SELECT BOARD EMERGENCY MEETING MINUTES

February 2, 2021

2:00 P.M.

There was an emergency meeting of the Select Board Tuesday, February 2, at 2:00 p.m. to discuss a plan moving forward following the fire at the town hall and town office buildings. The meeting was held by remote teleconference.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Kathi Marshall, Assistant to the Select Board. Linda Cushman, Mary Gross, Terri Larcomb, Wendy Wells, Larry Wells, Norm Brown and Joe Marshall were also present.

Tom Brady informed everyone that since the fire the previous evening many towns, local businesses, and individuals had reached out offering to assist with any recovery efforts.

The town is fortunate since we have been making plans to move the offices into the Community Center on Meadows Road. It was immediately decided that they must move Kathi and Polly into the building as soon as it was feasible. Tom said we have to move ahead as swiftly as we can.

Cindy said before anyone can go in there that lighting and flooring issues had to be addressed. Norm said he would run point on the project if the board agreed.

Linda said the first thing they should do is to salvage any records and files and store them in a trailer or container on site. Then they would have to check what could be salvaged. She suggested they not take any files to the school building immediately because the smell of smoke will permeate those rooms.

Larry Wells serves on the town fire department and he told those present that the office side of the building had remained largely intact, but it had suffered fire under the roof and water damage throughout. Once they were able to get inside the building they tried to cover all the office equipment with tarps, but the building was open to the elements. He felt the extremes of temperature, mixed with the water, likely caused damage to computers and printers. He did not believe the office equipment could be salvaged.

Kevin suggested a committee be formed to act on behalf of the Select Board members. They were to set out a plan for recovery and relocation of the offices. They would work independently of the Board, and report to them on a regular basis about the status of their work. They would make certain they were on the same page as board members with regard to planned changes.

Cindy mentioned the committee would have to meet quickly because the town couldn’t afford to wait for a week to go by without a report.

Warrant articles from last year were meant to fund the preparations for the office move as well as some of the equipment. It was also noted that the town’s undesignated funds account was in a healthy state.

Kevin made a motion to nominate an official committee to determine the needs and the work to be done in order for the town to be up and running as soon as possible. The committee was to consist of Joe Marshall, Norm Brown, Linda Cushman, Terri Larcomb, Mary Gross and Wendy Wells. Cindy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with Cindy voting “aye,” Kevin voting “aye,” and Tom voting “aye.” The motion passed.

Kevin also made a motion to authorize Kathi and Linda to oversee the use of undesignated funds in the amount of $200,000 in order to move the town offices to the community center and to purchase what was needed to prepare one room there for Polly and Kathi’s offices. That would include preparing the room with flooring, office furniture, phones, etc. Money spent would be replaced when the insurance investigation was completed. Cindy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with Cindy voting “aye,” Kevin voting “aye,” and Tom voting “aye.” The motion passed.

Linda announced that Lancaster would be handling the vehicle registrations for the town until Polly was able to do it at the community center. They would set up a fund and Jefferson would receive the revenue from registrations processed in Lancaster.

Kathi said the DRA suggested she purchase two laptops immediately—one for Linda and one for herself. These computers could be set up off site so both of them could continue working until repairs and renovations were complete. These laptops would also serve as off site backups so work would never be interrupted in the future.

Kevin made a motion to purchase two laptops to be used by Kathi and Linda. Cindy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with Cindy voting “aye,” Kevin voting “aye,” and Tom voting “aye.” The motion passed.

Terri was concerned about the employees and since payroll checks were damaged in the fire, she asked to get bank checks and make out payroll so checks could be distributed. Kevin made a motion for Terri to make out the appropriate pay checks for the previous week worked. Cindy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with Cindy voting “aye,” Kevin voting “aye,” and Tom voting “aye.” The motion carried.

The question arose as to how much money the committee could spend before having to consult with the board. Kevin made a motion to authorize $10,000 and for the committee to return to the board if they needed more. Cindy seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken. Cindy voted “aye,” Kevin voted “aye,” and Tom voted “aye.” The motion passed.

Cindy mentioned the Cub Scouts meet weekly at the community center. She asked the committee to notify Kim Perry to set up space for the scouts so they could still meet, but would not interfere with any of the ongoing work. Linda said she would contact Kim.

Kevin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Cindy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with Cindy voting “aye,” Kevin voting “aye,” and Tom voting “aye.” The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 3:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,