



**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, June 3, 2014 at 7:00PM
Town Hall Meeting Room**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair, Stu Sklar in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Selectmen Ron Ricci, Lucy Wallace, Marie Sobalvarro and Leo Blair were all in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan.

MINUTES

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 5/6, as presented.
On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 5/20, as presented.

TOWN HALL UPDATE

Envelope Analysis

Bragan reported only one firm responded to the inquiry. The board discussed their disappointment with the scope of work outlined in the proposal and the cost to do it. Each board member commented on what their expectations are and what they would like to pursue further with WJE. Bragan suggested that the Building Inspector may be able to recommend a local tradesman who could do the evaluation. Ultimately, the board is interested in finding out if there are any obvious major concerns with the building envelope.

On a Blair/Ricci motion, the board voted unanimously to authorize the Town Administrator to get a recommendation from the Building Inspector of someone capable of doing the envelope inspection with a budget up to \$5,000.00 and to have the Town Administrator go back to WJE with expectations asking for them to revise their proposal, and to contact other firms.

Lease municipal office space and Community Center concept

Town Administrator Tim Bragan began the discussion confirming there is space available in town for lease that can accommodate both municipal offices and school administration. He said the estimated cost to lease just municipal offices is \$86,000 to \$120,000 per year.

Bragan said the proposal outlined can achieve operational needs of the town and the community's desire to utilize the town hall building for community functions and activities. Bragan recommended that the town hall building be leased and anchored by the Center on the Common while combining the functions of Park & Recreation with Community Education. He said it is similar to how the Town of Littleton does converted an old school. Bragan said the town would have to decide on leasing or selling the old library building.

Bragan then reviewed the financial picture if the town moves forward with option 1B. He said the construction cost of the project is \$3.97 million adding in the \$185,000 that was approved for schematic design brings the total cost to \$4.155 million. He explained with a twenty year borrowing at 4.5% interest the total principal and interest for the project will be \$6.1 million. Over the same twenty years and at the same 4.5% interest rate, he said the cost to the town would be \$2.4 million to lease municipal office space. Bragan expects the board would have to address the exterior and structural deficiencies that have been identified with the building. Including the money already spent on this building (\$1,500,000) over the same twenty years at the same 4.5% interest rate the cost to the town would be \$2.2 million. He said

adding in the lease cost for twenty years (estimated at \$2.4 million) and the total cost to fix the exterior of the building along with the structural deficiencies brings the total to \$4.6 million. Bragan said this would save \$1.5 million over twenty years.

Points made by each board member:

Full speed ahead on Option 1B - fill our obligation to the voters – Leo Blair

Repair what is crucial with town hall building, move town hall staff to a appropriate office space during repairs to allow the public a trial period accessing municipal offices in another location (assuming public meetings would be held in town center during this time), to allow time for public feedback on the change – Lucy Wallace

Interesting financial picture – \$75,000 a year in savings

Concerned to delay project - community center idea is predicated on 2/3rds votes

Focus on 1B option but community center idea is worth considering - Marie Sobalvarro

Community center concept offers some savings and a more effective way to manage risk with older buildings - concerned moving forward on option 1B will consume funds quicker not allowing proper investigation of the other option – Ron Ricci

Interesting proposal – easier to raise funds for a community center than a town hall – Stu Sklar

The board members discussed moving forward with the first part of 1B (structural and exterior repairs) to stabilize the town hall building. In the meantime this would also allow time for public input on moving offices to a location on Ayer Road. Ricci was not in favor of moving the town offices during renovations unless necessary. Marie Sobalvarro pointed out there are funds within the construction budget to pay for moving and lease costs for a year. Blair encouraged execution of option 1B acknowledging other decisions will need to be made along the way.

After some further debate and discussion, the following motions were made:

On a Sobalvarro/Ricci motion, the board voted (4-1 Wallace nay) to continue with option 1B, both with exterior detail design construction drawings and interior with instructions to Drayton that our current intent is to bid and do the exterior first.

On a Wallace/Ricci motion, the board voted unanimously to authorize the Town Administrator to initiate the procurement process to find out about leasing appropriate office space within the Town of Harvard. The board members agreed to continue the conversation with other boards/committees and the public.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Ken Swanton, 14 Fairbank Street, Chair of Historical Commission said the commission has taken the position of supporting the restoration of town hall for town government. He personally likes option 1B and recommends the Selectmen hold a Special Town Meeting to approve moving the location of the town offices.

Robert Curran, 100 Slough Road, thanked the Selectmen for approving the Ken Harrod bike ride. He said the event was very successful. He asked the Selectmen to share any feedback they receive about the event.

