

Town of Pownal Select Board Meeting - November 13, 2023

MINUTES

Present: Jon Morris, Andy O'Brien, Kate Day, Becky Taylor-Chase, Ginifir Giddinge

Public: Jason Best, Jr., Jesse and Susan Peters, Dick Hogue, Liza Nichols, Bo Chesney, Andrea and Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest, Florence Lusk, Sarah Bartlett, Alice Kirkpatrick, Richard Connolly, Bill Schmidt, Steve Gruverman, Heidi Richards, Marcia Bowen, Rod Pervier, Susan Mack, Holly Morrison, John Bowdren, Rosita Moore, Craig Dietrich

- I. Chair Morris called the meeting to order, 6:30pm.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. AP Warrant #12 in the amount of \$88,584.66 was approved.
Payroll Journal #184 in the amount of \$11,603.28 was approved.
- IV. Minutes of October 23, 2023, were approved as written.
- V. Public Comment – Non-Agenda Items
 - a. Bo Chesney / Future Facilities Committee requested permission to utilize our Town Planner, Tom Ursia, to assist in grant writing. Select Board agrees and gave the OK.
 - b. Bill Schmidt asked if the Town would consider using Fidium for residents. Chair Morris noted that our internet is funded as a franchise; we would need enough interest to consider, but we could do some research on this.
 - c. Bill Schmidt asked if the Board felt this new recording system is worth it – it might be helpful to consider these 5 points:
 1. What problems does this system solve?
 2. How well does it solve the problem?
 3. What problems does it create?
 4. What are the costs of the problem? Finances, time and staff?
 5. Is this worth it?

VII. New Business

- a. Federal ARPA Grant – there is \$98,000 left to be determined on how to use – we will need to allocate those funds by December 31, 2024.
- b. TIF Update: We still need a Village District Plan as described in Option #2 from our TIF Consultant, or we could go with Option #1 to create TIF for Estabrook Development only. Since we can't defend the Village District right now, Andy moved to go with Option #1 to create a TIF for the Estabrook Development located on Route 9, 2nd and all voted in favor.
- c. Pat Hodgdon Oath – it was moved and 2nd to re-appoint Pat Hodgdon as a member of the Economic Development and Sustainability Committee. All voted in favor.
- d. Volunteer Form / Ruth Hannan: It was moved and 2nd to appoint Ruth Hannan to the Recreation Committee. All voted in favor.
- e. Oath / Pascale Delsol Shaw: It was moved and 2nd to appoint Pascale Delsol Shaw as Deputy Clerk, Deputy Tax Collector, Deputy Treasurer and Deputy General Assistance Officer. All voted in favor.
- f. Final draft of the January 22, 2024, Warrant Article for the Conservation Ordinance has been submitted. If this ordinance is adopted, it will affect many other areas of the land use ordinance and that would require writing separate warrant articles for each

revision/correction. It was suggested that we could have one warrant article to include the revisions/corrections. Andy moves to write the warrant article for the Conservation Ordinance as a single document article with corrections for the Special Town Meeting on January 22, 2024. 2nd and all voted in favor.

*Marcia Bowen (Planning Board) noted that the whole zoning ordinance has been rewritten to reflect changes and she agreed that we re-adopt the whole land use ordinance with exhibits.

- g. Town-Owned Property Policy: Becky suggested some changes to update the Real Estate Request form to include an application fee (suggested \$100) to cover administrative costs; to require applicant to provide the list of abutters with addresses; and to add the newer committees/departments that weren't originally listed. It was moved and 2nd to amend the policy to reflect changes suggested. All voted in favor.
- g. Real Estate Request Form for Map 2 Lots 30 and 30-32 was received from Shane Brady. It was moved and 2nd to approve the request to begin the process. All voted in favor.
- h. Town Office Closures November 16 and 21,2023: Due to an appointment, Becky would like to open the office at 10:00am on November 16 and due to a training, Becky would like to open the office at noon on November 21. The Board agreed.
- i. Mallett Hall Building & Grounds Committee: As the Chair, Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest has stepped down from the committee and we will need to look for another member. Jan Pieter has suggested that we look for a new member who would also be willing to be the chair. This change now gives the Select Board an opportunity to review the current charge of the committee, assess town office maintenance needs, and to anticipate the revolving needs of the Town. Chair Morris asked Kathy Hogue (a member of this committee) to review original committee: Kathy noted that the original committee started many years ago to oversee the old portion of Mallett Hall and continue to finish the new addition (such as painting, trim, etc.). The committee was to consist of representatives from groups who used the hall consistently: Historical Society, Grange, Redmen, International Folk Dance, Bradbury Mountain Arts, Pumpkin Festival and Pownal Arts Night, and Road Commissioner. Today, many of these groups no longer exist. Chair Morris suggested that we have a workshop/do some homework on writing a new charge and exploring the need for a maintenance employee to be in house to take care of the building and oversee projects. Jan Pieter noted that he will continue to serve as chair until a new person is found and would like to be a part of the workshop.
- j. Bradbury Mountain Arts – DeWitt Room: Chair Morris explained a little history regarding the new AV system. A grant was received to improve the sound in the DeWitt Room and to record and transmit for public meetings. This decision reflects the Comprehensive Plan to make town government more accessible. The Select Board voted that the DeWitt Room will not be rented for now to address tear down issues and to protect this investment. Jon cautioned everyone to continue this discussion with a respectful and calm manner. Chair Morris also noted that there has been some issues with rudeness to our Town Administrator

and suggested this would be a time for anyone to offer an apology – no one came forward. Chair Morris opened the discussion and asked for kind words and behavior.

