Dunbarton Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2019
7:00 P.M.

A meeting of the Dunbarton Board of Selectmen (BoS) was held on Thursday, January 24th at 7 p.m. at the Dunbarton Town Offices.

Mike Kaminski called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Board members present:
Mike Kaminski, Chairman
Dave Nault, Selectman
Robert “Bob” Martel, Selectman

Town Officials and others present:
Line Comeau, Town Administrator
Jennifer King, Recording Secretary
Sgt. Christopher Remillard, Dunbarton Police Department
Chief Dan Sklut, Dunbarton Police Department
Dana Lavoie, Energy Committee Chair
John Stevens, Energy Committee
Steve Lawrence of Pro Technologies
Eric of Granite State Solar

Several members of the public were present, including Phil Kimball, Joyce Murray, Fred Mullen, John Riggers.

Leo Martel was present recording the meeting for the benefit of the citizens who could not attend.

OLD BUSINESS
Approve Minutes
Motion: by Bob Martel, seconded by Dave Nault to approve the regular meeting minutes of January 17th, 2019 as amended.
Discussion: none.
Vote: (3-0).

Motion: by Dave Nault, seconded by Bob Martel to approve the nonpublic meeting minutes of January 17th, 2019 as amended.
Discussion: none.
Vote: (3-0).

PUBLIC COMMENT
None.
AGENDA ITEMS

Security Services

Steve Lawrence from Pro Technologies joined the BoS to discuss the town’s security systems. He has looked at what we have and noted that it is a quality system. They could reprogram the system, and it would be monitored 24/7. The difficulty is that the previous alarm company has installed codes on the current system. They attempted numerous codes in the system but could not gain access. The codes are installed to protect the data of the customer. They could reset and reprogram the system, which would also be costly. Pro Technologies will install a code, but that code would be known to the town. There were two estimates provided. The cost to replace the security panels so that they can have access to the system would cost about $350 each if needed. Dave Nault asked about the amount for yearly monitoring of the system. Mr. Lawrence replied that the cost is $1,315.80 annually. Line Comeau noted that it would be an $88 savings over what they currently have.

PUBLIC FORUM ON GROUND MOUNT SOLAR FARM

Mike Kaminski opened the forum at 7:17 p.m.

Dana Lavoie explained the goal of the solar project, stating that they identified the Transfer Station as the ideal location for the installation of the system. The installation would be this year, and the design of the system would last 30 years. The proposal is designed with no upfront cost to the town, and the payback is significant. They are looking at 156 panels. Energy produced would total approximately 79,000 kwh per year. Total consumption is approximately 73,000, so they would overproduce, which allows them to take advantage of payback from the utility company. Their electrical usage offset would be 108%.

Electricity costs are currently $10,000 annually. Initial costs for the system are $0. In years 1-6, there would be a monthly payment of $815, which is basically a lease payment. Their monthly savings on their Eversource bills would be $849 per month. If Eversource rates go up, that savings will increase. At the end of 6 years, they have the option to purchase the array in the amount of $50,000. From that point on, Dunbarton would own the array. The energy produced belongs to the town.

The state provides a rebate through a renewable energy fund which would amount to $18,408. As a municipality, they cannot access this rebate. Granite State Solar has the ability to access tax credits, rebates and accelerated depreciation, which they can then pass on to the town.

The project and its results have the support of the BoS, the Transfer Station and the Forest Committee.
Phil Kimball noted that some parts of state government have been trying to limit the amount of solar power produced and used in the state. Erik Shifflett, Co-Owner of Granite State Solar answered that there are some limits on certain projects, but theirs falls below those limits. Fred Mullen asked if there would be a loss of efficiency over the years. Mr. Lavoie said that it would be minimal, and that 87% production is the guarantee after year 25. Mr. Shifflett added that they shouldn’t see quite that level of decline because as we have a good environment in this area, with limited pollution. Snow doesn’t damage the panels, and they set them at a pitch that allows them to clear rapidly.

Mike Kaminski asked if the trim is black. Mr. Shifflett answered that they are a silver trim but will still have the same effects as far as clearing snow.

Pete Weeks noted the work to be done at the town hall and asked if the power output had been considered for that project if approved. Dana responded that the overall ROI is irrespective of any additional power needs; It doesn’t change.

Leo Martel asked if they could add on to the system if they found we needed to. Erik Shifflett answered yes, though this proposal was designed to fit behind the burn pit. If the pit were moved, that would provide more room for an additional array. He noted that if they go above 100K watts, there are different state regulations that come into play, but there is definitely room for a 3rd row.

Joyce Murray stated that she is happy to see this proposal and is proud that their town might vote to move with others in using renewable energy.

Heidi Costanzo asked what maintenance costs would be during the 1st 6 years and beyond? Mr. Shifflett answered that they do not sell a maintenance plan, as one really isn’t needed. If there is a failure, it would be more of a warranty issue. The rain cleans them, the only required maintenance would be keeping the grass maintained around the array.

