to work with Rec. at all. We asked about having a dunk-tank, Kennedy said that she wasn’t sure, and never got back to us. We chose another idea, and she didn’t reply for 3 days.

Kennedy said that she doesn’t have to hold the PTA’s or 6th grade’s hand. You could have come to one of the 4 meetings we already had, or you can attend the 2 remaining. The dunk-tank has to be set up on someone’s private property, and in the past, clean water was hard to come by. These were things I had to look into.

Grdina said that Kennedy just doesn’t get back to them.

Kennedy cited COVID, and being on vacation with her family.

Quinlan said that there are only 3 weeks until Gala is scheduled; he would like to see participation from the 6th grade and PTA.

Grdina said that she isn’t sure they have time to plan something new, since the ideas they had are no longer available to them.

Quinlan said that they need to participate, and to concentrate on what is possible.

H. Brown said that he doesn’t buy that they couldn’t do Snow Cones because it is a desert. The whole concept of Spring Gala is to have a large variety of Town groups get together and have fun.

Esposito asked Grdina if she had any ideas that could be put together in time?

Grdina said that she will put up a sign-up sheet for the parade.

Fimbel stated that she was one of the founders of Spring Gala, and that the 6th grade only participated in the parade. To add a fundraiser, they should have been at all of the planning meetings. Jumping in with a new idea without stepping on toes is hare to do when planning has been in progress. Kennedy needs to give her whole focus to this Gala and having a new entry at this late date is hard. +

Schwarz said that no one invited the Heritage Commission to participate – we responded to the invitation on social media and jumped right in; we have been to all of the meetings.

Grdina said that she hopes she can participate, however, we are not fundraising for our 6th grade class – we are doing it for next year’s class.

Kennedy said that Grdina has made it clear to her that they cannot make time with all of their year-end things.

Pomeroy mused that Covid took away so much from the community, we need to start again to move forward.

Quinlan said that he hopes that Grdina and Kennedy can put aside their differences and cooperate for the sake of an all-inclusive Town event.

Quinlan brought up the ongoing struggle with the owners of 54/56 Weston Hill Road. He met with Town Counsel today and surmised that there are two outstanding issues with occupancy. 1) Occupying the 2nd residence without a Certificate of Occupancy (there is a deficiency list in the hands of the Building Inspector that hasn’t been rectified), and 2) Time for appealing the ZBA Denial has expired (6 months). We can move against them for either.

Quinlan said that there is a fairly clear violation of the State’s junkyard regulations. They are operating some kind of non-permitted business from that location. Town Counsel is looking into the exact procedure of how to proceed next. He will come before us in 2 weeks with a procedure to follow.

Esposito stated that the owners left a message on the Office phone that the automobiles on premises used for parts would all be moved out.

Quinlan asked H. Brown for an update on getting these meetings streamed.

H. Brown met with Brian Miller who suggested that we look into the OWL Labs set up. It has 4 cameras with speakers inside it. The cameras focus on who is talking. You can hook up a screen through Zoom. The Owl is $1200, and the Zoom package would be $199/yr to broadcast live and record so you can watch later. You can look on YouTube for MVVS Board meetings and see how it works. Both the audio and video are pretty good. You can post documents to a white board. This is less expensive than what the school has – everything at the school is hard wired. I like this set up, but I am concerned about what the camera will do when we all talk at once.

Esposito believes that this is a good way to go, especially since we know that building renovations are coming up.

H. Brown said that there is a monitor that the audience can see. You will need a laptop for the Zoom part. Also, it is hard to get wifi to go through horse hair plaster.

Schwarz asked about upgrading the wifi speed.

H. Brown said we may not need to do that.

Quinlan said that we definitely need to figure out the hardware charges for the grant paperwork; the grant is just for equipment – not software.

H. Brown suggested having Miller bring his unit here for a demonstration. Board agreed.

Eileen Naber said that, at Planning Board meetings, the audience cannot see the maps. This will be better.

Kennedy offered that BAE may be willing to donate a white board.

H. Brown said that the $199 Zoom package includes the capacity to attach 9 boards.

**8:00 PM** H. Brown motioned to go into non-public session with the Police Chief to discuss a personnel issue. Esposito seconded the motion. All in favor.

Chief Slavin brought two candidates for part time officers to the Board for consideration. Both are currently in law enforcement and will not need to go to the academy. Slavin wants to get these officers on board now to cover shifts and to be equipped with part-time help since it looks like the State is moving away from using part-time policing. They have not even scheduled a part-time academy for this year.

Board agreed to hire the candidates, as long as their background checks pan out. The starting wage will be $27.00/hr. They will not get another increase until COBRA next year. Our current two part time officer’s pay will be adjusted accordingly also. Officer Repucci is retiring from patrol, and will be our training officer.

**8:17 PM** H. Brown motioned to come out of non-public session. Esposito seconded the motion. All in favor. These minutes were not sealed.

Quinlan asked if any of the Town’s expenses would go away if the users changed to Office 365.

L. Brown explained that the Town has already purchased permanent licenses for Microsoft Office for those who use it. This is a one-time expense, so, no, there would not be a reduction in cost from switching. Also, no one has enough money in their computer/internet budgets to cover $12.50/month for the cost of Office 365.

Quinlan asked Slavin to request that Twin Bridges send someone in to next Monday’s meeting to explain this in detail. Slavin agreed.

Esposito asked L. Brown if the paperwork for the GOFERR money was sent in to the Treasury.

L. Brown said that the annual report was due on Thursday, and was sent in on Wednesday.

Quinlan then brought up the requested abatement on 3 trailers in the trailer park. These 3 have been abandoned by their owners, and the park would like to get new people in there that will begin paying the property taxes as of their move in date.

L. Brown said that this would be a good move for the Town, but we must wait until the ownership has changed. Otherwise, it would be possible for the old owner to show up and take over the trailer with no tax burden. Board agreed.

Quinlan brought up the upcoming office open position and said that the Board would support a promotion from within, and made that clear to everyone. The candidate has decided not to seek the new position. We need to post an advertisement for a Town Administrator ASAP. Union Leader, NHMA, Amherst Citizen, Cabinet, Website, LinkedIn, indeed are all good choices.

Board discussed the hours needed and pay scale. It is decided to offer 30 hours per week at $28 - $32 an hour. The position will also offer Medical Insurance, Paid Vacation and Holidays.

Quinlan updated the Board on a sub-division before the Planning Board currently. It is on Carleton Road, and has a huge 100-year-old farm dump on the premises. The PB did a site walk and found that there is a steam running right next to it and is maybe 50 feet high in some spots. The developer has removed a lot of asbestos already, but they only took samples down 12”. Chip Spalding and Jim Bird have involved the DES and NHMA since the Planning Board does not have the authority to deal with this. The PB will be conducting another site walk with the DES included next week. They will be suggesting that the Town hire an Environmental Engineer at the expense of the developer.

Esposito added that the seller and his real estate people knew of this dump and didn’t disclose it. They said that it was not necessary to disclose because it was a commercial sale.

L. Brown said that the developer will have to put up a bond to cover the cost of the Environmental Engineer.

Quinlan asked her to let the PB know that.

Esposito wants the Board to revisit the Income/Asset limits for the Elderly Exemptions that we use. He feels that having to qualify with an income below $40,000 is too hard, and the limit should be adjusted accordingly.

Esposito also feels that the Board should look into doing something about the outside of the Town Hall. He said that it looks horrible and reflects poorly on the Town. We should see about siding right away.

**8:50 PM** As there was no further business before the Board, H, Brown motioned, seconded by Esposito to adjourn. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Brown