

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes August 31, 2020

7:00 PM Meeting called to order by Selectboard Chairman, John Esposito. Also in attendance were Selectmen Kim Roberge and Tim Berry.

Esposito led the meeting in a moment of silence for those effected by Covid-19 and those who are helping us through it.

Eileen Naber of Beech Hill Rd. asked if there was some kind of development going in on Beech Hill Rd that the Town knows about. Esposito said that he heard something about the Boy Scouts. The property needs to be subdivided and that hasn't been started yet. Berry said that there is a Purchase and Sale agreement drawn up to purchase 90 acres of the lot. It has to go to the planning board. The owners have allowed them to create access points and have let them clear 2 acres. Roberge said that they do have 2 driveway permits and that is all they can get. Naber said that it looks like they are following the rules. Berry said that they have put the cart before the horse on this one.

Board reviewed the minutes of 8/17/20. Berry motioned, seconded by Roberge to accept the minutes of August 17, 2020 as amended. Roberge; yes, Berry; yes, Esposito; yes.

Esposito addressed property owner Dennis Dwire and his property on Old Milford Road. He asked Dwire if the property was being rented out, as it may be against the zoning to do so.

Dwire said that he made accommodations over the garage for his father and shortly thereafter his father passed away. Then my mailman asked if he could stay there for a while and he did. Right now, I have a lady over 60 living there.

Brown asked if he lived in the home and was told that he is now living with his girlfriend, but he did when his dad was living there.

Esposito asked what the status is with the house now.

Dwire said that the home is lived in by an elderly couple and the lady over the garage. He believes that the women living over the garage will be leaving on October 15th and he has no intention of renting that space out again.

Esposito clarified with stating that the apartment over the garage will be vacant as of mid-October.

Dwire confirmed that he believes she will move out when the heat needs to be turned on.

Roberge said that he can't evict someone through the winter. You will need to go before the ZBA to see if you can get a variance. She also asked if the accessory dwelling unit was permitted or grandfathered.

Brown said it is not permitted.

Esposito said that everything will be fine if she leaves in October.

Esposito stated that we have not received the quote for cleaning the office spaces from the commercial cleaning company yet.

Roberge asked if that was the only company that we called and was told yes.

Roberge asked if we could try a few more. She also wanted to know if there will be a new line added to the budget for next year just for the cleaning.

Brown said that there was no need for a separate line item; it could go in the Repair and Maint. lines of each of the buildings where it is now.

Berry said that Charlie Baker will be joining us a bit later, and we could discuss the office opening date.

Roberge said that we can't really talk about opening the office until we have someone cleaning it, but she thinks the signage is good and will make a good flow pattern.

Berry mentioned that the doorbell no longer works.

Esposito asked if the DPW could fix it and was told that it was working again as of this afternoon, but that he would like to delay the opening until the day after Labor Day.

Roberge asked about having both people back in, having the tax collector back in along with the Building Inspector. She is also worried that reopening the Town Hall might bury Joan in work.

Esposito said that he doesn't think that will happen.

Brown told Roberge that she will be back in the office Monday through Thursday mornings beginning the day after Labor Day. She also said that the Town Clerk had said that she wouldn't open until the State reopens – probably the first of the year.

Roberge asked who had oversight over the Clerk's opening – who sets the hours. If we are hearing from people that if the kids can go back to school, why can't I register my car, are the Selectmen in charge?

Brown said that, under normal circumstances, the Board is not in charge of the Clerk's hours – she is.

Esposito said that everything is getting done.

Roberge offered that the safety of everyone is most important.

Esposito said that he has had some complaints, but they are minimal.

Shelley Brooks came to talk about the invasive species Japanese Knotweed. She spoke with Lee Gillman, who would be doing the spraying. Gillman feels it is too late in the year to get the permit, and with the drought, it is not the best time to spray.

Roberge said that she was sad to hear that, and that next year it should be a planned thing in the budget.

Esposito apologized for not getting it into this year's budget.

Brooks said that the problem with the estimate is that you need to know how many places you are going to spray. There are 9 sites that we have been given permission to spray, 2 have said no, two have given a verbal yes, and 4 people have not replied, and there is one

empty house. Lee Gilman estimated \$6000.

