

**MINUTES**  
**TOWN OF NEW GLARUS**  
**Special Meeting of the Electorate**  
**Town Hall – Swiss Miss Center 1101 Hwy 69 New Glarus**  
**February 10, 2015, 6:30 p.m.**

**ATTENDING:** Board Members: Keith Seward, Dean Streiff, Chris Narveson (6:45), Jim Hoesly, Robert Elkins, Pattie Salter and Dennis Nielson

**ALSO ATTENDING:** Patrick McGowan, Duane Sherven, Jerry Landmark, Craig Galhouse, Dan Gartzke, Tracey Schwalbe, Charles Wearing, Evangeline Wearing, Rita Mahoney, Karen Talarczyk, Doris Streiff, Becki Streiff, Bill Haight, David Hustad, Carol Hustad, Judith Blank, Bob Rudd, Susan Crum, Dale Hustad, William Argue, John Ott, Liz Seward (6:50 p.m.) and Mark Hazelbaker

K. Seward called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

- 1) Proof of Posting: P. Salter confirmed proper posting.
- 2) Consider authorizing the Purchase of Property: K. Seward explained the purpose of the Special Meeting of the Electorate was to ask Town Residents for authorization to purchase property and existing building for a Town Hall.
  - a) K. Seward noted that residents all have a voice/vote in the decision to purchase the property as noted in Resolution #02/10/14. Seward asked that when called on to speak, each person should state their name and keep their comments to 3 minutes or less.

K. Seward read out loud and moved to adopt Resolution #02/10/14 which authorizes the Town Board to purchase the property located at 26 5th Avenue, Village of New Glarus for \$141,795. J. Hoesly 2<sup>nd</sup>.

- b) Discussion: K. Seward explained that the Town of New Glarus has been renting their office space from the Bank of New Glarus for \$850 per month. Early last year, the Bank of New Glarus notified the Town that they would be needing the office space and would like the Town to begin looking for a new home.

Seward explained that this property became available and the board felt that it would meet their requirements. The Town Board made an offer to purchase with a contingency that the purchase be approved by the residents of the town. The offer, with contingency was accepted by the seller. Our Building Inspector, Mike Fenley inspected the property and reported that it would require repairs to the exterior stucco and a few minor cosmetic and lighting issues. In addition, we would want to add onto the building to add an additional bathroom, and to accommodate office and meeting space. The building is currently zoned R1 which allows for municipal use, but would need to be rezoned to C1 commercial in order to accommodate the expansion.

Judith Blank asked what other properties the Town looked at. K. Seward explained that the Town Board reviewed several office locations including other office space within the existing building, the Swiss Center of North America, the Old Town Hall and space within the New Library and the possibility of purchasing land and building a new town hall/garage. For one or more reason's none of these locations were feasible. We were looking for someplace that was not located within a flood plain, had ample parking, was handicap accessibility for Elections and was set up for our technical needs.

The building is 980 square feet, located on 2.253 acre lot with approximately 11 parking spaces. The asking price was and \$142,000 which was reduced down to cover costs associated with the repairs noted above to our offer of \$141,795. The 2014 tax bill listed the total assessed value at \$125,900 with an estimated fair market value of \$115,800 and the property was assessed taxes in the amount of \$3,009.66. As a municipality, we would be tax exempt and would not have that expense. We also would not have any realtor fees as we are dealing directly with the seller. Seward stated that based on our calculations, we would need 1,500 square feet for town hall operations. We have estimated that the addition to the building would add another \$100,000 to the project. The property is also in a good location and would be marketable should the Town decide to sell it. Our offer to purchase shows a closing date of two days after this meeting. Seward explained that even with the electorate's approval, we would not make that closing date because the zoning change and addition would need to go before the Village Design

Review Committee and would need the Village Board to approve the proposed project. So we would need to submit an amended offer to purchase to accommodate a later closing date.

Rita Mahoney had 2 questions. She noted that our existing space seems adequate and questioned the need for an addition? K. Seward replied that this current meeting space is about 1,000 square feet plus our office and storage space we are currently using about 1,500 square feet. The proposed property is currently just under 1,000 square feet which is small for our needs. He further explained that part of the addition would provide access to the tower area of the building which will be used for storage, another bathroom and additional meeting/office space would be added to the lower level. Mahoney also questioned where the money was coming from for the purchase and addition.

Seward noted that the board was considering a number of funding sources. He explained that a number of years ago the Parks Commission established sinking funds that have been accumulating funds. One of the sinking funds was set up for establishing a Park/Town Hall space. That account is currently valued at roughly \$49,000. The Town also established an Impact Fee account which has funds designated to projects two of which are land acquisition and parks improvement. There will be a discussion later on in the town board meeting to determine how much money the town board can use from each fund for this project. The balance of the cost would come from borrowing. Seward noted that he prepared an analysis of the impact on tax payer if the Town were to borrow the entire \$245,000. If we paid the loan back over 20 years at 3.05% interest, the cost of the loan, plus insurance and utilities would be \$11,500 which is comparable to the \$9,900 per year that we pay for the space we're in now. This calculation did not take into account any of the funds that we may draw upon, which would reduce the total amount borrowed.

