

April 1, 2015

The Stonington Board of Selectmen held a special meeting on this date at the Stonington Town Hall at 2:00 p.m. Present were First Selectman George Crouse, Selectmen Rob Simmons and Selectman Michael Spellman. Also present were members of the public and press.

**(1) Call to Order**

Mr. Crouse called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

**(2) Comments from the Public**

None

**(3) New Business**

Set call for Special Town Meeting and date for Adjourned Special Town Meeting/Referendum to consider and vote on:

A resolution appropriating \$69,000,000 for evaluating, planning, designing, repairing, equipping, improving, modifying, renovating and constructing property at the town's West Vine Street School, Deans Mill School and Pawcatuck Middle School and authorizing the issue of up to \$69,000,000 in bonds and notes to finance the appropriation. Mr. Crouse read the following resolution:

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED** that, pursuant to Section 3-3 of the Charter, the Board of Selectmen calls a Special Town Meeting for Monday, April 13, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Stonington High School, 176 South Broad St., Pawcatuck, CT, to consider and act upon a resolution as outlined in the Notice of Special Town of Stonington meeting which will be attached to the Minutes of this meeting as Appendix A, which Notice is hereby approved.

Signed and dated this 1<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2015 by the Stonington Board of Selectmen.

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to adopt the resolution.

Mr. Crouse read the following resolution:

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §7-7, the Board of Selectmen hereby remove the first item on the call for the April 13, 2015 Special Town Meeting for submission to the voters and sets the date for Referendum and Adjourned Special Town Meeting for April 21, 2015 as outlined in the Notice of Referendum and Adjourned Special Town Meeting that will be attached to the Minutes of this meeting as Appendix "B", which Notice is hereby approved.

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to adopt the resolution.

Resolution duly adopted this 1<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2015, by the Stonington Board of Selectmen.

### **Solar Farm Discussion**

- Mr. Crouse stated that one of the items in the CIP budget was to not do a solar panel study. Mr. Crouse stated that Mr. Phetteplace walked into his office and said we can get this done gratis. He stated that Solar City Company surveyed the town and none of our buildings would fit so the plan is a solar farm on the land fill. Mr. Crouse stated that we have only investigated two companies Solar City and Jordan Energy. He stated that the bad news is that at the end of April this award by Eversource is made. Mr. Crouse stated that a bid goes in and Eversource will accept the lowest bid. He stated the difference between the cost of the company running it and the cost of production and what they have to pay there is a little window of money that is possible for the Town of Stonington. Mr. Crouse stated that Solar City has estimated that the town will save \$91,310.00 per year and over a 20 year period it is 1.8 million. Mr. Crouse stated that Mr. Phetteplace and Mr. Gilligan are investigating heavily. He stated that we've been querying constantly Jordan Energy to send their proposals. He stated that Jordan Energy is a smaller company and Solar City is a Nasdaq company. Mr. Crouse stated that there are only two times, the end of April this year and the end of April next year. He stated that both companies have indicated as more and more people come into this the amount of money lessens and there are federal and state grants that are expiring on this. Mr. Crouse stated this means the margin of dollars for the company doing it decreases as the grants go down, therefore, we get less money back. Mr. Crouse stated that on April 7, 2015 the Selectmen were going to visit a solar farm in Glastonbury and Solar City.
- Mr. Simmons stated that his son and his company in Massachusetts was involved in a very large solar project. He stated he would be interested in sharing some of the information on this project with him just to get his input. Mr. Simmons stated he is a big believer in this type of project. He stated that there is a return on investment. He stated that it reflects the environmental conscientious of the community to want to generate solar power. Mr. Simmons stated that his only concern he has is that we not be pressured by a time constraint to make a decision that is made in a rush and may come back to hurt us later.

#### **(4) Comments from the Public**

None

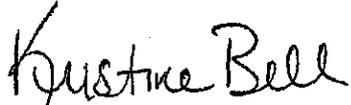
#### **(5) Comments from the Selectmen**

- Mr. Spellman stated that he would like to have the Board of Selectmen look into creating a special committee charged with preparing a report on costs and strategies to retain the West Broad Street School. He stated that the board be populated by a committee of six with 3 democrats and 3 republicans. Mr. Spellman stated that the town chairs of each party also seek out and consider unaffiliated members with an interest. He stated that the committee be populated and ready to prepare its work in the next 60 days. Mr. Spellman also stated that an advisory report be drafted for the Board of Selectmen in May of 2016 with a list of prioritized selected options.
- Mr. Crouse stated that Kevin Burns should be on that committee.
- Mr. Spellman stated there is considerable expertise on the school building committee that we have.
- Mr. Spellman stated that Julie Holland would be an ideal person and she's expressed interest.

- Mr. Spellman stated it behooves the board to seek an aggressive timetable for advertising or accepting resumes for hiring a Director of Planning so we can have them in place as soon as practical for the next fiscal year. He stated we grew the grand list grew .7 of a percent last year and he applauds Selectman Crouse for seeking that position.
- Mr. Crouse stated that if the budget passes then we have no problem.
- Mr. Spellman stated that we should have a contingency plan so we can hit the ground running. He stated that they need to show the voters that they are serious about growing the grand list. Mr. Spellman stated that we are in discussions with North Stonington on joint developmental interests. Having some of that expertise would assist the town greatly assuring our interests are met.
- Mr. Simmons stated that hooking up with North Stonington is a reasonable thing to do especially if there is some opportunity for property up Route 2 to be coming on to the market both towns benefit. He stated that we have just moved forward about the issue of appropriated and bonding for \$69,000,000 which is potentially the largest project in the history of the Town of Stonington and he just wanted to reflect on one or two things. Mr. Simmons stated that one thing he wanted to reflect on is the fact that the Town of Stonington has an AA1 credit rating from Moody's which is just below triple and far above a whole series of investment and speculative grade ratings. He stated that he notes for the record that the Town of East Haven, the Town of Bridgeport, the Town of New Haven, the Town of Hamden even the Town of Guilford do not have this high a rating. Mr. Simmons stated that he notes for the record that the State of Connecticut does not have this high a rating. He stated that the point is the Board of Finance of the Town of Stonington and he would assume the Board of Selectmen and others have preserved and protected this high rating with prudent fiscal policy for the town. Mr. Simmons stated he would also note for record that our fund balance is over 10 million which is requisite for funding the town for 2 months without income at all. He stated it seems to him that the Board of Finance and other entities in town have contributed to a very solid fiscal situation that gives him reasonable confidence that we can put this to the voters with the idea that from the standpoint from our credit rating and our fund balance we are fiscally sound. Mr. Simmons stated that the only concern that he has is the fact that the report on the amendments to the charter seem to be targeted specifically at the Board of Finance. He stated that from his standpoint for us to move forward with this very substantial project even with a high credit rating and a high fund balance he wants to make sure that the balance that the Board of Finance provides to our fiscal situation is maintained and we don't disrupt what he considers to be a well-functioning board of the Town of Stonington.
- Mr. Crouse stated that the building committee has spent two years and the window of opportunity this year is the best year for funding reimbursement from the State government. He stated that the final project estimated cost is not 69 but 52 million. Mr. Crouse stated that you have to put the 69 in just in case the State does not come through.

**(6) Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristine Bell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Kristine Bell  
Recording Secretary