

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

Chairman Hevy called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 6 PM with Mr. Kiley and Mr. Petraitis also present.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **September 05, 2017**

Mr. Kiley moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve these minutes as written. So voted.

II. APPROVAL OF WARRANTS

- **School Warrant #1011 for \$39,255.60**
- **General Warrant #1012 for \$98,923.34**
- **Payroll Warrant #6 for \$310,258.07**

Mr. Kiley moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve these warrants. So voted.

III. FINANCIAL ITEMS

There were no Financial Items.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. AED purchase

Mr. Hevy reviewed an e-mail from Police Chief Mark Smith noting that the cost of an AED to be used at the Town Offices is \$1,995.87. (Attachment #1) Mr. Kiley moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve the purchase from Holden Hospital Funds. So voted.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Medicare renewals

This item will be deferred until the next meeting.

B. Melink presentation

Jeremy Chapman of Melink reviewed a Powerpoint presentation that began with a history of the solar projects with the Town, and how the economics have changed. (Attachment #2) Mr. Chapman noted that the economic value of the project to the Town has declined by 69% since March of 2016, but the cost to build has declined by 43% as well. There are still many unknowns with this project. The state has not set a value on the new SMART program, the National Grid interconnection process can take as long as 6 to 9 months, and the final design of the projects depends on many things, such as environmental reviews. There is also a possibility that the federal government will put tariffs on solar components that are not built in the US.

Mr. Kiley asked if the tariffs would be retroactive, and Mr. Chapman stated that he did not believe so, but the prices of certain components are already going up.

Mr. Petraitis asked why the economic value of the projects has dropped 69%? Mr. Chapman explained that the SMART program is worth significantly less than the prior SREC programs. Melink anticipates that North Brookfield will be in the second block of the program, which will be a 4% drop from the first block.

Mr. Kiley asked why the canopy at the school is not full coverage? He had hoped that the school could save money on plowing in the winter. Mr. Chapman said that safety of the project is their first priority. The full coverage canopy would not have the ability to shed snow, which would make for a significant snow load on top.

Resident Jeff Smith of Walnut Street asked about putting panels on the landfill? Mr. Hevy explained that right now the Town has violations on the landfill cap, which the Board of Health is trying to remedy with DEP. Trevor Brusco of the Board of Health stated that he is currently working with DEP to get the landfill cap recertified. Until this happens DEP will not consider any proposals for solar at the landfill. Some of the issues that need to be fixed are from a lack of maintenance, especially the problem of vegetation in the swales, but also, the transfer station was not on the site when the landfill was capped. The plowing of snow has also damaged the cap.

Roger Davis of Sunset Drive noted that he understands that the Selectmen are trying to generate revenue for the Town, but it seems to him that everything has been finalized and there is no room for input. He noted that he spoke with Mr. Chapman a few months ago to talk about the use of pesticides and his concerns about water runoff. Mr. Davis said that he cannot support these projects if this issue hasn't been addressed. Mr. Chapman stated that Melink absolutely has to address runoff, they haven't gone through the permitting process yet. Nothing has been decided. The interconnection process with National Grid needs to be done next, and that can take 6 to 9 months.

Peter Rouette of Shore Road said that he attended the Planning Board meeting when the solar projects were discussed. At that time the Planning Board were talking about putting together some regulations. Mr. Kiley said that the Town has a solar by-law in place. If the Planning Board wants to change it then Town Meeting will need to vote on the changes.

Mr. Rouette asked Mr. Chapman if these solar systems are made in the US? Mr. Chapman stated that the modules are made overseas, but the racking system and inverters are made in the US. There are not a lot of US solar manufacturers.

Dennis Kelley of Bell Street said that he does not know much about Melink. Their website states that they have been in business for 30 years. He said that he would like clarification on Melink's qualifications to do this job. He asked for assurances that Melink would still be around in 20 years, and he asked if anyone from Melink had visited these potential solar sites and observed the environmental conditions? Mr. Kelley asked how closely Melink monitors subcontractors?

