

TOWN OF RYE SELECT BOARD

Monday, September 14, 2021

8:00 a.m.

Rye Town Hall

Select Board Present: Chair Bill Epperson, Vice-Chair Phil Winslow and Selectman Tom King

Others Present: Town Administrator Becky Bergeron

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Epperson called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

II. WORK SESSION – Select Board Initiatives

Chair Epperson explained that the purpose of this work session is for the Board to identify items that are important to the Town than can be accomplished.

Selectman Winslow presented a list by categories to the Board to work from. The categories included; but was not limited to, safety, town services, town buildings, and staffing.

- Safety:
 - TAP Grant project
 - Lang Road and Route 1 intersection
 - Portsmouth is doing the site work this year.
 - The actual construction will be done next year.
 - North Road and Route 1 intersection
 - It is up to the Rockingham Planning Commission and the State to come up with a proposal for Rockingham County to be placed on the ten-year road plan.
 - Route 1A and Perkins Road intersection
 - The town has paid to have a traffic study done.
 - The DOT has agreed to mediate the issues, if the town can come up with a solution.
 - Bicycle Lanes
 - A shoulder-widening study has been completed.
 - The town has received the report back from Rockingham Planning.
 - It shows areas of concern.
 - The next step would be for the Board to decide if they want to appropriate any funds to address the areas of concern.
 - The Police Chief used to give the Board a report regarding traffic violations and citations.
 - The Board would like to have this practice continue.
 - It helps them to be aware of the potential problem areas in town.
 - It also helps them to understand what works to stop these issues.
 - The Board would like reports on personal safety issues such as; home break-ins and fires.
 - Foreseeing potential trends may help to make them preventable.

- Digitizing Town Documents:
 - Funds were appropriated in 2018 for the project; however, it was put on hold due to the costs.
 - Need to decide:
 - What does the town need digitized?
 - Does that digitization integrate with any of the programs that the town already has existing?
 - Where will it be stored, how is it organized and who has access to it?
 - Instead of trying to digitize a working document, such as an application, it may be better to focus on storage, such as deeds and photos, in order to start the project.
 - Later digitized working forms could be developed.
 - Maybe start by giving the commissions and boards drop-box accounts, and at some point, migrate those individual accounts into a total cloud solution for the town.
 - The Board would like a memo to go out to the commissions and boards in order to find out what they would like to see developed.
- Town Hall Annex:
 - The Board should have the schematic design drawing by the end of September for approval.
 - An RFP will go out at that time, until the end of October.
 - The selection will be made in November.
 - It will be mid-spring or early summer for the people to be moved into the building.
- Town Buildings:
 - Town Hall Plans
 - After the offices are moved to the Town Hall Annex, the downstairs will be renovated to accommodate the Planning and Zoning Administrator, the Building Inspector and his staff, and hopefully, a Land Use Assistant.
 - The upstairs will be renovated for meeting space.
 - The whole building will be made ADA compliant.
 - There are a lot of ways to fund the renovations of the Town Hall since it is on the national registry.
 - There are grant funds available.
 - Mae Bradshaw will be a valuable source of information.
 - The Town could also consider combining a number of projects together and doing a ten-year bond.
 - There is also \$276,000 in the Town Buildings Capital Reserve Fund.
 - The Board decided to wait to see how the Town Hall Annex progresses before starting the Town Hall renovations.
- Town Services:
 - Senior Serve Van Storage
 - A solution is already in the planning stages.
 - Recycling Center Swap Shop – Hours of Operation
 - The Public Works Department does not have the staff to expand the hours of operation.
 - If the Recycling Committee wants to volunteer hours that could change.

- The Board decided to keep the hours as is.
- Town Facilities:
 - Salt Shed
 - The engineering for the shed is going out to bid.
 - The original appropriation approval was \$700,000; \$350,00 for the excavation and \$350,000 for the construction.
 - Due to the rising costs of building materials in the past two years, the design of the shed will need to be scaled back.
 - The Board would like to discuss this with Public Works Director McCarthy. They felt that they should not let an arbitrary number drive the needs of the town.
 - Water Treatment Plant and New Town Well
 - This does not come under the jurisdiction of the Select Board.
 - The water treatment plant will impact the water district taxpayers significantly.

Public Works Director McCarthy joined the work session at this time.

Mr. McCarthy explained that the \$700,000 number dates back almost ten years because the warrant article for the bond didn't pass each year. Two years ago, they decided to cut the amount in half and to not bond, but to raise and appropriate the funds. Last year, it passed by a simple majority to build the site. This year, they went back to the voters to build the structure. The project came in well under the budget for the site work; however, they cannot use any of the balance this year for the structure.

The original engineering was done under a general service agreement with Hoyle, Tanner, and Associates. There are still funds left there. The engineering firm suggested to issue a change order for the engineering, in order to do the building engineering under the original agreement.

