

Stockbridge Town Informational Meeting -Draft

February 25, 2021 7:00 PM

Zoom Meeting Info

+1 929 205 6099 Meeting ID: 847 4098 8469 Passcode: 866045

Present: Mark Pelletier, Lee Ann Isaacson, Jim Shands, Lori Scott, and Kelly McDermott-Burns

Mark called the meeting to order at 7:00 and read the Informational Meeting Guidelines.

Lori Scott read the Warning.

Mark read Article 1—Running for moderator for one year is Kenneth Butterfield. Running for Selectboard for a three-year term is Zach Cavacas. Bill Johnson has dropped out. Lister for a three-year term. No one is on the ballot. Mark asked anyone who is interested to come forward or notify the town office. Running for Collector of Delinquent Taxes, one-year term, is Susan Pelletier, currently in that position. Jack Green is on the ballot for Agent to Defend and Prosecute Suits for one year. No one on the ballot for Grand Juror for a one-year term. Lou Chap said he would run for that position again.

Kathy Burns stated that Tony Caparis would be running for Auditor for a three-year term.

Mark acknowledged that and moved on to Zach Cavacas who is running again for First Constable for one year. No one is on the ballot for Second Constable for a one-year term. Mark asked Zach or anyone interested to speak. No response. Mark moved on to Trustee of Public funds, three-year term. Deborah Aldrich is on the ballot for this position.

Beth Dawley asked if it was Craig Cota's position that was being filled or if he has chosen not to run? Mark replied that if someone is not on the ballot, and they were in the position, they have chosen not to run.

Kathy Burns wanted to know who Deb Aldrich is. Mark asked if anyone wanted to speak. Trustee Bill Edgerton said Deborah Aldridge lives in Gaysville and is an active community member. Bill feels that she is a good choice leadership to fill the Trustee position. He recommends her election to the position.

Mark continued to Cemetery Commissioner for a three-year term. There is no one on the ballot. Kelly said there are two positions open. She shared that the time commitment was minimal. Richard Lunna said he was interested in the Cemetery Commissioner's position. He will be a write-in on the ballot.

Kent Butterfield was called on and he said he has held the Moderator position for 30 years and would be happy to continue.

Mark then moved to Memorial Day Chair for one year, currently held by Suzanne Butterfield. Suzanne said she would run again. She will be a write-in on the ballot.

Mark read the following Articles:

Article 2--To hear the auditor's report and take all necessary actions thereon. Kathy Burns read the Auditor's Report. There were no questions.

Article 3--Will the Town vote to pay real estate taxes in two equal installments due on August 15 and November 15? No questions.

Article 4--Will the Town vote to elect a collector of taxes or to authorize the town Treasurer to collect card taxes? Christina Gallagher asked if the town had considered using the second day of the month versus the 15th to avoid weekend dates? Mark said it has never been brought up. Beth Dawley asked if it was due on Sunday wouldn't it be due on Monday, the next business day? Lori said yes. No additional questions.

Article 5--Will the Town vote to accept the proposed budget? Recommended \$792,539. Beth Dawley asked about the increase in the Sheriff's amount. Jim Shands cited complaints through the summer/fall regarding parking on Bridge St. in Gaysville and excessive speed on back roads. The town contracted with the sheriff to slow traffic around the ATV trail on Stony Brook. The Selectboard thought the need would continue next summer and fall.

Bill Edgerton praised the decision and asked if there are any opportunities/needs/requirements that this budget isn't meeting because of fiscal austerity? Jim responded that there would be a need for a third person on the road crew, but that is not in the current budget. Jim also mentioned the need for a new location for the town garage as the previous plan had not worked out.

Beth Dawley stated that at the 2020 Town Meeting, putting extra money in the budget for a third person was discussed. Why didn't it get into the budget? Mark replied Covid. Jim said it wasn't budgeted and agreed with Mark's statement. They agreed a third person is necessary. Lee Ann added that the Selectboard has people available as emergency backup and there are fallback positions arranged. A third person is on the docket for discussion.

Jim recognized Lori for her hard work during all the changes this year.

Christina Gallagher asked about the increase in Town Clerk salary and the cost of health insurance. Jim replied that the Selectboard came together to increase the clerk's rate in order to recognize Lori's outstanding work. They are also working to fine tune the personnel policy that will define health care benefits. Jim has no objection to the increase. Christina then asked whether this salary increase was for a change in hours worked or to recognize the work that Lori's been doing? Mark responded that Lori has been working an unbelievable number of hours through COVID. There are constant meetings through it all. Lori's always been available, and she does all the prep and research to make things run smoothly. Mark said the board feels she earned the increase. Lee Ann said she couldn't do her zoning job without Lori's help and that the town has had more activity during Covid than the two years prior. Lee Ann listed all the progress Lori has made during a time of heavy restrictions. Christina asked about the cost of health insurance and pointed out that the same amount for Lori was the same as Dave and Luke together. Jim said they are aware of that and are working on it. Beth Dawley stated that Lori has saved the town quite a large sum in IT work by doing it herself.

