

# **Town of Princeton, Mass. – Nov. 13, 2017 – 7:30 PM**

## **Selectboard – Regular Meeting**

Present: Chair Jon Fudeman, Richard Bisk, Edith Morgan w/ TA Nina Nazarian.

**Charter Cable update 7:30 PM** Chairman reported being late, so Richy B. opened meeting. Nina reported that Verizon would sign final pole transfer license in next few days, then Charter can start construction, still offering 12-month turnaround.

**Facilities Steering Committee update** JWA has toured the 4 buildings, and met with all departments listed in the RFQ for meetings. The next milestone is a meeting with the Facilities Steering Committee on 11/14.

**Monty Tech district agreement** The mayors of Fitchburg and Gardner sent a letter to all towns in the Monty Tech district asking for their support in getting the district agreement updated, citing MGL Ch. 71. The last one was from 18 years ago but the Monty Tech School Committee is not pursuing an update of it. Edith wanted to know what the mayors' concerns were specifically. Group decided to monitor response from other member communities.

**Request for out of District "school choice"** – Ms. Mary Burrows of 20 Dowds Lane has made a request for her daughter to attend the Franklin County Technical High School beginning in the 2018-2019 school year. Her husband teaches there, so no transportation cost. A document Nina distributed indicates that in order to go to another school district, the program which the student wishes to take cannot be offered by the school districts available to them. Nina will see if there are any potential additional costs to the Town and is communicating with Ms. Burrows regularly to see what the options are.

**Friends of Mechanics Hall 7:45 PM** "Friends" attending were Mark Fiandaca, Karen Rossow and Larry Pistrang to discuss costs to town of maintaining the building. The town pays \$1,500 per year for vacant building insurance coverage of up to \$200,000, plus a few hundred for electricity, mainly for lights (and in the case of the 2016-2017 winter the heater in the basement for the well which supplies 106 Main Street, a commercial building next door). Richy praised their efforts but said Select Board was seeking ways to divest town of the responsibility for Mechanics Hall. He has been investigating the well situation and noted that no agreement regarding supplying water to the next-door neighbor has been found. Mark F. said the Friends have considered rehabbing for a business/office tenant on the first floor, as the building structure is sound and the first floor offers 1100-1300 sq. ft. of usable space. Group discussed whether rehabbing the building to support a commercial tenant on the first floor was feasible. Jon arrived and reported that he had analyzed some numbers and discovered that rental income would not cover debt incurred from the costs of a rehab. Richy doubted that voters would approve spending money on the building. The Friends noted at least 165 active supporters of their cause and outlined the historical importance to the E.P. Village and to the entire town. Edith observed that opportunities will come up, but that the town doesn't want to get involved. Karen R. asked that S.B. continue to cover the insurance for a few more years while the Friends pursue ideas and options. Nina outlined the details of insuring a vacant building and how payment is calculated.

**Mechanics Hall well violation 8:10 PM** Nina had put together a chart of options regarding future status of the well, distributed along with the violation notice and notes from phone conversation with Paula Caron from DEP on September 22. The well is considered by DEP to be a public water supply (PWS) because the QuikStop uses it for food preparation (coffee).

Water continues to pass tests for drinking standards. No agreements or deed riders or easements have been found, and group noted that it was duty of the grantee (Richard Stuart) to find any such proof of entitlement. The first option would be to require 106 Main St. to install its own well. Option two would be to draw up a legal agreement for 106 Main Street to pay for the water and electricity. Power for the well is currently paid by Kwik Stop. The system is only deemed PWS when used for food prep and to a certain minimum number of customers. Group discussed use of bottled water for Kwik Stop coffee. Select Board noted that the DEP violation must be addressed before the deadline but the deficiencies and recommendations can wait but may develop into violations eventually. Town counsel warned that DEP must grant permission to abandon a PWS source. Board wants Dick Stuart to provide proof of an agreement allowing the well to be shared, or he must find another water supply.

