

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING NOVEMBER 25, 2014

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order in the Town Offices at 4 PM with Mrs. Walter and Mr. Hevy present. Also attending were teacher Jay Mooney, Charlie Williams from Wingspeed Adventures, and School Superintendent Marilyn Tencza.

Mr. Smith welcomed the visitors, and said that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the challenge/confidence course proposed for school property. This is not a climbing tower as the Selectmen previously thought. The Selectmen discussed this at their meeting last Tuesday night, and became concerned when they found out that students would be 40' off of the ground.

Mrs. Walter noted that the Selectmen's first priority is public safety and potential liability. The Selectmen are not opposed to this, but just need to protect the town.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Mooney to explain exactly what will be happening on the course. Mr. Mooney deferred to Mr. Williams, whose company will be building the course.

According to Mr. Williams, challenge courses have been around since WWII when they were used for military training. They are now called "adventure" courses or "confidence" courses. Mr. Williams stated that with all of the regulations that have been developed over the years, it has been proven that these courses are safer than regular gym classes.

Mr. Williams stated that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Public Safety Amusement Division oversees all of the "high" activities. Mr. Williams' company will inspect the course annually, and the client, in this case Mr. Mooney, will inspect the course daily. The height to the top of the poles is 47', and the students will be up anywhere from 32' to 37'. The students are secured by a rope anytime they are higher than 12'.

Mr. Hevy asked Superintendent Tencza if the School Committee has approved this challenge/confidence course, and she stated that they have. Mr. Mooney said that this course is intended for students in grades 7 – 12.

Mr. Hevy asked about certification of the instructors, and Mr. Williams stated that there are two levels of certification, a Level 1 certification is good for one year, and a Level 2 certification is good for two years. North Brookfield is lucky to already have two staff members who are certified, and Mr. Mooney intends to become certified as well.

Mr. Hevy asked what are the maintenance concerns for the course, and Mr. Williams stated that bolts on the poles may need to be tightened, and the wood surfaces should be treated every year or two. Mr. Mooney stated that money to pay for the annual inspections and maintenance for the next three years is already included in the grant.

Mr. Williams stated that part of the training involves teaching people how to prevent off-hours use and how not to be an "attractive nuisance."

Mrs. Walter said that she is at the point where she now feels comfortable with approving this. She has concerns about the possibility of charging for a summer camp, but that is something that can be worked out with the insurance company later on.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the request of the School Department to build a challenge/confidence course on Town property, provided that the course meets all of the requirements of the Town's Building Inspector, the Massachusetts Department of Public Safety, and the Town's insurance carrier, and that it receives the approval of the School Committee. Oversight of the use of the challenge/confidence course, upkeep, and responsibility for the training of personnel shall be the sole responsibility of the School Department. So voted.

Mr. Mooney, Mr. Williams, and Mrs. Tencza left the meeting at 5 PM.

Peter Shipman and Trish Miller joined the meeting.

Mr. Shipman and Ms. Miller presented a draft RFQ for architect services on the Town House renovation project. Included with the RFQ were a draft contract, and a Designer Selection Board application form. These three documents will make up the packet that will be sent out to prospective bidders.

Mr. Shipman stated that the Town House Advisory Committee would like Town Counsel to review the packet, and is tentatively expecting to hear back from legal by December 12th. The Selectmen agreed that we can ask the Town's attorney to review the document and have it back by next Tuesday. Mr. Shipman said that that would greatly improve the projected timeline. It is hoped to have the bid opening on January 5th.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the RFQ packet, pending review by Town Counsel. So voted.

Mr. Shipman and Mrs. Miller left the meeting at 5:20 PM.

The Selectmen reviewed an amendment to the Town's contract with NBEMS to provide ALS coverage. It was agreed to change the wording of the document to reflect a January 1, 2015 start date. Leslie will make the changes and have Mr. Holway and Mr. Kiritsy sign the document so that the Selectmen may sign in next Tuesday night.

There being no further business, Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to adjourn at 5:35 PM. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant