

Greensboro Selectboard

February 26, 2024 Special Meeting – Minutes

[Meeting was held remotely]

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Romans, Ellen Celnik, Eric Hanson, David Kelley, Gary Circosta

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHER ATTENDEES: Kim Greaves, Josh Karp, Brett Stanciu, Janet Long, Karl Stein, Mimi Benedict, Rick Ely, Tim Nisbet, Leslie Campos, MacNeil, Lise Armstrong, Stefanie Cravedi, William Berman, Sharon Putney, Naomi Ranz-Schleifer, Bobbi Nisbet, Joan Feffer, Harold Gray, Anne Stevens, Susan Cammer, Nancy Reige, Tony Acheson, BJ Gray, Jennifer Lucas, Erika Karp

CALLED TO ORDER: 6:33 PM

PRE-TOWN MEETING

Discussion of how the education tax system works in the state, and how difficult it is to understand. David Kelley said the big picture is that due to Acts 60 and 68, Greensboro residents' tax dollars are subsidizing a portion of the education costs of students in other towns. It's also true that many Greensboro residents receive an income-based credit from the state towards their property taxes, significantly reducing their tax burden.

Tim Nisbet, speaking for Hardwick Rescue, said HR is asking for a larger appropriation from towns they serve because their budget is up 70%, mostly due to payroll and insurance increases. Tim noted there has been an overall increase of calls made to Greensboro.

Hal Gray asked why the Bend Rd. is already deteriorating after being repaved last fall. Peter Romans said that due to scheduling issues, Pike was only able to complete the base coat. The final coat will be put down this coming spring.

Jennifer Lucas had questions about the capital budget that were answered by Gary Circosta. She also asked whether the Board is comfortable with current amounts in the town's reserve funds. Gary said the balances are robust enough that the town no longer needs tax anticipation notes, and that the reserve funds can help keep the tax rate more stable and buffer future expenses such as the town's portion of July flood costs and the new town garage.

Regarding the July flood, Peter said the town borrowed and spent \$1 million on flood repairs and interest on the line of credit is currently \$4k per month. This has made the Board inclined to propose larger fund balances. He added the town is slated to receive the first flood reimbursements in a few weeks.

Naomi Ranz-Schleifer asked about the 22% increase in crushed gravel. Gary said while the town is crushing the same amount of gravel, crushing costs per yard have increased.

Naomi asked why there isn't a dedicated reserve fund for Greensboro Fire Dept. (GFD) trucks and equipment. Gary said the Board has been working with the GFD on better planning for future capital purchases, which currently come out of the Capital Budget Fund. In the interest of balancing the needs of the GFD with limited funding for expensive trucks, the Board decided it would be prudent to purchase used trucks moving forward. The fire station will be paid off in about five years, and this could free up funds to put towards trucks.

Gary reiterated that the Board wants to be conservative with overall spending plans until the FEMA

reimbursement total becomes clearer.

Naomi asked about planning for the new town garage. Peter said building on the current site may not be feasible. Aside from physical challenges specific to that parcel, the fact that the road crew would have to operate out of that site during many months of construction would create a difficult situation and add considerable cost. Gary added that the Board has been looking for an alternative site but hasn't found one yet. The fire station lot has been looked at, but can't be used due to its wetland status. Janet Long asked about Warren Hill's property on the Bend Rd. Peter said Warren is not interested in selling at this time.

Tim asked for an update on the community wastewater project. Peter said the best site for the disposal field is located on parcels owned by Gerard Fontaine and St. Michael's Church, but both have reservations about selling. While conversations are ongoing, there's been no movement in recent weeks. The grant-imposed deadline for the town to sign purchase and sale agreements has passed, but the town has been given extra time to try to pull together a deal. Josh asked why engineering firm Hoyle Tanner hasn't been investigating two different sites at the same time, since it was never guaranteed that the landowners who own the ideal site will sell. Peter said while Hoyle Tanner has done some preliminary work looking at other sites, it seems they've preferred to stay focused on the one ideal site. Peter noted that only grant funds have been spent on the preliminary engineering work. Tim asked if the state could be petitioned for some kind of waiver, to allow alternative technologies to be used on a second-tier site. Peter said Hoyle Tanner is certainly open to designing different types of wastewater systems.

Town Moderator Tim Nisbet said he'd run for moderator again.

Selectboard member Ellen Celnik will be running again, noting that she was recently interviewed in the Gazette if residents want to learn more about her.

Gary said while he's planning to run for Selectboard again, he'd consider stepping aside if someone else wants the position.

David said he'd serve again on the Hazen Union School Board.

Janet Long is running again for Collector of Delinquent Taxes.

Jennifer said she's running for library trustee.

Naomi said town meeting should be accessible to more people, and that the town needs to work on better communication with residents and landowners. Josh wondered if the town should form a town meeting committee to discuss these issues, like was recently done in Craftsbury.

Bobbi Nisbet said on town meeting day, there'll be a non-binding vote on closing Lakeview, because there's a certain faction, mostly in Hardwick, that believes our school should be closed. She noted that if you want to keep the school open you have to vote NO on the article.

Nancy Riege said there's a meeting on Tuesday night where Mountain View Elementary School District Board members will be voted on. She noted that board members are voted on by the electorate present from Greensboro, Hardwick and Woodbury.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned unanimously at 7:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk