

# Select Board Sidelines

## August 25, 2021

**Disclaimer:** The opinions expressed in the Sidelines are the individual thoughts of the Select Board member.

### **Submitted by Bill Lombardi**

We had another productive and full Select Board meeting this past week. It is terrific to see the amount of public interest. The participation speaks positively for the betterment of the Town of Union.

**Coggins Hill Property:** We had another well attended and thoughtful Select Board meeting this past week. We had three offers on the property. The civility of the discussions was a testimony to the outstanding passion of the folks making the offers and to the people involved. Thank you for your kindness and clarity. It speaks highly of our town that we can have the type of conversation that we had without undue rancor.

Any time that there are multiple offers on a property, there will be disappointment for some. The result of this discussion was that the Select Board voted for the Town to retain ownership and to develop a deed restriction preventing development. A compromise solution? Certainly! The Board expressed appreciation to all the parties. The concern for the property and its value to future generations as the highest point in Union was well articulated.

**Committee for the Future of the Thompson Community Center (CFTCC):** The Select Board looks forward to the presentation of possibilities at our meeting on August 31 at 6:30 p.m. Due to State requirements, as it is a Select Board meeting, it must be held in person. It will be available on the Town's website under Town Hall Streams for those that want to listen to the presentation and conversation.

The committee is developing three possible recommendations: (certainly this is tentative and is my summary based upon review of this meeting via Town Hall Streams on the Town website).

- 1.) The Town maintains ownership, uses a provider such as Siemens to renovate. A management structure would need to be developed.
- 2.) Sell the Buildings to a Rehabilitation Specialist to create a mixed-use facility.
- 3.) Lease or sell the property to an organization primarily for housing but also preserving community utilization.

There is a meeting scheduled for August 31 with the Select Board and the CFTCC committee.

**Ayer Park / Seven Tree Boat Ramp:** At the August 31 meeting the Select Board will be voting on accepting the State of Maine, Bureau of Parks and Lands, Boating Facilities Fund, Project Agreement. Part of the language in the proposed agreement reads: “The State shall provide signs, technical assistance and a cash reimbursement of not more than 75% of the approved project costs not to exceed \$87,975 for expenditures made by the Recipient and approved by the State for the Improvements.”

**American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grants:** Knox County will be receiving \$7.7 million in funds from this Act. The County will use at least some of the funds for its own needs, and may consider grants to Knox County municipalities or nonprofit organizations who have a request that meets ARPA requirements. The requirements of this Act are very limited and specific. In that vein the Town is possibly submitting requests for funds for:

Public Health: \$9,000 - Protective equipment provided to local businesses during the pandemic.

Premium Pay - \$13,000 – Premium pay of \$500 to all essential employees that worked during the pandemic.

Broadband - \$10,000 for Broadband studies and \$500,000 for last mile connections, \$1000 for each house hook-up.

Ambulance - \$300,000 for a second ambulance.

**Be Well & enjoy the Fair!**