

# **SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**February 10, 2020**

## **Budget Hearing**

PRESENT: Kevin Meehan, Chair, Tom Brady and Cindy Silver, members comprising a quorum of the board

ALSO PRESENT: Kathi Marshall, Assistant to the Select Board; Jeff Young, Lynne Holland, Debbie Dubois, Jeanne Kenison, Mary Gross, Terri Larcomb, Chris and Liz Milligan, Jim and Leslie Seppala, Linda Cushman and Gregor Stocks were also present.

Kevin Meehan opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **New Business: 2020 Budget and Warrant Articles**

Kevin began by reading each of the upcoming warrant articles. There are three that deal directly with the renovations at the school. Kevin and Tom explained how the voting would work. The first of the school renovation articles (#2) would have to be passed in order for the town offices, the library and the Historical Society to move to the school. Debbie asked if #3 was passed as well, what those funds would cover. Tom explained that the entire school wing would have to be reconfigured in order to accommodate the Assistant to the Select Board, the Town Clerk, Treasurer, Assessor, Tax Collector, Trustees of the Trust Fund, and Supervisors of the Checklist. It would also have to hold all the town records, many of which are not located in one place. Walls would have to come down to give access to photocopiers, fax machines, etc., and it would also include some furniture.

Mr. Seppala asked what the effect would be on people's taxes if the articles were passed. Tom said the design team told the board it would be a \$27 increase (per \$100,000 valuation) if all three articles passed, but board members believe it would be less than that. Kevin said if we opted to sell the current town offices there would be some hurdles to cross, since the town septic system is on the property as well. Terri said she can't imagine why we would want to sell the building.

Mr. Seppala mentioned the \$25,000 that has been given annually in the past for the library fund, and Kevin explained that last year they moved that donation to the Buildings Trust Fund so that account could be built up for the future. The Buildings CRF is not specifically for the school, but for any town building.

Mr. Seppala noted that someone is going to ask what it costs to operate the building. Kevin said when everyone is moved in the cost will obviously rise. Tom said they are trying to compile accurate information on how much the building is costing us currently, and the board members would share that information at town meeting. Tom said there is a good chance we will not make the move into the school until the end of the year, so we did not need to budget specific figures for the school's operation—that total will be reflected in the 2021 budget. Terri asked if the operational costs for the school to this point are reflected in the budget. Kevin said yes, but it was mainly for heating the school, electric, security alarm, etc.

The question was raised about the money put aside for the closing of the dump. Linda explained that it refers to the old dump, and by law we are required to maintain a fund for closing a landfill in the event the testing done onsite does not come back clean.

There is a warrant article to purchase extrication equipment for the fire department. Chris let everyone know

the total cost of that equipment would be \$22,000, but the Firemen's Association is paying for half, so the town needs to raise only \$11,000.

An article addressing the possible sale of the property on the corner of Rte 2 and North Road brought up the question from Debbie if the Library Trustees have given approval to sell that land. Liz said it is town property and there may be no need for authorization from the trustees. Debbie asked if money from the sale of the property shouldn't go back into the Library Trust Fund for future use and maintenance. Liz reiterated that town property belongs to the town. Library trustees are responsible only for the inside of the library and the employees. They have no control over the land.

The warrant by petition requests to buy the town property next to the Old Corner Store in order to secure a clean source of underground water for the business. Kevin said if this passes, the board would make certain the town legal council protected the rights of the town if the property was sold. The question came up about giving the store water rights, but Tom said if we gave them water rights there are covenants that effect what you can and cannot do around the well, and basically we would be giving away the piece of land. The town legal advisors also mentioned if water rights were given to the store, others on the current surface water system could force the town to give them the same.

Chris mentioned that the monument has been moved before and maybe the new school building could be the focal point or center of activity, with town monuments on site there. Chris said it is just food for thought, but Terri said she didn't care for everything in town being changed.

