

Special Town Meeting
Record of Action taken on
December 16th, 2023

Meeting was brought to order by the Town Clerk, Michelle Nichols at 2:10 pm on December 16th, 2023 Michelle turned the floor over to the Town Manager, Patrick Lewis, who addressed the residents. He wanted everyone to know that on January 8th there will be a steering committee to see what options we have for the old municipal building. We are not deciding its fate today.

Today is about getting ready for the future and what we are going to do for a town office that is suitable for town business. This vote today allows the town to apply for congressional funds that will help with the cost of the new building. This will not affect the old municipal hall. If we get a yes vote today, there will be a committee set up to make decisions on the design and the location of the new building. The public will vote at the annual town meeting on the final design and location. Again on January 8th at 6:00 pm at the fire station we will have a committee meeting for the municipal building.

The Town Clerk then began the opening of the meeting, which was held on December 16th, 2023 at 2:00 PM in the Grace Bible Community Room 40 Doudy Hill Rd. She finished the reading of the warrant and went back to Article 1.

Article 1: To choose a Moderator to preside at said meeting. There was a motion and second for Paul Davis as Moderator, no other nominations. 4 Ballots cast for Paul Davis.

The Moderator asked for the residents to stand and say the Pledge of Allegiance. We also held a moment of silence for those we have lost.

Article 2: It was moved and seconded to adopt the Maine Moderator's Manual published by the Maine Municipal Association as the authority on the rules and procedures for conducting the Annual Town Meeting. (This is not the annual town meeting, this is a special meeting). Moderator requested that the residents vote by holding up the pink papers they were given. All in favor of using the Maine Moderator's Manual for the town meeting.

Article 3: It was moved and seconded to accept the article as written and the floor was opened up for discussion.

1st. Resident-Gerald Peters stated the following:

- He loves the old town hall as most of the public knows
- Today's vote is not about the old building, it's about the new town hall
- He feels that we need to have more information before we make a decision
- If we vote yes today, we have no more options
- If we vote No, then we can go back and see what else can be done for a town hall

Second Resident:

Jeff Peters:

- He wanted to commend the town manager on coming in with new eyes for this project

- For putting a committee together with residents that have been here for their whole lives and residents that have been here a short time.
- It says on the warrant that the board and the committee recommend a yes vote. There are people from the committee that do not favor a yes vote
- If we vote yes, we have no more options, we will be agreeing to build a new building
- If we vote no, then the committee and the board have to go back and get more information to present to the residents
- He feels that the old municipal building is a big part of our town and we should try to get the town office back in that building.
- He wants the public to really think about what it means to say yes to this question today
- He feels that the public needs to have solid figures, design and a plan to go forward
- The public has not been given information on the purchase of the A.E. Robinson building
- The public does not know what the building would look like or where it would be placed
- Mentions how the town manager has kept us involved
- Jeff went back to the meeting on November 27th to discuss the chaos that was created in that meeting. He did not perceive himself as creating chaos. He apologized to anyone taking his comments as offensive and creating chaos in that meeting. He just felt that the voters needed to have choices.
- This vote today is not to discuss the old town hall or the new town hall, it is to make a decision going forward.

Third Resident:

A little old lady- not sure of her name-

She quoted what Gerry Peters told her a long time ago when they were building her barn. He stated to not forget the consider that architectural history of the town. She mentioned how her barn matches the design of the town hall and the church. She is hoping that the town's people will take this into consideration when they make their decisions.

Fourth Person:

Mike Wark, Chairman of the Board

- First of all Jeff is correct Patrick has done a fantastic job
- There were exhausting committee meetings, dozens of hours
- Ironically some of the people speaking out against this ,were instrumental in bringing this to you today.
- If you go back and listen to those committee meetings, they are all recorded.
- You can hear that Jeff actually picked today's date for the town meeting
- Not everyone started out on the same page, it was meeting after meeting with discussions on what it would cost to get that building insurable, what the opportunity it was for the town to get congressional designated funds, all of this has been gone over and over
- We had this meeting this year because there is a cycle of designated funds available to us and the committees agreed we do need a town office.
- On November 6th, you can hear Jeff supporting a separate building solution, this is how we ended up here.
- We do have plans they are not carved in stone and the steering committee will help with how that building will look
- Patrick and Michelle will design where the walls are and the doors are

- We have an engineering firm that has quoted approximately what the building will cost
- Jodi has had a series of phone calls with Senator Collins office, it's not a guarantee, but we are very likely to get this funding up to 85 cents on a dollar for this project
- On November 6th, Jeff states that "if we could build a town office for \$45 to 50 thousand we would be a damn fools not to"
- Can you imagine how frustrating it is to put all the work into this that the committees have, the board has, that Patrick has only to have people switch their position when we reach the end zone
- You can vote however you would like. However this is a historical opportunity for Sangerville
- Ultimately we are going to need a town office.

