

MINUTES

**SELECT BOARD/ASSESSORS' MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2024
WILLIAM L. PULLEN MUNICIPAL BUILDING MEETING ROOM
ONLINE NON-INTERACTIVE ON TOWN HALL STREAMS
6:30 p.m.**

Select Board present: Jim Justice, Adam Fuller, Martha Johnston-Nash, Wayne Kirkpatrick, and Linda Mountainland

Others present: Jay Feyler (Town Manager), Erik Amundsen, John Gibbons, Tracy Weed, Greg Grotton, and others

- 1. Call Select Board Meeting to Order:** at 6:30 p.m. by Adam Fuller
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Approve Minutes of Tuesday, May 7, 2024:**

Motion by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash

Martha had one change: on page 9, under Thompson Working Group, it should be “developer” instead of “town” interested in both buildings.

Amended motion to approve with the above change by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash
5-0

- 4. Approve Treasurer's Warrants dated Tuesday, May 21, 2024:**

Motion by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
2nd by: Linda Mountainland
5-0

- 5. Approve Supplemental Tax Warrant – Jim Murphy:**

Jay said he sent board members a copy: the James Potter property was omitted from taxation when there were some transfers that got missed probably as part of a software issue with transfers that has since been taken care of. It is \$702.15 supplemental. The board has to sign the supplemental tax certificate and the supplemental tax warrant.

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Motion to sign by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
2nd by: Jim Justice

Adam said Jim’s notes were “in a series of confusing deed transfers, this property was omitted. The property has since been transferred to someone else.”

Above motion passed,
5-0

6. Discussion and Vote on Ground Lease Agreement:

Jay said they will not vote on this tonight, as Roger wants to go over clarifications. This is for a Verizon tower to be put on the property where the public works garage is. They have to get planning board approval. This would be a lease of the property, \$1500/month. He asked them to change a couple of things which they did – going from \$1,300 to \$1,500, and rent-free accommodations for emergency services on the tower. Jay also asked that any additional subleasing of the tower will be an additional \$300/month. Adam confirmed they will pay us monthly.

Jim brought up past controversy over other towers. Jay said the planning board has done some preliminary work and is pretty much in agreement. He reiterated Verizon will have to go before the planning board, provide the engineering, etc., and they don’t want to spend that kind of money without board approval. He added the hang-up right now is legal wording: one lawyer says it needs to go to town meeting, the other says to select board. It will come back in two weeks. He wanted to bring it up tonight to see if there is any objection by the board. Adam clarified the cell tower would be next to the building. Jay added they will pay 2% interest per year. We can dedicate those funds to the general fund to offset taxes or public works equipment replacement.

Martha said her brother and husband have towers, and \$1,500 is probably reasonable but 2% each year additional is low. Jay said it compounds; a lot of them are written every five years they do it – he wasn’t comfortable with that and would like to see it every year. The average increase is 2% across the state for this type of tower for municipalities, and the average price about \$1,480. He noted some towers have more things on it, and we will get \$300 a month for each additional which was not in the original agreement. In answer to Martha, Jay said the planning board will determine tower height, and he believes cell towers require planning board approval. Martha noted they will pay personal property tax but not real estate tax by leasing. In answer to Adam, Martha said we are talking about 10,000 SF unless there are guy wires outside of that. She confirmed as planned it is currently entirely on town property. Jay said it’s not taking up anything that we can use. Martha said tower company lawyers can get very aggressive and may cost a lot in legal fees over the course of time though she does not think it a bad idea.

John Gibbons said for the board’s information, around 2010 when he was on the board, Verizon wanted to build a 190’ tower in the same location. Townspeople resonated to the

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problem of it being a very in-your-face location, 100' from the road. At the time the town passed a moratorium to give the planning board a chance to address the problem. They ended up zoning it in the rural district. He asked if that property is in the village district. Adam said it's a question for the planning board, thanked John for the background, and noted people's understanding of cell phones has since changed. Jim confirmed with John there was an issue concerning the school; they tried to argue that the radiation was a health hazard, but federal law says towns are not allowed to consider that on their own with these applications. Adam reiterated the convenience of being connected and now there are towers on every hill.

7. Sestercentennial request for various projects on the Common:

Tracy Weed brought up the location of porta potties and two storage trailers for the Common for the weekend. The trailers will be an aluminum trailer and a small enclosed snowmobile trailer. They would like permission to get two porta potties lining them up along where Pat Cosgrove's comes up against the green. There will be four porta potties total on the Common: the two up there, and two down between the post office and the garage which Argy has already spoken with the post office and the landowners about. Argy has worked with Matt then Tom of the town crew to get their assistance loading tables and chairs into the enclosed trailer to keep those secured, Thursday end of day.

