

**MINUTES OF FRANKLIN SELECTBOARD
MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2009 AT 7:00 P. M.
FRANKLIN CENTRAL SCHOOL LIBRARY**

PRESENT: Scott Choiniere, Peter Kittell, Jamie Boudreau
SCHOOL DIRECTORS: Jonathan Gates, David Rood
MEMBERS OF PUBLIC: Michelle Guilmette, Franklin, Vermont

Scott called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

LIGHT:

Scott informed Board members that he and Burt checked out the light requested by the Homestead/Carriage House and they believe a 400-watt light can be placed at the east side of the proposed park and ride. A light in that area will shine down onto the street and should solve the problem. Scott further advised that the light pole at the corner of Homestead Drive/Route 120 cannot be moved as it has routing wires for the telephone network under it.

REPLACEMENT TREE:

Scott informed members that he has been working with Polly Gadbois on the tree issue discussed last meeting. The agreement was that if the tree died within a year, the Board would replace it with a five-foot tree and the cost of a five-foot tree at the time the agreement was made was \$250 so that is how that figure was reached. Polly is checking with the contractor who was involved in moving the tree to see if they would contribute something. Peter questioned if the money would be used to pay the delinquent property taxes and Scott said that he believes it should. Scott will continue to follow up and keep the Board posted on the progress.

TOWN HALL:

Scott advised that he did not have time to go down and check out the Town Hall. He noted that his home electric bill runs around \$90 a month and the Town Hall is running around \$60 a month despite the fact that everything except the furnace is turned off. Board members agree that the charge each month seems high.

SATURDAY TRASH:

Scott advised that there were twice as many customers this week as last week. The vendor requested that a sign be put up and Scott stated Mark made one and it was put up by the Fire/Rescue Building.

SIDEWALK GRANT:

Peter advised Selectboard members that the sidewalk will go out for bid in June. After all the bids are received and the clerk of the works appointed, it will be determined what cuts, if any, will be necessary so that we remain on budget.

MEETING:

Scott informed that Lisa will be calling Northwest Regional to see if we can get some assistance in setting up a meeting with neighboring towns to explore the possibility of combining purchasing power when putting such things as chloride, paving and fuel out to bid. Purchasing larger amounts through the same vendor, hopefully, will bring lower prices from which we can all benefit. Scott asked if the school would be interested in such a program.

Jonathan Gates replied that they already do it through the supervisory union. He stated they have little need for paving and none for chloride, but they do purchase such things as office supplies through the supervisory union.

Peter noted they tried to do this a few years ago without much success. He pointed out that Highgate and Swanton bid their paving out together and they are able to get a much better price than we do. He noted it might be a challenge to get everybody together, but with the current economic state, it might be beneficial.

Jonathan Gates asked about chloride and just who would be upset if it were not used. Peter informed him that chloride does not just control dust, it binds the gravel and prevents loss of gravel. Under normal circumstances, we lose about an inch of gravel per year. Without the chloride application, we would lose two or more inches. Peter advised that we now have about four miles of the blue stone down and once it is down and an application of chloride applied, it hardens right down. He noted we hope to put more down as it saves on both chloride and gravel in the long run.

MOWING AND SNOW BLOWING:

Mr. Gates stated they are meeting with the Selectboard tonight to talk about mowing and snow blowing and to explore whether or not the school and town can work together to figure a way they can best use their resources. Some concern has been expressed by taxpayers over sharing of resources. When the school purchased their tractor, they did not purchase a mowing deck as it was only being used to clear snow from entrances/exits at the school. Mowing was done by a private vendor and the bid was for twenty weeks, but most probably they should have bid it for twenty-two weeks, but it all depends upon the weather. He stated that the school custodial/maintenance staff will have time to cut the grass at the front and back of the school, but would not have time to do the ball fields.

He stated that Joyce went ahead and obtained prices on the equipment that will be needed for the tractor in order to mow. He stated the price will depend upon whether they go with a 54 inch or 60 inch mowing deck. They will also need a commercial type of weed whacker. The estimated cost for the needed equipment is around \$3,500. He stated that when Carolyn Bushey did the mowing she also ran a sweeper. They estimate it will cost them about \$1,000 for mowing of the ball fields. Last year, their mowing contract cost them \$4,200. It was noted that most of the start-up costs will be a one-time expense. The first year it will be more costly, but after that it will be much cheaper. They noted that last year they had three bids for the mowing, one which was really high and the other two were about the same and they went with the Bushey bid. They noted it took Carolyn about eight hours, plus one hour with the sweeper to all lawns and ball fields.

