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TOWN OF CHARLTON
Minutes of Special Selectmen's Meeting
Tuesday, July 21, 2020, 6:30pm

Due to COVID19 – meeting held by ZOOM app, video participation:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84775444074>

Present remotely: Chairman – Karen A. Spiewak, Vice-Chairman – Patsy Rydlak, Clerk – Stephen G. Koronis, Members – William Borowski and David M. Singer and Town Administrator – Andrew Golas.

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Spiewak called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

II. Consent Agenda / Warrant Approval as Needed

III. Community Relations, Announcements and Open Forum

IV. Appointments/Resignation:

V. Scheduled Appointments:

VI. New Business:

1. Discussion and vote regarding Public Safety Building Project, Deb Exclusion vote and project options. Mr. Golas reviewed the presentation. Chairman Spiewak said this information will be posted on our website. Ralph Fiske, Chairman of the Public Safety Building Committee said most of the members are on if there are any questions for them. Mr. Borowski wanted to make sure we are all on the same page. The way it's currently being proposed, we're thinking it's going to cost \$30.4 million? The answer was no. Mr. Borowski said for the architectural plan changes, we need to be very clear on what that number means. Mr. Golas reviewed the pages of the presentation with the costs. Rebecca Hopkins from Tecton Architects said she could answer some of the questions posed. She said the bid climate is very unknown right now. This is a reflection of how far the number could swing. It is not an assumption in any way. The escalation is unknown as well. They wanted to make everyone aware where these bid numbers could shift. Mr. Koronis asked if the bidder knows that the town voted on a debt exclusion of \$28 million dollars, and they're bids come in at \$26 million dollars, what are the odds of overages or cost overruns? Ms. Hopkins said we are looking at an overall project cost of \$30.4 million. The contractor won't bid on any soft costs, they would only bid on hard costs. Jeff McElray from Tecton said as long as the bid market is competitive, they will be aiming to beating their competitors. They will be more concerned with winning the job then the debt exclusion. Mr. Koronis asked about soft costs and Mr. McElray explained what they are. Donna Foglio, Finance Director explained the bond rating and answered questions. Noreen Johnson Smith had understood that the police department also needed a juvenile lockup separate from adult lock up. Is this part of the cost of the 5 million? Are there solar energy canopy savings in the plan? Rebecca Hopkins said there was some reconfiguration where possible. She doesn't believe reconfiguration of the cell block issue was done. She also stated the building will not be solar ready but could be added in the future. Mr. Singer asked where are the bays for the police cruisers and for unloading prisoners? Ms. Hopkins said they are

there in the design, they are tucked into the building. Mr. Singer asked about bays for the cruisers, can they be stored inside during bad weather? Ms. Hopkins said there is not enclosed parking for the cruisers but there is covered parking for them. Jeff McElray said the sallyport does allow parking for a few cruisers. They also have drive through bays. Mr. McElray and Ms. Hopkins answered questions. Chairman Spiewak said she feels we are getting a little off topic. Mr. Singer thought this meeting was also an opportunity to ask questions about it. Mr. Singer apologized and said he asked those questions because he thought this meeting was to allow questions. Mr. Koronis agreed due to the questions he's been asked. Mr. Golas finished the presentation. Mr. Borowski feels a joint public safety building is the way to go. He asked what is significantly different from the vote that was taken in August? If there is a completely different view, that would change his view. Ms. Rydlak said so much money has been spent to put this in place, would we not want to put this on the ballot because we already have? She said by not putting it on the ballot, we are not letting the residents decide and throwing away money spent. If they vote no, we move on. Mr. Singer said he's heard from both sides. He believes in the need but he also believes that there's nothing wrong with admitting failure either. As much as he sees a need, he would like to make a public commitment that if we put it on the ballot and it fails, we will not bring it back again and again. He would like the board to make that commitment. If the board does this, he will vote for it. Mr. Koronis said that there is so much more information now than any voter had last November. He would encourage to put this on the ballot right now with no strings attached. Ms. Rydlak asked how Mr. Singer would feel about backing that up by making it a bylaw that we can't bring it back for 5 years. Chairman Spiewak asked Hank Camosse, Chairman of the Finance Committee if he had any comments to add or any votes to take by his board. Mr. Camosse said he doesn't see anything the Finance Committee would vote on. They already said back when that they would go along with spending the 1.4 to define the building better and getting it on this ballot. He disagrees with Mr. Singer about this being a failure. Mr. Singer said he didn't say it was a failure. He said we failed to find an alternate funding mechanism. Mr. Camosse said we have a right and an obligation to present it to the voters. Joe Spiewak from the Finance Committee said he personally voted against the funding mechanism at the last vote because we didn't have a lot of detail. He credits all the boards for their work they have done in the past year since November 2019. Without some sort of override vote, debt exclusion, this project is never getting off the ground. The Board of Selectmen controls the borrowing. He said do not disrespect the voters of town meeting. Town meeting spends money. The ballot box is how it's funded. Kristin Kustigian from the Finance Committee asked if it's common practice that we have a Town Meeting with an article with no contingency for the funding source for a major capital project. Chairman Spiewak said it was recommended not to have it. Ms. Kustigian thinks you should always give the voters options to ponder on the ballot. Jason Julian from the Finance Committee said he would stand by the vote made previously to move forward. He would like it to go to the voters. Steve Coleman from the Public Safety Building Capital Campaign Committee said the board is deciding tonight whether to put it on the ballot or not. It was the direction of the Board of Selectmen for the committee to move forward and feels it should be put on the ballot. He would encourage the board to vote yes to move this to the ballot. Noreen Johnson-Smith from the Public Safety Building Capital Campaign Committee said she also voted against the initial financing proposal of the building because of misinformation out there. Since that time she has gotten involved. She thinks it's a leadership issue to challenge the idea that voters would have another say on a project this important. The leadership of our town owes it to the voters to give us an opportunity to vote on this. Speaking to the role of the Moderator which she currently serves in, she believes this is a change in the project and that we should be allowed to bring that vote back to the taxpayers. Chairman Spiewak said she

