

Pre Town Meeting/Selectboard Meeting

February 25, 2019

6:00 pm

Present: Doon Hinderyckx, Tom Schnabel, Pat Harvey

Guests: Joan Allen, Martha Slater, Jeanette Bair, Bruce Flewelling, Mason Wade, Walt Wells, Nancy Woolley, David Marmor, Harland Mckirryher, Tony Goupee, Barb Dehart, Mary Sue Crowley, Orion Lakota & Emma Wade

Doon called Pre Town-Meeting to order at 6:00 pm acting as Town Moderator. Posting requirements of this meeting were verified.

Jeanette commented about the Library budget not being included with the rest of the Town budget. She mentioned that in the Selectboard letter, the town report kind of read like the Library is a separate organization opposed to a department of the town. Doon noted that to a certain extent it is a separate organization and that it is backed and run by the trustees. Pat noted that the Library has its own budget therefore it's outside of our realm. Discussion continued over the history of the Library and size of its budget requests. Doon discussed that it would be easier to talk about it and for people to think about it if it were a standalone entity and not piled in with everything else. Being as it's \$40,000.00, it was big enough chunk that it was worthwhile to talk about. Nancy mentioned that in previous Town Meetings there's been several people who have questioned those large appropriations within the article line and there were requests to take those large items out and vote on them separately. Nancy noted that she thought that it was listed in the Town report in last year's Town Meeting minutes too. David spoke and asked if in the past when we approved the amount to be raised by taxes it included the Library budget and that this year it won't. He noted that it is a difference and seems like extra money and that the Library is singled out as the kind of money that can be axed from the budget in the same way if you decided not to fund the Safehouse because they hadn't done a good job, not that they never had. He explained that this is to show where the Library Trustees are coming from. Pat spoke and said it's a matter of interpretation and that by putting the Library in its own entity gives it its own identity so that the tax payers can look at the Library. Jeanette noted that it is extremely difficult to discuss the Library budget the way it goes up and down year by year with what's appropriated and not appropriated and with what is budgeted and not budgeted. Pat noted that this could be a good reason for it to be separated so that it doesn't take the regular budget numbers and go up and down when we are looking for a consistent number. Since it does fluctuate it's a good idea to set aside. David asked if any of the funds that are under possibly, control of Public Funds or maybe the Library Trustee Funds that are donated to the Library, not to be spent but to be either invested or allowed to grow, an endowment sort to speak? Doon answered that there are both from the Town and the Trustees of Public Funds and the Library also has Funds as well as the Cemetery. He continued that the proceeds from interest can be applied and that's what made this such a challenging budget year this year because the Trustees of Public Funds were not able to contribute anything to the budget whereas in the past years, they have been able to give thousands of dollars in significant amounts. Then this year, as it turned out they gave zero. David

asked if they could explain why they gave zero when they gave tens of thousands last year? Nancy said it was in the town report. David continued to comment that in the past, it was his impression that they gave the Town some of the increase, not more than they earned in that year, but maybe all and they allowed the funds to grow on a regular basis. He asked if we are to understand that they lost money this year? Barb responded that based on the statement of June 30, 2018 they grew just barely. Basically your trying to keep a conservative amount of principle funds that we keep money to go forward so you might make money this year, but you don't want to spend it all this year because you won't make money possibly next year. Dave asked if they ever distribute funds to the Town in excess of the money earned in that year and Barb answered yes that can happen. Walt commented that broadly based such things are under what's known as Spending Rule, like the Endowers set away that the money can be spent so if they're not making a substantial amount the endowers rules may say they don't distribute in any given year, so you really must go back to the endowments themselves. Discussion ensued. Doon stated that it added to the challenge working out the budget. First draft we were looking at a 14% increase across the whole budget. It made it a challenging year to a modest increase and with all the department heads scraping and cutting and putting things off that they wanted to do till later, we were able to keep it down to just under 2% increase in the tax rate. There were things we cut that we would have rather not. It's quite a little puzzle to put this budget together and make it all work. Thanks to all the volunteers that kick in and help to do it. Harland asked Doon if he was planning on running again and Doon answered that he was going to run again. Mary Sue apologized for being a few minutes late and asked about separation of the Town Library from the Town Budget. Doon commented that it was discussed earlier but to recap it had been decided to pull the Library out for more clarity since it's a big chunk of the budget and make it easier to talk about. Aside from being buried in a midst of the other budget. Just as we request at the last Town Meeting some of the bigger items are being pulled out, specifically WRVA was pulled out as a separate item also. Mary Sue continued that she was just wondering, with that knowledge and the fact that you were trying to make it clearer and that we were trying to show as a town what our Town Library cost to run. Nowhere in that description did it say how taxes paid of that amount of money and that the budget is paid for nearly 8% by donations and I just thought it would be nice to have that in there too. Did you know your town taxes only pay for 50% of the Town Library budget? It just wasn't there so I didn't see as clear as it could have been. I think as general knowledge most people don't know that their Town Library is only funded 50% by town taxes. That's a big piece of information. Doon stayed that if they looked to the budget in the Library they should. Mary Sue answered that there's two pages of lots of numbers and because the budget committee went to the effort of pulling it out and making sure that people notice the 12%, or bigger hunk of money, it would have also been nice to see it's only 50% of what it cost to run the Library. I thought it just needed to be clear. Doon thanked Mary Sue for bringing it up. Pre Town-Meeting ended at 6:28 pm

Selectboard Meeting:

Additions to the Agenda: Bruce asked if he could give a quick update on Pierce Hall Activities. Harland wanted to talk about the missing Selectboard Minutes book

Doon asked Harland which missing minutes are you talking about and for what Meeting and when? Harlan answered that there's a span of a few years, a book that's gone. I just would like to

know what it spans, the time period and what is gone. Bruce explained that while he was doing the road research, he was looking for various records for discontinuances and changes in mileage and when he couldn't find what he thought was complete information in the "Roads and Miscellaneous" record book he went looking for the Selectboard minutes. There seems to be a period from the late 30's to the early 40's, a whole book of selectboard meeting minutes that is not with all the rest of the books. It could be that it is in the vault someplace that we haven't discovered it, or it might have gotten taken down stairs with other records for some reason. Right now you can say it is not with the other Selectboard minute books. Discussion ensued.