Changes to the design include:

- Changing the foundation from a poured concrete foundation to a concrete block foundation.
- The size has been changed to hold 1,000 tons of salt, instead of 1,500 tons.
- The plan is to bid the project by November.
- The cost of the project will not be known until the project is bid.

Mr. McCarthy is meeting with the engineers at 10:30 to discuss the project. They were reluctant about the concrete block foundation. He is interested in hearing their reasoning. He will go with their recommendation.

Mr. McCarthy also reported that the engineers will be presenting him with the preliminary plans of the Route 1A and Perkins Road intersection. They will also be talking about the Sea Road drainage study and the Harbor Road bridge.

- The Harbor Road Bridge has been renovated but it is rated at a reduce load.
- It needs to be replaced, either just the deck or the abutments, for the whole bridge.
- The State has an 80%/20% bridge replacement program. Where the state will pay 80%.
- The State is behind on this program.

- The bridge has to be red listed and even then, it can take up to eleven years before the bridge gets replaced.
- Mr. McCarthy recommended starting a capital reserve fund to put away the town's 20%, in order to be ready. He suggested raising \$200,000.
- The Board asked that Mr. McCarthy to come to the next Select Board meeting with an update.

Mr. McCarthy talked about the road paving program. He explained that they try to do 3 miles of roads every year. The old formula was that a road should be paved every fifteen years. With 45 miles of roads, it would be 3 miles per year. This year was the first year they were able to do the 3 miles, due to funding.

The plan is to increase the budget by \$25,000 each year, until it gets up to \$500,000. That will take them to the five-year mark to see if any progress has been made.

Some of the areas being considered for paving are:

- The final section of Washington Road
- Mountain View and that whole subdivision
- When the water job is done, start up Wallis Road to Odiorne, along with all the side streets
- All the small roads down at the beach

Mr. McCarthy told the Board that he has contacted Alan Gould at MRI and they have started the process of hiring Mr. McCarthy's replacement as Public Works Director. He recommended that the replacement person be more of an engineer type person than an operational person. A good Public Works Director will already have an understanding of the operations without being hands on.

- Staffing:
 - The two part-time positions in the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office
 - The job description was finalized.
 - The two positions were posted two weeks ago.
 - There has been no response.
 - Recreation Part-time Program Assistant
 - There is a potential applicant for that position.

The Commissioners at the Rye Water District will be retiring as each of their terms expire. Tom Clifford will be leaving in 2022. These are critical elected positions.

The cell tower is 124 feet and will have three to four sections. It should be completed within the first quarter of 2022. Chair Epperson volunteered to call the engineers to confirm this information and to ask when it will be fully operational.

The Telecommunication Infrastructure Committee has been working to identify other sites for the potential placement of a cell tower. There is a potential site on the back side of the cemetery, which will be surveyed in 2022. It is believed that the town already owns this land. The current studies show that the town needs two more towers for total coverage. It was suggested to look at the 'Outer Marker' site; however, there may be deed restrictions prohibiting it. There was discussion regarding putting language in the ordinance mandating camouflaging further cell towers. Chair Epperson said

that he would look at the current regulation. It is not a bad idea. Discussion to be continued at a future date.

- Town Security:
 - The town is under contract with Atom Cyber Security Systems to have a cyber audit done. They will start the end of the month with a two-week process of monitoring the town's infrastructure (except for the library). They will come back with recommendations based on this study.
 - It was decided that it would be a good idea to pass the information along to the Rye Public Library and the Rye Water District.
- Finance:
 - There was discussion regarding the town being properly collateralized. Through the audit, it was proven that the town is properly collateralized through its relationship with TD Bank. TD Bank has an excellent Government Finance Division.
 - The town audit will be completed soon. The audit governess letter will be provided to the Select Board for review.
 - There was discussion regarding refinancing current town bonds at a lower rate.
 - The Town Administrator will look into this matter.
- Beach Sticker Policy:
 - The committee has not met yet, but will soon.
 - Recent information has shown that there is significant abuse going on with commercial properties.
 - One report spoke of an individual that is renting cars with beach stickers to out-of-towners to go to the beach.
- Housing:
 - The expansion on Route 1 is significant and it will change the demographics of the town.
 - There is a potential of an additional 250 to 400 people in town.
 - This change is more than anything in the last ten years.
 - It will affect the schools as well as police, fire, and water systems.
 - Chair Epperson recommended scheduling another meeting with the Police and the Fire Chief and the other parties that will be affected.
 - Chair Epperson's concerns include the water and sewer infrastructure on Route 1.
 - He suggested that as part of the approval process, they mandate that if and when the water and sewer does go up Route 1, these new developments must hook into the systems within five years.
 - They need to talk about this with Town Counsel.
 - This is a regional pollution issue, because Berry's Brook watershed is in Portsmouth.
 - The Coakley Land Fill issue is out there and the idea is to prevent another significant pollution plume.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed that it would be helpful to have another workshop with the department heads later this month.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Phil Winslow to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 10:05 a.m. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Motion passed 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger