

TOWN OF ACTON SELECT BOARD MEETING
November 29, 2023
6:00pm

MINUTES

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Winchell, Jr. called the meeting to order.

PUBLIC HEARING: FACILITY ASSESSMENT OLD FIRE STATION

Winchell, Jr. opened the meeting to public suggestions regarding the Old Fire Station/Gym building.

Roux read two emails received:

Valerie Doyle (via email) suggests that if the building can be converted to a safe space, reusing the building for the library.

Joyce Bakshi (via email) suggests demolition of the building.

Nancy Ruma agrees with Bakshi, in demolishing the building and using the space for better parking. Also suggesting that with the growth of the Acton community the municipal offices need to be revamped and expanded. The open space will lead to the potential for a community gathering hall as the current hall and kitchen space are not adequate for hosting public events.

Mary Stanton agrees that the building should be demolished, questioning why it hasn't already been. Stanton also questioned if the EMS building is being used, next to the Fire Station. Roux confirmed it is in use by the Sheriff, there is a meeting room and some of the gym equipment was moved there for the fire staff to use.

Adele Scritchfield stated it appears to be approximately \$800,000 to move the library and seems it would be best to just tear the building down.

Norwood suggested that if the residents want to renovate the building the town should research cost analysis for suggested projects prior to moving forward. Currently, the town appears to be leaning towards demolition.

Bernard Broder thinks this discussion is premature as we should start by updating our comprehensive plan for the town. If the primary concern is that the building is an eye sore, can we correct that prior to deciding what we can use the building for. Can the town paint the building and establish a better landscaping/planter outside the building to eliminate the "eye shore" of the building. If a use is found for the building later, the town can move forward with a renovation instead of a rebuild. Can we obtain an estimate to remediate the mold prior to deciding to tear down.

Scott Stanton thinks the building should be torn down, parking should be expanded, and a capital improvement plan should be established to move forward.

Elise Miller agrees that the building should be taken down and parking extended. The library does need to be expanded as they are outgrowing the space: suggesting a new library space with the potential to add an additional space for recreational use. Also stating the municipal building is being outgrown as well.

Joan Nash addressed funds being appropriated for this project/building: can we address what the article read and what the money was appropriated for. Winchell, Jr. indicated that funds were for the parking lot and complex; Roux will locate the article for further review. Roux found the article, which reads to address “. . . town hall parking lot reconstruction.”

Walsh reviewed the thoughts of residents and their concerns with the building and indicated the best thing to do is to tear down the building and start new. The building was originally built to house fire trucks and was never established to host meetings or house staff.

CJ Gardner addressed the report indicating the wrong date for the library building. Walsh confirmed the fire department was built in the 1880s.

Jim McGuire agrees with the tear down of the building. McGuire also agrees with creating a new library space as the space has been outgrown and the hours are limited due to the municipal building hours.

Richard Nass is in favor of taking the building down.

Joan Nass is also in favor of taking the building down: suggesting an addition to the current town hall building.

McGurty thinks without question, the building should be torn down. The next question is what to do with this space moving forward.

Winchell, Jr. closed the public hearing at 6:48 pm.

2. WARRANTS/BILLS

Signed

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Walsh made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by McGurty. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Norwood made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 15th meeting; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR WEEKLY UPDATE

Roux extended a thank you to all those involved in the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Thanksgiving Dinner. We fed 75 people this year (48 people last year): it was a successful event.

The Clerk's Office will need to close at 12pm on December 5th, next week, for the annual Fall Workshop, which is in Sanford this year.

Christmas falls on a Monday this year: The Transfer Station will be closed and reopen on Wednesday; the Town Hall staff would like to have Tuesday off. The Select Board agrees to being closed on Tuesday in observance of Christmas. The Code Enforcement Office will be closed during the week of Christmas for vacation. The town policy is to roll over one week of vacation and use or cash out the remaining balance.

Roux confirmed the new Deputy Clerk has been certified and completed her classes. McGurty extended thanks and congratulations on behalf of the Select Board.

Roux reached out to the Sheriff's Department and confirmed the request for the three, four-hour blocks for traffic details in the month of December.

Roux requested that when McGurty comes into the office next week, they can review the manual check policy.

McGurty questioned if there were any audit updates. Roux confirmed, reviewing an update from Cathy. A draft should be sent to the town by the end of next week for review.

