

MINUTES

SELECT BOARD MEETING TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2022 ONLINE VIA ZOOM 6:30 p.m.

Select Board present: Jim Justice, Adam Fuller, Martha Johnston-Nash, Josh White, and Bill Lombardi

Budget Committee present: John Gibbons, Barry Norris, Paul Gaudreau, John Mountainland, Michael Drickey, Erik Amundsen, Bruce Cobb, Lawrence Nash, Terry Brackett, and Bruce Cobb

Others present: Jay Feyler (Town Manager), Jesse Thompson (EMS Chief), Christine Simmonds (Village Soup), Greg Grotton, Abraham Knight, Sarah Drickey, Peter Beckett (Appleton Select Board Vice Chair), Lorie Costigan (Appleton Select Board Chair), Mitchell (Washington Select Board), Wes Daniels (Washington Select Board), Gail Hawes, and others

- 1. Call Select Board Meeting to Order:** at 6:30 p.m. by Adam Fuller.
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Public Comment:**

Adam read aloud two emails shared on screen.

In the first email, Holly Lombardi requested that the board reconsider their February 1, 2022 discussion and vote regarding Town Meeting going to referendum voting (the board voted against it).

Motion to reconsider as though the vote had not occurred by: Jim Justice

It was decided to take this up under Other Business, or at the next meeting if Jim's internet cuts out.

Jim mentioned 4x6 or 4x8 solid wood tables at Ocean Job Lots.

In the second email, Anonymous detailed conflict of interest concerns about a person being Select Board member, CFTCC member, and TMA member all at the same time. Suggestion was that the person resign from all committees and refrain from voting on anything to do with the Thompson Center. Statute quoted 30-A, 2605. Consensus was that if you have a perceived conflict you should abstain from voting; the board will be vigilant.

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Bill read aloud a third public comment from Patrick J. Mellor, also received as an email, essentially hoping to revisit the referendum approach to Town Meeting.

4. Approve Minutes of Tuesday, February 1, 2022:

Motion by: Jim Justice
2nd by: Bill Lombardi
4-0-1 abstention (White)

Approve Minutes of Tuesday, February 8, 2022:

Motion by: Bill Lombardi
2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash
5-0

5. Approve Treasurer's Warrants dated February 15, 2022:

Motion by: Bill Lombardi
2nd by: Josh White

Amended motion to approve as written with the clarification that \$12,500 is for the Vose Library by: Bill Lombardi
2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash
5-0

6. Discussion and Vote on Revised Ambulance Budget:

EMS Chief Jesse Thompson held meetings with Washington and Appleton. Both towns expressed concerns that the budget approved by the Union Budget Committee and by the Union Select Board was extremely high. Appleton was behind it but thought the budget should be stretched out by a couple years. Washington was happy with the current level of service but may look elsewhere. Jesse said we cannot survive without both towns.

Option C would be \$647,580 to maintain the current level of service with 24/7 per diem and competitive wages to current employees. Union would pay \$ 177,718; Appleton \$104,961; and Washington \$117,286. Jesse said the other towns would accept this.

Discussion included: whether towns should pay for 911 services as there-when-you-need-it-24/7, or based on healthier towns paying less based on past calls, or some combination; Maine Care/Medicare billing which Jesse said at the low end pay less than 80%; the population-based budgeting formula, which as Barry Norris said has been used statewide since 1980, and which Jesse is based on availability and need, not usage; the concerns of Appleton and of Washington; ways to improve communication between the three towns; Union's nursing homes; and Jay and Jim explaining why Jesse does not get paid nearly enough.

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Jesse suggested the formation of an ambulance advisory board with representatives from each town, like the one at his full-time job in Gardiner. This way the towns would have a say in the budget and would also help defend it to their boards. This board could discuss the billing formula as well.

Adam thanked the Washington and Appleton board members, Jesse, and the budget committee.

Budget Committee motion to accept Union Fire Rescue Option C budget of \$647,580 by:
Barry Norris
2nd by: Paul Gaudreau
9 in favor (Norris, Cobb, Amundsen, Mountainland, Nash, Drickey, Gaudreau, Brackett, Gibbons)
0 opposed
2 absent (Day, Kirkpatrick)
Motion passes.

Motion to accept Union Fire Rescue Option C budget of \$647,580 as approved by the Budget Committee by: Martha Johnston-Nash
2nd by: Josh White
4-0-1 opposed (Lombardi)
Motion passes.

7. Discussion and vote on Recommendations of the Broadband Committee:

John Gibbons said not much has changed with the Coalition. They are proceeding but probably two to two-and-a-half years from connections in the core towns. Adam dissented.

John went on to LCI. Jay met with the principals last week. The committee had put together a set of negotiation priorities. Jay reported LCI is ready to start preparing for a ConnectME grant application due March 20. From Union, LCI is asking for a 50-50 for the balance of what will not be covered by the grant, to extend their network to all unserved addresses in town. This first build would take approximately two years and would not include places in town where, for example, Spectrum has run its own cable. Cost is estimated at \$140,000 for Union's 50% cost share. Included would be a Memorandum of Understanding and Draft Agreement.

