

Mechanic Falls Public Hearing

October 24, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lou Annance, Chair
Cathy Fifield, Vice Chair

Stephen Bolduc
Nicholas Konstantoulakis

Kieth Bennett

STAFF PRESENT:

Koriene Low - Town Manager
Miranda Hinkley - Town Clerk

Fred Collins - Code
Enforcement Officer

OTHERS PRESENT:

John Emery
Milton Walker
Walter Berry
Rena Berry
Dorothy Bouchles
C Bouchles
Mark Gary
Stephen Turner
Joan Walton

Betsy Craig
Yvon Gilbert
Judy McMorrow
Eriks Petersons
Corinne Moore
Tom Webster
Sharon Webster
Ken Carlin
Carol Brocker

JP Doerr
Kim Voisine
Gary Voisine
Nancy Petersons
Jenn Durant
Norma Crabtree
Talmadge Crabtree
Jonathan Graham

Councilor Lou Annance called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.
We stood and saluted the flag.

Councilor Annance welcomed those present and thanked them for coming.

An explanation was presented regarding the upcoming election referendum question to purchase a new building for the purpose of moving the Municipal Complex.

Approximately eight months ago, the Council discussed the need to either repair the current town office building or build a new one. The current building is very old and requires many expensive repairs. There is minimal insulation making it inefficient to heat/cool, some of the vinyl siding must be replaced, it needs an HVAC system, the boiler needs a circulator pump for \$3500.00 and the pellet burner is inoperable and will cost \$7500.00 to repair. These are just a few of the current issues with the Municipal Building as it stands. A committee was formed to investigate the options. The committee found that a new construction on our existing lot would cost approximately \$1.5mil. At that same time, the medical building located at 22 Pleasant Street became vacant and was rumored to be going up for sale. The Council, Town Manager, and Building Committee members discussed this option, measured the required space for each office, and walked through the medical building. They found that the medical building was large enough to house the library, town office and police department. The Town Manager met with the Hospital and placed a letter of intent to purchase for \$300,000. The building is currently assessed at \$600,000.

Further discussions over the next two months between the Council and Building Committee resulted in a proposal of rolling the remaining bond balance, the \$300,000 purchase price and an additional \$200,000 to renovate the building to meet our needs. This would also include moving the Marquis sign and office equipment. The total loan amount, if approved, would be \$750,000. This is \$100,000 less than the original bond, therefore dropping the current payment and tax rate.

The Town has been approached by a gentleman that purchases old school buildings and converts them into senior housing. He is interested in our building as there are two heating sources, an elevator, and space for 12-24 units.

He has placed a tentative offer for \$200,000. If accepted, this money would go to the reserve account and the tax payers would vote on its final disposition. The tax revenue would be approximately \$1000. Per unit annually which would also lessen the burden on the taxpayer.

There are additional savings to take into account. Our heating costs would decrease by \$6000, electricity decrease would be \$4000 and just the inspection of the elevator is \$1400 per year that we would not have to pay out. The elevator savings does not include maintenance, which would be further savings. The total savings annually would be between \$19,000 and \$20,000.

At this point, Councilor Annance advised that the final decision would be the voters in November and stated that we hope the townspeople are in favor. He asked for questions from the public.

The following questions were addressed:

Q: Do we have a purchase and sale agreement with the hospital?

A: We do not have a purchase and sale agreement as we have to wait for the election results, however we have a letter of intent in which the hospital has agreed to hold off listing the building until after the election.

Q: Can we have an actual third-party appraiser determine the valuation of the medical building and municipal building? Concern is that we are paying more than fair value and selling for less.

A: We can have them appraised, absolutely.

Q: With all the assets here in one location (i.e. fire station, public works, ball fields, etc) why would we move?

A: We would love to keep all the assets together, however to do that it would cost \$1.5 mil to construct a new building. This is an opportunity that presented itself and we feel it is a smart purchase.

Q: Wouldn't we have additional cost to move buried tanks prior to selling?

A: The tanks are located at the public works building which is not being sold.

Q: A few years prior, the townspeople voted not to tear down the existing building as they would like to keep it for its historical value as the Municipal Building.

A: The building would remain standing and the façade would not change if purchased by the gentleman that approached us. He is looking for funding from a historical bond which would require certain things remain unchanged. The Councilor believes it was the intent to keep the historic building, not necessarily to have the Municipal offices remain in it.

Q: Can we lease the current building rather than sell in the event we would like to do something with it down the road?

A: This is an option we can review.

Q: Could the Council provide more visual aids at the next meeting on November 2nd? Townspeople would like to see a dual columned list displaying current costs and anticipated costs. They would also like a diagram of the parking lot at Depot Square displaying what is owned by the town.

A: Absolutely.

Q: Can the townspeople have an open house and walk through the new building prior to election.

A: We have been in contact with the hospital to request this as most employees have not had the opportunity to walk through either. We will continue to attempt, however with election in 2 weeks, we are not sure we can make any promises.

No further questions were presented. Council again thanked those present. Hearing adjourned at 8:00pm.

Town of Mechanic Falls

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John Emery John Emery

Mit 4/2/16

Walter Berry Walter Berry

Rena Berry

Marcky Bouches

Bougeon

Mark Jay

Steven Wise

Jean Walton

Tom Walton

Betsy Craig

Yves Gilbert

John John Mc Morrow

Gary Petersons

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PLEASE SIGN IN