

SELECTMEN'S MEETING

August 23, 2016

5:00pm

1. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Moved by Bill Shields, seconded by Elise Miller, to accept the agenda for August 23, 2016 as presented. The motion passed 3-0.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:** Moved by Bill Shields, seconded by Elise Miller, to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 16, 2016 as written. The motion passed 3-0.
3. **DEPARTMENT HEAD / COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES:** None

4. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. **Library Repairs:** Mrs. Roux reported that the contractor has agreed to do the insulation on September 26, 2016 at 8:30 for \$1500. He felt that the R20 insulation around the sides and along the underside of the floor in conjunction with the new heater, carpeting and floor, would improve the effort to retain heat.
- B. **Fire/Rescue Building – Fairgrounds:** Mrs. Roux reported that the Acton Fair Association has voted to accept the 12 x 28' building owned by the Town. Mrs. Miller noted that there was one minor grammar change that should be corrected on page 3, section 5 of the agreement. The Chairman stated that transferring the building to the Fair Association must still be voted on by the voters at a Town Meeting. Mrs. Roux will ask the Treasurer to add the building to the Town's Liability Insurance until the building is officially transferred.

The Chairman explained that currently this building is only used during the Acton Fair and serves as a first aid station and also is used by security. If this agreement is signed by both parties, the Town will continue to have first refusal of the building's use in any and all functions or events. Bill Shields made the motion, seconded by Elise Miller, to approve the agreement as written and all three Selectmen signed the document.

- C. **Recreation Committee/Soccer Program Volunteers:** Mrs. Roux reported that Deborah and Lowrie Robertson have agreed to organize the programs but would still like more volunteers to work on the committee.
- D. **Cemetery Committee:** Mrs. Roux reminded the Board that they asked for volunteers to serve on this committee at the last meeting and that two people have expressed interest. Consensus of the Board was that the composition of the Committee should be five members serving for one year. The Chairman noted that he knows of three more people that might be interested in serving. Mrs. Roux will draft an appointment document for this committee and bring it to the next meeting.
- E. **Tax Sale:** Tabled to the next meeting.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **Recreation Committee Members:** Moved by Bill Shields, seconded by Elise Miller, to appoint Deborah Robertson and Lowrie Robertson to serve on the Recreating Committee. The motion passed 3-0 and the oaths were signed by all three Selectmen.
- B. **GIS Internet Service Maintenance Agreement:** Mrs. Roux explained that this is an annual agreement that is in affect November 1, 2016 through October 31, 2017 and that the fee has not

been increased in five years. This service provides employee training, search functions have been improved and the program can now be used on tablets.

Moved by Elise Miller, seconded by Bill Shields, to approve the GIS Internet Service Maintenance Agreement for \$1800 for November 1, 2016 through October 31, 2017. The motion passed 3-0 and two copies of the agreement were signed by all three Selectmen.

C. 2016-2017 Tax Commitment: Mrs. Roux reported that the Board held a workshop before the meeting to review the 2016 – 2017 tax commitment. She noted that in comparing the figures from 2015 to 2016, the following factors will affect the tax commitment:

- The overall taxable real estate valuation declined approximately \$300,000, however the personal property assessment increased from \$90,000 to \$432,000 primarily because Time Warner claimed their poles in Acton in this year's valuation;
- The Homestead Exemption increased from \$11,000 to \$16,500; the State reimburses the Town 50% of that total;
- The County Tax increased about \$4,000;
- The Municipal Appropriations increased about \$16,000;
- The School Budget was increased from \$4,700,000 to about \$4,800,000.

The total overall assessment increased from \$7,500,000 to \$7,600,000. Also, based on the historical data for revenues of the past three to five years, it was decided that it would be safe to increase the projected revenues from \$959,000 to \$1,200,000, an increase of about \$300,000. The Auditor advised that the unofficial estimate of undesignated funds is about \$1,500,000; their recommendation is to maintain an undesignated fund balance of \$1,200,000.

Mrs. Roux explained that the overlay is the account that covers abatements or other unbudgeted emergencies. The recommendation is to set that fund little higher than usual because revenues now include the ambulance billing which is currently an unknown.

The Chairman noted that the current tax rate is \$11.55 per thousand and if \$250,000 is applied to the commitment, there would be a \$.30 drop in the tax rate. Mrs. Roux noted that retaining an amount each year to keep in a Capital Improvement Fund in case a new ambulance is needed, for example, or to fund road projects that have been postponed for many years could be considered.

The Chairman stated that the Treasurer has expressed confidence that these figures are reasonable.

