

Selectboard Meeting  
April 2, 2012

Meeting opened at 7:03pm

Present: Noreen Suriner, Chair; Alan Vint, Clerk; Mitch Feldmesser  
Duane Pease, Administrative Assistant

Warrants were reviewed and approved; payroll: \$4,442.35; expenses: \$168,936.05

Minutes of 3/26/12 meeting were approved.

Mail was reviewed.

Meeting was suspended at 7:14pm for a Board of Health Hearing.

Meeting was reconvened at 8:10pm

**Noreen** noted the Building Commissioner needs to be contacted to address some building issues.

**Eric Weiss** was in attendance with **Greg Garrison** of Northeast Solar, the lone bidder on the PV Solar installation for the Town Hall.

**Eric** stated the purpose of the solar was to make the building greener. He sent the specifications for the bid to 9 installers and scheduled a pre-bid conference that was mandatory to any that wanted to bid on the project. Only Northeast Solar attended the pre-bid conference and they submitted a bid in excess of \$63,000. Eric said there are two ways the Town saves with this installation: 1) the system will generate \$1,200-1,300 of electricity annually and 2) for every megawatt generated the SREC will be \$535 which is a guaranteed price for 10 years. That will generate an additional \$4,000-5,400 a year for the Town. The original thought was to have it installed on the roof; however, the bid calls for a ground mount system. Eric stated he had done his due diligence, had spoke with some of Northeast's customers and inspected their work. The initial proposed installation would be to the left of the Town Hall and visible from the road.

**Alan** questioned why the installation was not going to be on the roof.

**Greg Garrison** answered that he was not sure the roof would carry the load, there would need to be penetrations through the roof, the roof did not face due south so the solar array would be less than a ground mount and the winter production would be less due to snow cover. The ground mount would be situated so it would face due south, the bottom edge would be 6' off the ground and it could go as high as 8' off the ground. The ground mount would be set at the best angle to capture the sun, approximately 45 degrees. The roof mount could not be set at that angle due to possible high winds that would damage the system.

**Alan** asked about possible vandalism to the unit and what would happen if a brick were thrown on the panels.

**Greg** said a brick would break the panels, there are guaranteed to survive 1" hail at 50 mph. The 6' height would be high enough so a fence would not be needed and all the electrical connections would be on the high side of the panels so they could not be reached from the ground.

**Mitch** asked about the proposed location and wanted to know if the array would follow the contour of the land.

**Greg** said the array would be level and adjusted for the contour, it would be set back far enough so it would not interfere with snow plowing. The proposed installation would stabilize the long term energy costs to the town. It would pay between 1/3 and 1/2 of the building's electrical use.

**Noreen** wanted to know what the maintenance costs would be.

**Greg** said the inverter has a 20 year life and the panels a 25 year life with a guarantee of 80% of the panel rating if the panels are kept clean. He said like laptops, solar is constantly improving.

**Eric** said he was not sure what the recycling of the old panels would be when their life expectancy had passed and then he requested the Board approve the hiring of Northeast Solar in order for the project to move ahead.

**Alan** said the original project cost was projected at \$45,000 and now it is \$63,000. There were certain portions of the Green Grant that was earmarked for other projects in the town.

**Eric** said the money generated by the solar can be set aside for other uses and does not have to go into the General Fund; this would be between \$3,000-5,000 a year. If the project were to be installed on the roof, it would be less productive.

**Greg** said he would have an engineer stop by and take a look at a possible roof mount and see what exactly would have to be done to the roof, but his major concern is with snow on the roof during the winter. When the project goes forward, the employees doing the installation will be paid according to the prevailing wage law.

**Alan** said he needs to review the other projects agreed to before he can go forward with this solar project.

**Noreen** agreed with Alan and feels the other projects should not be cut or reduced until they can all be reviewed.

**Eric** said he would go back to the original plan and resubmit a revised project listing for review.

**Sherri Venditti** questioned if the solar array anticipates providing 75% of the needs of the Town Hall, why not make it bigger.

**Greg** advised if the array were expanded, it would require another inverter.

**Jay Swift** commented on the aesthetics of placing the panels in front of the Town Hall and why not install them behind the building.

**Greg** said they had thought of that but were hesitant because of the ball field and possible damage caused by a ball hitting the panels.

**Jay** said there was plenty of space behind the building that would not interfere with the ball field.

**Greg** wanted to make sure there was no ledge in the new area being proposed and also it would increase the distance the wire would have to be run to reach the building. He was also advised much of the site work necessary could be done by town employees.

**Eric** said he would go over the Green Grant allocations and, if necessary, send a letter to DOER regarding any deviations that were presented when the Grant was received. He would also further look into placing the array on the roof and also look into the site behind the building.

**Noreen** wanted a list of bidders the proposal was sent to, costs of the site work and how the remaining Green Grant money would be allocated.

Eric and Greg were thanked for their participation in the meeting and left.

**Curt Robie** was present and told the Board he was working on the COOP Plan with Larry Pease, Tom Austin, Ron Radwich and Noreen and they all needed to sit down together to finalize it. The COOP Plan is a plan that would show how the Town would conduct its business in the event of a disaster that destroyed the Town Hall.

**Alan** brought up that the Planning Board Chair is to send a note to the Selectboard concerning the petition to close the disputed portion of Harry Pease Road. The Planning Board is going to recommend, no recommendation. Also, Attorney Berenson needs to be informed the Special Town Meeting allocated additional money for him to continue to pursue the Tax Title takings. The Fire Department needs to be contacted regarding the storage of empty propane tanks that were very close to a recent brush fire. Finally, the Big Belly trash compactor was delivered and he would like it installed at the Transfer Station.

**Noreen** motioned to have it installed at the Transfer Station, Alan 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote was 3-0 in favor.

**Steve Harris** requested the Board approve the one-year Cartographics contract. Noreen motioned to accept, Alan 2<sup>nd</sup>; the vote was 3-0 and the contract was signed.

Highway Superintendent, **Skip Savory**, presented the Board with a letter of resignation from Andrew Sulikowski from the Highway Dept. Skip has been doing some work on the back roads. He also noted the generator for the Senior Center is ready to be installed.

**Noreen** advised this has to be completed by May 1<sup>st</sup> in order to obtain reimbursement.

Also, **Skip** said a town resident is willing to do some work on the dirt roads in return for keeping the fill that he removes. This would aid Skip in widening the ditches and would not cost the Town anything.

**Alan** was skeptical of this arrangement and will look into it before any work is done due to conflict of interest laws.

**Alan** also felt each Board member should come up with a list of names of people to serve on a By-law Committee.

**Noreen** added a committee is also needed to go over the road closures that were done in the past and also to investigate any road that may not have been closed but is no longer maintained. Noreen will also continue to pursue Northampton Control to see if Middlefield can benefit from using them for the 911 emergency calls.

**Joe Kearns** told the Board they need to complete the budgeting items for the Annual Town Report.

**Mitch** felt that should be the only item on next week's agenda. He also felt some of the Old Business items should be addressed, specifically the kitchen, dog officer and the letter to be sent to businesses in Town.

It was agreed to hold an Executive Session next week to address recent correspondence from Town Counsel regarding Harry Pease Road.

Alan motioned to adjourn, Noreen 2<sup>nd</sup>, vote was 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 10:08.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease  
Administrative Assistant

Minutes accepted with/without changes

Noreen Suriner, Chair

Alan Vint, Clerk

Mitch Feldmesser