

Royalton Selectboard
Royalton Academy Building

June 22, 2010

Selectboard Present: Larry Trottier, Ernie Amsden, Peggy Ainsworth, Joan Goldstein, Phil Gates

Moderator David Ainsworth opened the public hearing on the upcoming bond vote to fund the construction of the proposed municipal office building at 7:30 p.m. He noted that a member of our community, Reverend Jim Proctor is moving on to another community in Maine. Ernie Amsden then read aloud the resolution passed by the Royalton Selectboard at the June 8, 2010 Selectboard Meeting.

Public Hearing

Administrative Assistant Cleveland gave a synopsis of the history that has led up to the proposed municipal office building.

The Selectboard then opened the floor to questions from the public. Discussion ensued on the proposed municipal office building with the following notes:

- The project has not gone to bid due to the need to have engineered construction documents drafted at an expense that has not been budgeted for.
- Is the Knight's Opera House feasible? The building is too small and the cost to purchase and renovate the building is too expensive. (The asking price of the building was \$250,000 and cost estimates to renovate the building to address structural and life safety code was \$610,000.00)
- How did the cost of the proposed project balloon to \$975,000.00 when the estimated cost of the project at Town meeting in was \$400,000.00? The Selectboard noted that the estimated cost of \$975,000.00 was developed by the building committee that included a professional building consultant. The reason that the bond is set at 975,000.00 is due to lack of bid documents. Estimates ranged from \$130 a square foot to \$200 a square foot. Also Chairman Trottier noted that if the bond was set at \$500,000.00 there may be unknown costs that may occur, causing the Selectboard to then ask the voters to approve a second bond vote to cover the additional cost.
- Will the voters get a chance to vote on spending less than the proposed \$975,000.00? Yes the board will present bids should the bond vote pass.
- Why is the town occupying the Knight's Opera House when structural deficiencies have been identified? The State Of Vermont division of Fire Safety has reviewed the engineering report that identified the structural deficiencies, and has not required any additional work.
- Has a prefab building been researched that would include engineering costs? Two estimates were received and there are many construction costs such as

foundation work and site work (parking lot, landscaping, electrical connection, water and sewer hookup) that may not be included with the estimates.

- Have the Fire and rescue been asked for their input? No new plans have been reviewed by the Fire and Rescue squad since January when the conceptual site plan was developed.
- D. Whitney noted that the town may need to address the water main serving the proposed municipal office building, as the 12 inch main ends at the school and a six inch line continues south along South Windsor Street.
- Has a budget for the additional phases that will include the construction of the fire and rescue buildings been formed? At this point the Selectboard is only working on phase one. Indications from the Fire and Rescue squad indicate that they are not ready to proceed with planning until the billing for the Rescue Squad is better understood.
- J. Levasseur asked the Fire Chief what the timeline is for construction. D. Whitney responded that there is no real timeline with the possible construction of fire and rescue due to the concern of the billing for rescue. He noted that the need will arise within a year. He noted that A. Gravel is providing housing on Alexander Place for the Rescue workers.
- P. Ainsworth noted that the Selectboard is dealing with phase one (municipal office building) and the board will be sure to allow for enough space for the future building needs of the fire and rescue squad.
- The 2004 site plan called for a Community center, is this still being considered? The 2004 site plan was in essence a wish list and Chairman L. Trottier noted that the proposed project does not include the community center and the municipal office has been scaled down to provide a realistic proposal that will meet the immediate needs of the town.
- Is there a financial incentive or disincentive to wait for fire and rescue? Should we wait two years? Will the addition be substantially more? Board member J. Goldstein noted that the board is not able to answer that as we do not know what the size and specs will be for the fire and rescue. She also noted that up to \$200,000.00 is available in grants, low construction costs and the current low interest rates makes this a time to act on the project.
- G. Hobart noted that the project will provide badly needed construction jobs, and construction cost are the lowest he believes that will be available for quite some time.
- Is the grant money guaranteed or must it be applied for? Board member J. Goldstein noted that there is a significant application process that the town will have to go through to get the grant money. She noted that the grant is a maximum of \$200,000.00 or up to 35% of the total construction cost.
- Board member J. Goldstein explained the financial scenarios. Loan 1 (annual interest rate of 4.00%) would result in an increase of \$.0291 on the town tax rate, loan 2 (an Economic Recovery Zone Bond with an annual interest rate of 2.82%) would result in an increase of \$.0266 on the town tax rate, loan 3 (a Build America Bond with an annual interest rate of 2.70%) would result in an increase of \$.0263 on the town tax rate, loan 4 (a Build America Bond with an annual

interest rate of 2.700% and a \$200,000.00 grant) would result in an increase of \$.0209 on the town tax rate.

