

IN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 1997

Present: Chairman Lawrence L. Blacker and Selectmen Maryann K. Clark and John C. Drobinski.

The statutory requirement for notice having been met, the meeting convened at 7:30 p.m. at the Sudbury Fire Station on Old Sudbury Road.

Ch. 61A Notice of First Refusal Option - Lot 3, Concord Road

Town Manager Ledoux informed the Board that Town Counsel states that the Board may accept the property appraisal presented by the owners as a bona fide offer since it was conducted by/for a bank. Alternatively, the Board may seek a separate appraisal from an appraiser of their choice.

Chairman Blacker commented that an appraisal for a bank would undoubtedly be accurate and any error in valuation would fall on the conservative side.

Selectman Clark noted that the appraisal presented is supported by comparatives.

Chairman Blacker commented that the valuation appeared to be an appropriate one for a building lot in the Town.

Selectman Drobinski stated that he had no problem with the appraisal, but he did have some questions regarding the application.

The Board concurred in its acceptance of the appraisal presented by the owners.

Town Manager Ledoux stated that the matter would be on the Board's agenda during its next regularly scheduled meeting on January 13, 1997.

Interviews for Town Accountant Position

Town Manager Ledoux reported that the Screening Committee for the Town Accountant position had reviewed the 16 applications received and had conducted interviews with four of the applicants. He stated that the Committee had three applicants to recommend to the Board: Ruth Lewis, Stephen Roomian and Donald Young. He said that Ms. Lewis' and Mr. Roomian's interviews were scheduled for this evening and that Mr. Young's interview was scheduled for 6:45 p.m. on January 13, 1997.

1. Interview with Ruth Lewis

The Board was in receipt of a resume from Ms. Lewis noting that she is currently the Director of Data Processing/Assistant Comptroller for the Town of Arlington. As such, she is very familiar with that town's financial software package - MUNIS. Prior to her position in Arlington, she was a city auditor for the City of Somerville. Other past work experience included municipal, private and state employment in various accounting and/or data processing positions.

In response to questions from the Board, Ms. Lewis stated that she is familiar with the accounting software program used by Sudbury as the same is utilized by Arlington. She noted that she had been involved in the conversion of COBOL to 4GL, a process that Sudbury is currently undergoing. She stated that she is a member of the Massachusetts Accountants Association and is a Certified Municipal Accountant. She said that one needs to be re-certified every three years and that she regularly attends continuing education courses. She said that she enjoys working with the different departments and providing computer training to staff. She related that she becomes impatient when repeatedly asked the same question. She said that she viewed the role of the Town Accountant as someone who oversees the accounting work of the Selectmen and the department heads and would act, in essence, as a "watch dog" for the Town. She stated that she was familiar with the budgeting process for the schools and currently reviews Schedule 19 and is more directly involved in the Schedule A. She stated that with longevity she is currently earning close to \$70,000 per year and hopes to maintain such salary level if given this position. She said that she believed that the appointment term was for three years and planned to stay longer than that if given the job.

Town Manager Ledoux asked Ms. Lewis to provide a copy of the most recent audit management letter and Ms. Lewis agreed.

2. Interview with Stephen Roomian

The Board was in receipt of a resume from Mr. Roomian noting that he is currently the Town Accountant and Chief Procurement Officer for the Town of Hopkinton. Prior to that, he was the Town Accountant for Westminister. He noted that he is responsible for the accounting and receipts and expenditures of Hopkinton funds, maintaining UMAS and all GAAP for a budget in excess of \$22 million. He noted experience with Information Opportunities and Data National Corporation municipal softwares and past experience in the private sector.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Roomian stated that he has adjusted to different accounting software programs over the years and is proud of his knowledge of computers that he has acquired over the past six and one-half years. Although he has no experience with the MUNIS system used in Sudbury, he stated that he believed he could learn the system within less than a year. He said that he is a member of the Massachusetts Municipal Accountants Association and that he attends continuing education courses when he believes a particularly course would be instructive. He stated that he is currently earning \$47,000 per annum and hoped to at least maintain that salary level if offered the Sudbury position. He stated that he was interested in the Sudbury position because he believed that the Town Management form of government was more effective in resolving disputes and wished to work within such a framework. He admitted that he becomes impatient when the same person repeatedly asks the same question. He stated that the School Department in Hopkinton is quite independent, but he does review their warrants and payrolls. He also said that he reviews the school system's Schedule 19 and drafts their Schedule A. He said that he prides himself in working well with others and always gets right back to people who call with questions.

Town Manager Ledoux asked Mr. Roomian to provide a copy of the most recent audit management letter and Mr. Roomian agreed.

Special Town Meeting

Present: Kathleen C. Precourt, Finance Committee; Steven R. Wishner, Finance Committee; Karen V. Krone, Subury School Committee; Gregory S. Lauer, Sudbury School Committee; Mary Ellen Normen Dunn, Town Treasurer and Collector; and others.