NET-METERING AGREEMENT

Energy Advisory Committee member Jim Elkind and John Shortsleeve from Baystate Consultants (energy procurement consultant) were present. Elkind described the net metering agreement as a mechanism which could save the town up to \$900,000 in energy costs over 20 years. He said the net metering credits will amount to a 30% discount on a portion of the town's electric bills. Elkind explained Soltas LLC has a five megawatt solar farm in Brimfield and through state law they have the ability to export credits from their bill and distribute it to municipalities. He reviewed how the process got underway and is now asking the Selectmen to consider authorizing the Town Administrator to finalize negotiations. He expects they can reach acceptable terms and enter into a 20 year net metering purchase agreement. Elkind suggested any savings be used to fund ongoing energy conserving projects. Shortsleeve reviewed some of the details within the contract and how the SREC 1 project works. Bragan confirmed this agreement does not require town meeting approval. Some board members struggled to understand the town's liability if the project company goes into default or files bankruptcy but were assured if the town is not receiving credits the agreement is invalid. On a Wallace/Sklar motion, the board voted to authorize the Town Administrative to continue to negotiate an agreement with Soltas for the purchasing of net metering credits. (Wallace, Sklar, Ricci – Aye, Blair, Nay, Sobalvarro – Abstain)

CABLE COMMITTEE

Studio Update

Committee Chair Bill Johnson began by giving an overview of how progress was made on the new studio which became operational in March. Johnson said the committee is holding a dedication ceremony on Thursday, June 5th at 11am. He said this will be an opportunity to thank those who assisted in the project and invited the board members to attend.

Johnson said the new studio has already begun to prove beneficial to the community as a whole. They started training in basic production, students have formed a video production club and teachers have begun using the studio with their classes. Johnson was excited to announce through the Community Education program teachers from Assabet Valley will be teaching a video curriculum class this summer. Johnson reported all meetings are now being posted on UTube. They are also encouraging community groups to use the studio space once they have had some training on how to properly use the equipment. He added the committee intends on obtaining additional insurance to cover possible damages to equipment.

Cable contract renewal

Bill Johnson and Tim Bragan said they are awaiting response from Charter to move forward on the contract negotiations. They both confirmed Comcast will become Harvard's new cable provider and will have to honor our contract with Charter. Stu Sklar asked if Harvard has any other options. Johnson clarified the Department of Telecommunications and Cable only regulate cable television not internet or phone service. He explained our contract discussions are solely on delivery of cable services. He said we may be able to negotiate investment in infrastructure for use with other data purposes (internet networking) but we are only negotiating on cable services with this contract. Johnson explained our cable provider does not have to share infrastructure with other providers therefore another provider of services (internet, phone or television) over cable would have to install their own infrastructure or buy what Charter owns. Unfortunately, he said Harvard is not an attractive market. Johnson said they are contemplating hiring an expert to negotiate the contract. He described the contract negotiations to include requests for investment in infrastructure (fiber optic network upgrade) for municipal use, support for video/audio communication for local access (high speed all digital network), testing data for quality of

service, capital award for future upgrades to high definition for the subscriber network and an increase in operating monies.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Tim Bragan reported Harvard's bond rating has been upgraded to triple AAA. He said Harvard is the only town in Worcester County with this rating.

Bragan told the board only one board member has submitted agenda items for the Strategic Planning Session. He has also not received input on liaison assignments. Bragan asked the board to finalize their summer meeting schedule. They decided to meet on July 8th, August 5th, September 9th and 23rd. They will add additional meetings if necessary.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY OPERATION & MAINTENANCE

On a Ricci/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the contract.

CHAPTER 90 REQUEST

On a Sobalvarro/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to approve state Chapter 90 request for \$51,021.

BANNER REQUEST

On a Blair/Ricci motion, the board voted unanimously to approve banners for Lion's Club Triathlon.

POSITIVE SPIN FOR ALS RIDE

On a Wallace/Sobalvarro motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the 2014 ALS Spin Ride through Harvard.

MS RIDE

On a Wallace/Sobalvarro motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the MS Ride.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm.

Documents referenced:

TOWN HALL UPDATE – leasing space – finances memo dated 6.3.2014
Municipal Offices & Community Center document
WJE proposal dated 5.23.2014
NET-METERING AGREEMENT - draft agreement dated 5.29.2014
Presentation dated 6.3.2014
Memo from John Shortsleeve dated 5.27.2014

CABLE COMMITTEE – presentation dated 6.2.2014

WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY – contract dated 5.29.2014