

Final Minutes
SELECTBOARD, TOWN OF PAWLET
December 30, 2019
7:00 pm at Pawlet Town Hall
Special Meeting

Members in Attendance:

Mike Beecher
John Malcolm
Bob Jones
Ed Cleveland
Chuck Weeden

Others in Attendance:

Kristin Powers
Diane Mach
Kathryn Lawrence
M.E. Norton
Jed Rubin
Frank Nelson
Larry Leslie
Eve Schaub
Stephen Schaub
Mary Lou Willits
Janno Gay
Diane Mach
Jonas Rosenthal
Keith Mason
Martin Kravitt
Monica Kravitt
Deanna Mach
Gib Mach
Tom Collard
Eli Anita Norman
Ken Norman
Sally Caras
David Caras

EVENT

1. Call to order at 7:03 pm
2. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Addition or Deletion of Agenda Items
 - a. Additions:
 - Jed Rubin
 - Marty Kravitt
 - Eve Schaub
 - Additional clarification provided re: Library Project topic:
 - 1) Declaration of Official Intent to Reimburse Certain Expenditures from Proceeds of Indebtedness
 - 2) Resolution Certificate
 - 3) Warning
 - b. Deletions: None.
3. Introduction of those present by chairperson
4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting
 - Motion made to approve the minutes of December 17, 2019 as printed.
 - Mover: Ed Cleveland
 - 2nd: John Malcolm
 - Discussion: None.
 - Result: Approved (unanimous)
5. Pre-Requested Appearances by local citizens and visitors:
 - Jed Rubin – Introduced the Board to the Communication Union District, which lays groundwork for having fiberoptic where it is not currently in existence. It takes a minimum of two towns to start the network, and there are currently several in favor of adding this to ballot during Town Meeting. Should the Communication Union District be approved, a committee would form, which would work to pursue enhanced fiberoptic options. Mr. Rubin inquired as to whether or not the Town of Pawlet would be interested.
 - Discussion ensued, which resulted in the Board being interested in obtaining more information prior to making a decision. Mr. Rubin to provide information electronically for the Board's review.

- Marty Kravitt – Highlighted several points from his letter submitted to the Board regarding the proposed Library renovation projects, and why to not move forward with the currently suggested plans.
 - The board acknowledged these points. No action taken.
- Eve Schaub – Presented a comment regarding the proposed Library lift project (see attached statement at the end of these minutes).
 - Light discussion ensued. No action taken.

6. Announcements: None.

7. Reports:

A. Zoning Administrator's Report:

- Mr. Rosenthal shared one pending subdivision application, which is awaiting calculations prior to decision. The Planning Commission has also requested that the ZA's office review the Zoning Application.

B. Planning Commission's Report:

- No report at this meeting.

C. Road Foreman's Report:

- Mr. Mason shared a brief overview of the 2020 Highway budget, sharing that purchasing materials, besides salt and chloride, would result in an increase to the budget (4.7 cents). Additional budget considerations included:
 - Purchasing 2500 yards of winter sand proposed at \$10.00/yard.
 - Proposed increase in fuel budget, due to trucking materials from longer distances. This may also result in more wear and tear on town vehicles.
- An additional option would be to leave the Highway budget as is, and propose the improvement budget as a warned article, which would allow the voters to decide on this increase.
- Discussion ensued, with no formal decision made. Mr. Mason to provide formal numbers to the board prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting, so that the budget can be finalized.
- The Board addressed roadside mowing, and Mr. Mason reported that Mr. Hosley is most likely able to continue fulfilling the Town's roadside mowing needs.

D. Assessor Report:

- No report at this meeting.

E. Town Clerk's Memo:

- The Board reviewed the Town Clerk's Memo.
- F. Town Treasurer's Memo:
 - The Board reviewed the Town Treasurer's Memo.
 - The Board reviewed the warrants.
 1. Motion made to approve the warrants.
 2. Mover: Bob Jones
 3. Second: Chuck Weeden
 4. Discussion: None.
 5. Result: Approved (unanimous)
- G. Emergency Management Director's Report:
 - No report at this meeting.
- H. Health Officer's Report:
 - No report at this meeting.
- I. Waste Water Treatment Facility:
 - No report at this meeting.
- 8. Old or unfinished business:
 - Re: Personnel Policy – Following brief discussion.
 - Motion made to accept the amendments proposed to the personnel policies pertaining to vacation time, comp time and sick leave, starting 1/1/20.
 - Mover: Chuck Weeden
 - 2nd: Ed Cleveland
 - Discussion: Discussion ensued regarding requesting that employees adhere to the policy of maintaining 60 hours of comp time. Additionally, the updated policy, in full, will be printed, bound and provided for review and a signature from all Town employees.
 - Result: Approved (unanimous)
 - Re: Town Landfill – No response from a communication sent to Town Attorney, Merrill Bent, regarding potential amendments to the deed.
 - Re: Retirement Plan – There is a need to finalize this prior to it being put into the budget, however no need to finalize this evening. Light discussion ensued with no decisions made.
 - Re: Library Improvement Projects – Jonas Rosenthal began the conversation, introducing Mary Lou Willits, on behalf of the

Library Board, to share the Library Board's plan and the result of their majority vote on the proposed project.

