

**Winthrop Town Council
Regular Meeting
Monday, July 2, 2007 at 7 p.m.
Winthrop Town Office**

Attendance: Patrice Putman, Linda Caprara, Patricia Engdahl, Ken Buck, Kevin Cookson, William MacDonald, Jim Norris, Cornell Knight (Town Manager) and Julie Winberg (Secretary).

Chairman Putman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes for May 21, June 4, June 18, 2007:

Motion by Norris and seconded by MacDonald, to approve minutes of May 21, June 4 and June 18. Vote 7-0.

Ordered that the Winthrop Town Council meet to consider the following items:

Item #70 Hold a public hearing on the Special Amusement application from the Bailey Library for a family contra dance.

The public hearing opened at 7:02 p.m. The Town Manager informed the Council that the library is sponsoring a family contra dance in the town office parking lot. All dances require a special amusement permit. If it rains, the dance will be held in the all purpose room. This is part of the planned July 4th festivities. The public hearing closed at 7:03 p.m.

Item #71 Consider the Special Amusement permit for Bailey Public Library.

Motion by Buck and seconded by Cookson to grant the special amusement permit for Bailey Public Library. Vote 7-0.

Item #72 Consider the plow truck bids.

The town manager informed the Council that the truck bidder of \$39,446.11 withdrew their bid. The next bid is from Whited Ford at \$52,980 and Tenco for plow equipment at \$56,970. This includes a trade-in of a 1995 GMC truck.

Motion by Norris and seconded by Cookson, to accept the total bid plow truck bids at \$109,950. Vote 7-0.

Item #73 Consider the road paving bids

Paving bids were also lower than budget estimates at \$49.95 ton. The Road Committee is recommending paving on Turkey Lane, Pamela Drive, Claris Circle, Peck Farm Road and Annabassecook Road to the railroad tracks and \$25,000 towards crack sealing. If there is tonnage available Morton, Fact, Middle, and Tappan Farm will also be paved.

**Item #74 Presentation from Rick Malm, Lewis & Malm Architects,
property condition assessment for the public safety buildings.**

Rick Malm, Lewis and Malm Architecture of Bucksport, presented the Property Condition Assessment Report for the Public Safety Buildings. He along with several structural engineers presented an overview of their findings. This report addressed renovating and expanding the town's existing police, fire, and emergency medical facilities. The total cost would be approximately \$4.6 million, which is \$600,000 more than the proposed new public safety complex voters rejected in the town's February referendum.

The EMS Building has no handicap clearances, no sprinklers, the electrical panel full and antiquated, lighting is out of date, there are no roof vents, the soffits need to be replaced, there are rat droppings in the attic, the roof shingles need to be replaced, and a ventilation system needs to be installed. With these and several more renovations he enumerated, the space problem is still not addressed for truck bays, office space and lockers.

The Fire Station has no room to expand and the floor sags under the weight of the fire trucks that are too heavy for the building. Code violations exist such as no handicap access, the sprinklers are inadequate, there is poor door clearances, plumbing is antiquated, there are no grease trap, the furnace needs to be replaced, the building is heated by electrical units which are not cost effective, there is no ventilation system, the structural foundation is cracked and the air quality is poor. There is no way to enlarge the fire station and add to the parking at this present site.

Police Department has no handicap accessible, egress and ingress are serious problems, the building layout just does not work for the department's needs, the boiler is 24 years old, the electric panel is inadequate, insufficient outlets, the computer room is wide open, there is no ventilation, no fire alarm system, many masonry repairs are needed, the roof needs to be replaced, there is ground water in the basement along with rats in the building (presently, the employees have put up plastic sheets as drop cloths up in the

ceiling to prevent maggots from falling down). The recommendations are that some of these items be handled immediately.

This is a handsome building built in 1855. However, even with the cost of renovations, the existing floor plan needs to be changed.

The essential repairs for all facilities would total \$1 million and needed expansion at the ambulance and police stations would boost costs to \$4.6 million when site work and land acquisition are factored in.

Sandy Moody, a town resident, told the council that many people would like to see something done but felt that there are other options besides renovating the downtown buildings or constructing a whole new complex. She suggested the former Winthrop Medical Center property could be considered. Moody predicted that if the council revives the \$4 million proposal on U.S. Route 202, it would again be voted down.

Charlie Clark, administrative assistant at the Police Department, pleaded for some relief stating a serious morale problem.

Councilor Cookson reminded everyone that this evaluation confirms what at 30-member committee learned over three years of considering Winthrop's Public Safety Report.

Mr. Mann showed the results of the comparisons that were done with other towns and their facilities in the state, Ellsworth and Camden specifically. Councilor Norris asked why other towns like Oakland and Gardiner were not included in the comparisons. Mr. Mann explained that the figures presented were from towns that his company designed.

Estimate of the repair work has a 10% contingency. The numbers are per square foot. Some numbers are probably high some are probably low.

Councilor Cookson thanked Mr. Mann for this work and this evening's presentation. He commented that he felt a lot of this report covered the same ground that the Public Safety Committee did for the past three years. Regardless of what the town ultimately decides to do, something has to be done. This assessment is what

town people wanted to see. The Committee results were \$4 million. This assessment report is projecting an amount of \$4.6 million and includes buying a couple of pieces of property. In addition, it was confirmed that this report as presented did not include the cost of moving the dispatch center into temporary housing.