NOTE: The following comments have been summarized – full statements can be viewed on the Town’s website under “WATCH MEETINGS”.

1. Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest/Bradburry Mountain Arts (BMA) member read a statement to the Board. He identified that there would be a long-term plan for future use of the DeWitt Room and there is short term plan that needs to be in place for this weekend for the BMA Show and Sale. A long-term plan could be put together by a small committee to determine how to protect the equipment and use the room. A short term plan could be either by contacting the company who installed this equipment to see if they would take down and reinstall for the show; or, the tables could be moved to the side without unplugging anything making sure the equipment is safe.
2. Susan Mack: Never thought electronics would prevent residents from using this room.
3. Bill Schmidt: When will you have a solution? The intended use is an open question. Chair Morris reminded us that we are trying to bring information to residents. Bill suggested that we put away the equipment to let BMA have their show.
4. Florence Lusk (Freeport resident and BMA Show Manager): All voted in favor to allow Florence to speak. I appreciate that you are weighing many priorities on how to use the room. As show manager, I am grateful for the opportunity to work with Becky and the Town. We will make every effort to respect and protect the equipment and hope to come to a compromise. We would not unplug anything and would move tables to the side and use pipe and drape around to keep the equipment safely hidden from view. I will also be one of the artists in the DeWitt Room.
5. Alice Kirkpatrick (BMA member and Mallet Hall Building & Grounds member): We will respect and protect this equipment – I didn’t know we would be closing this room. Can the company who installed come and unplug and plug back in? We are ready to work with the Select Board.
6. Ron Pervier (BMA member): I appreciate what is being done by the Select Board – my family has lived in Pownal for many years. I helped with finish work in this room. It is my hope that we come up with a good solution.
7. Bo Chesney: Would our insurance cover any damage? Chair Morris will check.
8. Heidi Richards (Recreation Committee): Our committee acknowledges the need to protect our investment and to work with Becky so that she is not over extended. Our committee offers to help dismantle and put back the equipment for the BMA show. Or, there may be a Durham employee with these skills who might help in this situation? We have a town resident who would be willing to pay someone to do this. Our committee is also concerned about future use of this room for our events.
9. Steve Gruverman: Owns quite of audio equipment and his assessment of this is that it looks fairly simple. What is the possible risk of damage? It has been designed for public

use and wouldn't be very fragile. When equipment like this is put back together, there may be some trouble-shooting to get it back in working order.

10. Liza Nichols (BMA member): I don't believe SB members, Andy and Kate, understand the history BMA has with the town. Over the years, BMA has donated quite a bit of money for a variety of causes – grants, Keep Me Warm Fund, money to the hall for renovations, etc. Also, the elevator will need to be used to access the other rooms. Liza noted that the Select Board never informed BMA of their decision. Chair Morris noted that all meetings are public and recorded.
11. John Bowdren (BMA member): BMA used to give 10% of their show proceeds to the hall before the building use form and fee schedule was developed. Also, the elevator will be used and people will be walking through this room.
12. Holly Morrison: I am not a member of BMA but just want to affirm that this show makes our town rich – hope we can find a solution to grant the use of this room to continue our tradition to support the arts.

CHAIR MORRIS CLOSSES PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Andy O'Brien: This is not personal towards BMA but an effort to protect equipment. Some of the members did not treat Becky nicely, this was not her decision.
2. Kate Day: This is part of the purpose of this room - for public discussions. We are trying to be practical – we are not fully trained and are short of resources right now. Harassment of our Town Administrator is unacceptable.
3. Jon Morris: We need a temporary policy to protect the equipment. We have been in touch with the FHS Audio Visual Club who are interested. Training will need to happen. The timing of all of this was unfortunate. How do we accommodate BMA's event? Will need to screen off the tech in the back of the room by the elevator. Jon asked Florence how they would use this room. Florence: There would be nothing hung on the walls – table displays only. They will push tables to the wall and cover with curtains, nothing would be unplugged. Liza can bring wooden screens to put around technology by elevator.

Chair Morris asked if this compromise would work? Kate – yes, this is fair. Andy – we did catch them off guard, yes, this is a fair compromise.

1. Chair Morris stated that the temporary policy regarding rental of the DeWitt Room will remain in effect and the solution to accommodate BMA for their 2023 show is temporary. The Select Board will allow BMA to use the DeWitt Room for their show on November 18 and 19, 2023, with agreed upon conditions.
2. On Thursday, November 16, Andy will assist Florence in pushing tables to the wall and put pipe and drape curtains around.
3. Liza will bring wooden walls to put around technology near elevator.
4. On Monday, November 20th at 4:00pm, Steve Gruverman will assist Jon Morris in putting back equipment and making sure it all works.

VIII. Old Business

- a. Jon reported that the educational program regarding Brown Tail Moth is being developed.
- b. The North Pownal Community Club is in a one-year scoping plan.

IX. Correspondence

- a. Becky reported that some residents had watched the meetings and she continues to scan them to make sure all is working properly.


X. Any other business: None

Meeting adjourned, 8:20pm.

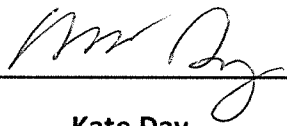
Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen A. Hogue / Deputy Clerk



Jon Morris



Andy O'Brien



Kate Day
