

Regular Session Minutes - Selectmen's Meeting
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Hall
Monday, December 17, 2012, 7:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Catherine B. Cordes, Chair, Margot R. Fleischman, William S. Moonan, Michael A. Rosenberg, Mark Siegenthaler, and Town Manager Richard T. Reed

ALSO PRESENT: Lauren Sheytanian, Finance Committee Member Ben Thomas; Bedford Community Access Television Board President Ronald Cordes; James Shea; Finance Director Victor Garofalo; IT Manager Sherwood Ives; Press representatives Kim Siebert, Mary McBride and Christopher Gambon

Chair Cordes called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Chair Cordes remembered Robert Slechta who had just passed away. Mr. Slechta was praised as an amazing volunteer who kept history alive in Bedford.

13-125 Wilson Mill Park Proposed Dedication

Town Manager Richard Reed referenced the December 10, 2012 memorandum from the Wilson Mill Park Committee concerning the dedication of the bridge over the Vine Brook to former Selectmen Gordon Feltman. Mr. Feltman was involved in the early stages of the Wilson Mill Park project. Mr. Rosenberg stated that Mr. Feltman was a bridge to many constituencies that might otherwise have been overlooked.

Mr. Rosenberg stated that a formal plaque would be attached to the framework of the bridge and would be funded by the committee. It was suggested that Mr. Reed should work on the wording of the plaque. Mr. Feltman's widow and family would be invited to the dedication which would take place in the spring of 2013.

Chair Cordes asked if there was any precedent to dedicating Town property to a Selectman. Mr. Reed stated that he was not aware of anything but did say that the schools have named things after people. Chair Cordes added that Mr. Feltman increased interest and knowledge of the site.

Ms. Fleischman made a motion to approve the proposal to dedicate the bridge over the Vine Brook in the newly redone Wilson Mill Park in memory of former Selectmen Gordon Feltman and authorize the Town Manager to work with the committee to word the plaque in his honor. Mr. Moonan seconded the motion.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

13-126 Proposed Bond Refunding

Finance Director Victor Garofalo was present to discuss refinancing a portion of the Town's outstanding Bonds issued in 2005 for the Department of Public Works building (which is exempt), Land Acquisition along the Middlesex Turnpike and the Town Center. There would be a total net savings of about \$422,873.65 including issuance costs. The remaining bonds interest rate can be decreased from 4.032% to 2.065% at this time but could change if the U.S. goes over the fiscal cliff. The new bonds would be paid off in the same time frame in 2024. The savings would adjust the budgets going forward.

Mr. Moonan asked why some bonds come up at certain times and not others. Mr. Garofalo explained that bonds have to have reached their call date and there also has to be a savings of at least two percent.

Mr. Moonan made a motion that in order to save interest cost, the Treasurer is authorized to provide for the sale and issuance of bonds under G.L. c. 44, Section 21A, to refund all or any portion of the remaining principal of and redemption premium and interest on the Town's General Obligation bonds dated July 15, 2005; and that for this purpose the Treasurer is authorized to provide for the preparation and distribution of a Preliminary Official Statement; provided, however, that no bonds shall be issued under this vote unless the final interest rates and other terms of the refunding bonds are approved by the board. Mr. Siegenthaler seconded the motion.

Chair Cordes asked when this would happen. Mr. Garofalo answered that this could happen by the end of January if all the rates remain the same. He added that if they do not get a favorable interest rate the Town could back out of the deal at any time.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

13-127 Proposed Invoice System

Mr. Garofalo presented an alternative online billing and payment system offered by Invoice Cloud. Currently the Town is using the Unipay system. Invoice Cloud is an expanding company that allows residents to set up accounts and view outstanding bills and payment history for real estate, personal property, water, sewer and excise taxes. The services could be expanded to allow online payment for birth, marriage and death certificates and dog licenses. With Invoice Cloud users would be able to view 18 months of past bills and payments. All taxpayers will be set up in the system so that they will be able to join if they choose to do so. Residents would also have the option of paying by credit card at the Tax Collector's window in Town Hall. Residents could make partial payments or automatic payments. In addition they can choose to have paperless billing with the taxes being sent to them through email. If a resident uses the automatic payment feature, a reminder would be sent three days beforehand.