**Joint Meeting with the Planning Board, Comprehensive Sign By-law 8:45 PM PB**

Chairman John Mirick was in to discuss sign by-laws and distributed two documents, to become an article for zoning bylaw changes at the ATM in May. The bylaw will merge signage regs from the general bylaws under the Select Board and consolidate all sign regs into Zoning Bylaws. One major addition is use of directional signs on major roads directing travelers to businesses and attractions, similar to in Vermont. These would be installed by DPW and billed to the business, for installation and future maintenance. Nina pointed out that a national standard may help in setting design/size/color specs, asked whether this similar proposal has been implemented in another community, and suggested considerations for when signs are damaged. Planning Board will get input from DPW before returning to S.B. and Adv. Cmte.

**Route 140 Reconstruction Project, Update & Vote Liaison – 9:05 PM** The project is progressing, with a mailing to go out tomorrow to all impacted properties along the project limits, to notify them of individual property meetings to be held on December 6th at 7th. Bill, Larry, Kevin, and Mickey will be the Towns representative at those meetings. Jon F. offered to act as liaison for the project and keep S.B. aware of happenings. Board voted all in favor to appoint Jon F. as liaison for the Route 140 through E.P. construction project. The Board also voted all in favor to expand the Road Advisory Committee by two alternate members and Nina will follow up with solicitation on Town News etc.

**Summary of unpaid taxes –** Nina supplied a summary of unpaid taxes at request of Gary Premo from Old Colony Road. He noted some properties are tax delinquent for 40 years or more. She explained that the tax collector will be mailing notices to the property owners to pay, and others will be moving into tax title. Total back taxes owed might approach \$850,000, but that includes over \$200k in bills for which demands have not yet been mailed (all in accordance to what is permitted by law). The Treasurer/Collector is working to propose a tax title policy (e.g. when properties get moved into tax title, when the town moves into a tax foreclosure, etc.) by Dec. 31 for discussion in the early part of next year.

**Financial Plan** Regarding the proposal to create a financial plan for the town, Jon reported that a volunteer group is putting wheels in motion and he suggests they go ahead with it. The group includes Bill Holder, Rick McCowan, Karen Cruise and John Kowaleski, and possibly others. Jon anticipates that information will be available in January.

**Collins Center proposal 9:45 PM** The Board received a project summary chart from the Collins Center and all agreed it was of value and worth pursuing. The first option was an Organizational Study of Financial Management Functions and second was a Development of More Detailed Annual Budget Document. Both of these could qualify for funding from the Community Compact grant. A third, HighLevel Review of Town Operations, would not qualify and would cost \$10,000 to the town. All agreed the Collins Center handling it would be professional with no political agendas and would require input from Adv. Cmte. Review Cmte. Board voted all in favor to authorize the T.A. to engage in a contract with Collins Center for

Projects 1 & 2 conditioned upon grants being applicable for both and with a schedule for completion agreeable to the S.B. They also voted all in favor to ask the Adv. Cmte. to approve a Reserve Fund transfer to pay for Project #3 and authorize the T.A. to enter into contract with Collins for same.

**Holiday week** Edith asked to cancel S.B. meeting on Dec. 26 and all agreed to come in (at least two members) to sign warrants on that day. Group discussed starting the budget process and Jon anticipates more input from the Adv. Cmte. they will be asked to be on agenda for next S.B. meeting.

**Approve minutes** Board voted all in favor to approve minutes of Oct. 16, 19, 20 & 30.

**Adjourn 10 PM** Selectboard voted all in favor to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted, Marie Auger, admin. assist.

**Selectboard Referenced Documents:** Mayors' letter to towns in the Monty Tech district; information about Mary Burrows' request for School Choice and MGL Ch. 74 Vocational Schools; chart of options regarding future status of Mechanics Hall well, violation notice and notes from Paula Caron from DEP; proposed signage bylaws; list and summary of properties with unpaid taxes; project summary chart from the Collins Center.

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