

Board of Selectman/Board of Finance Meeting (Special): Minutes
Tuesday, November 4th, 2014
Town Hall Meeting Room

Present: First Selectman Gayle Weinstein, Selectman Dennis Tracey, Board of Finance Committee: Michael Carter, Allan Grauberd, Melissa Koller, Jerry Sargent, Richard Bochinski, Steve Ezzes, Town Administrator Tom Landry, Director of Finance Rick Darling, Administrative Assistant Randi Derene and Weston Residents.

Ms. Weinstein called the meeting to order at: 8:25pm

This meeting was recorded and videotaped. Copies are available in the Selectman's office. The meetings are available for viewing online via the Town's website.

Discussion/decision regarding the revenue and expense outlook for the FY2015-16 operating, capital and debt service budgets. – Gayle Weinstein, First Selectman.

Mr. Landry did a great job on preparing a memo regarding our budget outlook. (memo attached)

Mr. Tracey said that he would like to propose this year a potential increase in the First Selectmen's salary. It has been at the same level for 5-6 years and is far below comparable positions both within the town and outside the town. While most people who occupy this position do it for community service, we can't always count on that.

Mr. Tracey proposes to continue this position as PT, with FT being voluntary. He suggests brining the PT salary up to a living wage.

It was brought to Mr. Tracey's attention that we should provide an updated job description. Mr. Bochinski thinks Mr. Tracey is right on target. Ms. Weinstein added that she feels this position should remain as part time.

Discussion decision regarding status and potential financing of Public Safety and Library capital initiatives - Gayle Weinstein and architect Brian Humes

The basic schematic of the public safety complex is complete. She wants to have a conversation about the generalities of this project, such as the square footage, and whether we think the Town Meeting will approve the cost. Estimates from Mr. Humes are \$500/ per sq foot to complete this building. The gross square footage is 15,819 which would give us a cost of \$7,909,500.00. Ms. Weinstein asks those in attendance if they have any questions.

One question the average tax payer might ask is "why the spend?" One issue is that we have several code issues in the Police Department that we need to address. The PD is also in a state of disrepair and in desperate need of renovation and an increase in space.

The question was asked about the costs to renovate versus the cost to build a new building. Also, we would like to demolish the portable annex and the Board of Education has told us we cannot use space in a school building for Town staff, so we need to find a new home for our employees.

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Our goal is to build a new Public Safety Complex that ties in all of our public safety personnel as well as renovate the existing police station for land use and human services.

Mr. Tracey wanted to clarify his understanding of the cost of this project. At first he heard it was approximately \$6.5 million, but now he is hearing \$8 million. Mr. Humes explained that the original price quote was for the construction/site work at a cost of \$400/sq foot. The \$500/sq foot is total project cost, including other project related costs. Also, the square footage has increased slightly. In addition to the \$8 million dollar request for the Public Safety Complex, there would be a \$1.8million request for the town hall renovation. This cost would also include demolishing the annex. So, total cost would be approximately \$10 million.

One of the other issues is the storm water drainage. It is currently located in the same area we would like to put the new proposed building. It was suggested that we could possibly relocate the storm water drainage fields to behind the onion barn. Also, if we get DEEP approval we can build a leaching field for a new septic system behind the Library. Also needed would be an infiltration basin underground in front of town hall. The approximate costs are about \$200,000 as compared to the \$50,000 that was originally discussed. But this would be about half the cost of pumping it to the Xenon plant, which would be about half a million dollars, which we are hoping DEEP will not make us do.

There was much discussion about the details of the plan.

Mr. Tracey asked what our options are if we wanted to cut back. What would be least painful thing to give up? Mr. Humes said cutting back doesn't remove the need, it defers the need. Mr. Humes says there is really no "fat" left to cut. He's trying to give us a 20 year plus solution.

Ms. Weinstein explained the general scheme and vision of this project which is trying to create a "public safety complex." The Police Station, Communication Center, Firehouse, and EMS will be all located in one area. Other side of building is where we would be creating the public space and public parking for the town hall complex. This will free up the lower level to bring land use and human services back to town hall. All the town hall offices will be under one roof, which make logistical sense.

Mr. Sargent stated that we need to address to the tax payers why we are not able to use the school space. Ms. Weinstein was told by the Board of Education that "the schools cannot be the solution to the town's problems", so town has to look elsewhere.

Ms. Weinstein reviewed proposed changes to Town Hall, including renovating the lower level for Land Use and IT offices, creating a human services suite in the upper level of the police department, relocating the First Selectman and Assistant to create a more conducive Selectman's office, and giving actual office for the registrar of voters.

Mr. Landry discussed the price differential between purpose designed space vs. rehab designed space. It would be a significant number, but not significant enough, especially since we do not have access to the school buildings.

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Regarding funding, Mr. Darling discussed issuing a bond as well as money taken from the General Reserve Fund. Property Taxes would most likely increase 1%.

It was agreed by all that the public would need to be educated on the needs for this project, especially the needs of the Police Department.

It was requested that Mr. Humes provide comparable PD plans/building costs from other towns before any decisions are made. Also requested is a cost breakout of the \$500/sq foot. Funding will be discussed at a later date.

Library space needs assessment: The Town has applied for a grant to improve code requirements, energy efficiency, new electrical outlets, and a generator. The Library Board has hired a Space Needs Consultant and they would like to create a modern day library with additional community space.

Discussion/decision regarding the approval of the 2015 Schedule of Selectman's Meetings

Mr. Tracey approved the 2015 Schedule of Selectman's Meetings, Ms. Weinstein seconded, motion carried.

Request for Property Tax Refunds:

David Muller	\$50.21
Brian Campbell	\$882.77
Robert K. Cary	\$77.78
USB Leasing	\$482.60

Total \$1,493.36

Mr. Tracey makes motion to approve the property tax refunds for the total of \$1493.36, Ms. Weinstein seconds, motion carried.

Adjourned: 10:26pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Randi Derene
Administrative Assistant

Approved: December 15, 2014