Mike Kaminski asked who monitors the output of the system. Mr. Shifflett answered that they install a monitoring system and would provide the town with the access to do the monitoring on their own. They can set up alerts to be sent to people if there is a major problem. Bob Martel mentioned that if they decide they want to purchase at year 7, they would look into doing a warrant spread out over several years to accumulate the funds. Dave Nault added that they wanted to bring the public’s attention to the project and the savings involved. After they have a full year in place, then they would look at presenting the voters with a warrant article for a small amount each year to save up for the purchase. Mr. Nault also noted that this project initially wasn’t one that they were confident about being approved by the public, but with the opportunity they have here, it is an option they need to pursue. Regardless of whether or not they purchase the system, it is still saving the town money. Bob Ray said that they could take the
surplus energy income and put it toward that eventual purchase, which would minimize the amount that would come out of the budget.

Eric Shifflett explained that this plan is fixed. They know they can cover the cost of their loan on that equipment. The savings start out neutral or cash flow positive, but that will increase over the years. Making the decision to purchase is in the best interest of the town. Granite State Solar can monetize the federal tax credit, write it off as a depreciating asset, and pass that along to the town.

John Riggers said that he is also glad that Dunbarton is doing this. He is curious as to why they would not be investing in the moving or tracking panels that could adjust. Asked why not the moving or tracking kind? Dana Lavoie explained that the fixed system is cheaper. A tracking system adds maintenance costs because there are motors involved. Eric Shifflett added that the tracking panels have a specific installation requirement. The installation site they’ve chosen would not work with a tracking system, as they would need more space with less shade.

John: curious about choice of location. Asked about security concerns. Dana: There needed to be a level piece of land facing south few trees in order to accommodate the two arrays. They are not overly concerned about security in this location.

Fred Mullen asked if the Fire Department would need to know how to shut the system down if necessary. Mr. Shifflett answered that there will be a shutdown point on one of the transfer station buildings and explained that there is little danger of fire and there are no hazardous or toxic materials involved.

Dave Nault asked if there would be any problem there any problem with recycling/disposing of them after using them for 30 years or so? Mr. Shifflett said that there is a market developing for older panels as this technology ages.

Heidi Costanzo asked if there are any concerns regarding the panels clouding. She had experienced this with some panels that she had and was curious if these would be prone to the same problem. Mr. Shifflett replied that the passive panels she had is a very different type of system, and clouding is not an issue for the system the town is looking at.

Leo Martel expressed that he is on board with this project. Mike Kaminski asked for a show of hands to get a general idea of the level of support for the project. Everyone in the room raised their hand in support.

Dave Nault asked if they were to add a 3rd row of panels, if they would be able to lease it or would they have to purchase it? Mr. Shifflett answered that he doesn’t see a problem with leasing the 3rd row, but they would requote at that time.
Heidi Costanzo asked why they chose a ground mount system. Mike Kaminski answered that it was brought before the voters about 4 years ago. There were concerns with the roof conditions, and if they would withstand the weight of the panels. Also, they are in a historic district, and didn’t really want to detract from that.

Jan mentioned that they have panels at home and she is curious about what would happen if an animal nested in the system or chewed through a wire. Mr. Shifflett confirmed power would only be affected for that one panel. They would be less likely to see a squirrel building a nest behind a ground mounted panel.

The public hearing closed at 8:05 p.m.

Linda Landry, 2019 Budget Discussion

Linda Landry thanked the BoS for putting her on the agenda for tonight. She wanted to speak to the decision made by the BoS regarding the request for increased hours for the Deputy Town Clerk. She thanks them for their consistent effort at being fiscally responsible for the taxpayers. When she presented her budget, she thought she had communicated her need for the increase in hours effectively. She gave a brief history of how this position has been staffed. She has spent years and years being understaffed/having no staff. Hope Arce is Linda’s 11th deputy in 22 years. Ms. Landry presented the BoS with the RSA that mentions Deputy Town Clerks. It states that the deputy performs all the duties of the Town Clerk in case of their absence. The training for this position is working one on one with the Town Clerk. It takes at least a year to get someone up to speed. She has spent half her career with the town training a deputy. There is a lot more to the job than motor vehicle registrations, but that is how most of Hope’s time is spent. In December, they had to turn away a resident that had come in for a marriage license because Linda was not present, and Hope was not experienced with the procedure for issuing the license, so the resident went elsewhere for the license.

Part of what the deputy does is not just waiting on people at the counter, it’s a lot more than that. It’s not just about the dollars, but she thought that with only one election in 2019 it would be an opportune time to increase the deputy line. Having a qualified deputy is not a convenience, it’s a necessity. If something were to happen to her, it is imperative that there is someone that would be able to step in and cover her duties. She is asking the BoS to invest in Dunbarton’s future by investing in Hope Arce as their Deputy Town Clerk.

