

Selectboard Meeting Minutes April 19, 2023 Zoom Teleconference 5:30 pm

Call to Order: Andrew Baker called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Others present: Selectboard member Margaret Payne, and Town Administrator Terry Narkewicz. Also present, Finance Committee members Deb Andrew, Terri Mitchell, Todd Dubreuil, and Matt Popoli. Selectboard member Bob Manners was absent.

Review of Annual Town Meeting Warrant – The warrant was discussed in detail. Questions were asked about various items. The beautification line item has doubled now that the town will be responsible for maintaining the gardens near the potholes. The computer account has gone up due to cyber security enhancements that are now required for insurance. The street light line item will be \$3,000 short this year. That line item was increased to cover that and raised even more in case the conversion to LED lights does not go forward.

The Mohawk budget is up once again. The Finance Committee had sent a long list of questions to the Mohawk business manager and the superintendent. No response has been received thus far. At this point, the Finance Committee said they were not in position to support the school budget.

Andrew suggested that funds for the solar installation on the pole barn come from ARPA funds rather than stabilization. Terry said there was not much ARPA funding left and it was a good idea to have a small financial cushion, as ARPA provides, in case projects go over budget. Matt felt the solar installation was a poor financial investment for the town. Andrew countered that it was a better investment than treasury bills. Terry said the town gets energy credits and that the exiting solar installation covers the cost of electricity for many of the town-owned buildings. It was pointed out that the Finance Committee and Selectboard are free to disagree on warrant articles at Town Meeting.

There were questions on the Planning Board's submission of a non-binding question on how to handle non-conforming, town-town, tax title lots. Someone from the Planning Board will be asked to explain why they submitted the article.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding three articles from MTRSD. The articles were only recently submitted, with little time for review. No one was prepared to vote on the articles without knowing the financial impact. Terry said all MTRSD towns were obligated to put the articles on a warrant, but some towns are choosing to wait until they have a Special Town Meeting. The Selectboard had voted to place the articles on the Town Meeting warrant. The articles could be passed over at the meeting or the Board could vote to rescind their vote to place them on the warrant. There are too many unanswered questions and even if the school district explained the financial implications, it is too late to confirm it. This meeting is the last one scheduled before the warrant needs to be posted. Andrew wanted to wait until Monday's Selectboard meeting so Bob Manners could have a vote on whether to rescind or pass over the articles. There is no time to post another Selectboard meeting before the warrant must be posted. If the articles are not on the warrant, they would need to go before a special town meeting unless the other towns vote the articles down. Another option is to vote the articles down at town meeting. Margaret was interested in knowing what the other district towns are doing. She said the school district had been asked to provide more information but it has not been forthcoming. She felt the Selectboard need to do due diligence and try to understand the articles. Andrew thought the voters should have the chance to understand the options. Margaret said people come to town meeting unprepared to deal with so much information and might be upset when they

learn that their officials don't understand it either. The Finance Committee suggested that the articles should be looked at by an attorney. Andrew wanted the articles kept on the warrant and then recommend to the voters that they be voted down. Margaret recalled a time when officials had urged voters to reject a school-related article but it still passed. A motion was made by Margaret to rescind the Selectboard's vote to place articles 31,32, and 33 on the Annual Town Meeting warrant. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Margaret – yes; Andrew – no. Motion failed 1-1-0.

The Board returned to the discussion of Article 28, which was a non-binding question, submitted by the Planning Board. It was felt that someone from the Planning Board would be present at Town Meeting to explain the bylaw change referenced in the question and that the question, itself, was not necessary. A motion was put forth by Margaret to remove Article 28 based on the thinking that the following article would be sufficient. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

Andrew reiterated his view that voting down the articles regarding changing the school district agreement was the best way to handle it. Terry said the all the district towns would need to approve the articles in order for the agreement to change.

Jim Boehmer RE: Earth Day Trash Collection – Jim would like to have an Earth Day trash collection on Saturday, April 22. This would be for household-type trash only, no mattresses or tires. The trash would be left near Baker Avenue for pickup and disposable by the town Highway Department. Margaret thought this could result in people bringing their trash to avoid paying the dump fee. Something similar happened in a nearby town. Andrew preferred to err on the side of goodwill. A motion was made by Andrew to give Jim Boehmer permission for a town trash pickup on Earth Day. This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Margaret – no; Andrew – yes. Motion failed 1-1-0.

Pavilion – Word has been received that the pavilion will not be completed by the end of the school year. Franklin Tech students will return in the fall to finish work on the roof.

Adjournment: At 7:05 a motion was made by Andrew to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Faye Whitney, Recording Secretary