Mark moved on to Article 6--Will the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to borrow money in anticipation of taxes? No questions.

Article 7—Will the Town vote to withdraw from the Rochester Stockbridge Unified School District? Mark stated the article was on the ballot because the Selectboard was petitioned by residents of Stockbridge

to have a vote on whether to get out or stay in. There was an informational meeting Tuesday night and if anybody had any questions, they could go to the town website and listen to the recording.

Article 8--Will the Town vote to roll the unspent portion of 2020 Audit expense and the 2020 Building Maintenance expense in the amount of \$13,000 under the 2021 budget? No questions.

Article 9--Will the Town vote \$4,200 to help defray the cost to use Margaret Perkin's former residence on Laury Road as the Town's new home of the Stockbridge-Gaysville Historical Society? Donna Bryan asked if the building had already been given to the town? Does the town own the building at this point? Or do the townspeople need to vote on acceptance of that gift? Forrest Newton answered that the building was not given to the town. The building was given to the Stockbridge-Gaysville Historical Society if they were to use it for a museum for the benefit of the public. Donna then asked when does what we pay for this building stop? Forrest said this is one part of the equation. The Historical Society will evaluate whether they can or cannot afford to accept this gift. They have to have a reasonable amount of affordable expenses to expect each year. There has to be a home inspection to decide whether or not the house is in usable condition.

Mark asked how the Historical Society arrived at \$4200. Forrest replied the Society looked at first year expenses and preparing it for public access. To minimize expenses, it will be closed for the winter. Ongoing expenses are electricity, heating and insurance. It will have to be handicap accessible. There will be modifications. The \$4200 should cover the first year. Mark clarified that if the deal falls through then the \$4200 would come back to the Town of Stockbridge. Forrest said the monies would not be used until they know they have the house.

Donna Bryan asked why the vote is this year and not in a future year when you know for sure if you will or will not have the house? Mark replied that it was because they wanted to get started and this would give them the money to move forward after the house inspection. Also, if the house inspection came in, and it wasn't affordable to fix, and they couldn't get grants and raise the money, then it probably wouldn't move forward. With town meeting coming they wanted to put it on the agenda so people could look at it, decide and discuss the issue. Forrest said the house is held in a trust and the Historical Society was given a month to decide. Donna asked if because of the potential cost, shouldn't that be a town decision? Mark said it is a Town decision when they vote on Article 9. Forrest said if the Town didn't support it, they wouldn't do it.

Lee Ann asked Forrest to explain the legal ownership of the house. Forrest said the house was owned by Margaret Perkins and she put everything in trust, and this house will be owned by the Historical Society, as long as it is maintained as a public access museum.

Beth Dawley asked what other funding is the Historical Society looking at? Forrest said the Historical Society had some funds and grants would be available. Nothing is being done until they have Town approval.

Lou Chap suggested that with interest in the Gaysville area and the park there may be ways to create revenue. He sees potential.

Planning Commissioner Kevin Travis said the project could bring value to the area and that it would be a good way to memorialize the history of the town and would be valuable for visitors and school children to learn local history. He thought that the time restraints were unfortunate but supports it because of

the assurances that the Town would be kept safe from large and unexpected expenses. Mark said he believes there are grants available for historical projects.

Mark read Article 10--To do any other necessary and proper business brought before said annual town meeting. Christina asked why this article isn't on the ballot. Lori explained that we wouldn't vote on this. Mark said this was for the Town to discuss anything that wasn't warned.

Richard Lunna said from what he has read that the Perkins house would only be for the use of the Historical Society. Would they own it or not? Forrest said that they originally thought it was just use but the Society would own it. Linda Lunna asked what would happen if it didn't work out and was no longer a museum? Forrest said that was a question for the attorneys.

Metta Rea asked what kind of deed would be conveyed. Forrest said it would be a fee simple interest. Mark said that means they would own it.

Mark stated that all the questions had been answered and asked if anyone else wanted to speak. Lori had a request from Sharon Pavlik for a list of the names for write-in along with the correct spelling. Lori will post the names on Town website.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:19pm.

Kelly McDermott-Burns, Asst. Town Clerk