6. DEPARTMENT HEAD / COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES

Will Langley, Road Commissioner:

The electrician finished the updates at the tractor shed to bring everything up to code.

7. LIAISON UPDATES

McGurty: Municipal Management / Warrant & Finance, APAT, Cemetery

McGurty has been working with the Treasurer: the bank didn't process some ACH funds causing a delay with payroll. The Treasurer cut some manual payments to resolve. Focus has been on budget verse year to date actuals. The report is being sent to the Warrant & Finance Committee: they will receive the report monthly.

Warrant & Finance will be meeting December 4, 2023.

McGurty has been working with Mike, APAT, and there will be a future agenda item.

Cemetery – n/a

Walsh: Fire Department, Transfer Station

Fire – n/a

Walsh is working with Ham at the Transfer Station to discuss the layout. A meeting is set for Friday with the Engineer. Walsh is unavailable on Friday and requested a date change for the Transfer Station.

Walsh participated in a webinar regarding rules and regulations for elected officials.

Norwood: School Department, Conservation / Forest, Mary Grant

Norwood participated in the webinar with Walsh and spoke with the Mary Grant Committee regarding the liaison changes.

Conservation – n/a

Norwood met with the School Committee Chair and Mr. Ross regarding the budget timeline.

Winchell: Roads & Road Committee, Recreation Committee

Winchell, Jr. spoke with Mr. Ward regarding the 34th Street Article 43 and has a meeting for another Article 43 application for Edge Road, which will be held on December 11, 2023.

The Recreation Committee will be meeting this week on Thursday.

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Lawn Care Bids

Roux provided a spreadsheet to review the price breakdown between the two companies.

Seacoast

\$15,960, which includes fertilizer

Seacoast provided a quote for bush hogging as well.

Spruce

\$75,000, which includes fertilizer

\$42,750, without fertilizer

Walsh made a motion to select Seacoast Property Maintenance for the 2024 Lawn Care services in the amount of \$15,960, with Bush Hogging for \$250 as needed; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Maine Health Trust Letter

Maine Municipal has asked for a letter confirming the Town is offering Dental and Vision at 100 percent employee cost.

McGurty made a motion to authorize the issuance of vision and dental insurance with Maine Municipal effective January 1, 2024; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

Signed by the Select Board Members.

B. Pandemic Policy

Roux advised the Pandemic Policy is outdated and the CDC Guidelines have changed. Roux would like to temporarily suspend the policy and update it for future use.

McGurty made a motion to temporarily suspend the existing Pandemic Policy; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

C. Town Meeting Timeline

Norwood attended the School Board meeting suggesting combining the School Budget and Annual Town Meeting. There were concerns with the meeting being held on a Saturday, as parents may be more available on a weekday and holding the meeting during the timeframe of school vacation. A current suggestion, pending further discussion, is holding the meeting on Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 5pm. McGurty questioned how many articles the school has proposed. Norwood advised between 15-19. McGurty advised that the town, last year, had almost 50 articles: indicating that on a weeknight, that may not allow enough time to get through all the articles.

Roux confirmed the difficulties in selecting a date for hosting the meeting. Both the school and town need to have an open meeting and going back to a ballot box is not an option. Combining the meetings saves the town money as the town doesn't need to pay for two moderators, two posting fees, and two meetings.

McGurty suggested setting a timeline for completing the budget by April and continue to work with the School Board to set a time meeting date.

D. 2023-2024 Salt Bids
Tabled

E. Executive Session 405 6 E - Legal Consult

Walsh made a motion to go into Executive Session 405 6 E – Legal Consult at 7:20 pm; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

Norwood made a motion to come out of Executive Session 405 6 E – Legal Consult at 7:47pm; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

n/a

11. PENDING

- A. Speed Trailer
- B. Traffic Detail
- C. Mooring Ordinance

Walsh made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by McGurty. All in favor. Motion carried.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Website

13. MEMBERS PRESENT - David Winchell Jr., Tom McGurty, Ed Walsh, Dan Norwood, Jennifer Roux

14. ATTENDANCE: Mrs. McGuire, Jim McGuire, Bernard Broder, CJ Gardner, Hope Denekamp, Nancy Ruma, Joe Ruma, Dennis Long, Richard Nass, Joan Nass, Adele Scritchfield, Will Langley, Robin Ham, Elise Miller, Mary Stanton, Scott Stanton