

Minutes

Board of Selectmen Joint Meeting With School Committee

-EMERGENCY MEETING-

Sunday, August 5, 2012 at 10:50 A.M.

Rowe Town Hall

Present:

Selectmen: Chair Noel Abbott, Vice Chairman Paul McLatchy III, Selectman Marilyn Wilson
Other Attendees: Dennis Annear, Brian Bordeaux, *Department of Environmental Protection*; Robert Clancy, *Fireman*; Henry Dandeneau, *Chief of Police*; Lisa Danek-Burke, *School Committee*; Tom Donaldson, *MIIA Insurance Adjuster*; Bill Knittle, *Principal*; Dennis May, *Deputy Fire Chief*; Paul McLatchy Jr., *Fire Chief*; Lisa Miller, *School Committee Chair*; Maggie Parent, *Finance Committee*
Audience of Citizens: Diane Broncaccio (Greenfield Recorder) and two others.

Note/History: On Saturday, August 4, 2012, a fire broke out at the Elementary School (suspected to be from a lightning strike). The entire roof was lost, and the building was likely to be considered a total loss. The Select Board, the School Committee, and additional officials met to discuss what the next steps are. Due to the emergency nature of this meeting, the 48-hour advanced posting requirements were waived.

Call to Order: Chair Abbott called the Selectboard meeting to order at 10:50 A.M. In the absence of Town Coordinator Ellen Miller, Mr. McLatchy took the minutes of the meeting.

Agenda: Chair Abbott had everyone look over the agenda and asked people to think of anything that might need to be added. He felt the best way to proceed was to go person-to-person and hear what they had to say.

Department of Environmental Protection: Brian Bourdeau from the DEP was present at the table, and explained that the DEP will be involved with any demolition of the School. Normally, there is a ten day waiting period for permitting before demolition can begin, but once a LSP (Licensed Site Professional) is able to assess the environmental impacts of demolition (asbestos, etc...), the DEP will help the town to expedite that permitting process. He offered himself as a resource for the town moving forward.

Police: Chief Dandeneau said that he was the first person to respond to the scene. When he arrived, the cupola was fully engulfed, and within a short period of time, smoke and flames were visible in the attic. After fire personnel responded to the scene, Chief Dandeneau focused on traffic and public safety. He had the two ends of the roads blocked off to thru traffic and this was maintained on the premises during the fire.

Right now, his top concern is meeting the security requirements the situation and the insurance company requires. Mr. Donaldson, the MIIA Insurance Adjuster, said that tape to seal off the area will be sufficient for the immediate future, but recommended that a person be at the site 24/7 until a fence can be set up. Chair Abbott made a motion that the Selectboard have a security watch at the site until further notice. Selectman Wilson seconded the motion, and the vote was 3-0 in favor. Chief Dandeneau asked if a police officer was required, or if a member of the fire department would suffice. It was agreed that someone from the fire department would be fine.

Deputy Chief May: Dennis May assumed the role of Incident Commander shortly after Chief Dandeneau arrived on the scene. By the time he arrived, 2/3 of the roof was engulfed. The Fire Department immediately set up the truck, but that was not enough. In total, 17 towns responded, including Greenfield with their ladder and high

pressure water truck After a few hours, the fire had died down to a couple of hot spots, but otherwise was under control.

Dennis Annear: Mr. Annear is the Fire Chief in Orange, and is also the Fire Chief of MEMA District 9. In his opinion, the response to the fire was great. It's only required to have four firefighters per vehicle, but there were close to one hundred individuals that responded. Wilmington alone sent about fourteen people. The primary focus of the agency was to ensure that Rowe and Franklin County had the resources necessary. He felt that everyone did an excellent job. He reported that there were only two injuries on the job: one person was dehydrated and suffered smoke inhalation, and another fell from a ladder. The fireman suffering from smoke inhalation seems to be doing well and is currently at the scene.

