

# TOWN OF ACTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

February 8, 2023

6:00pm

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**2. WARRANTS/BILLS - Signed**

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Selectmen Winchell made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Selectmen McGurty. All in favor. So moved.**

**4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING Tabled**

**5. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR WEEKLY UPDATE**

- A combined timeline was put together for the School, Town and W/F - drafts were distributed.
- Sebago Technics will be present on 02/22/23 at 6:00pm.
- The Town Administrator indicated she was looking for permission to bring in a former employee a couple days a week, as the current Office Assistant is going out on medical leave for about six weeks. Cheryl Drisko will work to pick up secretarial tasks. The Selectmen had no issues; Office Assistant's leave is unpaid.
- There are still over 100 dogs unlicensed in the Town of Acton and at this point there is a \$25 late fee. This makes your \$6.00 dog now \$31. The Animal Control Officer is actually going to be getting the dog warrant soon. The town office has called and sent letters.

**6. DEPARTMENT HEAD / COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES**

**A. Code Enforcement Officer – Jason Sevigny**

The Code Enforcement Officer approached the Board to update them on the fees increased in the Land Use Department. Neighboring town fee schedules were surveyed and compared to the Land Use fees. The CEO indicated the comparison is hard to understand because not everybody's schedules are the same; some items are embedded inside other fees.

Mr. Sevigny also stated that Acton has more individual fee items whereas a lot of the other towns have combined theirs into just building fees. For example: Site Plan reviews are \$250; Water \$2,000; but the Town also does a final, preliminary, etc. Some fees listed, Acton doesn't charge as he does not do permitting anymore, such as electrical and mechanical.

Selectmen Winchell indicated that the town steered away due to liability because we are not electrical inspectors nor have a licensed propane man. Programs such as storm water mitigation is only done within the Shoreland (unlike others who do everything).

Selectmen McGurty asked to clarify who has the role in setting fees, is it the Selectmen or is it the Planning Board? Do we consult with the Planning Board on this or is it really not a matter for them. As a trained accountant consistency is important and when you look at the other towns and if we see that we have fees that we are collecting that many of the other towns are not, then the question is why?

Mr. Sevigny indicated he didn't have an answer for all that but told the Selectmen that Acton has more Shoreland and according to the law some of these fees do pertain to 30% expansion which you only get within the Shoreland zone. Acton spends a lot of time and effort verifying that they have the right information. So, it's not just you who are paying fees but also for the time that it takes to do the research; it's really a reflection of the effort by the Code office.

Discussion ensued and the CEO stated that he was not opposed to whatever the Board wanted to present. Selectmen McGurty was invited to come, sit down and go through the fees and discuss.

## 7. **LIAISON UPDATES**

Tom - Warrant & Finance Committee, Transfer Station, Fire Department, Capital Improvement - None

Kim - Recreational Committee, School, APAT, Cemetery Committee - Absent

David - Roads & Road Committee, Code Enforcement and Land Use, Mary Grant Committee,  
Conservation / Forest Committee - None

## 8. **OLD BUSINESS**

### A. Water System Installation Update

The plumber and Mr. H2O have finally tied hands together so Mr. Kittredge is going to be doing the work this month within the next couple of weeks and we've got scheduled for installation the first of March from Mr. H2O.

### B. Roy Talbot Status

A reminder of the presentation was discussed, the Board needs to determine the next step. If the Board decides to acquire this service, Acton has been given first right of refusal until April before other towns on the waiting list will be contacted. Looking at a schedule, next week the Board should be discussing whether to move forward; discuss a special town meeting and develop a warrant; pick a date and run it through the Warrant & Finance Committee and then have the confidence that will allow the Board to go forward and sign a contract with Mr. Roy by April 30<sup>th</sup>.

## 9. **NEW BUSINESS**

### A. TRC Facility Assessment Presentation – Mike Highwood

Mr. Harwood was thanked for coming from North Carolina to meet with the Board. TRC responded to an RFP to perform a facility condition assessment.