- Annual tax increase per loan on a house valued at \$200,000.00 would be as follows
 - Loan 1 - \$58.11
 - Loan 2 - \$53.40
 - Loan 3 - \$52.62
 - Loan 4 - \$41.83

- G. Honigford asked what the difference between a bond and a loan is. A bond would be bought from state of Vermont which only occurs once or twice per year, or through the USDA Rural Development bond (Build America Bond, Economic Recovery Zone Bond). A loan would be through a commercial lender such as Randolph National Bank.
- Is Federal stimulus money still available? Board member J. Goldstein noted that the Build America Bond and the Economic Recovery Zone bond are a result of the Federal stimulus package.
- The Town owes roughly \$90,000.00 for the purchase of the property in 2003. Property was purchased through the Town Revolving Loan Fund for a price of \$235,000.00.
- Can there be specifications in the request for bids that require local people/contractors be employed? Have contractors been discussed? Can restrictions be made on the bond? Board member J. Goldstein noted that contractors must be bonded and hold enough insurance to cover the total cost of the construction project. The Selectboard must ensure that the town manages money responsibly by selecting qualified bidders. G. Honigford noted that the School Board was required to follow the same procedure that would be required should the bond vote pass. Contractors must be pre-screened to eliminate any unqualified contractors and then a request for proposal would be sent to selected general contractors, then the general contractor would hire sub contractors. (It is possible to stipulate local contractors be considered first.)
- Board member E. Amsden noted that a bond funded by the Federal Government would require the Town to select the lowest bid.
- The proposed office building would be 4,100 square feet and because it is unknown what our population or future service needs will be it is estimated that the proposed building will serve the needs for 25-50 years. It was noted that the design of the building allows for expansion to meet additional needs.

Discussion ensued on the current working conditions in the two town occupied buildings. Administrative Assistant N. Cleveland highlighted issues with the offices including space needs (storage, research, and vault), noise during meetings, excessive heating costs, mildew, inefficiencies with day to day operations, etc.

Town Clerk L. Stickney also noted that voting in multiple places, requires take down, set up issues and issues with where a vote will be held.

Discussion continued on how the project would be managed (including hiring a clerk of works) and if assistance could be provided for the application process should the bond vote pass.

P. Trombly asked why the warning was only signed by three Selectboard members.

P. Gates responded that he believed that there was a possibility to get money through alternative sources and that a “Design Build” method of construction and planning needed additional research.

E. Amsden responded that he personally contacted modular building company, a contractor in Bethel and one in Quechee and he felt that the cost was too high, and he was not comfortable with \$975,000.00 bond and believes that \$600,000.00 is more reasonable and feasible. He also noted that the contractor would be from the local region and not necessarily Royalton.

Discussion ensued on how any additional money would be spent should the cost of the project be less than \$975,000.00. Board member J. Goldstein noted that the money can only be used for the purpose stated in the bond warning and the usage of any leftover monies would need to be approved by the town.

Discussion ensued on additional needs and options in town including the Library’s accessibility issues and the need to maintain that building as well as the proposed building. It was noted that Crawford Auto Land may be going up for auction by the end of the year, and the Royalton Academy Building had been considered as well.

K. Rogers asked if money was available to purchase the Knights Opera House? L. Trottier noted that when we asked the town for purchase approval, the property was valued at \$277,000.00 on the grand list. L. Trottier also noted that the Selectboard worked with Mr. Crawford on a purchase agreement. Mr. Crawford set the purchase price at \$250,000.00. When the engineering report identified deficiencies in the building the idea was dropped due to the total cost (structural and code updates were estimated to cost an additional \$610,000.00).

G. Hobart noted that since 1994 every chair on the Selectboard and Planning Commission has worked on the municipal office building project, and now is a great opportunity to proceed. He would like to go through local contractors but we can not hold off on taking advantage of the grant money.

Moderator D. Ainsworth closed the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

Regular Selectboard Meeting

Chairman L. Trottier opened the regular meeting of the Royalton Selectboard at 9:15 p.m.

Public Concerns

The board was asked to address the pot hole in the entrance to the Academy Building. Administrative Assistant Cleveland noted that the road crew is aware of the issue and

plans on using cold patch asphalt to correct the problem when they do additional patching in Town.