Moved by Elise Miller, seconded by Bill Shields, to move \$250,000 from the Undesignated Funds to offset taxes setting a tax rate at \$11.25 per thousand. The motion passed 3-0.

D. Three Rivers Land Trust: Mrs. Roux notified the Board that the Land Trust had requested a letter of attestation from the Town to be included in their grant application. The Chairman read the proposed letter:

“To whom it may concern: Please consider this letter as verification that the voters of the Town of Acton approved the following article by written secret ballot on Tuesday, June 14, 2016 at the town-wide referendum: Question #1: Shall the Town vote to allow the Treasurer to execute a bond in the Town of Acton's name in the amount of \$75, 527 for a five year term with interest rate of up to 6% to raise and appropriate up to \$17,522 for payments of the loan;

appropriate a total of \$100,000 for the purpose of purchasing a 25 acre +/- parcel of land which is a portion of map 220, lot 002 known as Romac Orchards including the summit of Goat Hill. The balance of funds \$24, 473 shall come from Forestry Committee Reserve Fund. Said purchase is contingent upon fund raising efforts of the Three Rivers Land Trust to contribute an additional \$75,000 by June 30, 2017. The vote ended up being 326 yes, 257 no and 88 blank. With that said, assuming that Three Rivers Land Trust is able to contribute their amount as specified in the Warrant Article as specified above, it is the intent of the Board of Selectmen to keep the title to the property and maintain it as an open public space.”

Mrs. Roux noted that the letter does not include verbiage regarding walking trails, etc which may be required for the grant but the Committee can request a change if it becomes necessary. The Chairman wondered if including the requirement to maintain walking trails, etc. might be considered encumbering the Town which is not allowed.

Moved by Elise Miller, seconded by Bill Shields, to approve the letter of attestation as written. The motion passed 3-0 and the letter was signed by all three Selectmen.

- E. 248-015:** Mrs. Roux requested that this lot be deeded back to the original owner. The Chairman noted that the owner of the lot has paid all the outstanding taxes and that the Board feels that removing the property from the tax sale would be the right thing to do. He also stated that no bids have been received for the property.

Moved by Elise Miller, seconded by Bill Shields, to deed the property back to the owner as allowed in the Ordinance. The motion passed 3-0.

- F. 253-007:** Mrs. Roux explained to the Board that the owner of this property experienced a fire that totally destroyed the structure. The damage far exceeds the insurance coverage so the fees incurred from pulling permits to repair the damage must be paid by the property owner. She noted that the Board has waived fees generated by loss in the past. The State’s portion of the fees must be paid by the property owner.

Moved by Elise Miller, seconded by Bill Shields, to waive the Town’s portion of fees generated by repair of the loss to fire of the property on Map 253, Lot 007. The motion passed 3-0.

Mrs. Roux suggested that the Board consider a policy to handle this type of request.

- 7. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Steve Bodkin, Town Forester, noted that in 2012, timber harvesting activities within the Town of Acton were enforced based on State-wide standards. As a result, property owners applied directly to the State of Maine and the standards were enforced by that entity. Mr. Bodkin stated that recently, for a variety of reasons, the State has transferred that enforcement back to the town. He thinks the Zoning Ordinance no longer accurately reflects how timber harvesting is handled here at the town level. He would like to see a distinct intent expressed by the voters and the Board of Selectmen supporting that decision.

Mrs. Roux suggested holding a workshop that would include Mr. Bodkin, the Code Enforcement Officer, and the Planning Board Chairman to discuss the issue with the Board of Selectmen. Consensus of the Board was that Mrs. Roux will proceed with organizing that workshop.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- A. Road Committee Opening: one opening still unfilled;
- B. Flu Shots: Friday, September 23rd 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.;

- C. The Transfer Station will be closed on Monday, Sept 5 to observe Labor Day;
- D. Mary Grant Events” Picnic in the Park on Saturday, September 10th at noon; Pumpkin Carving in the Park at 4:00 p.m.;
- E. Fire Dept Roof Bid: Final day to submit is Tuesday, September 6, 2016;
- F. Library Entrance Bid: Final day to submit is Tuesday, September 6, 2016;
- G. Saco River Notice: An application has been received by the Saco River Corridor Commission from David Pepin for mineral extraction on property Map 207, Lot 5, on the H Road, to be considered on August 24 2016.

9. MEMBERS PRESENT: Ed Walsh, Bill Shields, Elise Miller

10. OTHERS PRESENT: Holly Mooney, Steve Bodkin, Robert Smith, Rollin Waterhouse, Paul Poyant, Jennifer Roux