LCI's second build would be much more expensive and take up to six years hence. They would ask Union for 50-50 of this cost as well, which would not be grant-supported at all as the grants are only for unserved areas.

Jay asked LCI if they built out the entire town then sold the network to another entity, would there be a cost recompense to the town? LCI told Jay all the funding provided would be returned to the town once the network is sold.

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Josh asked if there is a buy-in option for the town in this scenario. Adam said Jay was to ask about reimbursement for now as other things are still being discussed and/or for the lawyers to work out.

John suggested the current Broadband Committee morph into an ombudsman committee, as in other towns, to ensure everything with LCI goes smoothly.

Adam said we only have half the ARP funds, which can be used for broadband, and expect the second half next year. He suggested a motion to move forward with ARP funds for the ConnectME grant then at that point continue the discussion on phase two with Jay continuing to negotiate.

Bill asked for John's suggestion for a motion, which was: 1) move to approve an allocation of an amount not to exceed \$140,000 from the ARP municipal grant as the town's share for a grant application to extend the LCI fiber network to all unserved addresses in Union; and 2) move to commit to supporting LCI's grant application to ConnectME in the current cycle due March 30, not to dissent and to cooperate with them if they need more information from the town.

Motion to approve John Gibbons' two proposals as above by: Bill Lombardi
2nd by: Jim Justice
4-1 (Lombardi)
Motion passes.

Jay added the six-year plan was his idea for payments; they were pushing for four.

Adam said Phase 1 with ConnectME addresses our biggest issue, as we have many addresses without high-speed internet. He reiterated Phase 2 will have a higher cost.

8. Approve a clerical correction on Town Meeting and Election Dates and Times:

Jay said to meet statutory guidelines, this change will make Nomination Papers Available March 7 and Nomination Papers Filing Deadline April 14.

Motion to approve by: Martha Johnston-Nash
2nd by: Jim Justice
5-0

9. Town Manager's Report:

Jay said a Public Works employee left for a much more lucrative position, which seems to be the case. He is trying in the new budget to get wages up to retain people. He's had 10 applicants on indeed; not one had an A or B license, so we will probably pay for training, \$2,500 to \$3,000.

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He said we will go back to live meetings tentatively on April 5, with the full budget committee meeting in mid-April also in person. Though it's always the board's decision, he suggested March meetings take place via zoom due to scheduling and our emergency order expiring at the end of the month.

He added we've been getting low on sand. We do have contacts for more. Hopefully the weather will improve.

10. Other Business:

Motion to reconsider the referendum vote by: Jim Justice
2nd by Bill Lombardi
5-0

Motion to have a referendum vote at our June town meeting about having referendum voting in lieu of town meeting, but keeping the public hearings regarding the issues by:
Bill Lombardi
2nd by: Josh White

Adam brought up slippery slope concerns. Jay understood but said all across small towns, town meetings are not true representation anymore due in large part to social media. Bill found the simpler motion from two weeks ago.

Amended motion to put referendum voting on the agenda for the June town meeting and have it be a referendum vote by: Bill Lombardi
2nd by: Josh White
3-2 (Johnston-Nash, Fuller)
Motion passes.

11. Committee Reports:

- a. Broadband – Done.
- b. Aging in Place in Union

Bill said they had a meeting on the 7th. The chair resigned. They need volunteers. A luncheon coming up in March. Expect to hear about Community Circles in the coming months, addressing isolation issues.

- c. Future of the Thompson Community Center

Martha addressed communication, which is supposed to go through the chair to Jay from the committee. She added a lot of information is coming to a head. They had a meeting last night. Groups are working on the different options. Minutes by

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Ariana will be posted soon. She and Abraham Knight raised the question of which option town retention of the building would fall under.

Gail Hawes said she and Paul Raudonat will work on data consolidation via google docs leading to an eventual power point presentation by Rebekah. In answer to Adam, she said all the information with supporting documentation is intended to be on the town website eventually.

Greg Grotton asked for questions or concerns for Rebekah to get out to the appropriate people, through Adam to Jay to Rebekah.

d. Green Space

Josh said they await information from the lawyer on deed restriction questions.

e. TMA Report

Martha noted concern about some issues at the building, such as the alarm system. She hopes to have a definitive answer on what needs to be done before the next meeting, in answer to Adam.

Bill said we should break it into two categories: CFTCC report should be about preparing for the June vote; TMA report should be about daily operations. He would like to hear a report from both at select board meetings. This was echoed by Adam, who added maybe he didn't make it clear before, but he thinks it important that TMA speak to the board.

12. Select Board Reports:

Jim reminded about Ocean Job Lots wood tables. He is ready to go back to in-person meetings.

Martha reported computer issues and wants to replace these computers in the next five years.

Adam passed along another great winter storm road report from his daughter, as well as the school bus driver's appreciation. Jay said she sent an email.

13. Future Agenda Requests: None.

14. Adjourn:

Motion by: Bill Lombardi

2nd by: Josh White

5-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abaldo
Secretary