Conclusion was that Bruce asked for approval to start in the one corner of the vault and work his way around looking for the missing book. Board approved. Bruce spoke about the updates to Pierce Hall. Pierce Hall has signed a contract with Russell Construction Services out of Rutland for the construction of the Community Fitness Center. They hope to start construction next week with hopes of a Grand Opening in June. Doon asked if this was construction of the actual equipment and facility. Bruce responded that it is the conversion of the two spaces in the lower level. One will become the gym with the treadmills and the nautilus, and all that kind of stuff and the other larger room will basically be under the stage area for dance, aerobics, Zumba and that kind of stuff. Two parts of the total fitness center. Doon asked when again would you say that is going to open? Bruce noted that they have an 84-day schedule if everything goes perfectly, which it never does. Jeanette asked if there would be monthly fees to which Bruce responded that fees would be reasonable and that they were working on membership levels right now. Doon thanked Bruce.

Doon motioned to approve the minutes from the January 28, 2019 meeting. Tom seconded. All agreed. So voted. Doon moved to accept the minutes from the February 2, 2019 meeting. Tom 2nd it. All agreed. So voted.

Joan Updates:

Joan said there were a few miscellaneous things, mostly questions at this point. She stated that thinking ahead to which grants that she would need to be working on in the next fiscal year including well before the next fiscal year starts. The VTrans Grant series, The Class 2 roads and structures is up in mid-April. Joan asked if they had any thoughts about doing any projects. We, of course have things sort of stacked up and the one the most shovel ready is Mount Cushman Culvert replacement because we have the engineering drawings now. Looking at the budget I didn't see anything where you had a line item, maybe you do it differently or in a different place for a matching part of Grants. Typically anywhere from 10-20% depending on which program your looking at. We already have a matching requirement for the small sidewalk project at \$29,500. I don't have a number yet for the cost estimate for the Cushman Road Culvert. I hope to get that next week and just wondering if you have any thoughts about whether this is just a year you want to skip. Budget constraints or whether you want to keep doing projects. Doon noted that we are going to try and tip-toe through that because the budget did really constrain a lot of ambitious plans for working. We overshot the budget for paving last year. We really must catch up. Barb spoke about accounting solutions on how to structure matching Grant accounts so moneys can be accurately tracked. The problem has been the differences between when the Grants been authorized and what has been implemented and when you finally get your full payment. Joan agreed that it would be great to help plan and think ahead a year or more to help prioritize and what the expenses would be and what grants the Town would like to do sooner than later. Doon asked if the WRP is soliciting money towards the Stormwater. Joan replied that

we are supposed to hear very soon about the second grant. Doon noted that it plays into the ongoing need of working on the sidewalks around town. Joan continued speaking about the research for the EV charging station. She noted that there are a lot of questions and she will do more research and share later. Joan continued about the bus shelter and explained it was another sort of conundrum for her. I'm filing for reimbursement on the cost of the construction of the Park and Ride. She stated that we still have \$10,000.00 available in that Grant budget, which the state has said to submit what you have done and so far and will give an extension. This extension is not for a whole lot longer and needs to be closed out. Discuss ensued about the bus shelter and more questions would need to be researched. Doon thanked Joan.

Library updates:

Jeanette stated they were gearing up for a very busy March and that they have a full schedule of events for March. Jeanette read through all the events and was happy to hand out a copy of this schedule. Jeanette added that every first Saturday of the month at 1:00pm we have a group of an average of 6 people who come to a writer's group to work on their individual writing projects. This group has been meeting for a couple of years and is led by Amy Braun. Tony added that there are a lot of books that Jeanette keeps up to date and computers and movies and many other wonderful things and to please stop in. Doon thanked Jeanette.

New Business:

Auditors Findings about disbursements. Julie spoke that in the past there were no warrants attached to disbursements for any of the reserve accounts. A warrant has been created specifically to withdraw money as requested from these reserve accounts. This would also create a paper trail for the transaction. Julie mentioned that periodically Leslie Straus will come in to reconcile bank accounts as a third party. The Selectboard then signed a resolution form to authorize Julie Smith to be the signatory on all Town accounts. Next new business is a Liquor License renewal for Mac's Valley Market. Doon moved to approve. Tom 2nd. All in favor. So voted. Doon stated that the Tax mapping agreement needed signatures from the Selectboard. Doon noted that The Highway Certificate was mailed and filed. Bruce wanted to add that the Highway Certificate turned out to be more of a project than he had anticipated. He would need some instruction on how to download and get the information back up to them. He also asked to propose to the Selectboard about the first quarter mile of Jones Mountain Road which is now a class 4 but treated as if it's a class 3 road. In order to make that change on record you need to go through the whole process. You've got to advertise it, you've got to give 30 days' notice and you have to have a hearing so that's something the Selectboard will have to figure out if it's worth the effort to upgrade that section of the road. This would be done sometime this coming year. Discussion ensued.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Smith