

OFFICIAL MINUTES

**TOWN OF LUDLOW
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

SPECIAL MEETING

February 23, 2010

6:00 p.m. BLACK RIVER HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Howard Barton, Jr., Chairman	Doug Ficken
John Neal, Vice Chairman	Bruce Schmidt

STAFF:

Frank Heald

OTHERS PRESENT:

Susan Barton	Bob Gilmore	Beth Merrill
Angie Benson-Ciufo	Peter Girouard	Jean Morrell
Kim Benson	Leo Graham	Michael Normyle
Randy Bixby	Richard Harrison	Ralph Pace
Sharon Bixby	Marie Hasson	Howie Paul
Bart Bonanno	Charlie Hastings	Judy Pullinen
Angie Benson-Ciufo	Claire Hearne	Pat Pullinen
Amanda Brown	David Hearne	Jim Rumrill
Dan Buckley	Bob Kottkamp	Andrea Sanford
Betsy Caldwell Rose	Ginny Kottkamp	Lisa Schmidt
Beth Cardin	Judi Kreiger	Michelle Stinson
Richard Cardin	Kevin Kuntz	Brigid Sullivan
Pam Cruickshank	Peter La Belle	Herb Van Guilder
Jim Frail	Ray Lavanway	Patrick Cody – LPC-TV
Christine Fuller	Lisa Le Tourneau	Duncan Love – LPC-TV
Jim Fuller	Rich Le Tourneau	

1. Call to Order

- A. Chairman Howard Barton called the hearing to order at 6:00 p.m. All members present, except Brett Sanderson. He explained that the purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with information regarding articles that will be voted on at town meeting. The three articles to be voted on will be the bonds for the renovation of the armory, the operation of the armory for FY 2011 and repairs to the Walker Street and Pond Street Extension bridges. John Neal has prepared the presentation for the armory.

2. Open Public Information Meeting

A. ARTICLE I AND ARTICLE II - Armory

1. Frank Heald gave background information. The first meeting with the National Guard, concerning acquisition of the armory, took place 7 years ago. Last year, \$425,000 was approved for the purchase of the property and to begin architectural and engineering studies. The Legislature agreed to sell the property, at fair market value and it was appraised at \$337,500. John Neal, along with Frank Heald, worked with state legislators, Dennis Devereux, Alice Nitka and John Campbell and successfully negotiated a purchase price of \$85,000. That price included 2.9 acres of land, the main building, tank barn, shed and the tank. A committee was formed of a cross section of town residents, to investigate and study possible uses for the property. Tonight is the culmination of the work done by the committee.
2. John Neal named the committee members and advised that the committee has been working on this project for about 8 months. They held two public meetings to try to

obtain as much public input and suggestions as possible. Generally, the suggested uses for the property fell into 3 categories: educational, recreational and community based activities. He showed slides that included exterior and interior pictures of the armory facility. He showed a proposed floor plan and the main building. He advised that proposed community portions and uses for the building include a gym, office space, cafeteria, weight room, men's and women's locker rooms, weddings, after school programs, and a commercial kitchen. Community based service providers would be LPC-TV and Black River Good Neighbors. These two organizations would lease the tank barn. The estimated costs to renovate the main building, including the purchase price, would be about \$865,000. LPC-TV and Black River Good Neighbors have both committed, in writing, to 20-year leases. These leases would include cost of infrastructure renovations. The cost for these renovations would be about \$335,000 and this cost would be included in the 20-year leases. The \$1,200,000 bond for the renovations of the facility would be broken down into \$865,000 for the town, \$220,000 for Black River Good Neighbors and \$115,000 for LPC-TV. The committee hopes to reduce the costs by pursuing grants, stimulus funds and donations. Town costs will also be reduced through the two long-term leases. The impact on resident taxes would be about \$.01 (\$.005 for operations and \$.005 for debt.) This would amount to about \$20 on \$200,000, \$25 on \$250,000, etc. John Neal added that the project would enrich the community, enrich the education system and recreational programs.

3. Dan Buckley asked if the lessees would pay the debt service for 20 years.
4. John Neal said yes.
5. Dan Buckley asked why the town would have to get a bond for the total project and not have the lessees take bonds for their portions.
6. John Neal said basically because the town owns the property.
7. Dan Buckley asked what the \$111,000 is for.
8. John Neal said the amount needed for maintenance, operations and interest this fiscal year.
9. Frank Heald said that as soon as the process starts, we would have costs. There is no money in the budget for the costs for 7/1/10 through 6/30/11 –until we start using the building.
10. Beth Merrill asked about triple net leases.
11. John Neal explained that the lessees cover the costs for the bond, rent and maintenance.
12. Beth Merrill asked for more description about other items on the renovation costs list.
13. John Neal said that the school will take care of parking areas currently being taken care of by the schools and the town would take care of the rest. He explained that the list of estimated costs was derived from discussions with two different consultants and is believed to be fairly accurate.
14. Patrick Pullinen verified that the committee did look at experts for advice.
15. John Neal said that was correct. Frank Heald and qualified consultants did compile the list and it is fairly accurate.
16. Patrick Pullinen asked if the list reflects what the community wants.
17. John Neal said it reflects community and school boards needs.
18. Patrick Pullinen asked if there would be any surprises?
19. John Neal said there might be.
20. David Hearne asked what percentage of the main armory usage would be for the schools and how would it affect state funding for the schools.
21. John Neal said the armory would be a town facility.
22. Judy Pullinen said that she has checked with the attorney for the schools and it was noted that this is not to be a school facility. It will be a community facility with the schools using it from 8:00 a.m. through 2:30 p.m. on schooldays. The schools have used the armory in the past and a precedent has been established. Classrooms will have a separate entrance and can be used during the day by other groups.
23. David Hearne said that he could see someone else looking at it differently.
24. Judy Pullinen said that the lawyer, Chris Leopold, said it was okay.
25. Bart Bonanno asked if the \$865,000 includes renovations of the tank barn.
26. John Neal said just the main building.
27. Mike Normyle said that he is very impressed with the work done by the committee and this presentation and would like to thank them. He asked if the purchase includes tables and chairs for the cafeteria.
28. Frank Heald said there are about 100 chairs there now. Tables would be needed.
29. Mike Normyle said it is a fantastic idea.
30. Brigid Sullivan advised that she is with Black River Area Community Coalition and they are very excited about this project. They work with the Recreation Department and teens need a place to go after school, on weekends and during the summer. This is a fabulous opportunity.