D. Hustad asked if the decision to use the sinking funds was solely a Town Board decision or did this group have any opinion on how it is used. K. Seward explained that ultimately it was a Town Board decision but welcomed input from those present. In addition Seward explained that the resolution being considered was to authorize the purchase of land and property for Town use. D. Hustad asked if there were any anticipated rezoning issues. K. Seward explained that the board was going forward with the assumption of an addition. The property is built on a zero lot line. The addition to the building would exceed those dimensions which would require the Town Board to either get a variance on the existing R1 classification or apply to change the property zoning to C1. D. Hustad wondered if the offer was contingent on that issue. K. Seward reported that he was looking for input from the group on this matter. In addition Seward explained that our current offer only had a contingency on resident and town board approval. Seward noted that he was working with the seller to amend the offer to allow time for the Town to apply for both the addition and the request for a zoning change. In order to accomplish this, the Town's plans would need to go before the Village's Design Committee, The Village's Plan Commission and the Village Board for approval. Judith Blank wondered why the original offer didn't include a provision for rezoning. K. Seward reported that the original offer to purchase did not include the addition to the building. At the last Town Board meeting the Town Board decided that it made more sense to make sure we could add onto the building before purchasing it. The zoning issue became apparent when we started asking questions about the expansion during the Building Inspection process.

D. Sherven asked what the total interest would be on a 20 year note. He was interested because he wanted to know how much his taxes would go up once you added in interest, insurance, utility and other costs. K. Seward explained that if the Town were to borrow the entire \$245,000 added to our existing debt, using an interest rate of 3.05% he estimated that it will cost someone with a \$150,000 home approximately \$12/year.

Bill Haight noted that the utilities on the proposed building seemed high and wanted to know if anything could be done to make the building more efficient? K. Seward stated the \$3,500 included \$1,471 for natural gas, \$1,900 for sewer/water, electric, etc. We used \$4,000 as an estimate to accommodate a little extra costs associated with the addition.

Bob Rudd asked if the offer to purchase would include a contingency that the town would only purchase the property if it passed Village approval of the design and addition requests. Seward confirmed that it certainly was an option. Seward also noted that the offer needed to include a date certain for the purchase. This causes a dilemma because if the Village does not get through the approval process in time, the seller doesn't have a sale. If

we can't get this done in the allowed time, should we purchase the property anyway in hopes that the Village agrees with our applications. K. Seward explained that he would like to get the purchase approved and then tackle the offer to purchase details. C. Narveson cautioned against going into the purchase without a solid contingency in there to address the zoning issue.

Dale Hustad noted that it sounded like the Town Board was just looking for a yes or no decision. He moved to add an amendment adding a contingency that we would only purchase the property if the zoning and addition were approved. Rita Mahoney 2nd. Karen Talarczyk asked if there were any other funds available besides the Parks Sinking Fund. K. Seward confirmed that there were also funds available in our Impact Fee Account and that topic would be covered in the Town Board meeting. In addition, Karen asked if the Town had any other property needs. Keith explained that the Town Garage is in rough shape. He explained that there have been discussions with the Village about a joint garage. We also have looked at land to build a new garage and there is the possibility of demolishing the existing garage and build a new one on the same site. Seward explained that this issue would most likely come up sooner than later. We would be looking at a larger space with outside storage for sand and salt.

Mark Hazelbaker reported that it is more expensive to collocate a town hall with a garage because having a garage attached to the garage it would be a fire hazard. There would need to be a thick wall between the garage and the office with greater ventilation. In the end it makes better sense to have them separate.

A vote was taken by a show of hands, the amendment to the original motion passed 27 in favor, 0 opposed. Resolution 2/10/15 was passed with a hand vote of 27 in favor and 0 opposed.

K. Seward then noted that he needed input into the final closing date. He noted that if we chose the first week in May as the latest closing date as it would give the Town enough time to resubmit plans if the Village turns them down. R. Elkins was concerned that with the closing date so far out the Village may be apt to drag out their approval. C. Narveson respectfully disagreed stating that the Village needs to change the zoning on this and other properties on this block. He felt the Village would be eager to change the zoning to clear up this issue. Without objection, April 1, 2015.

Rita Mahoney reported that she recalled when the Parks/Town Hall Sinking Fund was originated the Parks Commission only wanted 50% of the funds to go toward a Town Hall. C. Narveson noted that the Parks Commission has been contributing approximately 1/3 of their budget each year to this sinking fund. Mahoney was opposed to using more than 50% of the Parks/Town Hall sinking fund for this project. K. Seward noted that there were two sinking funds. One for a park/town hall and the other for community projects such as the library. Karen Talarczyk agreed with Rita in that she was not in favor of using more than 50% of this sinking fund account.

Bill Haight asked if the addition for the building was going to be discussed. K. Seward asked P. McGowan to give an overview of the plan. D. Hustad noted that they only had plans for the outside of the building. K. Seward explained that at this point that is all the Village has required. P. McGowan gave a brief explanation of the expansion.

3) Adjourn: D. Hustad moved to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. R. Elkins 2<sup>nd</sup>. No further discussion. Motion carried.