MIIA: Mr. Donaldson, MIIA's Insurance Adjuster, reported on the following:

Needs Right Now: In the morning, he will be contacting structural engineers to get an idea of structural integrity (for safety), and to determine if the building is lost. The report on this will be "fast-tracked". A fence will hopefully be put up tomorrow, and if not, then on Tuesday. He will contact an LSP (Licensed Site Professional) to begin a preliminary assessment for demolition. This report may come in within a week. All reports will be in writing.

Ms. Danek-Burke said that even if the staff were allowed in the building to retrieve items (assuming it is safe), it will need to be done under very strict circumstances, and this feeling was shared by everyone.

Coverage: The Town of Rowe has "blanket" coverage with MIIA, which is a division of the Massachusetts Municipal Association. The school is covered for approximately \$2.7 million, but because Rowe has a "blanket" policy, it can go up to a total of \$6,980,700 (total worth of all buildings). So, if in theory, the school costs \$3 million to replace, the additional \$300,000 comes out of that blanket. The town will be given funds to construct a replacement building at what the previous building was valued at less a depreciation factor to be determined.

There are three parts to coverage in this case: the dwelling, the contents, and relocation. With the relocation portion, for the first year, the town will be fully reimbursed for relocation fees. This covers any fees resulting from moving the students to another facility. additional busing costs, (or paying for modular classrooms). After the first year, there is a \$200,000 limit. At this point, if the building is declared a total loss, students will likely need to be moved to another school.

In Mr. Donaldson's opinion (and only his opinion), September 2013 is the earliest that ground will be broken for the new school. Mr. Annear recommended that procurement processes need to be learned, as this will be an extensive project. It also might be beneficial to contact the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

As for the dwelling, the town can build a new building up to the amount given to the town. If they have a \$3 million assessment, the town can build whatever building they'd like for that amount, it doesn't have to be identical to the last one. Any additional funds (for expansion/upgrade) above that amount will need to be covered by the town.

Content coverage is separate than the building, but included in that blanket policy (the building and contents combined cannot exceed the \$6.98 million total). To help the school prepare for the upcoming school year (wherever they will be), MIIA can cut a check in advance so that supplies can be ordered. Chair Abbott recommended that be done.

Ms. Miller asked if the staff will be compensated for the extra work that will need to be put in. Mr. Donaldson said that this would be covered under relocation fees. The staff contract will need to be examined, but Ms. Danek Burke said that there is a clause providing for per-diem pay for any days worked above and beyond their contracted number.

Ms. Miller also asked if the content coverage will go down if certain items are salvageable and removed from the remains. To Mr. Donaldson- everything is considered a loss, so the total coverage will *not* go down even if some items are saved.

Questions to be Answered: A number of questions need to be answered, such as:

- What needs to be done for long-term safety for the solar panels?
- What can be done to help the school community and the townspeople cope with this loss?
- Will moving to another school result in certain staff losing their jobs?

Tasks: The group went around the table and listed tasks that need to be done, who should do them, and by when.

Recess: Mr. McLatchy made a motion to recess for a short period, and was seconded by Ms. Wilson. The vote was 3-0 in favor, and the meeting was recessed at 12:35 P.M. The School Committee voted 2-0 to recess at this time as well.

Present:

Selectmen: Chair Noel Abbott, Vice Chairman Paul McLatchy III, Selectman Marilyn Wilson
Other Attendees: Henry Dandeneau, *Chief of Police*; Lisa Danek-Burke, *School Committee*; Bill Knittle, *Principal*; Lisa Miller, *School Committee Chair*; Maggie Parent, *Finance Committee*
Audience of Citizens: None

Reconvene: Chair Abbott called the meeting back to order at 12:51 P.M. Ms. Miller did the same for the School Committee.

Rebuilding: While the two boards seem to be in agreement that a school should be rebuilt, Ms. Wilson felt that this is not a decision that should be made by any one board, or even two boards. She felt that a public meeting should be held to determine if the town would like to see it rebuilt. While it is likely that the town would vote in favor, there are those in town who do not want to see this happen, and their voices should be heard as well.

