

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MAY 12, 2015**

Present: First Selectman Edward G. McAnaney, Joanne Sullivan, Brian Fitzgerald, Timothy Reynolds and Ed Basile. First Selectman McAnaney called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Public Comment: First Selectman McAnaney was presented with a petition in support of the Bridge Street Community Center signed by 22 people. He also noted the receipt of an email from *Scott Lingenfelter (141 South Stone Street)* urging the Board of Selectmen (BoS) to not take any action at the Special Meeting. Mr Lingenfelter was concerned about the need to hold a special meeting and unnecessarily rushing the process.

Beth Chafetz 803 Mapleton Avenue questioned the accuracy of the project cost and operating costs noted in the motions on the agenda. She noted that the Ad-hoc Committee had asked for the project to move forward but were led to believe that the project would be included in a combined bonding effort with a referendum in the fall. She wants to know what the rush is to move forward now.

Ann Borg 1510 Mountain Road agreed with Ms. Chafetz' comments and said that the group has followed all of the procedures and that the BoS are now negating all the work the Ad-hoc Committee has done. She noted that at a Town Meeting next week there is no information of how much the project will cost tax payers since the Board of Finance has not determined financing.

Krystal Holmes of Michael Lane began by reading Mr. Lingenfelter's letter. She said the Ad-hoc Committee has been transparent presenting the project to multiple boards. Ms. Holmes said that the Board of Selectmen is unduly rushing the project forward and has not included the Ad-hoc Committee in any discussions. She said that bonding all projects together is the most responsible way to proceed. She said that at the Board of Finance meeting there was an unwillingness to meet the aggressive timeline. She urged the BoS to move the project forward to the Board of Finance (BoF) but not yet to a Town Meeting. She requested that she and Ms. Chafetz be allowed to interject during the Selectmen conversation since they are members of a Town Board.

Janet Banks of 9 Randall Drive noted that she was co-chair of a committee to look at the possible re-use of Bridge Street School in 2008-2009 and said many hours were spent researching options. She said all the volunteers are trying to do something positive for the community and its constituents. She felt that the BoS is trying to sabotage the project and that we need to think about something positive.

Tom Frenaye of Warnertown Road said the he agreed with 98% of Mr. Lingenfelter's letter.

Motion to refer the following question to a Town Meeting: "Shall the Town expend \$8,350,000 to refurbish the former Bridge Street School for use as a location for Parks and Recreation programs/community center with operating costs estimated

at an additional \$300,000 annually”.

Mr. McAnaney asked for a motion to move the project forward to a Town Meeting.

Mrs. Sullivan passed out her own motion “The Board of Selectmen recommends that the Board of Finance approve the expenditure of up to \$8.35 million to renovate and expand the former Bridge Street School for a Community Center for Parks and Recreation programs and additional town office space”.

Selectmen Reynolds said he is concerned that the BoF seems to be kicking the project down the road. Mr. Fitzgerald said that the BoF didn’t seem excited about making a judgment soon. Ms. Holmes interjected that the BoF thinks it’s irresponsible to consider this project alone and not included with other bonding initiatives. Mrs. Sullivan noted that group has worked hard and that the BoS has said they’d send the project to referendum so the procedure should be followed to send to the BoF next. Mr. Fitzgerald said he would take the blame on the idea to fast track the project. He said he wanted a decision by June 30th before people went away for vacation. He explained that a referendum would be set for June 25th and that it needs 30 days warning. Mr. Fitzgerald said that waiting until the fall would have the referendum in the middle of a local election and as a practical matter it will be pushed off until after the election. A new Board of Selectmen would probably take it up in January. Discussion followed about the possible action or inaction by the BoF. Mr. McAnaney said if the BoF doesn’t move the project forward, the proposed Town Meeting would be canceled. Mr. Reynolds said after listening to the public that he’d rather not cause an issue with the Board of Finance. He noted that he is not a supporter of the project but wants to give people a chance to vote and to not be rushed. Mrs. Sullivan suggested that the Town Meeting be scheduled after the Board of Finance decides on the project. It was noted that the BoF doesn’t meet in the summer.

Mrs. Sullivan withdrew her original motion and replaced it as follows “The Board of Selectmen refers to the Board of Finance for the approval of the expenditure of up to \$8.35 million to renovate and expand the former Bridge Street School for a Community Center for Parks and Recreation programs and additional town office space”.

Mr. McAnaney sees it getting bogged down by the Board of Finance. Mr. Fitzgerald said he’d vote for the motion but this will really delaying the project. Mr. Basile said if he was the sole decision maker he’d want to know how the community felt about the project before bonding. Vote 4-1 in favor with Mr. McAnaney voting against.

Motion to refer the following question to a Town Meeting: “Shall the Town expend \$8,350,000 to refurbish the former Bridge Street School for use as a location for Parks and Recreation programs/community center with operating costs estimated at an additional \$300,000 annually”.

Mr. Reynolds moved to table the motion until the BoF comes up with an answer on the previous motion. Vote 4-1 in favor with Mr. Fitzgerald voting against the motion.

**Motion to refer the following question to the Board of Finance for its review: :
“Shall the Town expend \$8,350,000 to refurbish the former Bridge Street School
for use as a location for Parks and Recreation programs/community center with
operating costs estimated at an additional \$300,000 annually”.**

This motion was replaced by Mrs. Sullivan’s motion.

**Call a Town Meeting for Tuesday, May 19, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Suffield High
School Auditorium to address the above motion.**

Mr. Reynolds voted to table this motion. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Mr. Fitzgerald moved to adjourn and by unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at
5:45 p.m.

The next Board of Selectmen Meeting is Wednesday, May 20, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Trase
Recording Secretary