Mr. Harwood provided a little bit of background on TRC and the services that they offered and specifically how they would approach this project. Mr. Highwood related that he was a civil engineer with a master's degree in civil engineering; had over 25 years of professional experience and was registered in 6 states as a professional engineer and had been doing this work for a long time and now has been with TRC for a couple of years. Prior to TRC he worked for ATC (another consulting firm).

TRC is largely an environmental consulting company that does a lot of work for the power industry and other private real estate clients. The company does these property condition assessments and facility condition assessments. There is a group of six members scattered across the country that do this type of work.

The two services, the property condition assessment is generally done when a private client wants to buy or sell a property (for example, when somebody wants to buy an office building they would hire the group to go in and do a top to bottom review and assessment of the facility and provide a cost over a certain period of time typically 10 years (usually it's the same length as the loan that they would get for the property) and we would give them the costs that the building would need to stay in operation at its current conditions. This means if the roof needs to be replaced in three years we would put a cost in the table in year three for a full roof replacement for that facility; if the asphalt needs to be replaced, a Mill and overlay, the elevators, electrical fire suppression systems, interior finishes, basically anything associated with that property that might cost money over the next 10 years we would look at and we'd put a cost table together) and our

clients generally would use that information to either negotiate if they're trying to purchase the property or to give the buyer some peace of mind if they're trying to sell the property.

A similar service, called the facilities condition assessment, is generally done for public clients where there's no plan to sell the property but they're going to use the information that we produce for property management. These clients need to know where to put their limited resources and where to get the most bang for the buck when keeping the facility in use and up to par for how it will be intended to be used.

Property Management clients that we have are municipalities that may not even really know what they own, the square footage of each building, what the different systems are, etc. The first thing we do is go through and establish everything and produce a detailed report that shows exactly what you own, what types of systems are present, the ages of those systems, the expected useful life and anticipated remaining useful life of that system, what type of maintenance foreseen over the next 10 years and what the replacement costs might be if it needs to be replaced.

This information is useful for capital budget planning, especially if you've got a limited budget to put money into a building; what are the immediate needs and what are the things that absolutely need to be fixed now for immediate funding; and then after that what we'll do is categorize the different needs: currently critical, needs to be fixed right away, etc.

The breakdown would be into four categories: needs to be fixed right now, critical but can wait a couple of years; typical maintenance throughout the term - anticipated maintenance costs needing to be prioritized for the typical repairs that could be put out years into the future and planned maintenance.

It depends on what type of maintenance you think you're going to do. We can often if there's going to be planned maintenance (for example having an air conditioning unit that's getting on its last legs) instead of replacing an item we can maybe get another five years of life out of it by just having some maintenance done on it.

No public comment. The Board will deliberate on the two bids and put it on next week's agenda.

#### B. Cartographic's Maps Online Renewal Contract

This is the standard Cartographic's contract, there have been no changes to it. The CEO and Town Administrator reiterated what an important tool this was for the Town of Acton.

**Selectmen Winchell made a motion to sign the Cartographic's Maps Online contract; seconded by Selectmen McGurty. No discussion. All in favor.**

#### C. Appointment

Selectmen Winchell met with Daniel Norwood today, who wants to be placed on the Mary Grant committee. The Board has been meeting with individuals who want to be on Committees before they are appointed and it is working out pretty well to have a face-to-face conversation with them and see what is up.

**Selectmen Winchell made a motion to appoint Daniel Norwood to the Mary Grant Committee until June 30, 2023; seconded by Selectmen McGurty. No discussion. All in favor.**

#### D. Investment Policy

Selectmen McGurty noted this was a follow-up to an item that the Board had been discussing for the last couple of meetings.

Discussions have been about how Acton's funds are currently invested and that there are opportunities to invest in as safe or better conditions than they are currently invested.

