

Selectboard Meeting Minutes August 28, 2023 Zoom Teleconference 5:30 pm

Call to Order: Bob Manners called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Others present: Selectboard members Rick LaPierre, Andrew Baker, (arrived 5:36 pm) and Town Administrator Terry Narkewicz.

A motion was put forth by Rick to approve the minutes of August 14. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

Department Liaison Reports:

Veterans Services – The veteran's services director is on vacation, so Rick does not know if the open position for a veteran's service officer has been filled.

Police Department – The merger of the two departments is almost complete. A system for data reporting backup is still being worked out. The new cruiser should be in service by the end of October. A police substation in the village is in the works. The Buckland Town Administrator and the Chief are working on it. People are reminded that with the coming of fall they should be looking out for school children, tourists, and wet leaves, please drive carefully.

Town Hall – Rick met with Terry and the Tax Collector. It seems there is a disconnect regarding physical and mailing addresses between the collector and the assessors. The assessors' records need to be adjusted to reflect the correct mailing addresses. As of August, there is more than \$29,000 in delinquent taxes for FY'22 and almost \$127,000 for FY'23. Steps are in place to remind people to pay. The town currently owns four properties that were taken due to unpaid taxes and four more are currently in land court. Rick said it might be time to auction the properties to get them back on the tax rolls. This will topic be added to a future agenda.

Terry reported that the elevator has passed inspection and is now available to be used.

Senior Center – Bob said the center did not receive the technology grant, but the plan is to reapply. There will be a meeting on September 13 with fire and police personnel and the Emergency Management Director to talk on planning for emergencies for elders. The September luncheon trip will be a mystery ride. All that is known is that there will be dessert.

Highway Department – The Bardwells Ferry Bridge is closed following a MassDOT inspection. It will be up to Shelburne and Conway to coordinate a plan for repair. Bob or the Board should plan to meet with the Conway Selectboard to work out details. It has been learned that the county did not meet the Federal government threshold for funding following the July floods. Therefore, MEMA cannot provide funding for repair work. The road crew is working on Lucy Fiske Road and will be paving by the end of September. The state has agreed to repave South Maple Street, aka Route 2A, but not until next spring. The town needs to find a new person to shovel the sidewalks during the winter. A motion was made by Rick to advertise for a part time winter laborer for snow clearing. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Andrew – yes; Bob – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Appointments:

5:45 pm Jim Kessler RE: Memorial Hall Association Renovation Project – The recently received Mass Cultural Council grant was initiated by the MHA but it was awarded to the town, so the two entities are working together on the renovation and need to coordinate efforts. The lease between MHA and the town should resume starting October 1 but MHA needs access

before that for cleaning and for checking and repairing equipment, so that all is ready for the first program on October 6. Andrew noted that in a typical landlord tenant situation cleaning and repairs would be up to the landlord, but in this case flexibility with MHA is in the best interest of the town. Rick wanted to make sure there would be no liability or insurance issues and was assured that both the town and MHA carry insurance. A motion was made by Andrew to allow access to Memorial Hall theater prior to the renewal of the lease on October 1. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Andrew – yes; Bob – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0. Jim said it was time to issue an RFP for an architect for the project. Once the match is made for the Mass Cultural Council grant, funds will be available to pay an architect. Andrew thought the funds for the match would be available within three months. Jim thought the money spent on the elevator could possibly go towards a match. A motion was put forth by Andrew that the board authorize Terry, Andrew, and Jim to initiate the process of engaging the FRCOG to help write an RFP to hire an architect for phase 2 of the Memorial Hall renovation. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Andrew – yes; Bob – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0. Jim Thanked Terry for all her assistance and thanked the Board for its support.

