

STOCKBRIDGE SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, February 25, 2021
6:30 p.m.
ZOOM MEETING - TOWN OFFICES, 50 MAIN STREET

Present:

Chuck Cardillo, Roxanne McCaffrey, Patrick White and Mike Canales

Call to Order:

Chuck called the meeting to order.

First on the agenda was to open the special permit hearing to consider the application of David A. Brause for property located at 82 Interlaken Road owned by BRITESTAR OMEGA LLC SERIES B C/O THE CORPORATION TR CO CORP TR CENTER. Chuck opened the hearing and made a motion to continue it to the March 11th, 6:30 meeting. Roxanne seconded; all were in favor.

Next was a joint meeting with the Finance Committee.

Jay Bikofsky, Finance Committee chair, called the joint meeting to order. Also in attendance were Finance members: Jim Balfanz, Pam Boudreau, Diane Reuss, Steve Shatz and Neil Holden. The first order of business was to approve the Finance Committee 2/18/21 meeting minutes. Steve moved; Jay seconded. Roll Call vote was unanimous.

The next item was to meet with the Regional School District Planning Board with Chair Lucy Prashker providing a status of phase one of their exploratory work and updates on phase two. Mike introduced Lucy Prashker to present. She explained that the Regional School District Planning Board is a separate entity formed in March of 2020; for the purpose of studying and evaluating the financial and educational advisability of a possible consolidation of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District and the Southern Berkshire Regional School District. It is comprised of the 8 member towns; the five towns that comprise Southern Berkshire and the three that comprise the Berkshire Hills. There are three members representing each town. Patrick White, Sean Stephen and Nick Fredsall represent Stockbridge. The planning board is looking at a broad spectrum of consolidation options, from a full pre-K through 12 merger on one end of the spectrum, to collaboration and sharing of programs and services on the other end; with many possibilities in between. About a year ago they received a State grant for \$50,000 and it was used to hire phase one consultants which looked at baseline analyses of the finances, the facilities and the collective bargaining agreements of the two districts. The consultants did projections assuming no changes. The reports showed that the declining enrollment trends we have been seeing over the last ten years are projected to continue over the next ten years; resulting in reductions in State funding and

increases in costs. This will result in increased assessments in each of the member towns in the two districts. Therefore, they are embarking on phase two; looking deeper into options for changing the current model of operations. Lucy referred to the distributed phase two budget and the proposed spending. In terms of a time line, the work with consultants and community input studies will take 12 – 18 months, followed up by a new regional school agreement recommendation. This combines to a budget of between \$154,000 and \$184,000. The planning board has asked each of the member towns to contribute \$15,000. They have also applied for a State grant to make up the difference. If they receive more, they will adjust down the town ask. As how the money will be financed is not known, Steve Shatz made a motion that the Finance Committee have a straw poll that they will support an appropriation of \$15,000 to enable the planning committee to undertake the second phase study. Jim Balfanz seconded. Vote: Jim: Yes, Pam: Yes, Neil: Yes, Diane: Yes, Steve: Yes, Jay: Yes. There was a unanimous expression of interest from the Finance Committee. The Select Board also expressed their interest: Patrick: Yes, Roxanne: Yes, Chuck: yes.

Next up were budget presentations of the Police Department, Water Department and Sewer Department.

Police Chief Fennelly began by stating that this year's budget reflects where they should be and actually expend as opposed to having carry over. A number of budget items decreased but the purchase of a new "hybrid" police cruiser has increased the patrol cruiser line. The hybrid should provide significant savings in fuel costs and emissions. Looking at police salaries, Darrell stated that the "Special Police Salary" line was eliminated and the overtime and training overtime lines have also been reduced.

Mike Buffoni next presented the Water Department budget. Mike said that some line items were reduced. With the Solar array they were able to reduce the electricity line. With new radio systems, that repair line was moved to the maintenance line. The water meter, office supplies, SDWA Assessment and intermunicipal agreements lines were reduced bringing the total budget to a 4.9% reduction. Patrick asked about extending town water and Mike explained that to do this, costly pressure pump stations would be needed.

Tony Campetti presented the Sewer Department budget. Tony said that the electricity line was reduced by \$5,000 due to the solar array. The purchase of safety equipment line was also reduced to \$1,000. The remainder of the budget was level funded. Patrick asked if there was discussion on extending the sewer. Tony said that it has not been looked into in depth.

Mike said that for March 11th they would have Highway and Fire in and also review capital items for the Warrant.

With the Finance Committee in attendance Mike asked Patrick to review the Ice Glen tree survey and possible reserve fund transfer. Patrick brought up the possibility of designating Ice Glen as an Old Growth Forrest. It has never been logged. Patrick and Mike took a walk-through the forest with three tree experts. It was determined that three different pests are attacking the hemlocks and without treatment we are looking at a mass die off of the trees within 2.5 to 3 years. Patrick added that the question for the Town is if we want to save the trees by treating them. It is recommended that a tree inventory be conducted at a cost of \$6,000. Patrick proposed that if inventory comes back with a handful of trees in poor health, that the Town consider funding in the short term; for the majority they would go to the State/Federal government to fund. Steve Shatz followed up by stating that there should be an inventory of Town/street trees for safety; a larger issue than Ice Glen itself. Shelby Marshall, past president of Laurel Hill, felt that it was beneficial to do the inventory of Ice Glen trees and well worth preserving the forest. He added that there is a lot of money available to this process especially because of climate change. The Finance Committee requested additional information. Mike stated that a reserve account transfer could be an option to fund this \$6,000 project. Chuck said that they would look into who would do the streets. It was decided to continue discussion at the March 11th meeting.

With no further business for the joint session, the Finance Committee signed off.

Next on the Select Board's agenda was bylaw discussion.

Beginning with the short-term rentals, Mike said that they had two proposals to review; one a full regulatory bylaw and the other a shorter bylaw that would address enforcement when issues arise. By the next meeting it should be decided which one they would like to move forward with. Roxanne felt that it would be important to have Tri-Town Health Executive Director, Jim Wilusz's input. Patrick felt it was necessary to focus on the regulatory piece while carefully tracking over the next couple of years. Roxanne was in favor of asking people to register and attest to specific facts. Patrick stated that his piece had nothing to do with the Board of Health but more to create regulations around residency vs short-term rental owners. Roxanne stated that this will be a lengthy process. Chuck suggested creating a simple bylaw to begin with, a date by which one must register with the Town and specific rules/regulations to be followed and fines if not in compliance. Discussion will continue on March 11th.

The Board next discussed house numbering bylaws. One would be to require house numbers to be visible from the street to aid first responders. Another is to correctly re-number the Town.

Roxanne reviewed the Kennel Bylaw which addresses response to dangerous dog situations. Chuck made a motion that this is placed on the Warrant. Roxanne seconded; all were in favor.

Next was the continuation of discussion to consider waiving fees for seasonal alcohol renewals. Mike stated that the licensees are Tanglewood, Naumkeag and Berkshire Theatre. Chuck made a motion to waive the fees. Roxanne seconded; all were in favor.

Chuck made a motion to enter into Executive Session per MGL Ch 30A, sec 21(a)(3 to discuss litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and they will not be coming into open session after. Roxanne seconded. I Roxanne, I Chuck, I Patrick.