

Town of Somers
Special Town Meeting Minutes
October 24, 2013

The Special Town Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm with approximately 65 individuals in attendance. First Selectman L.Pellegrini requested Town Clerk, A.Logan to read the legal notice.

1. Elect a Moderator

A motion was made by K.Devlin, seconded by B.Knorr to nominate M.Parker, Board of Finance member as moderator. No other nominations received. Vote was unanimous for M.Parker as moderator.

M. Parker explained that the meeting would have two parts: 1. explanation of what the bonding package would have on taxes and the process for bonding; 2. staff members will be presenting supporting information/documentation for particular bonding project. M.Parker noted that members of the Capitol Improvements Projects committee were present:

B.Boutwell, BOE; LPellegrini, BOS; S.Krasinski and M.Parker, BOF.

M. Parker explained that current interest rates are very low and borrowing is favorable to fund capital projects. Rates are currently as low as 2%. The Town of Somers bond rating is high and banks are willing to lend the money. The projects were sorted by most important and bonding on these projects would mean there would be no need to raise the mil rate to satisfy these debts.

G.Warner, Wood Rd -- Disagrees with the non-brick and mortar projects which should fall under operating expenditures. Will the public be notified of the interest rate prior to commitment and exact amount of borrowing? M.Parker explained that there will be various factors which may change the exact amount specified, but for the moment, it is the Town's best estimate based on price quoting and expertise information.

M.Bushior, Rosehaven Rd -- Will the bond rate be fixed for the life of the bond

2. Consider and discuss (but not vote on) resolutions to:

I. SES roof replacement \$2,471,000.00, SHS and certain school maintenance buildings, SES and SHS fire alarm system improvements, SES generator replacement and installation and the financing of appropriation by issuance of bonds and notes in an amount not to exceed \$1,053,000.00 and the use of grants and other sources of funds.

M.Suffredini, Superintendent of School

The current SES generator was installed in 1957 and is now unreliable in starting, provides minimal emergency lighting and is now costing large amounts of money because of parts availability which are becoming non-existent. A new propane generator (\$42,000) would be upgrading the quality of safety.

The SES fire alarm system was installed in 1995 and parts are again becoming non-existent and the control panel was discontinued in 2006. The new system (\$60,000) would upgrade to a fully addressable system similar to the MBA system. The SHS fire alarm system was installed in 1992 and again the same conditions are occurring as with the SES system. The new system (\$60,000) would be the same as the MBA system.

Roofs - \$2,309,000.00 --The SES roof was last replaced over the media center in 1977 and over the gym in 1988. Replace EPDM roofs (1995) excluding the 2006 addition and the 2012 solar project. Replace 1992 shingle roofs excluding 2005 addition and portion of gym/art area - 2011, and replace 1992 built up roofs. Maintenance building replacement roofs - original roofs are 1981 and 1992 shingle roofs.

B.Capuano, Hall Hill Rd -- Is there any asbestos which would need to be remediated? No

D.Doyker, Stafford Rd -- Are each of the projects going out to bid? Yes, these will be classified as state projects with approximately 60% reimbursement from the state to the Town of Somers.

Y.Sanberg, Mtn Rd --Has alternative energy sources been researched such as a fuel cell? L.Pellegrini stated that it had been researched but since there is no natural gas into the Town it would not be viable. She is currently attempting to get natural gas into the Town. More solar panels are being researched for installation. A generator, besides the benefits noted by M.Suffredini, would be needed for an emergency management facility at the school with a battery back-up. Y.Sanberg stated that a more aggressive approach should be made for alternative energy sources.

G.Warner, Wood Rd -- If the generator is \$4,000 and the alarm systems are only \$120,000 these are very small amounts that should be incorporated into operating budgets. M.Parker explained that by incorporating these expenditures into operating budgets, it would also generate an increase in the mil rate. With bonding, the expenditures are financed at a very low interest rate, over an extended period of time and it does not burden the Town. The current bonding level will be maintained and/or lowered.

M.Bushior, Rosehaven Rd -- Does the Town buy back from the grid from the solar panels? Yes, the Town is saving approximately \$10,000 per year in energy costs.

II. Appropriation of \$3,105,000 for improvements to Mountain Road and Somerset Lane financing of said appropriation by issuance of bonds and notes in an amount not to exceed \$2,605,000 and the use of grants and such other sources of funds

Jeff Bord, Town Engineer

Mountain Road is considered a main collector roadway to Turnpike Road, Stafford and other small roadways and developments. There would be 6 box culverts either replaced or installed, water would be directed under the roadway vs. over the roadway as it currently exists, the total area to be modified would be 2.5 miles in length, and improvements would be made for sight-lines, especially at the beginning of Mountain Rd. Approximately 1200' of Somerset Lane would be reconstructed because of the condition of the roadway from frost heaves.