6:00 pm Kate Conlin RE: Grant Funded Tree Planting Program – Some funds from a US Forest Service grant are available for riparian restoration in the form of tree planting. Two areas near Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School are ranked highest of all sites in town for the planting. Kate plans to run the plan past the Conservation Commission. It is up to the town if trees can be planted on town-owned property. The school committee will also need to grant approval for the school-owned parcel. The school building committee has requested that fewer trees be planted near the teacher's parking lot, to make mowing the grass easier. The trees will not pact either the playing fields or the sledding hill. A motion was put forth by Rick to allow the planting of trees on town property near BSE, as proposed on August 28, contingent upon approval by the school committee. Roll call vote: Andrew – yes; Bob – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

6:30 pm Streetlight Discussion – Finance Committee & Energy Committee – Bob said it was his hope that this matter could be brought to next year's Annual Town Meeting and he would like to direct the Energy Committee to create a warrant article describing who would manage the lights, the funding process, etc. However, a petition has been received requesting that the matter be brought to a Special Town Meeting. Bob would like to table this discussion until the next meeting by which time the signatures on the petition will have been certified. Andrew agreed that the issue would best be resolved at Annual Town Meeting, but would the petitioners agree to rescind their petition. At this point, no one knows the procedure for rescinding a citizens' petition. If it is not rescinded the Selectboard must hold a Special Town Meeting. It was also said that the language of the petition is ambiguous. The Town Clerk has asked the state for help in determining the procedure for rescinding a petition, but there has been no answer yet. The Finance Committee did not plan on giving an opinion on streetlights at this time. They felt the information they have is not enough to make an informed decision for the taxpayers. That committee would also like to see this go before Annual Town Meeting. Tom Johnson of the Energy Committee saw no problem in putting this off until Annul Town meeting and thought it worth trying to see if the petition could be recalled. Andrew suggested that if the petition could not be rescinded perhaps ARPA funds could be used to conduct the required audit of the streetlights. Bob said there was about \$28,000 left in ARPA funds that was being saved as contingency in case it was needed for any of the other ARPA projects. A motion was made by Andrew to being the topic of town-owned streetlights to Annual Town Meeting at which time

funding sources and available options would be included. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Andrew – yes; Bob – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Old Business:

Streetlights – See above.

Cowell Gym HVAC Project (John Walsh) – John said the work is scheduled to be finished tomorrow. The site will then be cleaned up. The current boiler will be kept through the winter as an added reserve, but it is not expected to be needed. The board thanked John for all his work on this project.

West County Senior Services District Board of Managers Appointees – Shelburne now has four people who are interested in serving on the Board of Managers. Ashfield has one. Buckland has no one. Until each town has at least two people, appointments cannot be made.

Relocation of Veteran's Memorial – The foundation has been poured. The monument has been taken back to Negus and Taylor's shop for cleaning.

Community Preservation Act Committee – Nothing new to report.

Jim Kessler, Memorial Hall Assoc. RE: Request to Reactivate Lease October 1, 2023 – See above, 5:45 PM appointment.

New Business:

Joe Giard, Transfer Station Attendant RE: Proposed Additional Staffing – Bob has spoken with Joe about the challenges and increasing duties of the attendant. Sorting batteries and light bulbs, monitoring the recycling and dumpster, and selling tickets is a lot for one person. Joe thinks an additional four hours per week of time would be helpful. He does not want those extra hours. Bob thinks a second person on site would be good for safety as well as for the work load. Several people help fill in as needed but a second permanent person would be better. Terry will look at the budget to see if the town can afford a second person. Rick thought a second person made sense for as many hours as can be afforded. The Free Store is another area that needs work. There seems to be more things going in than going out. The Free Store may be a requirement for getting recycling points. Andrew thought if the items were rearranged, more of them might get taken.

Any Other Business: None

Next Meeting – The next Board meeting will be on September 11, at 5:30 pm via Zoom.

Correspondence:

Kimberly Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor RE: Community Compact Program – This is the annual reminder of grant opportunities through the Community Compact Program. The grant options this year are less than usual and at first glance the Board did not see anything that seemed appropriate. The Board will study the options for future discussion.

Public Comment:

John Walsh added to his report on the Cowell Gym project that the project will not be considered complete until building and electrical inspections are done.

Adjournment: At 6:50 a motion was made by Rick to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Andrew – yes; Rick – yes; Bob – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Faye Whitney, Recording Secretary