

Select Board Sidelines

January 26, 2022

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

Submitted by Bill Lombardi

Special Town Meeting: Was held last evening. Article 3 passed. The Town voted to authorize the Select Board to expend from unappropriated fund balances, up to \$30,000 for the benefit of the Thompson Community Center, and to raise said amount on the 2022-23 tax commitment.

Emergency Services/Ambulance Budget: A joint meeting with the Select Board and Budget Committee was presented with possible budgets for the next fiscal year by Chief Thompson. Due to increased demand for ambulance and lifesaving services in this challenging time, an increase in staffing was deemed to be necessary. Additionally, the need to retain staff and the competitive nature of the employment market necessitates an increase in salaries.

The conclusion was to add four medics and to increase wages to be competitive with the services around us. Although there were decreases in some line items the changes resulted in an 85% increase in the budget. Remember that this is a shared service with Appleton & Washington. When voted upon by these towns they will be paying a proportional share. It is estimated that this budget may result in a potential increase in the Real Estate tax rate.

Pullen Committee Property Purchase: The Pullen Committee purchase of the Clark's Field property on Rt 17 is proceeding. The land survey has been completed. No closing date has been announced.

Public Works: Many positive comments have been made regarding the condition of Union roads. Although we haven't had major snowstorms, multiple snow/ice events have kept the crew busy sanding roads. Lots of sand is being used. Cost of parts has increased. Diesel prices are up. It has started out as an expensive winter. Judos to the Public Works folks for the job they are doing on our roads. Great job!

The bids are in for the Ayer Park boat ramp and the Clarry Hill culvert. They are scheduled to be discussed at the next Select Board meeting on February First.

Future of the Thompson Community Center Committee: Statements of Interest were approved from John Mountainland, Ariana Whiting and Michael Beardsley. The Select Board welcomes your participation on the Committee and looks forward to your input.

Select Board Sidelines: We had a lively discussion. No vote was taken. The Sidelines will continue with limited participation by Board members.