K.Devlin, Long Hill Rd -- What would be the timeframe for Mtn Rd? J.Bord explained that it would take approximately 12-18 months for the state permit to be issued and it would be a minimum of 1 construction season for the beginning of work.

Y. Sandberg, Mtn Rd – Expressed extreme concern regarding the reconstruction of Mountain Road. Y.Sandberg lives on Mtn Road and was concerned about his driveway being cut, his stonewall being damaged, and his property being disturbed. He also stated his concern that there was no project plan in place and no timeframe for reconstruction. J.Bord attempted to explain the planning process, permitting process, evaluation process, etc. and invited Mr. Sandberg to come into the Town Hall offices to review all plans currently in existence.

T.Nesbit, Mtn Rd – Asked whether or not a traffic study had been conducted. J.Bord stated 'no'. There is no development of the area it is strictly an improvement to the existing roadway.

D.Doyker, Stafford Rd -- With the proposed improvements, including the lowering of elevated areas, the road would then become more desirable for speeding vehicles. She has seen vehicles not stop at the end of Mountain and speed through to Battle. Safety and speed needs to be monitored. Also, the timing of the improvements is critical for the safety of travel. Alternative roadways for Mtn Road are not conducive to winter travel and would be more of a danger.

S.Bollinger, Roberts Rd – Have any grants been sought? J.Bord explained that there is currently a \$500,00 STEAP grant which has already been approved and will be incorporated into the bonding package.

B.Socha, Amie Lane-- The west side of Mtn Road has many old growth trees and the Town should consider their removal for safety reasons.

M.Bushior, Rosehaven Rd -- The Town should make sure they are aware of the possibility of blasting which may have to take place and the effect on individual wells, and the potential release of radon and/or arsenic from the blasting and boring.

S.Bollinger, Robert Str -- Is the project going out to bid? Yes

J.Rivard, Maple Ridge Dr -- If the permitting process is approximately 18+ months, why is the monies needed now? The monies are needed now for the analysis/design process which would be presented when the project permits are required and for the bidding process.

Mr. Collins -- How can you request approval for \$2,000,000 when you have no firm cost estimates? M.Parker stated that the bond counsel would not approve a project unless the project was solid in both plans and costs. There is no guarantee on cost estimates, there will always be changes based on conditions and obstacles in construction. However, all components will be consistent with the grant monies.

B.Buck, Juniper Hill -- How can we be certain that there has been no pre-determined contractors, the project is actually going out to bid and will go to the lowest bidder pending evaluation? How does

anyone get onto a bidders list? Atty C.Landolina explained that either the architect or the project engineer will prepare the bid request proposal.

III. Authorize appropriation of \$565,000 for an ambulance and a tanker truck and financing of appropriation by issuance of general bonds and notes not to exceed \$565,000.

G.Schiessl, Fire Chief

The Town will be replacing a 1981 tanker which is constantly breaking down. The lifespan of emergency vehicles is 10-15 years and this particular vehicle will now be 23 years old. Tankers cover approximately 60% of the town.

B.Socha, Amie Lane -- What is the residual value of the vehicle? Approximately \$5,000. The vehicle will be marketed for sale.

D.Pinney, Pinney Rd --

M.Kingsbury -- The Town has seen too many recent fires, and the department should have what they need.

G.Schiessl -- The ambulances for the Town are now scheduled for replacement every five years. The current ambulance will come to the end of its efficient and useful life in

IV. Appropriation of \$53,000 for the acquisition of a shuttle bus and the financing of said appropriation by issuance of general bonds and notes not to exceed \$53,000

A.Saada, Social Services Director

The Town operates a shuttle bus for both seniors and the disabled. Currently there are two vehicles: a 2004 with 181,000 miles and a 2006 vehicle with 156,000. The vehicles have cost the Town \$7,000 in vehicle maintenance/repairs in the last 6 months, the ridership has increased during the last 7-9 month to 6,500 miles from the previous year (2012) of 5,500 miles. The vehicles have exceeded their life value and are not placing the residents at risk. The busses are utilized to transport individuals to doctor appoints, dialysis, etc.

M.Bushior, Rosehaven Rd -- Why haven't the busses been replaced sooner?

D.Marceau -- Why not bond for two vehicles? M.Parker explained that the Town wants to stay below the current bonding levels. The CIP committee has determined the priority of the projects and determined the expenditure of one vehicle would be best.

M.Parker asked if there were any other questions or comments. Again, noted that there would be no votes taken at this meeting. All voting will take place on November 5, 2013 at the Town Hall Auditorium beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm

3. Adjournment

A motion was made by B.Devlin, seconded by L.Pellegrini and unanimously voted to adjourn the Special Town Meeting of October 24, 2013 at approximately 7:55 pm

Respectfully submitted:

Ann Marie Logan, CCTC
Town of Somers