Jay asked if they wanted to set up something on the Common to advertise. Martha mentioned a pop-up – setting up a table with a display and selling t-shirts, coins, and hats. She said they do not have a particular date. Tracy said it's small committee already committed to a couple of parades, the Vose Library plant sale, and the Farmers Market. Adam asked if the board was ok with having the date open-ended. Martha said there may be a couple of dates through July 21, the last day of the Sestercentennial.

Motion to give permission for the pop-up, trailers, and porta potties by: Jim Justice
2nd by: Wayne Kirkpatrick

Linda asked where the trailers would be located. Tracy said the enclosed trailer would be stored in the same spot next to the porta potties, out of the way to the left of the market.

Above motion passed,
5-0

Martha brought up the Chamber of Commerce Friday night July 19 pie social and concert set up by the gazebo. Adam confirmed we typically shut down the road (beside the gazebo per Linda) for that. Jay said the board also has to vote to shut the road down, noting in our ordinance the select board can shut town roads down.

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Motion to give permission for the Chamber of Commerce to use the Common for the pie social and concert and to shut down Abbott way by: Jim Justice
2nd by: Linda Mountainland

In answer to Tracy, Adam said a separate vote is needed for this, since the Chamber and the committee are separate entities. Other road closures were briefly discussed, to be addressed at the next meeting.

Above motion passed,
5-0

8. Approval of Sestercentennial Volunteer Member:

Tracy said Bryan Johnson is going to quasi-join the committee. His contribution will be helping with photos and capturing events throughout.

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

9. Other Business:

Adam read aloud a Facebook post from Martha about the TCC (potential development involving a \$12,000 determination of historic designation still under consideration) at Wayne's request. Heated discussion ensued. Wayne wanted this to go on public record: Martha using social media instead of speaking during the meeting. He asked her not to mention his name again on Facebook. Adam shared his mother's advice: "if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything." Jay reminded that previous developers have backed out due to controversy in the town, controversy affects hiring, and he also addressed false information that gets out there. He expressed his frustration that the (TCC) committee's hundreds of hours of work could be thrown out because of Facebook posts. Adam encouraged a higher level of professionalism and leading by example, which he said he believes everyone on the board is capable of. The board concurred.

Jay said the board voted to remove stuff from TCC and brought up what to do about the alumni material. He was told the alumni association has been dissolved. Sharon Caron agreed to take and store the material. He wanted the board to vote for that or another option, such as purchasing a POD in which case it would stay under town control, and we could put tables and chairs in there also. Alumni material would stay in the POD until the building is done, when hopefully the developer would put it in shadow boxes as they have in other developments.

Adam said he mentioned to Sharon they need some kind of paper that shows the alumni association handed the material off, noting the town is not in the storage business. He suggested giving her a chance to go back and produce this, from if not the alumni

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association then perhaps the people involved with setting it up, maybe Irene. He also mentioned some tie in with the Matthews Museum and potentially the historical society.

In answer to Martha, Jay said a POD is not temperature or humidity controlled nor would Sharon's be. Martha suggested giving the alumni material to the historical society, who would then be responsible for it. Jay said they have no room. Martha said Sharon might store the alumni material for them and asked if the board would have a problem with the historical society having it.

Greg Grotton recommended tabling this to give Sharon more time. The board concurred.

10. Town Manager Report:

Jay said we should be fully staffed again at Public Works.

He said he was impressed that the Union School fourth and fifth graders are doing some government stuff and invited him to speak there on Thursday. Adam asked if they could have a classroom here, a daytime meeting. Jay said that was done many years ago at the middle school, and he will mention it to them.

He said he notified the Sestercentennial Committee that the safest parade route is the Common Road. He said Ruth Ann has worked hard. The fire chief, EMA directors, and Bob Oxton agree the safest route is the Common Road, so we don't get traffic backed up from Town House Road onto Rt 17. He also has multiple emails from the state that this is the safest route, which mitigates the DOT sign requirement and number of certified traffic controllers needed as well. He said we will do a tabletop exercise based on all the scenarios there.

Adam brought up Ruth Ann's concern about the steep hill by the pizza shop. Jay said they came up with some ideas, such as volunteers helping with bicycles and unicycles. These volunteers will not need to be certified as that road will be closed. He added when traffic gets backed up to Rt 17 they will briefly stop the parade as with parades before.

11. Public Comment:

Erik Amundsen said at Vose Library is a display of art from Union Elementary School.

Linda said at the school budget meeting, they added another million dollars to the school budget. She added there is no amount on the referendum being voted on; it will be a million more than what was in the book.

Jay said he talked with the superintendent – if they are capped articles, you can't add, you can only subtract. He clarified if it says "to see what sum," it's an open article; if it says "to see if we will raise and appropriate X amount of dollars," it's a closed article.