Residents could pay by an ACH (e-check) or credit card. The fee for the e-check is \$.40 per payment transaction. The credit card fee would be 2.95 percent per transaction excluding utilities. Water and sewer bills would have a credit card fee of around \$5.95. Currently the e-check fee with Unipay is free but would increase to \$.25 effective January 1, 2013 and their credit card fee is also 2.95 percent. Not many residents are using the current system with Unipay.

Mr. Garofalo explained another function that would allow smaller mortgage companies to check the balance of real estate bills online instead of calling the Finance Department.

Ms. Fleischman wondered about the level of security with Invoice Cloud. Mr. Garofalo responded that Invoice Cloud has the best up to date security with quarterly compliance checks. Ms. Fleischman asked if Invoice Cloud would accept liability for a security breach. Mr. Garofalo indicated that information is stored on the Invoice Cloud website so they would be liable.

Mr. Garofalo then gave a brief demonstration of the system using the Town of Sharon as an example. Mr. Moonan asked if most towns were covering the \$.40 fee for e-checks and Mr. Garofalo answered that most charged the fee. The charge would need to be built into the budget and would cost around \$2,000 quarterly if the Town covered the charge.

Mr. Moonan inquired how long it would take to join with Invoice Cloud. Mr. Garofalo indicated that it depends on the backup at Invoice Cloud but potentially by the May billing period. The Town could also leave Invoice Cloud at any time.

Ms. Fleischman asked whether any other companies were researched. Mr. Garofalo replied that other systems have restrictions on what can or cannot be viewed by residents.

Chair Cordes stated that it would be a great service for a certain percentage of the population.

13-128 Proposal for Selectmen Meeting Video System

President of Bedford Community Access Television (Bedford TV), Ronald Cordes was present to discuss their most recent proposal for preparing the Selectmen's meeting room for television broadcast. The previous proposal was not acted upon. Facilities Director Richard Jones and IT Manager Sherwood Ives both recommended going for the system upgrade level for the configuration of the equipment.

The simplest version consisted of operating a camera on a tripod but Mr. Cordes indicated that the Selectmen's meeting room was too small to make this option feasible. The next option would have a single camera mounted on the wall in front of the Selectmen. The limitations of this option include not being able to see presenters,

PowerPoint presentations and the movement of the camera between Selectmen would produce poor video quality.

The upgraded version would consist of three cameras; two mounted on the back wall facing the Selectmen and one behind the Selectmen facing the public. A smaller cheaper field switcher would allow for an operator to be present in the room as opposed to the previous model that was too big for the Selectmen's Room. It could be used to operate the three cameras and pick up on any PowerPoint presentations. The switcher would be portable and similar in size to a laptop so it could be safely stored after meetings. The only issue would be the sound. Mr. Cordes suggests installing low profile microphones on the Selectmen's table and presenter's table. Mr. Cordes furthered stated that in the event of an executive session it would be very simple to turn the camera off.

Mr. Moonan asked if the meetings could be broadcast live. Mr. Cordes said it could go either way and does not affect the kind of equipment needed. Verizon is the only company with a direct line from the studio to Town Hall. Comcast's line goes to Maynard and back feeds to the Bedford TV studio. The current lines do not however, have the capacity to hold three cameras. Mr. Cordes stated that the Facilities department would pull the wires from behind the walls.

Chair Cordes asked how much this project would cost. Mr. Cordes replied that Comcast and Verizon have given money for this project so no additional funds would be necessary.

Mr. Moonan suggested that the project move forward with the system upgrade version so that a Request for Proposal can be drafted as it will take a few months to purchase and install the equipment. Mr. Moonan pointed out that the Town is one of the only communities in the surrounding area that do not broadcast their meetings.

Mr. Rosenberg asked if the Cable Television committee has been consulted. Cable Television Committee member James Shea responded that the committee will not weigh in on this. Mr. Shea added that Bedford TV has the technical resources to put together an equipment package.

Chair Cordes stated that it would be a great service for the Town to broadcast not only the Selectmen's meetings but other committees' meetings as well. She added that no vote was needed tonight, just a consensus to move forward. Mr. Siegenthaler added that it does not make sense to install only one camera and that it should be done correctly with the three cameras.

13-129 Proposed 2013 License Renewals

Chair Cordes noted that the Bedford Plaza Hotel and the Bamboo restaurant had outstanding compliance issues that prevented their approval at the December 10, 2012 Selectmen's Meeting. They are now ready to be approved.

