**Selectmen’s Meeting Minutes**

**February 28, 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 opened 4 sealed bids in response to the published RFP for the Access Road to the proposed Library and Cemetery:

1. Preston Excavating LLC $462,005.37
2. Leighton A. White $575,072.00
3. Mathewson Co. $470,875.00
4. Jennings Excavation $675,814.58

Board will discuss bids and choose a vendor at a work session on Wednesday, March 2, 2022 at 2:00 PM in the Town Hall meeting room.

John Arico, Chairman of the Budget Committee remarked that all of the bids are higher than the $400,000 in the proposed warrant article. He asked if the Board will increase the article on the floor of Town Meeting, if a road to just the cemetery would be cheaper, and could it then be upgraded.

Esposito said that the Board would choose a vendor and then increase the warrant article accordingly.

Berry said that, unfortunately, there is an end to the wetlands permit, and the road without the parking lots would be a lot cheaper.

Ben Crosby, DPW Director, explained that the wetlands permits were applied for in 2019; just before the rules changed. If we don’t build the road according to the accepted plan before 2024 it will cost $100K in wetlands mitigation, and it may not even get approved.

Arico restated that, if we don’t build the road by 2024, there is at least a $100K charge if we can get the permit at all.

Berry reminded the Board that Meridian had calculated a ballpark figure for bonding purposes, using the NH DOT’s numbers, at $475K.

Becci Schwarz, Chair of the Historic District Commission and the Heritage Commission, brought forth a Stewardship Plan for the Town Hall. This document is required by L-CHIP in order to be eligible to be awarded grants. The deadline to submit is March 15, 2022. A Conditions Assessment by a 3rd party is also required.

Berry asked how much the Conditions Assessment is going to cost.

Schwarz said that the overall cost is $7,250, but will get 50% covered by a grant. She said that she needs the Board’s blessing to file the Stewardship Plan.

Esposito instructed the Board to look the plan over tomorrow and report any changes needed. He will get back to Schwarz on Wednesday with the final version.

Bill McKinney offered that the annual inspections of buildings can be performed by the Joint Loss Management Committee.

Schwarz handed the Board a Code of Conduct that the Historic District Commission ratified on January 27, 2022 in order to be in the Certified Local Government Program.

H. Brown motioned, seconded by Berry to accept the Code of Conduct for the Historic District Commission. All in favor.

Police Chief Slavin came before the Board with an estimate for installing a new door and lock for the office on the 2nd floor of the McCollom Building. He explained that the PD has 40 years of records stored in the basement, and recently there has been water infiltrating the space. He would like to get his records upstairs where they will be safe. He suggested using the Repair and Maint. budget line for the McCollom Building.

Berry said that he was under the impression that the vapor barrier was working quite well.

Slavin said that the breach was a new development.

Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to hire Lucien Soucy to install a new door in the office upstairs in the McCollom Building for the sum of $820.00. All in favor.

Crosby came in with a quote for $7,395 to repair the 2012 International Dump Truck.

Esposito said that this truck has been a long-time problem, and asked Crosby if he could get one more year out of the loader, or go a year without a truck.

Crosby said that he doubts very much that the loader would last, and being down a truck adds 3 hours to each route.

Berry asked if the truck is worth it, and how many hours are on it.

Crosby said that he would talk with the company that gave him the quote to see what they think.

Esposito asked Crosby to get back to the Board next Monday, and stated that the Board will have to increase the line item on the floor of Town Meeting.

Resident Eileen Naber let the Board know that the resident at 24 Salisbury Road has started advertising on Facebook that he is starting a small engine/ATV repair business out of his home, and asked if there was a protocol in place for getting things like this before the ZBA.

Board asked L. Brown to send our standard letter to the homeowner.

H. Brown asked if the Board could re-open bidding for the access road if they don’t like any of the bids.

Esposito said that they could do that.

Berry remarked that the lowest bid went from $380K last year to $460K this year.

Berry discussed the numbers for the proposed library. He feels that the Trustees should not be using $4.6 Million for their number since the latest DSK numbers said $5.1 - $5.5 Million not including sitework or the road.

H. Brown said that he has never heard of those figures.

Esposito said that he doesn’t feel the library will go through with those numbers; the library project is polarizing the whole Town.

Berry said that we all wanted to work together to get this building (Town Hall) done at the same time. The pro-library people did not support the Town Hall warrant article last year. It is one thing to say we all want to work together – it is another thing to actually work together.

H. Brown said that these people want to sit around on Facebook and condemn the projects without coming to our meetings or the library trustee meetings. About having a smaller library – the proposed library is roughly the same size as the MPR at MVVS.

Berry said that he has read the needs assessment. It is assuming a population of 7,500; total buildout of the Town is 5,000. We are at .47 square feet/person. The State average for a town our size is just over 1.0. At full buildout we would need a 5,000 square foot library. If we build as proposed, we would have the 4th largest library for any town our size. We are ranked 20th in tax rate – we can’t afford to have the 4th largest library. Also, our population only grew by 175 in the last 10 years.

H. Brown said that our library was built in 1907 for a population of 400. The needs assessment said that we should have a 7,600 square foot library.

Esposito said that it is costing $123,000 to have the plans drawn up, can the size be reduced without spending another $123K?

H. Brown reminded Esposito that the $123,000 was just for the final phase of the design.

Berry feels that there should be a back-up plan.

H. Brown said that there are a lot of people ready to back the library project as soon as the road passes.

Esposito said that the sale of the property with the Elderly Deferral should have closed last week. I suggest that the Board use the receipt of back taxes to offset the tax rate in November. Board agreed.

Board reviewed Minutes: 2/14/22. Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to accept the minutes of February 14, 2022 as amended. All in favor. Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to accept the non-public minutes of February 14, 2022 as written. All in favor.

Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to rescind the mask mandate. Masks are now optional at the wearer’s preference. All in favor.

Esposito referred to a handout by the Emergency Management Director suggesting how to set up the MPR for Town Meeting on Wednesday, March 9 at 7:00 PM.

Board discussed the 4 bids received to construct the access road to the proposed library and cemetery. It is decided that they will hold a work session on Wednesday, March 2, 2022 at 2:00 PM to go over the bids.

Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to accept the Mont Vernon Town Hall Stewardship Plan as written by Rebecca Schwarz pending no amendments are found.

**9:25 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