Mr. Chapman noted that in addition to an ongoing project in Southbridge, Melink has recently completed a large project in Rochester, and also similar large-scale projects in North Carolina and Hawaii. He said that they have had to deal with sensitive environmental areas and endangered species at other projects, and environmental review is part of the permitting process. Mr. Chapman stated that Melink tries to use local contractors, especially electrical contractors, when they build a site. Mr. Chapman noted that a decommissioning plan and bond will in place in the event of a worst case scenario where Melink is not around in 20 years.

John Tripp of Crooks Road noted that a petition with over 400 signatures was presented to the Selectmen and the Planning Board. He wanted to know if that made any difference in anyone's opinion? The Selectmen said that they have taken the opinions of others into consideration. Mr. Kiley noted that the Town Meeting vote authorized the Selectmen to remove those parcels of land from Article 97 and the Selectmen have not done so, so yes, the petition did make a difference.

Mr. Tripp asked if there is a possibility of putting panels on the landfill, or only putting canopy and roof-mount panels at the school and not in the forest? Mr. Hevy explained again that nothing can be done at the landfill until the Town gets DEP approval for the cap. Nobody knows how long that will take. Mr. Bruso from the Board of Health stated that the swale behind the compactors is "non-functional." Even when the Town is in DEP compliance there is no guarantee that there will be solar on the landfill. Mr. Hevy said that the Selectmen do want to pursue putting solar on the landfill, but the timeframe won't tie in with this project.

Cynthia Varney of Crooks Road said that she is very concerned about the trees. She owns two acres of land and has very diverse wildlife there. She does not want to lose that. She believes that back in the 1970s additional land was purchased around the school to be a buffer.

Justina Floria of North Main Street asked where this meeting was posted? She was told that it was posted with the Town Clerk and also on the Town's website. She said that in her opinion the Town is a "mess." Mr. Kiley said that people have to bear some responsibility for keeping themselves informed.

John Hawkins of Donovan Road urged people to file complaints with DEP to stop the process. He does not want to see this project happen.

Mr. Chapman stated that they have to look at endangered and protected species as part of their review process. There are procedures that have to be followed, and that Melink wants to follow.

Laura Zajac of Brickyard Road asked if by-law changes are approved would it affect these projects? Mr. Kiley said that the Selectmen don't know. Ms. Zajac asked how much has the Town spent on legal fees for this project? She was told that the Selectmen will find out the number.

Peter Dupell of Bell Road asked if the Selectmen intend to seek the removal of Bell Road and Oakham Road from Article 97 as authorized by Town Meeting? The Selectmen said that they do not intend to do so.

Mr. Petraitis noted that the Board talked about putting solar panels on the landfill several years ago. He said that Selectmen's meetings are almost every Tuesday, and the Selectmen talk about Town Meetings for weeks and months before they happen. He also said that in light of hearing the people tonight, he thinks the Board should consider another town vote on the project.

Mr. Hevy entertained a motion to move forward with the next step in this process. Mr. Kiley moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to move forward with Melink. So voted, with Mr. Petraitis voting "no."

Mr. Hevy thanked everyone for coming and for voicing their opinions.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Tyler Wolanin office hours

Mr. Hevy noted that Tyler Wolanin, District Aide to Senator Anne Gobi, will be in North Brookfield on Tuesday, September 26th from 11 AM to noon at the Senior Center.

VII. PENDING/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

See attached list.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Hevy announced that the public has the opportunity to briefly comment through the Chairman, with a two-minute limit.

Board of Health member Trevor Bruso noted that the annual Hazardous Waste Collection Day at the transfer station will be held this Saturday from 9 AM to noon

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session scheduled.

There being no further business, at 8 PM Mr. Kiley moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant

PROJECT STATUS AND PENDING/FUTURE SELECTMEN'S AGENDA ITEMS
Updated 07/25/17

PROJECT

NBDDP/Aztec

Solar contracts on Municipal Property

Purchase Orders

Personnel policies

Electric aggregation

Community Compact projects

Financial Forecasting

Capital Planning

CMRPC/Regional Shared Services

IT Grant

Town House restoration project

Bates Observatory

STATUS

In progress

Pending

Pending

In progress

Pending

Final report delivered

Final report due Aug 30

Final report delivered

Final report delivered

FOTH Capital Campaign

Use Renderings Complete

Pending