Mr. McGurty indicated if anything happens with the bank, with the FDIC, you are going to be waiting months to get your money. He also stated it's insured but you're not going to get your money right away as there's a whole process to get it as opposed to U.S treasuries. Basically the US government has to default on its debt, and that is highly unlikely, but eventually they will raise the debt limit.

Mr. McGurty approached TD Bank for a proposal. Their cost was \$10 per transaction (About \$1,000 in total fees for the year) which is more than covered by the excess interest earnings you'd realize. A conversation was held with Schwab (which is a major player in this area) and they are charging 0.3 percent per transaction. The amount Acton would invest in this is uncertain but Tom stated let's assume it's \$5 million dollars; that would be \$15,000 per year for that service and that's pretty typical. Selectmen McGurty indicated he would be happy to get something in writing if the Board would like that, but this was gotten directly from them. So, the Board needs to make a decision on whether or not it's something they are interested in doing and if so, who would we do that with? Then prior to doing it, the Board would need to adopt an investment policy which can be given to the investment manager laying out what they can and can not do, what kind of securities they are allowed to invest in and what they're not allowed to invest in. Selectmen McGurty expressed he had been doing searches on the web and many towns have these policies. After taking a couple of policies, Selectmen McGurty revised them and gave a copy to each of the Board members to consider at a future meeting while indicating he was trying to get this to a point where the Board could make a decision.

No public comment.

#### E. Revaluation Contract / Update

The Board received an update from O'Donnell & Associates, including a contract to sign. They are making great progress and provided a schedule in their packet that can be posted on our website. It will have a list of the various things that will need to be done and where they are in terms of status on those things, for instance, all the field work is done; data entry is 80% done, sales analysis (which is assumed to be looking at recent sales) is underway, scheduled development that's underway, they are planning to have notices sent in June 2023.

No public comment.

**Selectmen Winchell made a motion to sign the John E O'Donnell and Associates contract; seconded by Selectmen McGurty. No discussion. All in favor.**

#### F. Salary Increases

The Town Administrator reported that many of the Department Heads have asked if there were going to be some workshops and discussion with the Board of Selectmen as far as what they are going to recommend for salary increases this year. The Town Administrator indicated it would be easier to tell the Dept Heads now what kind of percentage increase to include in their budgets. The Board discussed cost of living increases, social security increases and after discussion supported a 5%. This does not pertain to the Fire Department who will be moving forward with the \$2.50 increases supported last year.

**10. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**11. PENDING**

A. West Shore Drive Culvert -

No update, David asked the Town Administrator to schedule a zoom meeting for next week.

B. Transfer Station -

A decision was made to close the Transfer Station on a previous Saturday during the bitter cold weather for the safety of the residents, staff and functionality of the equipment. After debriefing, moving forward, if a situation like this occurs again there will be considerations to open on Sunday as a make up day.

C. Budgets Due 02/17/2023

The Town Administrator asked for a schedule, whether there were going to be any workshops and the Board's plans on getting the warrant to Warrant & Finance by March 13, 2023. Discussion ensued. It was decided to follow past practices and have a draft warrant to Warrant & Finance by March 6th and have a workshop on February 22 from 3pm - 5pm.

D. Website Bid Presentation 02/22/2023

Request was received and granted to confer to the next meeting.

**12. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

February 13, 2023 Capital Improvement Committee 5:00pm

February 13, 2023 Conservation / Forest Committee 6:30pm

February 15, 2023 Select Board 6:00pm

February 16, 2023 Planning Board 6:00pm

February 22, 2023 Select Board 6:00pm

**13. MEMBERS PRESENT**

Selectmen David Winchell, Selectmen Tom McGurty, and Town Administrator Jennifer Roux; Selectmen Kimberly Stacey-Horn was absent.

**14. ATTENDANCE**

Mark Harwood, Jason Sevigny, Dennis Long, Joyce Bakshi, Will Langley, Adam Doliber, Robin Ham