Bob Martel noted that he has been to the office a few times and Hope has been there by herself. He said that he was hoping for a real number in regard to the time needed. Linda said that they are limited on who they can pull from a small time.
Mike Kaminski said that they want to see how this goes for a full year before they increase the hours. She has never had the help of a deputy for a full year before. Linda Landry said that if she is going to have Hope for 12 hours, that time is going to be filled with vehicle registrations and not training. The RSA specifically states that a deputy needs to be able to perform the duties of the town clerk, but she doesn’t have enough time to train Hope adequately.

Dave Nault feels they’ve been pretty flexible when it comes to making sure they provide the town departments with what they need to function. He pointed to the additional funds they gave her in lieu of the hours.

Linda Landry said that if she is going to have Hope for 12 hours, that time is going to be filled with vehicle registrations and not training. The RSA specifically states that a deputy needs to be able to perform the duties of the town clerk, but she doesn’t have enough time to train Hope adequately.

General discussion took place regarding the duties pertaining to the role of Town Clerk.

Bob Martel feels this gives Ms. Landry a year to put together an educated evaluation of what she is going to need for additional hours for this position. Dave Nault added that they did give her budget additional money that could help with additional time for training. He sees the amount of transactions going through her office, and he understands that there is an increase.

Ms. Landry noted that she was not notified that her budget was decreased. She happened upon this information and feels that she should have been told about the change.

Mike Kaminski applauds Linda for making the case for her department and thanked her for sitting with them to discuss the issue.

Budget Changes Review

Mike Kaminski referred to the transfer station equipment breakdown and request of additional funds in the transfer station budget. Bob Martel said that the transfer station supervisor is able to move the money around in his budget, and he does not see the need to increase the budget in this situation.

- BoS is in consensus to not increase the transfer station maintenance line. The manager should use the money within the current maintenance line and return to the BOS if other funding problems arise.

Line Comeau pointed out a decrease in what they had for excess revenue. That total is now $300,012. $45K is lapsing to the general fund. Budget hearing is scheduled for the 7th.
**Line Comeau** has been approached by a resident of the town who is a veteran of the armed forces. He has a request to put an article on the warrant pertaining to the adoption of the ‘All veterans’ property tax credit’ under RSA 72:28-b. It is her job to ensure that the warrant article is written properly, and she is presenting this petitioned warrant to the BoS.

**Line Comeau** is filling out the paperwork required to be posted with the warrant. The draft is nearly complete, and it needs to be reviewed by the DRA, she is awaiting the DRA review and comments. The current warrant follows the template the Department of Revenue uses.

- The BoS in consensus to keep the format of the warrant the same.

**TOWN BUSINESS**

**Mailbox Items**

**Dave Nault** shared that several departments teamed up to present a plaque to Ed White for his years of service to the town on various committees and departments.

- BoS is in consensus to authorize the Town Administrator to cut the checks from the Conservation Commission as well as the Kuncanowet Town Forest and Conservation Area committee to pay for their shares of the plaque.

**Mike Kaminski** signed an agreement drawn up via their attorney regarding utilities.

Everett Road Extension. **Mike Kaminski** presented the guidelines they developed for the Everett Road Extension. **Line Comeau** will reach out to Geoffrey Moody to inform him that they are completed and have them included on file.

- BoS was in consensus regarding the selectmen’s message for the town report.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Fred Mullen** complimented the BoS on the way they work together and compromise to get things done.

**BOARD MEMBER ISSUES**

**Mike Kaminski** commends Chief Sklut on the Police Department response to the gunshot issue on Overlook Road.

**Mike Kaminski** thinks their lawyer was astute that they are looking at additional legal fees if they decide to pursue legal action against All-Star Security. The town attorney tried to speak with All-Star, but the company owner was very abrasive.
Motion: by Dave Nault, seconded by Bob Martel to hire Pro Technologies to reprogram all of their security devices within the town buildings in the amount of $1209.44.  

Discussion: Bob Martel noted that the owner of All-Star has been very difficult to communicate with. Dave Nault agrees and cited lack of support from All-Star Security as well. Mike Kaminski spoke to the lack of consistency All-Star’s billing practices.  

Vote: 3-0.

- The BoS is in consensus to move forward with the Solar Project. The Energy Committee did a great job in researching and putting the project together as well as presenting it. The BoS is ready to sign a contract at the next meeting.

Line Comeau noted a letter received from one of the plow drivers addressing a concern.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: by Dave Nault, seconded by Mike Kaminski to adjourn the meeting. 

Vote: 3-0.

The BoS adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Jennifer King, Recording Secretary

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Mike Kaminski, Chair

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Dave Nault, Selectman

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Bob Martel, Selectman