

TOWN OF CHARLESTOWN BOND HEARING JANUARY 21, 2020

Select board Present: Chairman Steven Neill, Albert St. Pierre, and Jeffrey Lessels

Staff Present: Jessica Dennis, Administrator

Building Needs Committee: Patricia Chaffee, Scott Wade, Roger Rumrill, Amy Rumrill, Charles Baraly, Judith Baraly, James Fowler, Keith Weed, Ingrid Nichols; Architect

Public Present: Willard McKane, Sarah Davis, Rose Smith-Hull, Robert Davis, Terry Spilsbury, David Richardson, Charles Higgins, Joyce Higgins, Joanne Hipp, Gabriel St. Pierre, William Resisanski, Nancy Houghton

Call to order And Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Neill called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM and welcomed everyone. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mr. Neill read the warrant article: Building Needs Bond: "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,900,000 for the purpose of Town Wide Building Needs Renovations, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$2,900,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) and to authorize the municipal officials to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon. First payment to be made in 2021."

Mr. Neill asked Mr. Lessels to speak for the article as he is ex-officio to the Building Needs Committee. Mr. Lessels introduced Ingrid Nichols the Architect that Committee has been working with, as well as the members of the Committee. Mr. Steve Horton was unable to attend tonight because he is ill.

Ms. Chaffee explained how the Committee determined what should be included in this bond request. In 2018 the Committee started with a much larger list of projects, they weeded it down the projects and eliminated projects that could be taken care of as general or routine maintenance items. The construction of a new fire station is 75% of the bond amount. A slide show was presented, reflecting photos of the structural issues at the existing fire station. The foundation has structural concerns, the roof drips onto the foundation causing some of these issues and the metal roof also leaks in multiple places. The building was constructed in 1970 and was only meant to be a 20 to 25 year building, now it is 50 years old. Mrs. Nichols also stated that there are air quality issues in the bays and members are bringing their gear to Claremont or Springfield, VT to be washed after an incident. The mechanical structures in the truck bays need replacing. The stairs to the second floor are not up to fire code and the head clearance on the second floor is not up to code either. There are mold issues in the building also due to the numerous leaks and age of the building.

The renovations proposed to Silsby Library building were discussed. Mr. Fowler explained that the masonry work is being done partially funded by a Grant; the Town put money into a Capital

Reserve and finally had enough funds to move forward with the project. When the new part of the building was constructed in the 1980's the Town ran out of money to install proper drainage which is part of the struggles with the masonry work now. The insulation in the attic needs to be replaced; some of it contains mold and the insulation in the new part of the building is flammable. Additionally, there are no smoke detectors in the attic. Mr. Nichols spoke to the handicapped ramp in the building; it is not compliant, specifically the corner at the bottom of ramp; it's very difficult to maneuver in a wheelchair. The Committee discussed many options for the ramp and handicapped lift; the renovations will include a new side entry close to the existing, this will keep the look of the building and meet handicapped compliance and include a new lift/elevator. The renovations to the building will include work in the former Town Clerk's space; clean-up of existing mold which is also a result of the drainage issues around the building and safeguards will be put in place to prevent mold from occurring in the future. Additionally, there is more than one electrical panel in the building; one is under the back stairs to the library which is sometimes exposed to wet conditions which is a very serious problem. This room is exposed the very cold temperatures and will be insulated to prevent the water and freezing in the future.

Ms. Chaffee spoke to the original list of items the Committee reviewed; one of which was the Town Pool. The original quote to resurface and replace the water lines at the pool was an estimate of approximately \$688,000. The Committee felt this was a large price tag to repair the pool and was not in the best interest of the Town at this time.

The Town Hall was the next building discussed. Ms. Baraly was asked to speak for this building; she explained the Town Hall Committee also reviewed wants and needs for the building. The Committee would like a handicapped lift or elevator in the building, but felt they could explore grants and this project was likely beyond the scope of this project. The most critical repair needed at the Town Hall is the foundation. The foundation is shifting due to the age of the building and the weight of the vault/safe in the southeast corner of the building, the former Selectboard's office. The floor has been reinforced to the best of the Town's ability, but until the vault/safe is removed, the floor will continue to sag and the foundation will continue to shift. Part of the stewardship agreement associated with the L-Chip grant received by the Town is to maintain the integrity of the building and most of the issues are due to the vault/safe being in the building.

Ms. Chaffee spoke to the \$2.9 million dollar number and the breakdown in cost of the projects discussed above. The Town Hall structure concerns are approximately \$100,000, the Silsby Library/Municipal Building is approximately \$517,840, and new fire station is approximately \$2,023,425. The other project is a new roof for the Highway garage; it is nearly the same age as the fire station and is in need of a new roof, which is approximately \$168,000. The longer the Town waits on these projects the more expensive they will become. At an inflation rate of five to eight percent for the materials and interest rates it is beneficial to do these projects now. The bond will have an impact of approximately 94 cents per thousand on the tax rate; the first payment would not be until 2021.

At over \$200,000 to repair the roof and the foundation at the existing fire station, this is the approximately the amount of one years payment, and the Town will have only addressed the concerns in one building. Establishing a better maintenance plan on these buildings after the construction and repairs are completed will be essential moving forward.

Mr. Davis inquired about the terms of the bond; Ms. Chaffee explained the quote she received was for a 20 year note at 3.25%. Grant opportunities can be explored if the bond is approved by the voters, so it is possible that the Town will barrow less and the \$2,900,000.

Mr. Richardson asked if a new location would be explored for the Fire Station. Ms. Nichols explained that the bond estimate did not include the purchase of land, but does include the cost of demolition of the existing building. Anything that can be salvaged will be, for example the new heating/cooling units were recently installed could be used in a new building. Mr. Lessels stated that Mr. Horton is from Walpole and is very experienced.

Mr. Spilsbury inquired about the time frame for this project from start to finish. Ms. Nichols explained it will take two to four months to design the new building; bids would likely go out after summer, as contractors are very busy during the summer months, and then it would take approximately eight months once construction starts to construct the new building. The Town Hall will take approximately two months and Silsby Library work could be bid and worked on during the summer months. Within a year all the work would be completed.

The Selectboard could possibly take out small/short term loans throughout the process if necessary to get the work started.


There will be another, similar presentation done at the Deliberative Session on February 1st. There were no additional questions at this time.

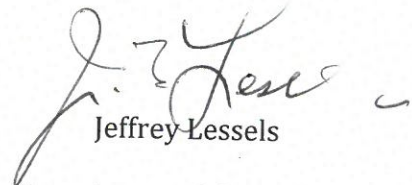
Adjournment: Mr. St. Pierre moved to adjourn, Mr. Lessels seconded and meeting adjourned at 6:18 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jessica K. Dennis

Approved,


Steven A Neill, Chair


Albert St. Pierre


Jeffrey Lessels

(Note: These are unapproved minutes. Corrections will be found in the minutes of the February 5, 2020, Selectboard meeting)

