

Special Town Council Meeting Minutes: December 19, 2016

Attending: Sarah Fuller, Chairperson; Richard Henry, Barbara Buck, David Bubier, Linda Caprara, Priscilla Jenkins, Linda MacDonald, Chief Brooks, Deputy Chief John Palleschi, 15 firefighters, Phil Locashio, Charlie Eichacker, Melody Main, Peter Nielsen, Betsey Rowe, Roger Kilgore, Russ Hazard, Eric Conrad, Chief Frost, Linda Huff, Gil Turcotte

Business Meeting: Chairperson Fuller called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and began the meeting, to wit:

The Chairperson recognized Deputy Chairperson and Winthrop Fire Department member Richard Henry, who led a recognition ceremony for Deputy Fire Chief John Palleschi, who is retiring from the Fire Department after 39 years of service to the town. Deputy Chief Palleschi accepted a plaque and two standing ovations in thanks for his many years in the department and the community.

Item 136. Fire Chief Brooks and Architect Phil Locashio presented a model and plans for a new fire station. Chief Brooks had met with the neighbors again, and included trees and fencing to separate the station from nearby residences.

Chief Brooks presented a Suggested Financing Option Sheet that reduced contingency funding from the estimator's \$200,000 to \$150,000. One goal was to keep the annual project loan cost below \$127,000/yr. The proposal was for annual payments of \$119,720. Chief Brooks said the donated \$450,000 could be used for items the town might opt not to provide otherwise, or alternatively, be used to reduce debt when the project is complete. Councilor Henry stressed the importance of taking full advantage of the donation rather than jeopardize it with delay. Chief Brooks said we are in contact with the donor. Chief Brooks reminded the Council that various options remain for the old station, once it is vacated.

Councilor Caprara questioned the purposes for the hose tower. Chief Brooks explained its use for drying hose and training exercises. He mentioned that an existing stove, washer and dryer would be used rather than bought new.

Councilor Bubier asked about the 10% contractor's fee. Phil Locashio said competitive bidding may reduce the number somewhat.

Councilor Jenkins asked why there was no heat pump. Phil Locashio said that would raise the project cost, but could be added later.

Betsy Rowe asked if the training room at the Police station could be used instead of putting one in the fire station. Chief Brooks said there are features of the building designed to have firefighters at the facility for what amounts to faster response.

Chairperson Fuller said this project is a long standing priority, that the \$450,000 donation is a huge benefit not to be lost by delay, and that other challenges ought not keep the town from moving ahead.

Roger Kilgore agreed that wood frame construction with a sprinkler is the most economical construction method. Chief Brooks agreed, comparing costs with Augusta and Manchester's projects.

Russ Hazard asked about the building's capacity and the possibility of expansion in the future. Phil Locashio said there is a possibility for expansion to the south. Peter Nielsen explained details of a

loan available from USDA Rural Development at favorable terms.

Phil Locashio said bid specs and drawings will be ready by the end of January. A three week bid period will be followed by a week for bid review, with possible bid award at the March Council meeting.

Councilor Henry moved that we seek construction bids, seconded by Councilor Caprara. Councilor MacDonald was opposed due to the school budget problem. Councilor Jenkins was opposed due to disagreements over wood construction and energy source considerations. Councilors Bubier and Fuller spoke in support. The Council approved the motion to seek construction bids (Henry, Caprara, Bubier and Fuller in favor; Buck, Jenkins, and MacDonald opposed).

Item 137. Peter Nielsen explained the need for an additional \$850,000 in tax anticipation borrowing. Peter read a memorandum from Town Attorney Lee Bragg concerning revenue errors in the school budget that necessitate this loan. Councilor Henry felt the Superintendent should resign. Councilor Caprara said whatever savings are found in the current school expense budget should be duplicated in the next budget cycle. Councilor MacDonald explained a lack of trust coming from the \$58,000 “shed” issue. Councilor Bubier expressed concern with raising property taxes to fix the problem. Peter Nielsen and Melody Main acknowledged the school department’s efforts to save on expenses. Russ Hazard mentioned a state financial team that can review school figures so that revenues match expenditures. Councilor Henry asked the Town Manager to consult with the Town Attorney on measures available to the Council to help control and prevent problems now and in the future. The Council voted to approve the Order providing for up to \$850,000 in tax anticipation borrowing from Androscoggin Bank (Jenkins/MacDonald, 7-0).

Item 138. Peter Nielsen explained a proposal to create a short term committee to produce a simple computation form/report for both Town and School budgets, and suggest related budget process changes. The Council approved the idea. The committee will include a Board of Education member, a Town Councilor, Finance Director, School Accounts Payable/Budget Coordinator, RHR Smith Senior Accountant Bruce Nadeau, Consultant Gerald Nault, and Assessor Linda Huff, all at no cost to the town. The Council felt the Superintendent and Town Manager should attend. The Council voted to make Councilor Caprara its representative (Henry/Buck, 7-0).

Item 139. The Council voted (Caprara/Jenkins, 7-0) to sign quit claim deeds for satisfied tax obligations for:

- 1) Patrice A. Clark and Patricia A. Clark for property shown on Map 3 Lot 2
- 2) Melissa A & Kurt Webster for property shown on Map 23 Lot 21
- 3) Melissa A & Kurt Webster for property shown on Map 23 Lot 22.

Other Business: The council’s next meeting will be January 9, 2017.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.