

DOVER WARRANT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the May 18, 2023 Meeting

Members in attendance: Melissa Herman, Cam Hudson, Gordon Kinder, Sara Cadena Kinney, Janet McCormick, Steve Migausky, Peter Smith, Woody Weiss

Members Absent: Jerry Chen

Others in Attendance: Bob Springett, Board of Selectmen; Ruth Townsend & Ford Spalding, Community Center Building Committee; Chris Boland, Parks & Recreation Committee; Mark Ghiloni, Parks & Recreation Director; Janet Claypool, Council on Aging Director

Location: on-line, via Zoom

Ms. Herman called the meeting to order at 8:02 pm.

Special Town Meeting – Article 1: Community Center Building

Mr. Springett showed slides depicting the Community Center design, which has not changed since it was approved at the 2021 Special Town Meeting. The cost has increased from \$18,850,000 to \$25,443,800. Material costs are still up, labor is scarce, and demand from other projects is high. Estimated borrowing costs assume an interest rate of 3.25%, although a rate closer to 3.00% is likely. He displayed charts showing the annual tax impact on various properties, and the Town's total debt service over the next 20 years. He then showed the added debt service cost of borrowing \$10 million for the acquisition of a conservation easement on Hale.

The Selectmen's plan if the additional Community Center funding is rejected is to design a scaled-back building that can be built with the funds already approved. Asked if delaying might result in lower costs, Mr. Springett noted that re-bidding in itself adds to the costs of doing nothing. Asked why the Town only received two bids, Mr. Springett said that builders are very busy right now; he was pleased that the two who did bid have excellent reputations.

Special Town Meeting – Article 2: Community Center Recreation Spaces

Mr. Boland said that citizen feedback to the building committee clearly wanted the outdoor recreation spaces at the old Caryl – especially the swing set and hard court – replicated at the new Community Center. His committee recommended that these be included in funding for Article 1, but the Selectmen chose to make it a separate article. Annual debt service cost per household would be negligible. Asked whether these could be built at a later time, Mr. Spalding said that owing to drainage issue with an abutting property they need to be part of the initial design and would probably cost more as an add-on. Mr. Boland noted that even if Article 1 is voted down, these items might still be able to fit within a scaled-back project, so the article should still go forward. A swimming pool was rejected at the 2021 Town Meeting, but still has proponents. Mr. Ghiloni said that the initial cost would be on the order of another \$2 million, and would entail significant operating costs. Mr. Spalding noted that in our climate, only an indoor pool makes sense; the Regional Schools would be a better location than the center of town. Asked about the on-going costs the Town is incurring while Caryl is unused, Mr. Ghiloni said that Park & Rec has spent about \$25,000 renting space elsewhere, plus the cost of heating Caryl. Ms. Claypool said that the Council on Aging has spent about \$12,000 on space rentals.

Other Business

The Committee discussed whether or not we should make a formal recommendation on these articles. The decision was deferred until after all members have attended at least one of the two presentations.

Mr. Kinder moved that the minutes of April 26 be approved, seconded by Mr. Hudson. The motion carried 8-0-0.

Ms. Kinney attended both meet-and-greets with the finalists for Town Administrator and was impressed with both of them. Mr. Hudson recommended that those who did not attend should watch the last Board of Selectmen's meeting, where the candidates appear.

There being no further business a motion was made to adjourn, seconded by unanimous proclamation. The meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Smith, Secretary