A resident interrupts with " We have a town office." Many people join in speaking over the speaker and the resident speaking

Mike: We are renting one.

The Moderator steps in.

Mr. Wark: we are currently renting space and that's where we will stay

People in the back speaking at the same time- can't tell what is being said

A resident wanted to know who was speaking, Mike introduced himself

Moderator explained that Mike is the chairman of the board

Sixth Resident:

Orman Gray

We have a town office, it's a beautiful town office.

Kelly speaks in agreement that it is.

Moderator steps in, one person speaking only

I have lived here for 53 years and been on the fire department for 30 years. I have donated a lot of time to this town. There is nothing wrong with that town office. We were putting money into it years ago. What was getting fixed there? Or was it going in someone's pocket? Hundreds and hundreds of dollars were voted on in town meetings. Where is the money going?

So I say no to this new building, you go back to that old building and you work and if you don't want to be there, git, leave. We will find someone else to go in there and work. We don't need none of you. Period.

Moderator thanked the resident

Sandy Peters:

- Thanked Patrick I commend him. He has done an excellent job with this committee thing. We appreciate all the work you have done with this committee . I agree with what everyone has said concerning that.
- I was on this committee and I did sit at those meetings-discussion out of context
- Everyone was discussing the A.E.Robinson Bldg to purchase, build etc.
- Mr. Wark and Jodi came into the meeting with information about the congressional funds
- We said that it is something that needs to be looked into
- We wanted them to come to you with choices on this warrant
- You could apply for the funds but don't give up on the town hall bldg.
- We have not been educated on what we can do

- You should not give up on the old town hall

Jodi Cabot:

- A No vote today does not allow us to go forward to look into the congressional designated spending
- This is perhaps the last year that these funds will be available
- In order to seek that money from the government, the town has to in agreement that they will be able to put in their portion of the funds needed to match the 15% required by the congressional spending
- We are willing to put in our portion for them to give us the 85 % of the funding.
- Anyone saying no says that the town is not willing to take advantage of a once in a life time opportunity for this town

Debbie Gould wanted to ask Jodi Questions:

- She wanted clarification on the voting yes and the connection with the congressional funds
- If everyone voted yes, we could apply for the funds, but is it a 100 % guarantee we will get it?
- If we vote no, we will use all of our reserve funds to build this building
- Yes we would proceed with the building
- She then went on to speak about the mailings and keeping the residents informed
- They -the people of the town- do not trust what they are being told because they are only getting bits and pieces of information
- There is a trust issue here

Another resident:

- Question concerning the congressional funds- is it just this year that we can't apply for the funds.
- Jodi answered that we can not apply until the town approves the funds for the matching part of the congressional funding with would be 15% of the total cost.
- Susan Collins Office has stated over and over again that these funds are not guaranteed
- Susan Collins has stated that these funds may not be available again
- She might not be running again

Leslie Moore:

- He is a fairly new comer to the town
- He sat in on every one of the meetings concerning the town hall
- Yes the building was the center of the town
- You are a very poor town of 1300
- He has worked professionally in historical restoration
- How are we going to use the rest of the building
- It's going to take money and as long as the town is involved with that building the money for that building will be paid for by the town and residents

Kelly: interrupted this speaker stating that there are grants-preservation grants

Mr. Moore tried to continue, but was not allowed to

Jeff Peters

- Congressional funding for a new town hall build
- How time sensitive—need to have the application by the end of the year
- Jeff did his research and the money isn't even available until next year
- Cant even apply until next year
- A yes vote today is going to end the town hall as we have know it
- We will not be able to go back into the municipal building
- A no vote means that we bring everything back to the table and give the public concrete figures
- We have a town meeting in march which is still in the parameters of the application process for this congressional money

A resident wants to know where they are putting the building

Another resident states they don't know

Kelly speaks-

- Her understanding is that the town could not get insurance for the building
- Discusses her house and her insurance

Mike: to clear up insurance question

- Insurance on the building for damage done a claim is made and you can repair your building
- The town has not had this type of insurance for a long time (more back ground speaking over Mike)
- That's not what drove us out of the building -we lost our liability insurance
That is someone falls down and gets hurt

Kelly breaks in to say that she will sign a waiver every time she goes into the building

Moderator asks for resident to allow Mike to speak

- When the insurance company told us that we could no longer do business within the building that was a game changer

Kelly breaks in again

- The Robinson's building has been brought up several times-He has spoken to Mr. Robinson if we bought it for what he is asking
- it would need to be renovated and the cost according to the engineers that we had look at it would be over \$600,000 and the congressional money can't be used because that is only for new builds
- 50 % more and we are not going to have any help with it so they put it on the back burner
- Trust—all three of the telephone numbers are on the web site and have been for years. We can be called concerning anything. He has never received a phone call about anything. We are here to help.

Moderator addressed breaking in on people who are speaking . He will gladly let anyone speak that wants, but be respectful and don't speak over someone.

