

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**JOINT SELECTBOARDS of**  
**SWANTON, HIGHGATE, & FRANKLIN**  
**Franklin School Library**  
**School St, Franklin, 05457**  
***Thursday, November 29, 2012 @ 7:00 p.m.***

10 Present: John Lavoie, Chair of Swanton Selectboard, Dick Thompson, and Joel Clark,  
11 Swanton Selectmen; Henry Rainville, Chair of Highgate Selectboard; Luke Choiniere,  
12 Highgate Selectman; Peter Magnant, Chair of Franklin Selectboard; Yvon Dandurand,  
13 Vice Chair of Franklin Selectboard; Andrew Godin, Franklin Selectmen; Kyle Lothian,  
14 Franklin Selectman; David Jescavage, Swanton Town Administrator; Heidi Britch-  
15 Valenta, Highgate Town Administrator; Paulette Tatro, Kim Gates, Brian Spears, Aaron  
16 Porter, and Robert Irish.

17  
18  
19 1. Call to Order

20 Mr. Magnant called the hearing to order at 7:04 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was said. Mr.  
21 Magnant thanked the Highgate and Swanton Selectboard's, Tri-Town Committee and  
22 guests for coming to Franklin. The members of the three boards introduced themselves.

23  
24 Mr. Magnant turned over the meeting to Mr. Clark, chairman of the Tri-town  
25 Selectboard Committee

26  
27 2. Discussion of Proposed Arena:

28 a.) Renovation Options/Costs-Mr. Clark opened with Swanton's view of  
29 the issue with the 185 ft. of ice vs. 200 ft. of ice when complete. Mrs. Gates with the Tri-  
30 town Committee expressed their point of view looking at the project as being one project  
31 for the entire group not individual boards. The Interlocal contract needs to be accepted  
32 as time is short and needs to be warned for March meeting. Mr. Clark advised each  
33 board needs to determine the wording for their article for the warning. The rink size  
34 needs to be determined for voter approval; language of the Interlocal contract is not as  
35 important for the ballot article. Mrs. Gates would like to see the majority of the contract  
36 language set before the vote to be able to answer questions from the community about  
37 the detail of the contract. Mr. Dandurand asks the chairman how this board will vote; as  
38 majority of 13 members as one board or as each town board individually. Mr. Lavoie  
39 advised that Swanton has been open with their decision. Franklin and Highgate have  
40 not been as forth coming with their plans. Mr. Rainville stated the Highgate board has  
41 made decisions to bring to the Tri-Town board. We need to be engaged as one board;  
42 not individuals. Need to make decisions that all can live with as a joint board and return  
43 to our own town board and advise them of the decision. Mr. Clark advised Swanton  
44 made a choice and relayed it to the tri-town board. Something as simple as the ice size  
45 can be a non-started for this discussion. Mr. Rainville advised Highgate did not have all  
46 the information before the tri-town committee supplied the information to them; he  
47 would like to see 200 ft. of ice but cost is an issue. Mr. Clark advised the intent was of  
48 getting the information out to get the discussion going. Mr. Dandurand asked if it was  
49 appropriate to make a motion as to how to vote as a board? Mr. Clark advised can make  
50 a motion and vote but the results may not be conducive for the final town vote. Each  
51 town has to vote the item; Mr. Rainville states each town has to make its own decision.

52  
53 Mr. Lavoie states that the long range forecast is that 185 ft. of ice will be obsolete; all  
54 new ice surfaces are at 200 ft. Schools will look at the size for playing surfaces. As  
55 fathers of the towns we need to look beyond today and forecast the future for the next 30  
56 years. Need to set at the best you can have and build it once and build it right. Uses will  
57 change and hockey as it is will change. \$1 million to make it the best at the \$5.1 M  
58 project will be a benefit if in the future MVU is told they cannot use the rink for playoffs  
59 as it is not sized appropriately. Swanton looked at and forecasted down the road at the

1 future use curve. Mr. Thompson has reviewed the USA Hockey Association documents  
2 and advised they recommend to be as near to the 200 ft. ice size as possible. The  
3 difference is \$12,500 for Highgate, \$27,500 for Swanton, and \$6,000 for Franklin extra  
4 per year for the 20 year bond. The facility will be run as a business and need to make a  
5 good business decision. Mr. Rainville feels the board needs to look at all possibilities to  
6 add the 200 ft. of ice with the engineers; feels they can do the project cheaper. He  
7 would like to see the direction of the board a little different with board decisions. 200 ft.  
8 of ice is all right with him but need to look more closely at costs; will need to cap the  
9 project cost. Mr. Choiniere agrees with the 200 ft., if going to keep the 185 ft. do the  
10 cheapest plan as is or go to the 200 ft. plan.