Debbie asked about the Athletic Trust Fund and what the funding was for. Kevin explained one of the most recent purchases from that account was a new skating rink. The newer rink is made of material that won't deteriorate in wet weather like the rink boards we have used in the past. They have been rotting and we have been replacing them one by one. This new rink should alleviate that issue. The other fund is for maintaining the ball field.

Kevin moved on to the proposed budget for 2020 and read each of the proposed revenues for the year as well as the expenditures. Linda asked the board if we did anything about updating the tax maps. CAI had estimated \$25,000 and said we could pay half in 2020 and half in 2021. Linda said if the board was going to appropriate the funds it had to be done before this meeting ended. They would need a warrant article right away, because once the meeting ended we could not add any more money to the budget.

Kevin said we will add another warrant article that reads, "To see if the town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$12,500 to update the current tax maps to the digital format." Linda said at least the warrant is in the budget now. When the Select Board has their weekly meeting immediately following the budget hearing, they can discuss the warrant, and if they decide they don't want it, they can take it out.

There were no other questions on the budget at that time. Kevin closed the budget meeting and announced a fifteen minute recess before the beginning of the Select Board meeting.

### **Select Board Meeting February 10, 2020**

Kevin asked Kathi if she had a surplus figure for fiscal year 2019, and she said she did not have it with her. She said she should be able to print it out of the accounting program. Kevin said the board would need that

information for town meeting.

Board members signed an application for permanent tax exemption for a veteran. The gentleman filled out all the information, and Kathi had Linda checked his application before she asked the board to sign it.

Kathi mentioned that David Govatski has two members who want to attend a conference and he would like to know the best way to cover that cost. Kevin said in the past we have reimbursed them, but he was not opposed to using the town credit card to pay for training for volunteer members. Kathi mentioned the Conservation Commission is having a meeting in April, and they are going to invite the board members to attend. Kathi said she would let them know the exact date.

Kathi also mentioned a woman came to ask about the cleaning position. She is from Whitefield and works part time. Kevin said to hold off until we post that position so they can all come in and sit for an interview. Cindy said in the meantime she would like to donate Cory and Jacob's time of Community Service to come in and clean up the town hall and offices—sweeping and vacuuming. Board members said that would be fine.

With regard to the school tank inspections Chris does want to be recertified. Kathi said she will find out the price of the course before the board decides if they will send two people for training.

Board members then focused on CAI and the updating of the town's tax maps. Kevin and Tom discussed whether or not there should be another warrant article for the \$12,500. Tom said if the entire bill to update the tax maps was \$25,000 and we were to pay half in 2020 and half in 2021, how could we sign a contract for \$25,000 when only half had been appropriated for this year?

Following some discussion Kevin suggested the \$12,500 simply be a line item in the budget as opposed to a warrant article. Tom agreed, and it was decided to add that expense as a line item to the 2020 budget. Kevin said for the next meeting he would like the 2019 figure for what the town had to raise in taxes, and he also wanted to know if we had any surplus of funds in 2019 and if so, the amount.

Kevin said the board still had more to go over with regard to the budget, but it was getting late. He wanted to recess the meeting until the following day, February 11, at 5:30 p.m.

**Select Board Meeting (cont'd) from Monday, February 10  
6:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 11, 2020**

At this short meeting to tie up any loose ends concerning the warrant articles or the budget entries, Kathi told the board she had added the CAI tax map update expense to the 2020 budget as a line item. She gave a copy of the budget to each board member and told them the budget and the warrant articles were all entered into the Department of Revenue's website, and each item had been approved.

Tom asked why the tax map expense had been listed under the Financial Section of the budget, and Kathi explained it was because all tax expenses were in that category, and the tax maps had to do with the tax collector and other assorted tax expenses.

Once the budget was briefly reviewed board members asked Kathi if she would contact the bank and check on interest rates for the warrant articles, if approved, and to find out what the approximate annual payment would be on one warrant, and on all three, so they would have the information ready for town meeting.

Tom made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Cindy seconded the motion. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

The next meeting will be Monday, February 17, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,