Mrs. Peters:

- In the 1990's we had a 4 person restoration committee. Diane McCarther Clark, Steve Jackson, Alice Moulton and Gerald Peters

- They put that town hall into the repairs that needed to be done to bring the building in compliance for building codes, fire codes, insurance codes
- It was done once why can't it be done again
- Do we have an opportunity to have some grants? Does it have to be under certain things or categories
- Why is the pressing issue that we have to do this today
- Are we going to be railroaded to do something that we don't want to do because they want to do it
- Money was raised by the restoration committee and we had the money for the elevator but the select board kept taking money out of that account (not this board but another one) The money was appropriated for the elevator and it keep disappearing.
- You can't take money from accounts for other things when it was appropriated for a certain project
- \$2000.00 a year was appropriated for repairs to the stain glass windows that happened twice. This money was disallowed? Who takes the money away from us after it has been appropriated for a project?

Jodi:

- The congressional fund application is due by the end of March
- We, Jeff, Sandy, the committee and the board, set this day to check in with the towns people to see if you would support the funding so we could apply for this money
- That is the time frame and we are not applying by the end of the year
- It was not a bomb that was dropped on anyone
- I have been researching this money for months and reporting to the board bi-monthly about going for this money
- All of the board meetings are recorded so there has been no secrecy
- We are doing the towns work every day. We can't keep everyone in the loop unless you do your part
- We tape all our meetings all of the committee meetings are all one tape as well
- For anyone who says that this was done without your knowledge, it's erroneous
- If you are concerned about trust listen to the tapes
- I want people to feel secure, we have done the research and we have moved these things forward at every meeting.
- You want figures, every time we call the engineers, they tell us to double the number, double the number because everything is going up
- So they have had a sense of urgency because of the cost of the project is going up and we are trying to do this so the town can afford it.
- Encourage you to come to our meetings and listen to our meetings we meet every 2 weeks

Lady in the blue shirt – a lot of people don't have internet. How are people going to know what is going on. Not everyone has the internet. Asked about mailings, why aren't these being done.

The board did not know how to answer.

Mr Doughty:

- Spoke about his work in construction
- He went into the basement of the old building and that foundation is in pretty good shape
- Spoke about old stone wall foundation and bricks
- More research and information concerning the foundation

Mr. Potter:

- If we raise money for the fire department by 40,000 our taxes go up
- If we can spend 440,000 and my taxes do not go up
- How can this be?

Mr. Wark:

- The 440,000 is being taken from our reserve funds

Mr. Potter:

- So we can take 440,000 from our reserve fund but we can't increase the fire department budget from the same account?

Mr. Wark:

- The annual budget and the reserve are two different things

Debbie Gould:

- Where we putting the building

Patrick:

- If the vote goes through today a committee will be put together to design the building and decide on a location of the building.
- It will then come to the town to be voted on

Debbie Gould

- Can we change the time of day that the board meetings are? There are a lot of people that can't get to the 4:00 meeting

Moderator:

We can only discuss what is on the warrant for today. I am sorry but we can't discuss anything else.

A resident asked what the congressional money could be used for?

Jodi answered, It can only be used for a new building not a purchase of a building or any renovations of buildings.

Another resident brings up the subject of buildings in Dover-Foxcroft being abandoned. The American Legion took over that building and it is now beautiful.

Sue McAvoy: She asked the question of where the location of the building would be. Does the town have property that is adequate for a town hall? Town owned property

Patrick: Yes we do. We have the veteran park, you have 22 acres at the public works. We could purchase land, but he would rather not buy. We do have places where there are resources such as water and sewer.

Beth Rowell;

- It still seems like we are still miss informed. Had no idea we had over a million dollars in reserve
- Wants to know what else is out there for options

Another resident spoke concerning the congressional funds.

Mr. Wark spoke repeating what has already been said 4 times.

Mrs. Davis spoke about grants for this building, and we have people who know how to write grants for this building. If we decide to keep the building we need to do the whole building not just the town office section.

It's beautiful and one of the only old buildings left in town.

Virginia Wark spoke:

- We would be better off building a new town hall and we would put the town office back into the town meeting.

- Mrs. Davis said no there is money out there we can refurbish the old building
- Obvious how people feel about this building
- If it was in great condition, our staff could go back into the building to have our town office.
- The board is working hard to do the right thing
- If we have the money to build a building and it won't raise the taxes. It's in the reserve

Diane wants to move the question forward.

Moderator directed the residents how the voting is going to work. The ladies started putting pens out to the public so they could vote.

Michelle started going row by row having residents put their ballots into the ballot box.

Once through the crowd, Michelle came back to the table to have Diana and Kathy count the ballots.

Final Vote is: 107 people in the community room

79 NO votes

21 YES Votes

100 Votes

7 people did not vote at all.

Moderator read the results of the vote.

Moderator asked for the last motion of the day

Motion made and seconded to adjourn at 4:30 pm.

All in favor

Adjourned at 4:30.