11  
12 Mr. Magnant feels if you have an alternative opinion it is not a good business more. We  
13 are not Collins Perley and not Chittenden County; having to consider funding. The  
14 Principals Association hopefully would not decide to not come to play at our rink due to  
15 the 185 ft. size. Nobody wants to do it wrong but the extra ice is for hockey only. With  
16 the two options given the 185 ft. gives hockey what they want with new locker rooms and  
17 other area. Want to do what is right for the entire community not just the hockey group.  
18 We have a building, we are not starting over, and the building is there. Mr. Clark  
19 realizes that this is a sensitive issue and it is a big expense. Mr. Lothian agrees that what  
20 Mr. Magnant stated is well said. Mr. Godin agrees that we need to do something but we  
21 will not run out of ice. He has issues with going to 200 ft. of ice; it does not make sense  
22 for the cost. Use what we have and improve it and go forward. Mr. Dandurand states he  
23 is here for the voters of Franklin not himself; will listen to them and what they want.

24  
25 Mrs. Tatro had contacted the Principals Association and got not reply. She spoke with  
26 Dave Rouselle at MVU regarding the ice size. He stated the minimally accepted size by  
27 the VPA is 185 ft., they strongly encourage the 200 ft. The Tri-Town Committee will go  
28 back and look into the cost numbers to see what individual costs are and what can be  
29 cut; bleachers for example are a high cost that are not needed as designed for Highgate.  
30 The Selectboard's need to determine what options are wanted and they then can chop  
31 costs to make them work for life expectancy and usability.

32  
33 Mr. Godin asks if we can achieve the 200 ft. of ice for \$4.5 million. Maybe a lean-too on  
34 the end of the building rather than a whole building extension. Mr. Rainville would like  
35 to get the 200 ft. of ice at the lowest cost. Mr. Thompson advised need to warn for town  
36 meeting at a cap of \$5.1 million and work to cut the cost as best as possible. Educate the  
37 public on their efforts to cut the project costs. Mr. Clark asked about the ability to  
38 expand toward the road. Mr. Rainville advised he is not sure due to the leach fields. Mr.  
39 Clark states that expanding on both ends with the lean-too options may work. Mrs.  
40 Gates advised the funds for the consultant have been mostly expended; need to look at  
41 the options with the consultant to get the best options. See what we can get cheaper;  
42 bleachers, ice work, locker rooms.

43  
44 Mr. Thompson advised the warnings must be posted by February 4<sup>th</sup>. The town reports  
45 go the print the third week of January with the articles. Mrs. Tatro said to keep in mind  
46 the HUD grant of \$190,000 that is available for the project. Mr. Clark said the basic  
47 plan for the 185 ft. is at \$2.5 million. Mrs. Gates states they can go to the architect with  
48 the wants to cut costs of the project. Mr. Clark says the structural engineer and  
49 estimator would need to determine the cost. The design contingency costs need to be  
50 tracked as well and not forgotten about. He has spoken with the St. Albans Rotary  
51 regarding the project and they are willing to make a contribution to the cost as well. Mr.  
52 Rainville asked about the donation money and HUD grant that are available. Should the  
53 donation money be kept for starting/operational costs as a profit will not happen right  
54 away to cover these expenses. The HUD money of \$190,000 could be kept as well for  
55 capital improvement of the future. Is the \$4.5 million to do the 200 ft. of ice palatable?  
56 Mr. Jascavage advises the HUD grant money must be used for the building project.

57  
58 Mr. Clark looks for verification with the board members for their approval of going to  
59 the voters with a cost of \$4,310,000 after the HUD grant to be on the ballot; and the  
60 consultants to design a \$4.5 million project. Board members are in approval. Mr.  
61 Lavoie would like to thank the Tri-Town Board for all their time; they have done lots of  
62 work on this project. Need to get the consultant and the selectboards together to make  
63 some final decisions; may need to downsize some items to get the 200 ft. of ice at a

1 lower cost. Mr. Clark inquires if they should appoint a representative from each board,  
2 not the entire board, to meet with the consultant. Invite the Tri-Town Committee and  
3 architect to crunch costs. Mr. Rainville advised the Tri-Town Committee should be  
4 invited to meet with the boards for direction and get with the architect before hand on  
5 options for the \$4.5 million cost of the 200 ft. of ice. Mr. Lavoie says it is nice that all  
6 towns are agreeing to a specific project. Mrs. Tatro expressed thanks to the boards for  
7 their efforts of a joint decision. Mrs. Gates stated that Wiemann-Lamphere have been  
8 good to work with. The committee will get with them regarding the \$4.5 M project with  
9 200 ft. ice, lean-too on both ends. MAHA needs to be involved as well for what they  
10 need and can live without. Asks that the boards e-mail her with other suggestions of  
11 changes or needs before the weekend so she may be in touch with the architect as soon  
12 as possible. Mr. Clark and Mr. Lavoie would also like to meet with Wiemann-Lamphere  
13 to compare the \$4.1 project with the \$5.1 to achieve what is needed.

