

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2015

The regular meeting for the Board of Selectmen convened at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's conference room at 110 Main Street. In attendance were Edward S. Harrison, Dr. Richard M. Smith, and John R. Morrell. Also present were Town Administrator Evan Brassard and the media.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:

Dr. Smith made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of December 23, 2014 – open and executive sessions. Mr. Morrell seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

Bellmen Lease:

Carolyn Bedard approached the Board of Selectmen and explained she had requested a change in the lease between the Monson Bellmen and the Town, since the original lease stated they had 1,875 square feet of land, and over the years they have received permission to expand to 5,250 square feet of land, located behind the Fire Station.

Ms. Bedard also explained what the Monson Bellmen are; they are an antique fire apparatus Fire Club and Museum containing a treasure trove of Monson Fire Department history and firefighting memorabilia from 1876 on. Ms. Bedard noted they have five pieces of motorized apparatus, three of them belonging to Monson. They have Monson's 1815 Old Tub which was Monson's first piece of equipment, the Chief's car, a 1906 Wirt Knox hose cart as well as an 1896 Seagrave hose cart. The museum is not open in the winter, but during the summer months they have one open house a month, and the public is invited to stop in.

Ms. Bedard said it costs between \$5,000 and \$6,000 a year to keep the Museum going, and this is done through trips they sponsor, can and bottle drives, tag sales, and donations.

Mr. Morrell congratulated Ms. Bedard for all of the hard work she puts into it, and stated this museum is a good thing for the town.

Mr. Morrell made a motion to approve the amended lease agreement. Dr. Smith seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

Tree City U.S.A.:

Valerie Beaudoin and Leona “Lee” Brahen approached the Board of Selectmen and noted the application has been completed by the Tree Committee, and explained it. Ms. Beaudoin noted they have the money so there will be no additional money from the taxpayers to pursue the \$2 per capita which is part of the requirements for the Tree City.

Ms. Beaudoin stated for 2015, the Tree Committee will be maintaining the trees in the public realm around town, finishing off with and moving forward from, the tornado damaged areas. They will also continue pruning the trees they planted throughout the town at no additional expense to the town, as this falls within their volunteer work.

Ms. Beaudoin said this upcoming spring the planting will be fruit trees and blueberry bushes, and this will expand outside the tornado area.

Ms. Beaudoin noted sometime in March they will be requesting an official proclamation to finalize all the pieces of the application for Tree City U.S.A.

Mr. Brassard noted Town Counsel had some minor revisions as well as some language tweaks throughout the document. Mr. Brassard noted the overall mission is very commendable.

It was agreed to wait until the next meeting to finalize this as one package, allowing the Board of Selectmen time to review the document.

Mr. Brassard said the Tree Committee has done a tremendous amount of work throughout the community and its members are looking to broaden their scope and continue their work, and he feels this is tremendously positive.

Mr. Morrell said he thinks it’s good the Tree Committee will continue providing volunteer work on behalf of the trees.

Mr. Harrison thanked the Tree Committee as well, adding this saved the town a lot of money.

Flynt Quarry Discussion:

Leslie Duthie approached the Board of Selectmen and explained the Town of Monson and the Opacum Land Fund have worked together and submitted a grant to the Division of Conservation and Recreation, and they have received a grant in the amount of \$10,400 for trail work at the Flynt Quarry.

Ms. Duthie said they have three brand new trails at Flynt Quarry; one of which is the Monson High School cross country trail, which is marked in blue. The yellow trail loops pretty far up into the property using some of the old existing trails as well as some new trails. The third trail will travel along the backside of the edges of the former quarry. Ms. Duthie noted there are some historic items that can be seen from the trail and they are working with the Historic Commission to create a history trail through the Flynt Quarry. Ms. Duthie said they are going to continue maintaining the old rail bed as well.

Ms. Duthie explained in creating the new trails, one of the things people kept bringing to her was opening up the face of the quarry. Ms. Duthie said the brush has grown up so much you can't even tell it was once a quarry and she would like permission to have volunteers clear about 150 feet of brush along the length of it. It was noted this is town owned land and not conservation land. Signage will be installed notifying hikers of the dangers as this is a natural hazard; no climbing on the rock surface or walking too close to the edge.

Dr. Smith made a motion to allow Ms. Duthie and a group of volunteers to clear the brush at the quarry as needed. Mr. Morrell seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

Open Space Plan – Equal Access to Facilities and Activities Policy:

Leslie Duthie approached the Board of Selectmen regarding the Open Space Plan – Equal Access to Facilities and Activities Policy.

Mr. Brassard explained the Board has a copy of the proposed policy, as attached, which is needed in order to submit Monson's Open Space Plan and have it approved. Mr. Brassard noted this is basically a grievance policy for access issues that might come up. This will provide the public with the ability to file a grievance or to voice their concerns whether it's comments, complaints, and/or to resolve grievances or inquires.