- Mary Lou Willits – Referred to the Library Report, prepared in November. Upon thorough review of the plan and accompanied presentation, the majority of the Library Board voted to support the Library Lift Expansion plan provided by architect, Ralph Nimtz. Ms. Willits continued on to address project funding, and the possibility of pursuing multiple grant programs. Ms. Willits went on to share the importance of the Library's compliance, and ensuring safety and inclusivity of the community at the Library.
 - Fellow Library Board members, Janno Gay and Sally Carras, contributed to the conversation, supporting the Board's majority vote decision to endorse the Library Lift Expansion Plan.
 - Additional points mentioned by Martin Kravitt highlighted the opposition to the Library Lift Expansion Plan.
 - Gib Mach shared potential funding hurdles that may present themselves during such a large project.
- Discussion ensued regarding how to properly add this item to the Town Meeting ballot.
- Motion made to adopt the Library Plan, taking the necessary steps to add the Library renovation plan to the ballot.
 - Mover: Ed Cleveland
 - 2nd: John Malcolm
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Approved (unanimous)
- Motion made to adopt the Declaration of Official Intent of the Town of Pawlet to reimburse certain expenditures from proceeds of indebtedness.
 - Mover: Ed Cleveland
 - 2nd: John Malcolm
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Approved (unanimous)
- Motion made to adopt the Resolution Certificate.
 - Mover: Chuck Weeden

- 2nd: Ed Cleveland
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Approved (unanimous)
 - Motion made to sign the Warning necessary to add the Library accessibility project to the ballot.
 - Mover: John Malcolm
 - 2nd: Ed Cleveland
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Approved (unanimous)
9. New Business:
- Re: Grant Opportunities for Radar Speed Signs – Two grant opportunities are available for these signs that will be investigated further in the New Year.
 - Re: RRPC Commission Dues – A reminder to the Board that the RRPC dues have been announced.
10. Public Comment:
- Mary Lou Willits provided a printed list of grant opportunities for the Library projects.
 - Frank Nelson reported several road issues in West Pawlet.
 - Happy New Year!
11. Motion made to Adjourn at 9:15pm
- Mover: Chuck Weeden
 - Second: Ed Cleveland
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Approved (Unanimous)

As a longtime fan of the Pawlet Library and as a founding member of the Pawlet Projects Committee, which raised over \$250,000 to convert the schoolhouse into the library's new home back in 2002, as well as a former Library Board member, I would respectfully like to submit the following comment.

For the last year I've been attending Select Board meetings and Library Board meetings in hopes of having a complete understanding of the proposed Library elevator project, but in that time I have yet to hear a compelling argument for it.

The first argument I heard is that the Select Board *wants this project*, and so the library should go along with it in order to maintain a good relationship with the Select Board. But the Select Board seems far from united in their feelings about this proposal. Even if they *were* unanimous, this by itself would not justify spending \$300,000 on a project, if that project does not make sense.

The second argument that I have heard is that it would resolve the problem that falling ice and snow presents for the existing handicapped access ramp. However, for a fraction of the cost of this proposed elevator, the town could add either snow guards or a ramp roof to resolve this.

The third argument I have heard is that the library has a new Strategic Plan that calls for providing places "for people to gather for social activities and community discussions." But the strategic plan does not call for an elevator to the basement- it calls for meeting spaces. This is something *we already have* - not only in the library itself, but in other locations around town that may be used by the library and have been- the gym at the Mettawee Community School, the meeting room in the Pawlet Community Church, and the historic auditorium on the second floor of the Pawlet Town Hall. *All* of these spaces are handicapped accessible, and one of them, the Town Hall auditorium, is only steps away from the library itself.

The fourth argument I've heard, only recently- this morning- is that this is an effort to honor Matt Waite. If that is the case, I'm surprised this hasn't come up in conversations about the project prior to now. I'm also very surprised that no one contacted Kellie Waite to let her know about this plan. Instead, *I* was the one to tell her about this project, when I called her to ask her what she thought of it.

We've already spent well over \$12,000 on a misguided project. Are we really going to propose to the voters of Pawlet that we spend time, energy, and hundreds of thousands of dollars on a project that no one seems to love, and no one has asked for?— When there are so many other things Pawlet very much needs? *We do* need new library front steps. *We do* need a new town garage. As one Select Board member put it, this proposal seems like using a hand grenade to kill a housefly. It is a bad, heavy-handed solution to a nonexistent problem. It does not belong on the ballot.