The Board was in receipt of a memorandum from the Town Manager outlining the procedures and time frames involved in scheduling the Special Town Meeting required by the recent citizen petition, spearheaded by Ralph Tyler.

Town Manager Ledoux informed the Board that February 14 was the only date that fell within the legally required 45 days of submission and also was outside the upcoming school vacation (February 17-21) and was within 45 days of the March 31 election. He further informed the Board that Mr. Tyler had called him and was agreeable to having the Special Town Meeting conducted on February 24, even though it was outside the required 45 days. Town Manager Ledoux noted that that date would also fall outside the school vacation period and was less than 45 days prior to the March 31 election.

Selectman Drobinski said that he had been misled in signing the petition. He said that he was told that the articles would be considered during the annual Town Meeting. He said that he would never preclude someone from presenting a warrant article at a Town Meeting despite his position on the merits.

Chairman Blacker opined that it is possible that others were also misled or confused when they signed the petition. However, he said that it was very clear from Mr. Tyler's presentation at the Board's meeting on December 30 that he knew that he was seeking a "special meeting" that might result in two opportunities to present the Loring school project to the voters.

Chairman Blacker noted that, although Mr. Tyler might be willing to agree to a date outside the legally required period, the others who had signed the petition might not. Chairman Blacker opined that Mr. Tyler did not have the authority to speak for them.

Town Manager Ledoux reported that Town Counsel had advised that a mere seven-day delay would probably be deemed reasonable if legally challenged. Town Counsel cited a case where the court had found a 77-day delay was unreasonable but suggested that a brief delay may be acceptable.

Chairman Blacker commented that his initial reaction was to call the meeting on February 14 to avoid any possible problems. However, he indicated that he would do whatever the School Committee desired.

School Committee member Karen V. Krone stated that they had no notice from Mr. Tyler that he intended to pursue a petition seeking a special meeting. She said that it has undermined two years worth of work by hundreds of people. She inquired if the signatures had been certified and the Town Manager responded in the affirmative.

Finance Committee member Steven R. Wishner asked if the results of the special meeting would affect what might be considered at the annual meeting. Town Manager Ledoux stated that any of the proposed articles raised during the special meeting could be offered again at the annual meeting.

School Committee member Gregory S. Lauer noted that the special meeting would cause some expense to the Town and suggested that the Town try to salvage some value from it. He suggested that either all the capital articles be presented and the process be moved up or that they proceed with just the Loring project and make it clear that such is just one piece of the needed school/Town projects.

School Committee member Krone inquired as to the psychology of re-raising before the voters items that they had recently rejected.

Town Manager Ledoux, citing an experience from another community, opined that a prior defeat would not bode well for a favorable vote the second time around.

Finance Committee member Kathleen C. Precourt commented that the Townspeople had not had enough time to consider the issues. She said that everyone in the Town will have to make a decision and accelerating the process is very unfair to the Town.

School Committee member Krone said that they had thought that they would have five months to educate the community on the issues.

Town Treasurer and Collector Mary Ellen Normen Dunn said that there was no advantage to speeding up the process. She said that even if all the articles passed, the financing is not going to occur the next day.

School Committee member Lauer agreed saying that even if passage occurred at the March 31 election, they were too late to meet the state financing deadlines this spring. He also noted that the acceleration compressed the time period for the Finance Committee to review the School Committee work.

School Committee member Krone added that it will take three and one-half years to complete all the school projects.

Town Treasurer Dunn inquired if the other projects could be discussed at the special town meeting if they were not actually offered.

School Committee member Krone stated that it was a "no win" situation.

Town Manager Ledoux suggested that perhaps the later date be considered to allow more time to consider the Town's options. He said that Mr. Tyler intimated that if the other capital projects were offered at the Special Town Meeting that he would move to "IP" (indefinitely postpone) the Loring project.

Chairman Blacker stated that would be just fine. The other projects could then be indefinitely postponed and they could all be considered at the annual meeting as originally planned. However, he said

that one should not count on such a tactic. Chairman Blacker noted that the Finance and School Committees were scheduled to meet later in the week and suggested that each committee consider (1) whether the Loring project should remain the sole article at the Special Town Meeting and merely placed in context with the other needed projects; or (2) whether all the other articles should be offered at the Special Town Meeting. He suggested that any special town meeting could be scheduled for February 24 which would allow the committees and Board to consider these matters further. Chairman Blacker suggested that the Board consider meeting on Thursday, January 9, if need be, to consider this matter further. He asked the Town Manager to consult with the Town Counsel on the various issues and to advise the Board if the vote cannot wait until their next regularly scheduled meeting on January 13 to call the Special Town Meeting and thus it becomes necessary to meet on January 9.

The Board concurred.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Attest: _____
Steven L. Ledoux
Town Manager-Clerk