Councilor Norris commented that it seemed clear that some sort of work session with as many residents that can participate needs to be formed in order to dig a little deeper in this assessment report in a less formal setting allowing a month or two to digest both reports and compare it.

Councilor Buck agreed that time to look at other options was definitely needed.

Councilors Engdahl and Caprara also agreed but with the qualification that some things needed to be done right away and both wondered why things like pest control were not part of the day to day operation and maintenance noting that that does not need a committee - some things need to be done right away.

Chairwoman Putman commented that she is willing to wait a little while, but there are very significant problems and a committee was formed that looked at this situation and evaluated and made significant proposals for 3 ½ years. She noted that one-month should be sufficient.

Councilor Norris stated that the other piece that the council needed to include in the evaluation that the committee did not have was from the referendum and why it was not successful, depending, of course, who you talked to. Too much money was top of the list. He went on to say that he wants to avoid making a judgment mistake by getting feedback before making a decision.

Public comment this evening supported these thoughts - to make the original committee report and this assessment evaluation available and to take some time with a newly formed committee to study and compare the two avoiding the idea that the town is going too quickly again to form its decision.

Councilor Norris stated that if people feel this is being rushed, it would be defeated. He made a motion seconded by MacDonald

that the Chair appoint a committee that will sit down, take both reports together, glean out information, formulating a decision, and recommend a direction to go and getting to this point by soliciting as many ideas and recommendations from the public.

Further discussion ensued.

Councilor Caprara commented that something needs to be done but did not see why more input was needed. The council knows what is needed.

Police Chief Young spoke, solely as a taxpayer, and asked the council members to make a decision.

The Council was reminded that there was a motion on the floor to set up a committee, with a schedule to explore alternative measures and simultaneously advertising a public forum opened to all to obtain as much input as possible. At the end of this time (whether it be a month or two), the council will be in a better position to decide what direction to take.

Councilor Cookson commented that he could not vote for this motion and that setting a schedule is not doing anything positive. He reminded the group that the Public Safety Committee had multiple public sessions and hardly anyone attended.

The Council took a break for five minutes and resumed the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Councilor Caprara stated that she had rethought her initial position. She now recommended that since all the information is readily at hand, the council should set up work sessions taking public comments and solicit public input reviewing and considering other potential sites.

Councilor Norris noted that the five-minute break was very productive. He withdrew his motion and Buck seconded that withdrawal. He asked that the Chair should suggest how to proceed.

The Chair will appoint a committee and propose a schedule that will include some work sessions and public hearings for a two-month period. The first work session will be held on 7/16 and the

second on 7/31. This will give the public adequate time to review the contents of both reports. Both sessions will start at 7:00. p.m. at the town hall. Anyone who has questions and concerns needs to attend and with this power point presentation on the website and with copies of Mr. Mann's report at the town office and on a disk at the library as well as on the town's web site, the public will be well informed.

The intent is to review the background work that the committee did and this assessment report. These work sessions will be well advertised. The public is also encouraged to send emails to the town manager.

Item #75 Discussion of Council Goal - ask the Planning Board to review zoning ordinances to see if amendments are needed to spur housing projects.

One of the Council goals for affordable housing was to ask the Planning Board to review the Zoning Ordinance to see if there are amendments needed to spur some projects. The Zoning Ordinance was mentioned a few times during the economic development forum last month. One of the issues was the added cost to residential builders because of lot size restrictions.

Councilor Caprara stated that before the council moves forward they first needed to define what is meant by housing projects - single-family housing, apartment complexes - this clearly needs to be defined before asking the Planning Board to review anything.

Councilor Buck stated that the Planning Board needs to look at all of it.

Councilor Caprara reminded everyone that the agenda item involved specifically housing projects and a definition is needed prior to discussion.

The Chair suggested that the Planning Board should be put on notice while the Council starts discussing affordable housing. The Council can move forward with the recommendations and at the next meeting put this back on the agenda - affordable housing.

Motion by Cookson and seconded by Caprara to ask the Planning Board to review the zoning ordinance for possible amendments to help affordable housing projects. Vote 7-0.

Manager's Report

Motion by Cookson and seconded by Caprara to accept a \$100 donation to the Ambulance Service. Vote 7-0.

Three contracts with mental health agencies for the Porch Light program have been signed.

There were 570 hearings on the property reevaluations. Everyone that had a hearing will receive a report on what the decision is. There is an abatement process once the tax bills go out.

Councilor Caprara noted that she has been told from numerous residents about their distress over sky rocketing rates on properties on the water.

The town manager noted that the last revaluation was sixteen years ago and many taxpayers had their taxes go down.

Chairman Norris stated that he sat in on a few hearings and how impressed he was on how well they went and how well people were treated. He noted that the website was very helpful. He also reminded those that had concerns that this was a mass appraisal and that the town could not afford to have this company do it with specificity. That is just the nature of the process.

Councilor Caprara commented that she would like to know how many abatements were successfully changed.

Councilor Engdahl asked that a pest control company be contacted right away to take care of the infestation in the Police Station. The town manager responded that a company had been contacted.

Motion by Buck and seconded by MacDonald to adjourn at 10:15 p.m. Vote 7-0.