

Meeting Notes

March 12, 2024

Phil called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

In attendance: Phil Cieply, Amy Wilson-Kent, Alejna Burgos, Tom Fichtner, David Kurczy, Mike Goddard, Peg Nogueira, Karen Meade, Mike Ammendolia , John Vandersluis and Lawney Tinio

The committee unanimously approved the secretary's minutes from Feb.13, 2024.

The article for the town warrant is being finalized and must be in by March 14.

Phil discussed the meetings that he and other members of the committee have attended. One meeting, with Dan Byer, discussed a scheduling "reservation" system to help with the new recreation options (basketball, shuffleboard, pickleball and shuffleboard).

A group discussion followed. Mike A suggested that CPA monies should fund some of the engineering of the proposed recreation grounds as the terrain is not level. "We need to take the time to pick the right spots, especially with parking and senior activities involved." He also suggested adequate lights and cameras. It was agreed that we may need to adjust our expenses in light of what CPA will pay for.

A reminder was brought to the discussion that for the Warrant to pass at the town meeting, we need a 2/3 majority. Should it pass, it will be voted on again 2 weeks later but only needs a simple majority at that point.

Next, the Communications Team (Peg, Tom and Karen) reported on the progress that has been made to "reach out" to the community. Peg and Phil have met with a few groups and feel that we need an "artist's rendition" of the proposed building to put on display. We want it to really be impressive.

The Senior Center is holding two Open House/Informational sessions for the public at the center. The first is Friday, March 22 from 1-2 pm and the second is Wednesday April 24 from 6:30-7:30 pm. ABMI has agreed to videotape the March session and air it on their network.

Chief Kurczy has agreed to have a police officer assist with traffic control and crossing safety.

Dan Byer has created with a flyer for the Town's webpage and added the open house dates to the town calendar.

Karen has been sharing the Mendon Senior Center page photos and announcements with the Mendon Bulletin page which is reaching far more people. She has put a question on her page and that of the Mendon/Upton Mom's and Dad's page asking them to respond to her straw poll question: "Would you be likely to vote in favor of the proposed new Mendon Senior and Community Center at the Annual Town Meeting on May 3rd". The choices are Yes, No and Not sure. The committee is monitoring the answers and responding to any questions raised.

Tom F suggested it might reach more people if the open houses were held in a facility that had Zoom capability (reaching more people who may not be able to attend in person). Peg stated she thought it would be a good idea for townspeople to actually experience the size of the building firsthand, including the limited parking and capacity restraints. Both ideas have merit. We will see how the first session goes and decide if a change in venue is the way to go. Lawney will work on a plan to get the video seen by more people. Phil's spreadsheet of dates and groups to meet with is filling up quickly. All members of the committee are asked to speak to family, friends, neighbors, etc., and take advantage of any other opportunity to share our vision for a new senior/community center.

Next topic was a discussion of the debt exclusion and the net cost to taxpayers. There is some debt that is "falling off" this year that could possibly be used to defray some of the building cost.

Mike G- It will be necessary to inform the taxpayers what other projects that would impact taxes, equal or exceed our need.

Alejna- had some ideas about posters and signs to be purchased.

Lawney T- They can't be placed on town-owned property. He stated that 100 signs should be enough.

Phil spoke about the status of invoices and that our bills have been paid. We have about \$10,000 left. He is asking for a motion to authorize up to an additional \$5000 to be paid to the Architectural firm to pay for the artist's rendition and consultation, especially around questions that might be raised at the Town Meeting. Peg made the motion, Lawney seconded and all were in favor.

Mike G wants an update from the Collis Group and asks that we compile a list of grants that we are chasing. Possible funding sources such as Friends of Mendon Elders and other fundraising sources should continue being explored. It is important that we let the taxpayers know the impact on the town budget. We need to justify the cost by demonstrating what necessary additional programs will be gained by this expansion. Hit the important impacts...food pantry, emergency shelter, VNA and health clinics. Be sure to mention several capital needs such as an expanded Highway Department and additional space for Parks and Recreation personnel/equipment. Our current building would be utilized to fill that need and save the town those additional costs. The Selectboard has plans to have a study committee look at ways to expand the Highway Department and Parks and Recreation.

Assuming passage by the voters, the next steps in the process were briefly touched upon. This will be covered at a future meeting.

No date was set for the next meeting as the next date (March 26) is the same night as the Brothers of the Brush speaking engagement.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44pm

Peg Nogueira

Acting Secretary