

TOWN OF JEFFERSON
SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2020

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Jefferson, was held at the Select Board Office Monday, January 27, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Kathi Marshall, Assistant to the Select Board; Stuart Arnett of ADG, Sean Toomey of the State Fire Marshall's Office, Mary Gross, Debbie Dubois, Nancy Decourcey, Lynne Holland, Joe Marshall and Jeff Young were also present.

Report of Departments and/or Boards

Highway: Mark was not present.

Business Office: Kathi said she has been working on the budget and the 2019 Town Report. She told the board Linda was coming Wednesday to help her enter the budget onto the state's website because it was not "user friendly," and Kathi had never worked on it before.

Public Input

ADG Update: Cindy explained to all those present that Stuart had come to give an update on where we stand with regard to ongoing plans, and to make certain he and his company were helping in any way they could. Sean was attending to obtain guidance on how the town was implementing the move forward to get into the school and confirming that any changes planned were up to code.

Stuart said there were many things to do, but he wanted to be able to answer other questions while the town was still moving forward. He also mentioned the last time we met he raised three issues. If the town opted to move in without a lot of bells and whistles we could start by using the funds that are currently available to us. If the town opted for upgrades or extras, those funds would have to come from private money. The third issue was whatever the town would have to do if it switched to a multi-tenant building. That could mean change-of-use and would involve adherence to state code, and thus cost more.

Sean said he would need to know what changes the educational space was to undergo. He will need to know the extent of renovations and plans in order to assess code requirements, but he believes it is still manageable. He said the school already has assembly space and rooms. He also said it is a positive thing that the school is only one story. He said he would need to do a quick review of exactly what is planned. He said he could not estimate any costs without knowing the entire scope of the design, but he still believed it was possible.

Tom said we would like to do the project in a cost-effective manner, but we want it done right as well. The bare bones plan called for some changes for the office area that would include removing a wall, so the town offices could be connected somehow. Sean said the Fire Marshall's Office could work in an advisory capacity or work under the state building permit system which would mean there would be a fee of 15-cents per square foot (the school is 13,000 square feet), and they would assume the role of "building official" overseeing original plans and renovations all the way through to the certificate of occupancy under the state building code. Sean said in this scenario they would sign off on the project, and the town would know with certainty that everything was up to code. Kevin opened up the meeting to those attending to see if there were any questions or comments, but none were put forward.

Cindy mentioned the town's desire to make the school building into an emergency shelter. Sean said there were grants available for that from Homeland Security. Sean mentioned we would need a generator and board members acknowledged they were aware of that. He reiterated that if the town had an emergency shelter, there were grant funds available, and the town should look into that.

Stuart and board members then went on to discuss the possible wording for the warrant articles. The "bare bones" project would likely cost \$650,000. Stuart said the library will be using their own funds, around \$290,000. The town will need approximately \$50,000 to improve the area designated for the Historical Society. There will also be about \$20,000 needed for fees and assorted costs. The current library fund should more than cover a total renovation for the library. But the balance of \$290,000 will require approval by the town through warrant articles.

Tom said he wanted to make certain the townspeople know the library funds are to be used specifically for the library move and set-up, and we will not be raiding their funds in any way to do any other work in the school. Stuart did say there are changes that will be made to the building that will effect all offices there, and the library should pay for part of those types of expenses. Debbie Dubois mentioned the approval of the library trustees was needed in order to spend money that was appropriated for the library, and the board should be mindful of that as they moved forward with plans. Kevin assured those present that those funds will only be used for library renovations in the school and nothing else. Nancy Decourcey added that people will also want to know how any approval of warrants to raise money will effect their property taxes.

Stuart also suggested the town have a contract with the Historical Society for a rental fee and designated length of time for the rental contract. He also added they should contribute to the cost of their space in the school. Joe Marshall said the Historical Society is not really a part of the town like the library and town offices. He said he could see contributing to some of the specific space upgrades, but as a tenant, they should not be expected to pay for overall building renovations or costs. Cindy agreed, and said that was the responsibility of the landlord.

Stuart said most warrants his company has worked with are good for three years. Board members were not certain that was the time frame. Stuart said you don't want to be trying to get all this done by December 31 if you are not ready to relocate and make it work. He felt fairly certain that warrants were good for three years.

Mary expressed a concern about the offices and said they should be private. She said Kathi needed private space, and she did as well for tax discussions with land owners, etc. Board members said they were aware that privacy needed to be considered.

Kathi asked if the board had considered how many people were going to have keys to gain entrance to the school, how many would have the security code to the alarm system and so on. Cindy said all that had to be figured out before the town made the move to the school. Kathi said with people there everyday, it could be possible for the need of a full-time maintenance staff for cleaning the entire building, removing waste, repairing smaller things, moving things from place to place, etc.

