

SELECTBOARD MINUTES
JANUARY 16, 2019

Meeting opened at 5:00pm

Present: David DiNicola, Chair; Judith Hoag; Albert Sirard
Duane Pease, Town Administrator and Laura Lafreniere, Assessor Chair

Dave motioned to go into Executive Session to discuss litigation strategy with respect to the ongoing threatened litigation regarding 86 Chester Road where to discuss in open session would be detrimental to the Town's litigation position. Votes may be taken. The Selectboard Meeting will be reconvened. Judy 2nd; vote; Dave, Aye; Judy, Aye; Al, Aye. Executive Session opened at 5:03pm.

Selectboard meeting reconvened at 5:46pm.

Warrants approved and signed; Payroll: \$14,764.26; Expenses: \$17,146.45.

Minutes approved on motion by Dave, Al 2nd; vote 3-0.

Board met with Erica Johnson of PVPC to discuss the CDBG for the next fiscal year. Erica gave a brief outline of the grant; Middlefield is one of four towns that apply for these yearly grants along with Chester, Huntington and Russell. Grants are used for social services, housing rehab, infrastructure improvements and planning projects. This year the outline has changed and no longer does the town have to submit a list with the priorities ranked.

A number of questions were asked regarding last years grant application to raze the former General Store and adjacent house. The grant request was rejected as the State did not feel it was a threat to the health and safety of the general public among other reasons. Erica had done an extensive amount of work on this request and in following up with the State; she asked what would happen if this request were submitted again and was told not to bother as it would be rejected again. Judy's concern was what other funding was available since our request was rejected. Erica stated that PVPC does have additional funding that would cover the cost of demolishing the store; however, it would not cover the house. Kathy Roth questioned if Erica had submitted the drawing of what the site would look like after demolition, Erica had and they did not influence the decision. Erica said the request was reviewed by the Dept. of housing and Community Development and from their comments; it was a very thorough review.

Sherri Venditti questioned if the Davis-Bacon wage rates were used in figuring the costs of demoing the buildings, Erica said she had to use the Mass. competitive wage rate as they are higher than the Baker-Davis rates. If the town did some of the work would funding be available, Erica reiterated the State would not approve the funding.

Cathy Roth questioned what funding would be available the take down the store, Erica said that PVPC recovers funds from homes that are sold prior to the grant monies being forgiven. If a homeowner receives a grant, there is a 15 year payback period, that is if the home is sold before the 15 year period runs, the homeowner is responsible for paying back the pro-rated cost of the repairs that were done. This money then becomes available for other projects deemed worthy.

For this year, Sherri, suggested windows and possibly a generator for the Senior Center as Erica had said Senior Centers are generally looked at very favorably and the financial aspects of other grant requests are not looked at as a reason not to fund. It was also suggested that an on-demand propane hot water heater may also benefit the Senior Center as it currently has a 5 gallon electric heater that does not supply all the hot water that is necessary. Erica said she would include these in the grant application. The board thanked Erica for meeting with them.

Board next met with Charley Rose, Chair of the Worthington Selectboard and Dan Jacques, Chair of the Montgomery Selectboard. Both towns are farther along in dealing with Comcast and their internet agreements. Charley said they sent a letter to Comcast stating they were accepting their proposal and would enter into a franchise agreement with Comcast. They sent the draft agreement to their Town Counsel for review and modifications. Both said it requires negotiations to cover more than the 95% that the state mandates but Comcast will listen to arguments and is somewhat flexible. Comcast will provide a mapping of the town to show what homes will be connected and how the cable will be mapped on each street. The Town can negotiate for free service to schools, town hall, etc. Also, a 5% increase can be charged on the television charge for a community channel if the town so desires. There was continued discussion including cost of drops to homes which Comcast is willing to negotiate but usually the first 300' is free but additional; charges would apply to greater distances and for underground service. If the homeowner so desires; Comcast will run fiber to the home. The Board thanked Charley and Dan for their input.

There was no new business or public input.

Dave motioned to adjourn; July 2nd; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease
Town Administrator

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

David DiNicola, Chair

Judith Hoag

Albert Sirard