Mr. Siegenthaler made a motion to approve the renewal for Bamboo Restaurant and Bedford Plaza Hotel for alcohol licenses, Common Victualers for Bamboo and Inn holder for Bedford Plaza Hotel for 2013. Mr. Moonan seconded the motion.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

13-130 Miscellaneous Action Items – One-Day Special Liquor License

Mr. Rosenberg made a motion to approve the application for a One Day wine and malt alcohol license for St. Michaels Knights of Columbus Council 5292 on January 26, 2013. Mr. Moonan seconded the motion.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

13-131 Minutes

Mr. Fleischman made a motion to approve the Regular Session Minutes of December 3, 2012, as amended. Mr. Moonan seconded the motion.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

13-132 Town Manager's Report

Mr. Reed informed the Selectmen that he is working with staff to develop the FY2014 Selectmen's budget with a 2.15% guideline. He expects to present an idea of the Selectmen's budget at the January 14, 2013 Selectmen's Meeting.

13-133 Open Discussion

Ms. Fleischman informed the Selectmen of the meeting arranged by Colonel Weilacher, Commander of Hanscom Air Force Base with Captain Heitsch, Commander of the Boston Coast Guard Base in regards to the Coast Guard housing on Pine Hill Road. The Coast Guard housing is in the process of being turned over to the US General Service's Administration (GSA) for the purpose of discharging ownership. The housing would be discharged in a cascading fashion with the federal and state government deciding whether they would like the housing or not. The Town would be the last to make a decision on it before it would be available to the public. The property will be maintained by the Coast Guard throughout the whole process.

Mr. Moonan added that he was pleased to hear that progress was being made since a year and half ago when this was last discussed. He pointed out that Representative John Tierney was a great help in starting discussion with the Coast Guard. Mr. Moonan suggested involving Mr. Tierney again to let the GSA know of the Town's desire to turn the Coast Guard housing into affordable housing. Mr. Moonan stated that the Bedford Housing Authority would be willing to be involved with the project.

Chair Cordes added that Captain Heitsch agreed to work with the Town and arrange a visit to the property if the Town wanted to see the property.

Mr. Moonan wondered if there were any Transportation Improvement Projects (TIP) projects that the Town was working on. Mr. Reed replied that Director of Public Works Richard Warrington is the Town's TIP contact person. He is working on submitting a form for the extension of the Minuteman bike path, the implementation of the Great Road Master Plan and Middlesex Turnpike. Mr. Reed mentioned adding Wiggins Avenue to the list. Mr. Siegenthaler added that the project might lend itself to Massport or state funding. Ms. Fleischman suggested that it might be beneficial to monitor what the Town of Lexington does in regards to applying for TIP funding for Hartwell Avenue because of its proximity to Wiggins Ave in Bedford.

Mr. Reed stated the process of submitting projects for TIP funding generates hundreds of projects but only a few projects are actually funded. He further stated that they tend to take projects that are well along in readiness and design.

Mr. Moonan inquired about the status of the Take Home Vehicle Policy. Mr. Reed replied that he would make amendments to the current policy. Mr. Moonan requested that it be ready for discussion before Town Meeting.

Mr. Rosenberg mentioned that work is about to commence on the Crosby's Corner reconstruction project. This TIP funded project should take five years and will cost \$70 million to \$80 million. He added that the first year of the project will consist of building an access road.

Mr. Rosenberg pointed out that Annual Town Meeting is 14 weeks away and happens to coincide with the first night of Passover. He stated that he spoke with the Moderator, who was looking into what other communities are doing. Mr. Rosenberg suggested convening Town Meeting with only the Moderator and rescheduling for lack of a quorum as the start date is dictated by the Town Charter. Chair Cordes suggested following up with the Moderator.

Mr. Siegenthaler stated that the Planning Board continued the hearing concerning Plank Street. The Planning Board was concerned about the proposed housing. The board chose not to vote and asked that the owner come back with statistics on how many school aged children would be added with the housing. They also requested that the owner revisit the office space percentage. Mr. Siegenthaler added the Planning Board was aware of the memorandum from the Selectmen.

**Mr. Moonan made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Fleischman seconded the motion.
The motion passed 5-0-0.**

The regular session meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.