Michelle Guilmette asked about the size of the school tractor and was supplied with as much information as Mr. Gates and Mr. Rood could provide off the top of their heads. The tractor is a diesel and would need a mid-mount deck. Cost of hiring someone to mow the ball fields was discussed and it was estimated it would be \$10 or \$12 an hour for eight hours a week times twenty-two weeks or about \$1,000. It was also noted there would also be FICA and worker's compensation costs. Discussion was held on insurance issues. The School Directors feel they need to look into the liability issue - if someone is injured while using the school tractor would the school be liable. Peter noted that the town has its own insurance and workers' compensation. The Selectboard pointed out that they have an operator for the weed harvester and he is covered by the town insurance and workers' compensation. Mr. Gates questioned who owned the weed harvester and Peter replied that it was purchased through grant monies.

Discussion was held on the areas the town mows - town offices/library, town hall and the veterans' park. Peter noted the town hall lawn is the roughest. It is estimated that it would take an hour to an hour and a half to do the town's mowing. Scott noted that the town usually contracted out for this mowing, but because they had to cut \$44,000 from their budget, it was removed.

Discussion then moved to working out an agreement on use of the tractor. The School Directors stated that Joyce Hakey and Steve Ballard feel that the tractor should be returned in the same condition it was taken - if it was clean and filled with fuel, it should be returned clean and filled with fuel. The school and town will share normal wear and tear costs, but any damage (other than that caused by normal wear and tear) would be repaired at the expense of whoever was using it at the time. Selectboard and School Directors all agreed to this plan. Scott stated he feels we should come up with an agreement which both boards will sign as board members do change and there would then be an agreement on file.

The school still will need to hire someone to do the ball fields, and David Rood noted that their staff's first responsibility will continue to be cleanliness and maintenance of the school building.

It was noted that the town crew will shortly be going on a four-day work schedule. A schedule will have to be worked out between the custodial/maintenance staff of the school and the town crew.

It was decided that the town would assume half of the start up costs. It was suggested that deferred maintenance costs be divided on the basis of use - for example - if the school uses the tractor 75% of the time, then they would assume corresponding cost of maintenance. Scott pointed out that the town crew is able to do much of the maintenance themselves, such things as changing oil, filters, tire changing, brakes and welding. This may help both the town and school keep costs down.

Snowblowing needs were discussed. It was noted that the school must ensure that entrances/exits are opened before arrival of students/staff. The tractor was originally purchased by the school for this purpose with the intent that it would last a long time. It was purchased with both the front end loader and snowblower. Using it for mowing of both the school and town plus snowblowing of sidewalks will, of course, shorten the life expectancy. It was noted that the sidewalks would usually be done later in the day. Concern was expressed over the condition of some of the sidewalks, especially in the area of the town hall which might potentially cause damage to equipment. It was decided the crews could work out logistics of sharing equipment without involvement of either board. Scott noted that it took Marshall about two hours to do the sidewalks. Mr. Gates pointed out that time would increase once the new sidewalk is in. Scott also noted that the town has been very fortunate to have Marshall do this work on a volunteer basis.

Upkeep of the road to the ball field and the walking trail was discussed. The school directors noted there are things that Joyce wants people at the school to do and they are hoping for some volunteers to help out.

It was noted that the tractor is diesel and Scott pointed out that the school might want to consider purchasing its fuel through the town. Fire and Rescue do it now and there is a log kept at the garage. Whenever fuel is taken, it is logged and a bill is sent out monthly. It might be a better price for the school then they can get by buying locally.

The school's next Board meeting will be on April 7, 2009 and the Board will have something written up so that an agreement is on file. Scott noted there is a mutual agreement on the generator where the town pays maintenance costs, but the school does the monthly tests and maintains the log.

Mr. Gates questioned reimbursement/salary for positions shared between the town and school. He noted there was a recent change made in which the school had no input. It ended up costing the school less so they said nothing, but they should be included in any future changes/agreements. They would like something in writing as they are not really sure how it is being split up. It was noted that Boards do change so it is always good to have these agreements

in writing for future reference. It was noted that the employee receives her insurance through the town and there was a marked increase in our rates this year. Scott will check with Polly and Lisa to see what they have on this matter.

Discussion was held on the purchase of fuel oil and the school was invited to join with the town in the bidding process. Scott noted that we are on a budget plan and usually put out our request for bids in April with the bid being awarded in May. Mr. Gates noted that the school tries to save by cutting back the thermostats at night and on weekends. He noted the school is also being used for town events which makes a difference also. He feels it is good that the building is being used more. The school would have to let the Selectboard know the amount they would require so it can be included in our bid letters. It was noted that the next Selectboard meeting is April 13th which is after the School Board meeting.

Scott thanked the School Directors. Motion made by Jamie/Peter to adjourn. All members in favor/meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

March 25, 2009

Barbara M. Varin

NOTE: These minutes are not final until approved by the Selectboard at their next regular meeting. Note: These minutes were approved by the Selectboard at their April 13, 2009 meeting.