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Erik said Scott, Union school principal, asked to appropriate another million dollars due to a leaking roof, the hot water heater died, and the septic system failed. He added the million dollars probably won't cover that. Martha confirmed that would go into the maintenance budget. Jay said Scott tried to specify for a septic system but you can't.

John Gibbons, also in attendance at the school budget meeting, said Scott was proposing setting up a reserve account for a million dollars, though he didn't use those words, because the \$81 million bond issue failed last year. It will be a year from now before they come up with another plan. Everybody has been telling them to put some money aside, so you've got something to work with and not hit all at once. Erik said that was created at the meeting before with a million dollars, and this is another million dollars; the first million dollars came out of their reserves, so now there is two million dollars in the maintenance budget.

12. Committee Reports:

a. Broadband

John Gibbons said things are moving. The first big job is mounting fiber on the poles, and that is progressing well ahead of schedule. They started in April. As of two weeks ago it was 80% complete which surprised even Tidewater. The next big task is making connections. Tidewater sent letters announcing the coming availability of the expanded network to all the residents along the new fiber paths. They are directing the residents to their website to express an interest in being connected and to fill out an application that contains key information. They are currently scheduled to start making connections by September, but he would not be surprised if it started considerably sooner. Bottom line: things are moving. The committee is trying hard to set up regular status meetings with Tidewater, and that process is going slowly.

Adam brought up needing new committee members. John said he thought we need to agree with Tidewater on what they would be doing. Adam said when it comes time, this is a good committee to be on.

b. Green Space

Jay said things were put on hold due to the new foreclosure law. They are anticipating somebody going to court re: 10 to 15 years back. Lawyers have already sent blanket fishing letters to some municipalities. Towns will spend big money, and as Adam said we don't want to be the guinea pig.

c. Sestercentennial

Tracy said the bandstand is almost complete. They decided to use the platform SignUpGenius to help coordinate volunteers for the weekend. Jay worked on the

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volunteer liability form. With this platform we can put that form in front of the person signing up to volunteer. Holly Savage has done a phenomenal job with this. It isn't quite ready to go live. Jay clarified anybody can do the witnessing. Tracy said they hope people will print it out ahead of time and bring it with them. They will be asking the volunteers to park down at the fairgrounds and ride the shuttle up to keep the Common as open as possible.

She said they have ordered more coins, an updated version that will be here in the next couple of weeks. The first batch went like wildfire.

Linda said her barbecue raised \$2,233. About 75 people were in and out. She was impressed. They worked hard and it paid off. She thanked Debbie Kennedy, Joyce and Greg came, Ruthie and Becky all helped with serving and setup. The biggest thank you goes to John, Mikey, and Chuck who did all the cooking.

Jay thanked Tracy for the ton of work she does that nobody knows about.

Martha now has t-shirts as well as the caps. There will be online merchandise options.

- d. Ambulance Advisory – None.
- e. Thompson Working Group

Jay said they have a meeting Thursday and so report next board meeting.

Motion to remove Bill Packard from the TCC Working Group by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
2nd by: Linda Mountainland
5-0

Adam thanked Bill for his time.

13. Select Board Report:

Jim said he was at the Fire and Rescue banquet on Saturday, a nice time with a catered meal, and they handed out a lot of thank you for your service tokens and awards. On behalf of the select board, he told them that board members all really appreciate them and they all do a fine job. Linda also attended, said it was nice and they had a video. Wayne said Nick Casullo's daughters are on the department and are also photographers. He sent them his photographs as well (full disclaimer: it's up to the chief what is done with photos). He said the Gunslingers catered it, with enough for 60 people. Linda said the food was so good. Jim said he was the last one they gave an award to, for his time on the fire department and rescue squad, and they also gave him a rose for his wife.

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Adam said work has been cranking. The board has had a lot on its plate. He appreciates the board members. Linda said he does a good job, echoed by board members.

Wayne said he went on vacation for the weekend. Jay said someone who didn't show up got employee of the year award at the banquet. Jim said it was Wayne. Wayne said he enjoys everybody on this board. He brings up stuff that bothers him but at the end of the day feels as though they can all work together, get this job done, and see this building through. He apologized if he was a little forceful and thanked everyone.

Adam thanked Linda for doing the barbecue. She said she wants to do a fundraiser for fire/ambulance. She will be working on it, and it includes lobsters. It won't be until August or September.

Adam said Argy had mentioned involving the select board in the Sestercentennial, so that will be coming up. Martha said they had talked about receiving the rededication of the monument, and Tracy said Adam for the beard contest on Saturday.

14. Adjourn:

Motion by: Martha Johnston-Nash
2nd by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
5-0

Meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abaldo
Secretary