Roberge said that it looks like half the sites can be done, maybe we should budget 50%.

Berry said that the Conservation Commission was going to pay the \$200 cost for the permit; we should add the \$200 to our budget line.

Esposito asked if that permit was annual and was told yes.

Brooks explained that they only need a permit to spray around Carleton Pond.

Esposito said that the Board will get it into the budget.

Brooks said that the quote does not include around the DPW or transfer station. Gillman said that someone from DPW could get the permit and do the town.

Esposito asked how toxic it is and if PPE would be needed.

Brooks said that they use Round Up.

Esposito reminded everyone that there is a lawsuit involving Round Up.

Berry believes we should hire a licensed vendor do it; he is not keen on having our guys do this job.

Esposito agreed.

Berry asked Brooks to fill him in on the lights at Carleton Pond.

Brooks recommended a \$500 light fixture that would be the same as all the other lights we are getting.

Berry said that the new lights will be using the old arms. He likes Brooks' idea of one light better. We want to make this happen before winter. Do we have one light on the pond or on the parking lot, or two lights?

Brooks said that her personal opinion is to see what happens when they switch to the LED light. One light may be bright enough that we won't need the 2nd light.

Berry thought that the pole on the ground has the light still attached.

Brooks said that the pole has had the light moved to shine on the parking lot.

Esposito wants to put up the light and see what happens.

Charlie Baker, of the Heritage Commission, asked what the process is to fill positions on the Heritage Commission – does the commission find someone or do the Selectmen?

Roberge said that it can go either way.

Esposito asked if he had someone in mind.

Baker said no, and that they would like to have someone that has grant-writing experience.

Rebecca Schwarz, of the Heritage Commission, asked if it could be posted on MV Chatter and on the front page of the web site.

Berry agreed and said that the more places we can post it, the better and said that it is hard enough to find people to volunteer, never mind with grant writing experience.

Baker said he would be happy with an Alternate.

Brown asked them to send her a blurb and she will make sure it gets posted.

Esposito reminded all that next Tuesday is the election and there will be a run-through on Saturday to make sure everyone knows what to do.

Berry asked if the Town Clerk has all the help she needs and if the vote counting machine has been tested.

Esposito said that the traffic pattern inside the school has changed, masks are required and there will be police presence the whole time.

Esposito asked if there was anything to report regarding the Library Trustees meetings.

Roberge said that they are using a smaller dollar figure than Crosby (DPW Director) is using for the road, and that she did tell them that all discussions must come through the Selectboard.

Berry wanted to discuss the surplus that the school is trying to spend.

Roberge explained that there is more than \$300K in unreserved fund balance at the school. On 8/17/20 they proposed to spend \$159K of it. Among other things, they wanted to add a full time custodian and another Para-professional. Motion was made and accepted. At the emergency meeting on 8/27/20, the motion was to increase the amount from \$159,972 to \$293,841. The Board was put off at the increase. They petitioned to the State to keep the unreserved fund balance. In prior years they have returned about \$300K to the taxpayers. They had another emergency meeting on 8/28/20.

Eileen Naber said that the idea is for the school to be able to spend some of this money this one time on COVID measures.

Berry said that the money will be rolled into the budget next year. This money represents 10% of our whole municipal budget; it will have a huge impact on taxpayers. Outdoor tents and waterproof desks? Where are they going to be stored, and what about the liability?

When we have surplus funds, we can

spend it the next year, I hope the Governor doesn't give it to them.

Roberge said that the school has to give it back, the Selectboard does not. There is no way that it could be rolled into the default budget next year. They rolled the proposed custodian back to ¾ time and the para would be only temporary.

Esposito said that he questions this whole thing; this is \$1.00 on the tax rate.

Berry offered that it is almost enough to build the new Library/Cemetery road.

Board discussed adding the Police Department to the request for reimbursement through the GOFERR grant.

Berry said that the State says that we can apply for public safety salaries.

Esposito feels that, the way it reads, we should get it.

9:00 PM As there was no further business before the Board, Berry motioned, seconded by Roberge to adjourn.

All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laurie Brown