Mr. Morrell felt people should be able to stay anonymous if they wish. Mr. Brassard explained they can remain anonymous in the initial phase, however if they don't like how it was handled or the outcome and want to pursue it further, they won't be able to remain anonymous as they would have to work with us to resolve the issue.

Mr. Brassard also stated he would like to change the name to "Town of Monson Open Space Plan and Recreation - Equal Access to Facilities and Activities Policy".

Ms. Duthie noted the playground at Veteran's Field is being built as handicapped accessible, as well as some of the facilities back there that will be accessible for handicapped people to use. The committee is also looking at the feasibility of creating a handicapped accessible trail at the Flynt Quarry on the former rail bed where it's flat. Ms. Duthie noted that due to the terrain of the town, it's not feasible to make all the trails handicapped accessible.

Mr. Harrison said he would change the first word on the policy from "Maximum" to "Reasonable". After a brief discussion, it was agreed to change the beginning wording to Mr. Brassard's suggestion and go with "Reasonable accommodation".

Dr. Smith made a motion to approve the Town of Monson Open Space and Recreation - Equal Access to Facilities and Activities Policy as amended. Mr. Morrell seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

Memorial Hall Discussion:

Leslie Duthie approached the Board of Selectmen and explained the Town of Monson appropriated CPA funds to do the life safety and issue repairs at Memorial Hall. A committee was formed composed of a member of the Arts Council, a member of the CPC, and a member of the Historic Commission, to monitor the life and safety issues going forward and the repairs occurring at Memorial Hall. The \$321,400 appropriated for the repairs has been for the most part, used up, and apparently this is just a drop in the bucket. A lot of the problems that exist in Memorial Hall are some of the repairs are costing more than originally anticipated.

Ms. Duthie explained the committee has completed just about all the repairs they can with the CPA funds allotted. The work is not complete. They still have a lot of work they are overseeing. The ADA Compliance component of the project will be completed and the wiring and the alarm systems have also been done.

Ms. Duthie thanked Custodian Paul DeMaio for all of his work there, and the help in keeping the cost down.

Ms. Duthie said the building still isn't compliant and therefore unable to be used freely. The window situation still has not been addressed. Only one side of the building, the south side, has windows that are completed. Ms. Duthie said it does look like the doors on the street side will be refitted so they will comply with safety regulations and still look like the Memorial Hall doors.

Ms. Duthie noted as Chair of the CPC this is not her strong point, understanding historic structures and the kinds of changes that need to be made in order to be able to use the building. Ms. Duthie asked for some guidance in prioritizing the issues and breaking it down into components, and the scope of work in general in the projects still needing to be addressed, as well as other opportunities for funding. Ms. Duthie noted grants will be needed as well to assist with the costs as she feels this is going to be an on-going project.

Mr. Brassard said the real problem is the committee ran into a scope that is not easily contained. You do one thing and it snowballs into something else due to years of deferred and/or Band-Aid repairs. Mr. Brassard said you have to step back and look at the project as a whole. Mr. Brassard said a new committee needs to be formed with community involvement from anyone with any expertise in this area, to figure out how to pay for the assessments.

Ms. Duthie said when the CPA was approved at Town Meeting, it was with the understanding grants would be applied for to assist with the costs. Ms. Duthie said sometimes that can be very challenging and noted the town could do bonding, and use CPA funds over time, towards the various components of this project.

Dr. Smith suggested having the Town Planner Dan Laroche, look at the building as a whole and prioritize items.

Mr. Harrison said his guess would be you're looking at a million dollars to get the building to where it should be. Ms. Duthie agreed.

It was agreed the first step is to form a committee comprised of five to six people to lead the project. Mr. Brassard said Mr. Laroche could help steer the committee as an ex-officio.

Mr. Brassard stated Mr. Laroche is looking at a State historic grant with a member from the Historical Commission.

MDC Property Municipal Use Discussion:

Mr. Brassard explained in order for the MDC Reuse project to move forward, the Town must acknowledge they have no use for it. Both the Reuse Committee and the Town have agreed they feel there is no municipal use.

Dr. Smith made a motion the Town of Monson has no municipal use for the MDC site. Mr. Morrell seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

In Other Business to Come Before the Board:

- Mr. Brassard asked the Board for a change in the custodial hours. The former custodian who took care of the Police facility worked one hour a day five days a week. Mr. Brassard is proposing adding one hour to allow a custodian to work two hours a day three days a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. This person will clean the bathrooms; remove trash, and do general sweeping for both the Police Department and the Town Office sides. Mr. DeMaio's hours will remain the same.

Dr. Smith made a motion to increase the custodial position by one hour a week. Mr. Morrell seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

Mr. Brassard said he will advertise the position.

Correspondence was read and completed.

At 8:30 p.m., Mr. Morrell made a motion to adjourn from open session to go into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation – pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, Sec. 21(3), not to return to open session. Dr. Smith seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

John R. Morrell, Clerk