The Recreation Commission has asked that the Town grade the Carpenter Recreation field parking lot and requested that the Selectboard consider amending the dog ordinance to prohibit dogs on the Town recreation fields. The Selectboard asked that Administrative Assistant Cleveland schedule the work with the road crew.

Administrative Assistant Cleveland presented an informal petition asking the Selectboard to set time restraints for contractors working for the Town. The Petition asked that the Selectboard adopt a policy requiring specific work hours for contractors working for the Town. This concern stemmed from a complaint about the starting time that the mowing contractor begins mowing the Carpenter Recreation Field.

Royalton Academy Building

The Selectboard reviewed the lease agreements for the Royalton Academy Building tenant's. It was noted that an increase of 3% was applied to the lease agreements for the White River Partnership, Central Vermont Council on Aging, and the Royalton Preschool.

J. Goldstein made a motion that was seconded by P. Ainsworth to execute the lease agreements for the Royalton Academy Building tenants. The motion passed unanimously.

South Royalton Village Green

Water Fountain

Administrative Assistant Cleveland reported that the fountain needs work to prevent the pump from clogging. He noted that he would like to apply for a water allocation from the Prudential Board. If approved the water allocation would allow for an underground water spicket to be installed. This spicket will be used to fill the water fountain and would potentially be used by the fire department for Old Home Days. The Selectboard supported the application.

Richard Ellis Bandstand

Administrative Assistant Cleveland reported that he has contacted Mark Durkee to repair the broken railing on the handicap ramp on the bandstand. As it is a liability concern he has scheduled the work to commence as soon as possible. He reported that the railings on the steps are also rotting out and in need of replacement. He also noted that he changed lights in the bandstand.

Police Department

The Selectboard reviewed the proposed inter-municipal policing agreement with the Town of Sharon. The current agreement expires on June 30, 2010. The proposed agreement asks that the Town of Royalton provide 16 hours of community policing in the Town of Sharon, with an additional 15 hours per month of on demand policing.

J. Goldstein made a motion that was seconded by P. Ainsworth to sign the Inter-Municipal Policing Agreement with the Town of Sharon. Discussion ensued, and P.

Gates made a motion to table the subject. No second was made on the motion. Chairman Trottier called the original motion to a vote. P. Ainsworth and J. Goldstein voted in favor of the motion, P. Gates and E. Amsden opposed the motion. Chairman L. Trottier voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed 3-2.

Police Cruiser

It was reported that the Town's police cruiser had a fire start near the catalytic converter, and required repair. Chief Hull has been informed that there is a lot of rust built up around the fenders, and that the vehicle may not be able to pass inspection if no work is done. Discussion ensued on the need to purchase a new police vehicle. The replacement fund for the police vehicle has a balance of \$15,000.00.

J. Goldstein made a motion that was seconded by P. Ainsworth to purchase a new police vehicle with P. Gates and L. Trottier working with Chief Hull to present possible vehicles at a future meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Highway Department

Excess Weight Permit Application

The Selectboard reviewed an excess weight permit received from J. P. Sicard, Inc., who will be inspecting the Royalton Village Bridge (BR # 31) for the State of Vermont. Discussion ensued and the Selectboard asked that Administrative Assistant Cleveland gather more information as the weight requested was deemed to be too excessive.

Vermont Law School – Community Betterment Fund

The Selectboard discussed the letter requesting VLS to provide one scholarship per year.

J. Goldstein made a motion that was seconded by P. Ainsworth to authorize Chairman Trottier to sign the drafted letter to VLS. Discussion ensued on the current agreement. Chairman Trottier called the motion to a vote. The motion passed 3-1 with E. Amsden opposed.

EC Fiber Network

J. Goldstein reported that a letter in support of the application by EC Fiber LLC ("EC Fiber") for a Vermont Employment Growth Incentive. EC Fiber has chosen the town of Royalton as its head-end site. They will occupy and purchase a currently vacant building and will create high quality jobs for the residents of Royalton and surrounding towns.

P. Gates made a motion that was seconded by P. Ainsworth to sign the letter of support for EC Fiber. The motion passed unanimously.

J. Goldstein reported that the Town can apply for funding through the Vermont Community Development Block Grant program that would be loaned to the EC Fiber Network to purchase a vacant building on Waterman Road. More information will be presented at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned 10:15 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted by
Nathan P. Cleveland**

