Finance Committee

MEETING MINUTES

March 17, 2021

Virtually

Paul Flaherty, Rick McGuire, Stephen Bern, Shawn Craig, Nick Ensko Deb Teta, Michelle Antinarelli, Lyn Haggerty, Jerome Owcarzak, Sandra Hakala, Derek Brindisi, Kelly McElreath, Dave Loeper, Deb Amorelli, Kenny Costa

The meeting was opened at 7:02 pm virtually.

Paul Flaherty introduced Lyn Hagerty to present her justification for her citizen petition to add a ramp onto the Knowlton Risteen Building.

Highlights of the presentation include:

- Explanation of the Disability Act and changes to buildings in January 1995
- History of dates of ramp requests
- Rear door access with stairs can be modified with a ramp
- Building is town owned; the construction of new library/senior center is not approved and will take time to construct
- $45,000 cost: ramp estimated in June 2019 for $25k for aluminum ramp; additional cost for exterior door replacement, threshold and accessible hardware for door;
- Not yet estimated costs include alternate material such as wood; widening of inside door; marking parking lot. Note any unused funds would be returned to the general fund.
- Lyn Hagerty also stated this solution would not meet all accessibility needs to the building
- Library Trustees and Capital budget has endorsed the project. Planning Board does not need to be involved in this project.

Lyn does not have a written estimate and it was pointed out this project would need to go to bid. Lyn stated this is an estimate to install a simple ramp and the project does not need a site plan or OPM.

Derek Brindisi stated this project would need to go to bid and pay prevailing wage. It would be good to get an estimate based on prevailing wage.

This project would also need an engineered plan to attest to qualifying for ADA. Lyn will look into getting an estimate with prevailing wage.

Paul Flaherty stated this is a band aid and the rest of the building will still not be accessible.

Rick McGuire stated he spoke with Historical Society. If new building is built, they would move their storage and museum to the first floor. It was noted, there is not plan what will happen to the building if Community Center is approved.

Steve Bern stated the project does not address any of the issues inside the building only the doors to get inside the building in the hallway.

Town is currently undergoing a transition plan and results will not be available until August.

Michelle Antinarelli clarified the amount of the original estimate. She also restated other points of the presentation and it is understood there is not a plan yet. Lyn Hagerty indicated installing the ramp would show a good faith effort. She also stated by doing this, people would be able to get into the building and is hoping the Committee would endorse the project this evening.

Nick Ensko pointed out he believed the building was grandfathered since nothing has been done and it was pointed out there was not any type of 'grandfathering' for older buildings.

Derek Brindisi added he has had conversation with Mass Access Board. The Town is in development of an ADA transition plan and noted the law does not state when the transition to full accessibility needs to take place. Many municipalities have struggled with providing the upgrades. Thus, there are other areas in the Town that need attention and not just this building. Derek also indicated this plan/estimate is not complete and other articles presented at Town Meeting would have a quote attached to the project.

If a complaint is file against the Town then the Access Board would conduct an inspection. A decision would be rendered and the Town would need to submit a plan to Access Board for their consideration. The board would give the Town time to comply and hopefully the new building would be built.

Shawn Craig stated there is more information needed on this project and maybe a better cost estimate could be obtained and this vote could occur in the fall.

Michelle Antinarelli stated this project is the first step.

Derek Brindisi offered to speak with Lyn so she had the ability to obtain concrete estimates. Derek stated his concerns about going to Town Meeting without a plan and cost estimate based on that plan. Asking for a vote of $45K when the project cost $60K puts town officials in a difficult situation. Derek estimated this project will be more than $45K. Steve Bern stated this is a concern for hm as a Finance Committee member and this project should go through the correct protocols.

Derek Brindisi appreciates the advocacy of the project but a qualified cost needs to be obtained before approving construction costs.

The Committee determined to move forward with the remaining agenda items before voting on this article.

Paul Flaherty began the discussion of the warrant by stating the BOS added additional articles to the warrant at their meeting the previous evening.

Paul Flaherty stated he is hoping to review the articles in 'bulk'

There was a discussion on Article 7 for the snow removal deficit. It was stated the deficit is around $20K but unsure if upcoming storm would add to that.

Upon motion of Rick McGuire, seconded by Shawn Craig for favorable action on Articles 3, 4, 5 & 6. Unanimously approved by rollcall vote.

Article 7: Monies transferred to stabilization. Kenny Costa stated the amount included the monies transferred out of stabilization for MURSD for FY2021 budget plus the monies needed to bring the fund to 10% of our budget as recommended by our financial policies and encouraged by the bonding company to improve our rating when we borrow funds. A higher rating will increase competition when we go out to bid.

Upon motion of Rick McGuire, seconded by Shawn Craig for favorable action on Article 7 from Free Cash. Unanimously approved by rollcall vote

Upon motion of Nick Ensko, seconded by Rick McGuire for favorable action on Article 8 (chapter 90 funds). Unanimously approved by rollcall vote.

Article 9 (roads) was held

Upon motion of Nick Ensko, seconded by Rick McGuire for favorable action up to $100K from Free Cash on Article 10 (snow removal). Unanimously approved by rollcall vote.

Upon motion of Nick Ensko, seconded by Rick McGuire for favorable action on CPC articles 12B – 12E. Unanimously approved by rollcall vote.

Article 13 (Conservation Fund) was held in order to obtain justification from Conservation Commission. Current balance is $28,248 in the Conservation Trust Fund.

Upon motion of Nick Ensko, seconded by Steve Bern for favorable action out of Enterprise on Article 20 (DPW pickup truck purchase). Unanimously approved by rollcall vote.

Upon motion of Nick Ensko, seconded by Rick McGuire for favorable action from Free Cash on Articles 21 & 22 (Fire Department requests). Unanimously approved by rollcall vote.

Article 23 – Geese Management: Derek Brindisi explained this funding will be used to make the geese at Kiwanis Beach uncomfortable in hopes of moving them away for the area. The geese can contaminate the beach water leading to beach closure. Derek is finalizing the quote and it will not be as high as the $10K requested in Article. Upon motion of Nick Ensko, seconded by Shawn Craig for favorable action out Free Cash on Article 23. Unanimously approved by rollcall vote.

Upon motion of Nick Ensko, seconded by Rick McGuire for favorable action from Free Cash on Article 24 (purchase of scanner). Unanimously approved by rollcall vote.

Article 26 was held.

Article 27 – citizen petition to fund OPEB. Kenny Costa stated he presented the Town's plan to fund OPEB in the future when our pension obligation is fully funded. Bond rating company was satisfied with the plan. He also commented we are adding $100K as well as new employee contributions each year. He would advocate to fund if the Town had the money available but it is not a priority to fund at this time. Questions were asked of Michelle Antinarelli (sponsor of the citizen petition) who stated she was looking to fund our actuarial yearly cost through the tax levy and limit the amount of Free Cash generated. The $900K amount was determined from the recent GASB report.

It was determined to address wages/variances, remaining articles and community center at the next meeting due to the time.

Adjourn at 9:25

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly A. McElreath