can't believe we are having a conversation on debating to put this on the ballot or not. She always assumed we were putting this on. It's a no regret move to put it on the ballot and let people vote. To Mr. Singer's comment, if it means getting this on the ballot, what do we need to do. For information, tonight we need to vote to put it on a ballot and we need a super majority which means 4 out of 5 people to allow it to go to ballot. Mr. Singer said if people took what he felt was a very sincere and easy compromise that would allow this to go forward while promising the public and giving them the assurance they were looking for and that's the biggest complaint from most people about this board, not the makeup, historically, we would have already had this vote last week. He said from each member of the board and he will, if it fails at the polls, he will vote no if this comes back up again while he's on the board. Chairman Spiewak asked Mr. Koronis if he was ok with making this pledge. Mr. Koronis said there is so much more information now than what we had. He is hesitant to do what Mr. Singer is asking. Mr. Singer is referring to a request for a public safety building if it doesn't pass. Mr. Borowski has no problem backing Mr. Singer or a public safety building, however the argument that many made was town meeting approved the money, the town ballot was for funding and didn't approve. He said we allowed people to vote last year and it's not fair to have people vote again on the same exact thing they did last year. Ms. Rydlak said it would not be right to not put it on the ballot but she would give her word. Mr. Borowski said like he said last week if he can get a similar pledge that we are going to continue to reduce the budget or plan and that we will give an earnest look at funding it in an alternative manner, he's fine proceeding. Mr. Singer agrees and is happy to give his pledge. **Motion by Mr. Koronis to put the Debt Exclusion for the Public Safety Building on the November ballot, seconded by Ms. Rydlak. Roll call vote: Ms. Rydlak – aye, Mr. Borowski – aye, Mr. Singer – aye, Mr. Koronis – aye and Chairman Spiewak – aye.** The Finance Committee adjourned their meeting. The Public Safety Building Committee adjourned their meeting.

2. Discussion and potential vote on Economic Development Commission Charge. Mr. Golas stated with the EDC remaining largely dormant over the past few years and many of the members either resigning or not seeking re-appointment, he believes it would be beneficial to consider re-constituting the EDC to improve the operational efficiency of the commission. He provided a draft for the board's consideration and discussion. He stated at our last meeting there was discussion of whether or not to have a dedicated EDC Director as part of the charge. Mr. Borowski is fine with it as is but would like to table the discussion as to who runs it to another night. Mr. Golas said it isn't specific to a position and we could amend the charge. The consensus of the board is to wait. Jean Vincent from the Planning Board said we are talking about the EDC, is the board just talking about the committee or someone to be in charge of the EDC? Mr. Golas said it was reconstituting the committee. She thinks the EDC Committee should be a little more organized then a committee that decides who is who. She is all for having the Planning Director be the go to person. Chairman Spiewak thanked her. Ms. Vincent said when the board does get into that conversation, she asked if she could be part of it as a Planning Board member. She thinks that the Planning Director should be the person. Chairman Spiewak said this will be on next weeks' agenda. Ms. Rydlak said that they have been pushing an EDC position for the past year or so and would like to at least make a decision soon. She also said there is a new big developer coming to town. Our Town Planner has been acting as the EDC.

VII. Old Business

VIII. BOS Committee Reports

IX. BOS Policy Review

X. Town Administrator Report. No report.

XI. Other Business (unknown at time of posting):

XII. Next Meeting Announcement:

- BOS Regular Meeting – July 28, 2020

XII. Adjourn: **Motion by Mr. Borowski to enter into executive session at 8:53pm under M.G.L. c. 30A, Sec. 21(a), #2 – to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel and contract negotiations with non-union personnel (Finance Director, Fire Chief and Planning Director) if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares and to reconvene to open session for any other business and to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Koronis.** Chairman Spiewak does declare. **Roll call vote taken: Mr. Koronis – aye, Ms. Rydlak – aye, Mr. Singer – aye, Mr. Borowski - aye and Chairman Spiewak – aye.**

Motion by Mr. Borowski to adjourn at 10:40pm, seconded by Ms. Rydlak. Roll call vote: Ms. Rydlak – aye, Mr. Borowski – aye, Mr. Koronis – aye and Chairman Spiewak – aye.

Submitted by:
Mary C. Devlin
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by:

Karen A. Spiewak, Chairman

Stephen G. Koronis, Clerk

Patsy Rydlak, Vice-Chairperson

David M. Singer, Member

William Borowski, Member