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October 24, 2011

Present was James M. Tomaszewski, James C. Lehan, Robert J. Garrity, Jack Hathaway, Town Administrator and Marian Harrington, Executive Assistant.

Jim Tomaszewski called the meeting to order at 11 a.m. The meeting was held in Room 124, Town Hall. This meeting is audio recorded. Jack Hathaway read the agenda contents.

BOB BULLOCK, BUILDING COMMISSIONER – UPDATE ON FEES

Bob told the Board he would like to update building fees. He said he did a review of fees over the last 10 years. Bob gave a list of turnovers. Jim T. noted that 2003 was the year we did the junior high.

Jim L. said the majority of work is new homes and renovations. There is a higher fee than most of the other area towns. Jim struggles with increasing anything that is already on the higher end of the scale. But he acknowledges we have expenses.

Bob said most of the towns on here have a commercial base. We don't. We are trying to charge fees to meet expenses. He said they were looking at the sheet metal permits, and decided to look at everything. They want to be sure the fee includes all the work they are doing. Their budget reflects the fees, but the budget has been cut as well as all the work they do hasn't. They wanted to look at the fees, to see if they don't have to have their budget cut. If you say you are fine with the fees, he is okay with that.

Jim L. said we are coming out of tough times. He doesn't want to burden the homeowner by raising fees. Rather than trying to look at these by pick and choose, maybe there are things we can do to help. Jim L. does not support any increases at this point.

Rob said at previous meetings, we are nibbling around the edges, but we need to do an analysis of the whole structure. Bob said the main permit fees haven't been changed the whole 11 years that he's been here, or even before that.

Jim T. asked Jack about transfers Bob needed the last 3 years. Bob said last year was \$9,000. It's been about 5% or less each year.

Jack reviewed the departments in town hall – building being 1/12th - \$155,000. Jack read the sheet with direct and indirect costs. Rob reviewed the indirect costs. Rob doesn't feel he has enough information of the right kind to make a decision.

Jim L. said we have to look at the overall process. We then need to do an analysis. He doesn't want to burden the taxpayer, but doesn't want to keep going into debt. Jim does not support this right now.

Jim T. asked Bob how long it would take you to do this analysis. Bob said it would a nightmare to evaluate all he does in different places. He would say a year. Bob said building has been pretty consistent. Jim T. said obviously there is not enough support for increasing fees right now.

Jim L. told Bob to get underneath all the fee structure and make sure we are where we should be on each one.

Rob suggested consulting the Beacon, ask for a permit fee study and ask for results. Look and see what's going on with area towns.

Bob stated he tried to figure the base numbers correctly. He said you need to find out what actual cost number is and start there and work your way back. Towns are all over the place. Ours was the most comprehensive for what we are permitting, and what the cost is.

Bob will come back when he has something for the Board. Jack would like one of the Selectmen to be Bob's contact in case he has questions. Rob Garrity will be his contact person.

WARRANT

The Board discussed the articles requiring Boards to audio tape meetings. They said this should be worked out through a policy rather than a bylaw.

Geneva Ave article. Rob said the decision was for a park or school use. If you build houses on this property, you may be heading down a road that you don't want to go. Fall Town Meeting has very few people, maybe 53 attend. That's who will be voting on this. Rob felt that there are too many questions. Rob said the first time he saw this was on a warrant in an open meeting. This should have been discussed first. No unified plan.

Jack said this is a topic he has been talking about since 2005; well before we started building the school. We need to decide at some point if we are going to use this road or not. As road commissioners, you need to make a decision. He put it on town meeting to generate revenue. He said he is only proposing this, and you can decide what you want to do.

Jim T. said the original road would be \$400-500K, but work has been done on the road, so it will probably only be maybe \$200,000. He remembered being on the Advisory Board years ago and having this discussion and it was before we knew about the school. The need for the secondary access to the school has always been there and something we need to look at.

Jim L. said Jack is doing his job in bringing forward recommendations on issues. This road has been a topic of discussion since he was on the School Committee in the 80's. Everyone favored a secondary road, and is a public safety issue. We need to be sure we can get to the school when a crisis takes place. How do we pay for it? That is the topic we are trying to resolve. There were implied considerations, not commitments, that we would try to get this road thru as part of construction. There is no value to the town to hold onto excess land when we can create revenue to help the town. Rob agrees there is due process that needs to take place, and we do get very poor attendance, and we need to work through this. This is not the time to be doing this. How do we get the revenue to make this happen?

Jim T. said leave the access road there as a permanent road. How will it be paved? Whether we sell the lots, that is different. They are owned by the school. They need to be declared by the School Committee.

The Board felt it is in the best interest of the Town to have that road. They discussed maybe having it paved with shared funds with the School Committee.

Bob said he has always been in favor of this road. We need to pave that road. Lots would be \$150 - \$175K per lot. He said it is walking distance to center, MBTA and school – beautiful neighborhood, reasonably priced homes that are affordable. Prime lots. Enough frontage and land for the two lots on Geneva. This would be an easy way to pay for the road sooner than later. Rob said it's okay to keep it as open space.

Jack said it's not a piece of land that the whole town is going to walk on. It's not a productive piece of land for the whole town use. Nice piece of land for the neighborhood.

Jim L. said we should take it off the warrant at this point. Jim T. supports it for the spring town meeting. We need to find the money to pave the road. Boardman is not a great street to take all the traffic.

Rob Garrity moved to reopen the warrant. Jim Lehan seconded and it was **so voted**.

Rob Garrity moved to remove the Geneva article for the fall town meeting. Jim Lehan seconded and it was **so voted**.

Jim Lehan moved to close the warrant. Rob Garrity seconded and it was **so voted**.

Jim L. said the road needs to get done. Irrelevant of contingencies, money cannot be used to pave the road. Jack said MSBA won't pay for this road. We never got an opinion on whether we can pave it while the asphalt is there and do it then. It might be a way to get substantially reduced costs to get the road done. Cut a deal. Jack said the whole problem with that theory is the timing. After the school is taken down, that's when all the unknown costs are going to happen – asbestos, etc. and that will be June, July, etc. That's when the paving will be done. To leave a funding source – Chapter 90 would be a safety net – we don't want to go back to town meeting. Jim L. suggested we go to the paving contractor and talk. Bob said we have already worked this out, and this is now an extra. Maybe with Chapter 90, we can negotiate and use that funding. Jim L. said get bids and see what the best deal is to get this done. If it's \$350K, that will remove Ch. 90 or free cash. We have no idea what the bids are. We need to do the engineering, first. Bob said there are bids out for engineering to get an idea of costs.

Bob discussed the Zoning article for Shire, and the tree bylaw. Shire will be off highway; change the C1. The intent of the tree bylaw is so that they can't go in and strip the land.

Bob agrees with Rob's comments, and it is okay to have open space. School was built as a green school. Trees cut down and it was developed. Two neighbors have had to build up septic systems above ground because the land is so wet. He is concerned about what building on that land will have on his neighbors who abut the land.

Bob said he grew up there and the neighborhood was always dry. When town center was built, then it became wet.

Being no further business, at 12:30 p.m., Rob Garrity moved to adjourn the meeting. Jim Lehan seconded and it was **so voted**.

This is a true and accurate report of the Special Meeting of October 24, 2011.

Robert J. Garrity, Clerk