

Town of Panton
Town Meeting
Tuesday, September 22, 2009
6:00 p.m. – Panton Town Offices

Board:

Eric Carter
Beth Tarallo
John Viskup

Administration:

Sue Torrey
Bill Clark - Moderator

Guests:

Sharon Ashcraft Barb Fleming
Joe Kuhn Ruth Kuhn
Gary Norton Bill Polk
Kevin Sullivan

Call to Order: Moderator Bill Clark called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and explained that the meeting was for discussion only as no Articles were warned. He then turned the floor over to Beth Tarallo for an overview of the grant project.

Beth Tarallo explained that there is an opportunity to obtain funding for town hall repairs/improvements through a Transportation Enhancement Grant. The grant is available to towns to fund alternative transportation projects i.e. walkways, bikeways, etc. There are approximately 12 available activities in the approved categories one being a Welcome/Visitor Center. Under consideration is opening either the upstairs or downstairs to the public for a visitor center/welcome center which will then make us eligible for grant funding for some of the improvements needed for the building. The grants available are for projects between \$10,000 and \$300,000 and there are stipulations that must be met. Certain improvements i.e. bathroom upgrade, septic, welcome/historical display would be eligible but the town would be responsible for 20%. Whatever isn't eligible would be at 100%, i.e. the roof, etc. John Viskup commented that the town hall has been neglected for years and should be a priority before it falls down. He added that the Board has expended a great deal of time trying to obtain funding and is disappointed at the reaction of the State of Vermont AOT. John explained that the initial funding request was for approximately \$500,000 which is a great deal of money and there doesn't appear to be any other funding available. Beth explained that there are guidelines for a visitor center; must be open Memorial Day to Labor Day four days a week and the last week in September to Columbus Day. She added that the project is more likely to be funded if the visitor center were staffed. John commented that the town couldn't afford it and a comment was made that perhaps it could be a volunteer. Beth advised that the application is due October 13th with a decision being made by the end of March 2010. Work cannot commence until approximately 2011 or later. John Viskup commented that the first application was rejected without even a letter of explanation and today AOT notifies us that for the town to be eligible for funding the visitor center must be located in the town office which is unacceptable as it would disrupt town business. Beth explained that the visitor center must be visible when someone walks in and if it were upstairs it must be staffed to be eligible for funding. Eric Carter commented that the grant seems tenuous at this point but it's better to know now what the town is up against. John Viskup expressed dismay that the rules keep changing as time goes on.

The meeting was opened for questions. Joe Kuhn asked the Board to go forward with the application. Eric Carter stated the money is allocated to benefit transportation in Vermont and our way in to fix our town hall is to open a visitor center. He added that this isn't a grant to fix old buildings or a grant for historical restoration so therefore there are stipulations. Sharon Ashcraft commented that in her experience grants must be well written to even be considered. Joe Kuhn asked about pursuing the roof repair without grant funding and John replied that it will be discussed at town meeting in March. Sue Torrey commented that she would like the town to have a plan for maintaining the hall to prevent future maintenance issues.

It was agreed this should occur and certainly should have been considered in the past at budget time each year. John Viskup commented that it is hoped the hall will become a community center to enable town functions.

Beth explained that this meeting is a requirement of the grant and that it's important to receive feedback from the town on whether to proceed with the grant application. Sharon Ashcraft offered her assistance in writing the grant for the town and will work with Beth. Bill Clark called for a straw vote and it was unanimous for the town to go forward with the grant application. Eric Carter expressed concern about going forward with the application as AOT seems to be saying we don't have much of a chance. Beth agreed that the information is not as positive as originally thought. Eric questioned if the town was willing to do what it takes and staff the center during the timeframe required. Joe Kuhn advised Beth to stop her efforts if it becomes too much. Beth commented that Addison County Regional Planning is supporting Pantton and has written a letter a letter of support to be included in our application.

Discussion ensued on hiring a high school student to staff the center during the summer and perhaps it could be incorporated into their academic requirements. It was mentioned that this may be added incentive for the grant to be funded. Joe Kuhn expressed his appreciation for all the effort put forth by the Board in pursuing the grant.

Bill Clark called for adjournment and Joe Kuhn so moved. Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Chair John Viskup reconvened the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m. to open and review the bids submitted for the 1999 Dump Truck. Bids were as follows:

Salisbury Fire Department	\$10,000
Parker Excavating	\$10,500
Champlain Construction	\$13,000
Lewis Excavating	\$ 9,880
Tom Miner	\$ 8,500

Motion by John Viskup to accept Champlain Construction's bid of \$13,000. seconded by Eric Carter. So voted. Motion by Eric Carter to accept Parker Excavation's bid in the event of a problem with Champlain Construction. John Viskup seconded the motion. So voted.

Chair Viskup adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully,

Susan F Torrey
Clerk