31. Dan Buckley said that from the perspective of the schools, the *cafégymnatorium* is a big problem and they need a separate facility for eating. The availability of a cafeteria and a gymnasium in the armory would solve almost all of the problems brought up during the accreditation process.
32. Herb Van Guilder asked how many of the committee members have looked at the building. He has received comments from people who don't like to speak at public hearings. He feels that the tank building would be better used as storage for town vehicles and equipment. The town garage is inadequate. He feels that the armory building should stay as it is. He feels that too much work might cause future structural problems. He feels that the school lunch program is working well. It has functioned that way for 50 years. They need money for new equipment. There is a declining enrolment. He is concerned about the schools having to get the students over to the armory building. It would mean increasing the lunchtime. He is concerned about what they would do with the freed up space in the schools. He questions why we have to rush into these renovations. He suggests a blind survey of municipal and school employees to get their suggestions. He suggests that the town might be better off building new buildings for LPC and Black River Good Neighbors.
33. Beth Merrill said the town is not locked into the committee's suggestions. Maybe we should take the time to think about this. She does not like the idea of moving the children to the armory for lunch. If the town votes yes, does it mean accepting all of the suggestions?
34. John Neal said that the committee worked hard on this project and did hold public meetings to get input. If the bond were passed, the project would proceed as proposed.
35. Judy Pullinen advised that the LES and U39 school boards have given their approval.
36. Patrick Pullinen said that the acoustics in this room are not good. It must be very difficult to teach in this room with gym and lunch going on at the same time.
37. Peter Girouard asked if the bond vote is defeated, could the buildings be used as they are for the children for gym and after school activities, without spending any money.
38. John Neal said there are ADA and fire safety issues that would have to be addressed.
39. Peter Girouard asked if anyone had looked into the minimal costs to use the building as it is.
40. John Neal said the committee had held public hearings and had tried to address the suggestions received at those meetings.
41. Mike Normyle said that the proposed renovations are good and if done right the first time, will provide the town with a facility to be proud of.
42. Dan Buckley said that the schools have looked at changing recess times so that the children would already be dressed, from recess, to go over to the armory for lunch. They have started to look into traffic flows and there would be changes so that the traffic would not be routed where the children would be walking. The younger children would already be dressed to go to the armory.
43. Susan Barton asked if a canopy or covering would be included in the costs.
44. Dan Buckley said that would be a separate project. They would isolate one parking lot.
45. Judy Pullinen said if the bond passes, a traffic flow study would be done. There are no costs for that included in this project. Regarding the cafeteria, she said that things have changed over the years. There used to be a multipurpose room. There are now four, 25-minute lunch periods. If the bond passes, there will be 3 longer lunches and entrance times into the cafeteria would be staggered. The current facilities are not big enough and were not designed for their current use.
46. Judy Kreiger said that the kitchen is old and very outdated. It is quite a challenge to prepare foods there.
47. Bart Bonanno asked if anyone had thought about having a food service consultant give suggestions to design the kitchen.
48. Judy Kreiger said that the company that she works for is a professional food service company and they are working on designs for the armory. They have been in business for many years.
49. Herb Van Guilder asked if anyone had looked into the cost of building new buildings for LPC and Black River Good Neighbors.
50. Kevin Kuntz said that the tank barn is about 6,000 square feet and based on conservative construction estimates of \$200 per square foot, the cost would be \$1,200,000 for just that building. It would be a real cost savings to renovate both buildings for that amount.
51. Andrea Sanford said that when times are tough, the community needs to pull together. They need a place to go to socialize together. Times are tough now and now is the time to pull together. The armory would provide that place.

B. ARTICLE IV – Bridge Repairs and Drainage Issues

1. Howard Barton advised that this article is for the approval of repairs to the Pond Street Bridge and Walker Street Bridge. It also includes repairs to drainage issues at Dorsey Park. He advised that they are trying to get state money to offset some of the costs.
2. Dan Buckley asked if they would be able to get stimulus money.
3. Frank Heald said that they would probably be able to get some money for the bridges through the Agency of Transportation structures group. That, in part would be stimulus money.

3. **Close Public Information Meeting**

- A. Howard Barton asked for any further questions or comments. There were none. He closed the public information meeting.

4. **Adjourn**

- A. **MOTION by Doug Ficken and seconded by Bruce Schmidt to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Howard Barton, Jr., Chairman

Brett Sanderson

Doug Ficken

Bruce Schmidt

John Neal