14  
15 Mr. Clark states that we have an agreement of the \$4.5 M project with a \$4.31 to go to  
16 the voters with.

17  
18 Mr. Porter interjects his opinion is that this is a business with employees, advertising  
19 and run like a business. The tax payers want to see what their money was used for.  
20 Down the road the 185 ft. ice may be obsolete with the changing of times. People seem  
21 to be unwilling to change and grow within the community. Do it and do it right, do not  
22 cut the cosmetic things to cut costs only. Mr. Magnant advises that all the extra cost is  
23 for the ice and not visible cosmetic changes. Mr. Clark states the architect will design  
24 without diminishing the project. Mrs. Tatro says in keeping the community informed;  
25 two costs need to be presented to them for the 200 ft. option before a final decision is  
26 made.

27  
28 b.) Ownership Structure/Interlocal Contract: Mr. Rainville attended the  
29 November 26 meeting on the contract details. Mr. Clark feels it is not a show stopper  
30 with the details of the contract. Mr. Magnant has concerns with #5: should the  
31 members be appointed by the boards rather than elected. The boards would have more  
32 control over issues with appointments. Also concern with #6; Mr. Lavoie feels the  
33 representation of each town should be percentage of shares. Maybe the member  
34 makeup should be 3-2-2 from towns as Swanton carries the lion's share of expenses at  
35 55%, they should have more voting members. Mr. Lothian agrees, Mr. Rainville states it  
36 is not a deal breaker for him, can work with it. Mr. Thompson supports the concept.  
37 Mrs. Gates warns that the board should not be territorial with who makes the decisions.  
38 Mr. Clark advises that #6 can be adjusted yearly by the grand list to redistribute the  
39 costs by percentage of town shares. Mr. Magnant questions #9 on surplus; if there is a  
40 large surplus may it be used to pay down the bond payment or put aside in a capital  
41 improvement fund. Mr. Dandurand questions that changes can be made later if need  
42 be? Mr. Irish speaks regarding the capital improvements funds and to be sure to put  
43 enough aside as the interest you gain are very little; put as much aside as possible for  
44 future capital repairs. Mrs. Gates states that #1 and #2 basically say the same thing; #10  
45 relates to this contract only and towns do not become an agent for other town's  
46 business. Mr. Magnant asks for clarification of language on #11; "contract shall be for  
47 30 years with renewal thereafter." Mr. Clark asks do we adjust the ownership with the  
48 renewal of the contract ever five years as in #2? The board should digest this for  
49 discussion at the next meeting. Mrs. Tatro asks the board to e-mail Mrs. Gates with  
50 comments and suggestions regarding the language for #12. "Opt-out".

51  
52 3. Other Business: Mr. Clark asked if there was any other business.  
53 Mr. Thompson advised that once the bond is voted and approved that it is there for 20  
54 years. There is a 30 day period to petition for a revote by the public. The selectboards  
55 may request a revote many times each within 60 days of the last vote. It could happen  
56 in each town that a revote is requested. It will be joint ownership of the lease with all  
57 three towns, the legal language with the 99 year lease needs to be finalized.

58  
59 Mr. Porter states that parking is an issue and driveway flow. Could the baseball fields  
60 be moved to create a second driveway entrance and lot for bus traffic/parking? Mrs.  
61 Tatro advised this issue is being looked at.

62  
63 Mr. Irish asked if the Australian ballot is separate and not with the other ballots.

1 Advised that yes this will be its own ballot. MVU will have its own ballot.

2  
3 Mr. Rainville states the tri-town committee needs to continue to look for grants to off-  
4 set the cost. Mr. Jescavage advised that grants can be acquired after the contracts and  
5 bond vote are completed.

6  
7 a.) Mrs. Britch-Valenta asked the board if their wishes are to have Paul  
8 Guilliani complete the contract? Each town should contact their individual attorneys for  
9 guidance. Paul is an expert with these issues; Mr. Thompson states if they can get close  
10 to a final draft they can then present to own attorneys. Each would pay own legal fees to  
11 review contract.

12  
13 b.) Mrs. Britch-Valenta asked who should be responsible for the minutes  
14 and agenda of all meetings moving forward? The Selectboard is who determines what is  
15 on the agenda, Mr. Clark is to finalize as chair.

16  
17 c.) Next meeting date is set for December 20, 2012 @ 7:00 at the Highgate  
18 Town Offices. The Tri-town committee will meet with the architect to get options for  
19 this meeting.

20  
21 4. Executive Session—No executive session.

22  
23 5. Adjournment

24 Mr. Magnant made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lavioe seconded. Motion carried. The  
25 hearing adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

26  
27  
28 Typed on December 4, 2012

29 Minutes by Lisa Larivee

30 Received and filed by:

31

32

33

34

35 \_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Larivee, Franklin Town Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date