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Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

December 19, 2018

1. 7:00 p.m. Call to Order

The December 19th, 2018 meeting of the Finance Committee was held in the Board of Selectman's Room and was called to order at 7:00 P.M., by Mr. William Rotondi, Chairman. Members present: Mr. Stephen Evans, Vice-Chair, Mr. Tom DeLuca, Mr. Peter Carignan, Mr. Aaron Smith, Ms. Bonnie Yezukevich, Mr. Richard Dorney, Mr. Walter Eykel and Mr. Michael Fiore.

Also in attendance was Mr. Mike Yunits, Town Manager.

Absent were Mr. Paul Helmreich and Ms. Aimee Sawyer.

2. Article 1 discussion

Mr. Yunits presented Article 1 from the Draft Special Town Meeting Warrant (12/13/2018). Brief discussion ensued.

Motion to vote was offered by Mr. Carignan, seconded by Mr. DeLuca.

The vote passed unanimously.

3. Article 2 discussion

Mr. Yunits presented Article 2. Mr. Rotondi asked about rescinding expenses. Mr. Yunits responded. Mr. Carignan asked about borrowing. Mr. Yunits responded. Mr. Fiore asked about dates in the article. Mr. Rotondi asked a procedural question on voting.

Motion to vote was offered by Mr. Carignan, seconded by Mr. DeLuca.

The vote passed unanimously.

4. Article 3 discussion – Town Common Improvements

Mr. Yunits presented Article 3. Mr. Evans asked about the current \$65,000 level. \$18,000 left in account now. Gift account balance unknown by those present. Intention is to expand project to lighting and benches, etc.

Motion to vote was offered by Mr. Carignan, seconded by Mr. DeLuca.

The vote passed unanimously.

5. Article 4 discussion – Energy tax agreement

Mr. Yunits presented Article 4. Tax agreement, \$200,000 per year for 20 years presented to selectman. Mr. Carignan asked what happens after 20 years. Response: tax will be based on taxation at the time. Mr. Smith asked about accessor's involvement in tax plan. Mr. Carignan asked about the tax break and what the tax would be absent the agreement. Response: would be less than \$200,000, but the specified amount was such to make the agreement attractive to the town and provide for stable budgeting. Mr. Dorney asked about early termination. Response: a bond will be posted to cover decommissioning costs. Any new owner would need town approval.

Adam Shumaker from NextSun Energy LLC presented information on the proposal, termination agreement, materials used in the panels and general operation of the site.

Mr. Smith asked about walk-away expenses for decommissioning. Mr. Shumaker explained that a bond for the amount of 120% of the decommissioning expense would be posted for the duration of the project. Mr. Smith asked about optics for the flat-rate \$200,000 deal. Would they be less? Response: the expected actual tax would be about \$163,000 absent the agreement. Mr. Yunits pointed out that Article 5 relates to solar projects.

Ms. Yezukevich asked about the benefit to the company for the \$200,000 tax payments. Mr. Shumaker responded that the agreement provides for stable expenses for the company, would be attractive to the town and might facilitate quickly moving through the approval process.

Mr. DeLuca asked about wattage generated. Mr. Shumaker responded it would be about 8 Mega Watts, but waiting for final design to know for sure. The cost for wattage based on the base rate plus adder for agricultural project plus adder for the battery system would be about \$0.22 - \$0.23 per Kilowatt hour.

Mr. Dorney asked about other projects. Mr. Shumaker responded that the company was founded in 2008 and has projects in Massachusetts and Vermont. At one point moved to Colorado but moving back the MA. About 40 Megawatts generated so far, about 20 Megawatts being owned by the company. Operations and maintenance will be located in MA and VT.

Mr. Carignan asked about growing cranberries under solar panels. Mr. Shumaker responded that the design and spacing of the panels was such to allow continued operation of the cranberry farm. The panels will be spaced further apart and will be at least 10 feet off the ground. Cannot shade more than 50% of the bog. UMass Amherst has studied the panels. Results are positive; more data will be available over the next few years. Mr. Evans asked if the company builds or sells installations. Mr. Shumaker responded that they do sell some, own others. They intend to own and operate this project. Mr. Rotondi asked about the bond. Mr. Shumaker responded that any new buyer would have to post bond and be subject to same rules. Motion to vote was offered by Mr. Carignan, seconded by Mr. DeLuca.

The vote passed unanimously.

6. Article 5 discussion

Mr. Yunits presented Article 5. Noted that the Norton Planning Board voted to support the Article. Norton is trying to become a green community through the Smart Program. Missing

now: 1) Solar by right and 2) Stretch Code (insulation codes). This article will allow solar project development on cranberry bogs.

Mr. Shumaker added the Department of Environmental Protection now supports development of solar project on cranberry bogs. As of early October, all bogs are eligible for dual-use projects. Mr. Smith asked about wetlands protections. Only cranberry bog wetlands will be affected. Other wetlands will be protected as now. Mr. Rotondi asked about environmental hazards in the panels. Mr. Shumaker responded that the panels are largely glass and are reclaimable. Cadmium Telluride type panels are not economical in this area and will not be used in this project. Mr. Smith asked about adding material restrictions to the text. Mr. Yunits responded that we don't have the expertise to do that at this point. Mr. Evans asked about town sign-offs. No objections from other town departments exist. Mr. Rotondi expressed concern that the wrong panels might be used. Mr. Yunits deferred to state regulations on materials. The DEP monitors and regulates solar projects and the Planning Board will be involved in approving the decommissioning plan.

'Motion to vote was offered' by Mr. Carignan, seconded by Mr. DeLuca.

The vote passed unanimously.

7. Discussion of recent social media posts. Mr. Yunits discussed recent social media posts that may have been attributable to Finance Committee members and that any member expressing lack of support for the Accessors Department should consider resigning. Support for the Accessors Department was expressed along with the need for access to homes.
8. Reviewed Finance Committee Meeting Minutes from November 28, 2018. A misspelling in a name was observed.

Motion to vote was offered to approve the minutes as amended by Mr. Carignan, seconded by Mr. DeLuca.

All approved except Ms. Yezukevich who abstained.

9. Mr. Carignan moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. DeLuca.

The vote passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 P.M.

Respectively submitted by: Walter Eykel

Minutes Approved by Committee on: Jan 14, 2019

Signature: Walter Eykel

Materials Distributed:

- Articles Score Sheet
- Draft Special Town Meeting Warrant (12/13/2018)
- Article 2 Summary
- Town Meeting Vote Agreement with NextSun Energy (10/23/2017)
- Proposed PILOT Agreement with NextSun Energy
- Referral of Proposed Zoning Amendment to Planning Board (12/14/2018)