



OFFICE OF SELECTMEN
Post Office Box 487
Marlborough, New Hampshire 03455-0487

Telephone (603) 876-3751 Fax (603) 876-3313
E-mail: selectmen@marlboroughnh.org Website: www.marlboroughnh.org

//

SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
October 18, 2021

Chairman Paignt opened the meeting at 10:00 am. Also present was Selectmen Jane Pitt and Earl Nelson, Ed Moura, Doug Hamshaw, Jeff Miller, Maidli Hill, JoEllen Switzer, Bob Sweet.

Bob Sweet had requested this meeting with the Selectmen and representatives from the 150 Committee, Friends of the Frost Free Library and the Trustees of the Frost Free Library. Jeff Miller was the appointed speaker to share the consensus of the three parties. He stated that all parties want the project as opposed to no project. They support the west side but would support the east side if it was financially viable. They want the "full boat" option including the children's bump-out addition on the west side. The 150 Committee is unable to bridge the cost difference. Would support the town in searching for grant opportunities. Inflation costs are a concern. They feel the donors' enthusiasm may be less for the east side option. If Selectmen sponsored a warrant article that asked for town funds to bridge the cost difference between two sides, they would submit a petition warrant article to overturn the Selectmen's decision to move forward with the east side in the event the money article fails. If the first article was approved, they would move to pass over the second article. Effective immediately no funds from the Friends can be spent on the east side option. No donors are expected to withdraw and no legal action is expected and would not be encouraged. If a legal agreement is necessary for moving forward, the Friends attorney will be used billable to the Town.

Selectmen Nelson asked for clarification that any east side option would need to include a west side bump-out as well. Bob Sweet confirmed. Selectman Pitt commented that due to the strings the group has attached in the presentation, the only option she saw was going to town meeting with the warrant article to overturn the decision, as the "full boat" option was too high to ask taxpayers for in light of an expected school tax increase this year. She noted that there is no reason to spend any further time or money until we see where we end up at town meeting. Ed Moura felt the article will pass as the Selectmen have not given him enough reasons for why to support the east side. Selectman Pitt said unfortunately we do not agree.

Doug Hamshaw was concerned that there are many rumors out there including that we are adding a second floor, expanding into the parking lot, etc. The Selectmen have heard the same rumors and others.

JoEllen Switzer asked why the west side was not deemed safe by the Selectmen. Selectman Nelson answered that all the information discovered about the site and the tunnel together with the severe flooding in July were reasons why he felt the east side was the safer option. He stated he is responsible for all citizens in town.

Ed Moura asked about setbacks. Selectman Pitt explained the town was exempt from zoning but as a courtesy the project was submitted to the Planning and Zoning Boards. She estimated a side setback could be 20 feet. Jeff Miller asked if having an engineer on-site at all times would alleviate the Selectmen's concerns about the tunnel. Doug Hamshaw responded that the Selectmen feel the safer option is the east side and an engineer on site would not change that decision. JoEllen Switzer said it seems that the issue will need to go to town meeting. Selectman Nelson replied that it appears to be the best option at this point.

There was a discussion about the expected costs. Doug Hamshaw reported he felt inflation was still at 20% or \$150,000. Estimates show the “full boat” east side option at \$200,000, plus architect costs. Selectman Pitt asked for clarification on what the 150 Committee feels could be raised. Bob Sweet was confident that \$100,000 could be raised towards inflation costs. Selectman Pitt asked if this amount would be for either side. Bob Sweet confirmed any funds raised for inflation would be for whichever option the town moves forward with. Jeff Miller commented that based on all estimates, it appears the “full boat” east side option would require an additional \$235,000.

Ed Moura offered that all should revisit the Needs Assessment done in 2016. He highlighted what the report had determined was needed at the Frost Free Library, including accessible meeting space and an expanded children’s area. He said he had spent considerable time at the library observing what areas are most utilized. He then provided a handout questioning the need for a 75 person meeting space. Based on past gatherings, the size of those gatherings and parking restrictions, he questioned if we should be considering a classroom size meeting space similar to what Peterborough has done with their addition vs. a town-sized meeting hall.

Bob Sweet disagreed and said a large space would allow summer concerts to proceed in rainy weather instead of being cancelled. He estimated 38-43 cars could park at the church. Ed Moura commented that parking at the church is not easy access in winter months. Selectman Pitt questioned if this reconsideration should go back to the Trustees for consideration. Bob Sweet felt such a drastic change to the plan would be a problem with donors.

Jeff Miller asked if the Selectmen or the Town Administrator had any updates on grants. Selectman Pitt said the timeline for any grants we might find could take up to a year, maybe a little less. Selectman Pitt also spoke about other issues with the library building that will require attention, specifically she noted the moisture issues and windows in the original building. Ed Moura agreed that the old addition had issues with the ceiling and windows. Unless the Selectmen changed their decision, Ed Moura felt the only path forward was a petition warrant article to reverse the Selectmen’s decision as he felt the Selectmen are unable to defend their position. Jeff Miller left the meeting at 11:15 am. Ed Moura left the meeting at 11:30 am. Doug Hamshaw left the meeting at 11:45 am.

Bob Sweet asked if the Selectmen would agree to allow the Friends to proceed with completing the west side plans. The cost would be paid for by the funds that the Friends have not yet turned over to the town. Selectmen Pitt felt proceeding with either side at this point would not be wise as it appears the decision will be based on town meeting vote. Bob Sweet said that having the west side documents ready to go out to bid would save time if the warrant article passed. There was some discussion about what the architect cost would be to finish the west side plans. The Selectmen will consider the request. Bob Sweet, Maidli Hill, and JoEllen Switzer left the meeting at noon.

The Selectmen discussed the warrant article proposed by the library group and how the project would move forward if approved at town meeting. There were questions regarding the necessary majority for the motion to pass being a citizen’s petition. The Selectmen will need to clarify with town counsel. It was the general consensus that no additional money should be expended on either the east side or west side option if the library group’s plan was to go to town meeting.

Selectman Paight moved to adjourn at 12:45 pm. Seconded by Selectman Nelson. Vote was unanimous.

Submitted by,

Gina Paight