Ms. Danek Burke agreed with Ms. Wilson. Mr. McLatchy said that he didn't like the additional "to do", but concurred that the people need to make the decision, not the Selectmen or School Committee. Ms. Miller asked if it needs to be a full-fledged Special Town Meeting. She fears what will happen if it fails a vote, but other members cited historical support for the school.

Mr. McLatchy said that if a decision can be made in the next 24 hours or so, a warrant can be prepared and posted at their meeting on Tuesday evening.

Communication: Information needs to be disseminated. Ms. Danek Burke said that Rowe is a very tight-knit community, so information will be quickly shared. Chair Abbott suggested a one-minute town-wide call simply telling people what happened, what is happening, and immediate plans for the next few days.

Security Pay: Chief Dandeneau said that he will start by seeing if anyone in town (either fire or police) are interested in working as a watchman at the school, and if none can be found, he will consult with police departments from other towns. He did request that the Board of Selectmen decide whether they should be paid the standard detail rate of \$38/hour or a different rate. Ms. Wilson made a motion that the town pay the individual the standard detail rate, and Mr. McLatchy seconded the motion. The vote was 3-0 in favor. The School Committee voted to support paying this rate.

Chief Dandeneau explained that he did not have a key to the building, and as such, couldn't have salvaged anything even if he had the opportunity to. In the future, it was agreed that the Police Department should have a key (or 24/7 access to a key) for the building. Chief Dandeneau departed the meeting at this point.

Ethics Commission: Chair Abbott explained that he was in touch with the Ethics Commission, who said that he needs to file a conflict of interest form, which then needs to be approved by the Selectboard. Chair Abbott was appointed to fill the vacant slot on the School Committee recently. Ms. Danek Burke felt that as the School Committee had a quorum, approval of a C.O.I form may not fall under the "emergency" category in this situation. Mr. McLatchy agreed. Mr. Abbott will therefore not be considered a part of the School Committee until the Selectmen vote to approve his C.O.I form (if they choose to do so).

Relocating: The School Committee voted to authorize the Superintendent to explore options for educating the Rowe students during the 2012-2013 year. Ms. Danek Burke had spoken with the Superintendent, who had spoken with Mohawk School Committee Chair Bob Aeschback, who said that they will help in any way possible. The Charlemont Board of Selectmen also offered support.

Ms. Miller wants to get moving as quickly as possible, but also wants to be cautious. She doesn't want to just jump at the first opportunity, but look at all options. Ms. Danek Burke said that she would like to see the students relocated to a school as they have proper facilities (library, kitchen, gym, etc...), which Principal Knittle agreed with. Hawlemont has the physical space (no formal offer has been made), and Buckland-Shelburne might as well. Heath probably does not.

There was a consensus in the room that the goal should be to keep the student body together. That said, this may be a good opportunity to coordinate with other schools and work on education and compare procedures and planning.

Principal Knittle will work with the teachers to find out what the school still has (or can salvage), and what will be needed. Ms. Miller said that the town should just assume there is nothing.

Office Space: Principal Knittle will speak with Town Clerk Jenn Morse, who offered the use of her office to Principal Knittle. The Selectmen offered the use of the town hall facilities if needed.

Next Meeting: A formal meeting for the School Committee will be held on Wednesday, August 8th at 5:00 P.M. The Selectmen have a meeting on Tuesday at 6:00. Another emergency meeting between the Selectboard and School Committee will be held tomorrow (Monday) evening at 6:00.

Adjourn: Chair Abbott motioned to adjourn, and was seconded by Ms. Wilson. The vote was 3-0 in favor, and the meeting was closed at 1:55 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul McLatchy III

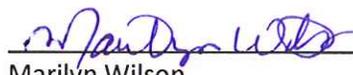
Approved:



Noel Abbott, Chairman



Paul McLatchy III, Vice Chairman



Marilyn Wilson

October 9, 2012

Date Approved

Attachments:

- Agenda