Public Input

New Business

Demolition Permit: Kathi gave board members a copy of the Demolition Permit Chris Milligan had given to her that dealt with people tearing down a building subsequent to a fire, or due to natural dilapidation, etc. Kevin said we currently don't have demolition permits and the town really should. The reason it is coming up at this time is because there was a recent fire in Jefferson, and the building now has to be demolished. In this process you want to make sure the electric company is notified so power can be shut off, etc. Tom asked if the permit would have to go through the Planning Board. Cindy said the permit says when the building is demolished the owner will call the town for a final

inspection. She asked who was responsible for the final inspection, and Kevin said it would be the Fire Department unless someone else was designated to do it. Tom wanted to know what are the Fire Department's qualifications for doing the inspection. He then requested the board hold off on any decision until he checked with some other towns to see how they handle this situation. He said he would bring information back to the next meeting.

Meeting recession: Board members began to discuss the wording for warrant articles pertaining to raising the funds for the school renovations, but the meeting was running so late (10:30 p.m.) that Tom made a motion to recess the meeting until the following Thursday evening, January 30, at 5:30 p.m., in the town hall. Cindy seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Before the meeting adjourned members agreed their public budget hearing should be Monday, February 10, at 6:00 p.m., to be followed by their regular weekly meeting at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting recessed at 10:40 p.m.

Thursday, January 30, 2020 5:30 p.m.
SELECT BOARD MEETING CONTINUED . . .

The meeting originally begun Monday, January 27, 2020 was continued Thursday, January 30, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in the town hall.

Discussion continued regarding the wording of the warrant articles for upcoming town meeting. Tom began re-working the three-stage plan to include moving into the school, doing a certain amount of renovations and modifying the school to accommodate bathroom showers in order to qualify as an emergency shelter. With the addition of a generator we would qualify for grant money. Tom asked if the generator should be included in the warrant. Kevin said the town really has to put the money in because if we end up going for a matching grant and we don't have the money, we won't get it. Kevin said the generator for the school would probably run about \$40- to 50-thousand dollars.

Kevin asked if members thought \$165,000 was enough to renovate the office space. Cindy did not think so. Kevin suggested the first warrant article be for \$100,000, and that would at least get the building ready to be moved into. Then, with another \$100,000 we could accomplish town office renovations and reconfiguration. Kevin pointed out that it's not just an office; it's actually the town "wing" of that building and has to accommodate Kathi, the Treasurer, Tax Collector, Town Clerk, Supervisors of the Checklist, Trustees, Assessor, etc. Cindy added that the bathroom had to be updated as well, and we can't forget that this "wing" is the entire reception area too. The last warrant article would be for showers and the generator, bringing us to emergency shelter compliance. Tom said each of the last two warrants had to be contingent on the first article passing. You can't do any renovations unless you are okay to go into the building.

Kevin said we need to have a meeting with Liz and the Library Trustees to see exactly what they are spending and what they envision for their library space. We don't want to duplicate their efforts, but we do want to consider what expenses will be incurred if we set up a 'common area' in the school for miscellaneous meetings or gatherings.

Tom summarized the warrant articles by saying there should be three, each one for \$100,000. Hopefully we will end up with grant money and that will free up some of the funds. We have to remember that \$20,000 of these funds will go to fees for the Fire Marshall's Office, the state, etc.

Tom suggested there be a warrant article to have a separate account for future maintenance and care of the school. It would make it much easier to track expenses there over time. Tom also asked if previous meeting minutes had specifically told people what the tax impact would be. Kathi said she had put that information in the meeting minutes when Stuart was here in early December. Cindy checked the

minutes and that dollar amount was based on borrowing \$1,000,000. Tom and Kevin recalculated the tax impact based on the warrant articles being proposed at town meeting, and each article passed would be \$6.60 per \$100,000 of property value (\$19.80 if all three articles pass).

The board members went on to discuss the various warrants and whether or not they should be added to the list. They also determined where funds would come from in order to move forward with the various departmental requests. Kevin said it was important that the Davenport Road apron be repaved, and members agreed. Tom asked about the next big-ticket item the highway department would need. Kevin said it would be either the Dodge or the grader. Mark had previously said the grader could go for another year most likely. Members wanted to be certain they could accomplish the requests without having to raise money through taxation.

Members went over each warrant article and fine-tuned the wording in accordance with DRA requirements. When they were finished there were twenty warrant articles prepared for town meeting.

When the board went over the budget Kathi asked them if they were going to include a cost-of-living increase for all employees. Tom asked what the percentage of increase was, and Kathi said she believed it was 1.6%. Cindy checked the Social Security site and confirmed the figure. Tom made a motion to add a cost-of-living increase of 1.6% for all hourly employees retroactive to January 1, 2020. Cindy seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Cindy made a motion to adjourn, and Tom seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

The next meeting will be Monday, February 3, 2020 at 7:00 p.m in the town office.

Respectfully submitted,