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**TOWN OF CROMWELL
ATHLETIC FIELD COMMITTEE
TOWN HALL
41 WEST STREET, CROMWELL, CT 06416**

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 10th, 2023
Room 219**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Ferrarese at 6:05 pm.

Roll Call:

Present: Mr. Guyon, Mr. Brisson, Mrs. Russ, Mr. Ferrarese, Mr. LeBlanc, Mr. Zabroski, Ms. Maher, Mrs. Franklin

Absent: Alternate Mr. Vinchetti

II. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Motion to approve minutes from previous meeting Motion: Mrs. Russ. 2nd Mr. Zabrowski. All in favor minus 2 Abstentions (Mrs. Franklin & Ms. Maher). Motion Carried.

At our last meeting, we discussed the following as potential meeting dates for 2024 but did not vote to approve:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
01/10/2024	Room 219	6:00pm
02/07/2024	Room 219	7:00pm
03/06/2024	Room 219	7:00pm
04/03/2024	Room 219	7:00pm
05/01/2024	Room 219	7:00pm
06/05/2024	Room 219	7:00pm
06/26/2024	Room 219	7:00pm
08/07/2024	Room 219	7:00pm
09/04/2024	Room 219	7:00pm
10/02/2024	Room 219	7:00pm
11/06/2024	Room 219	7:00pm
12/04/2024	Room 219	7:00pm

Motion to Approve the 2024 AFC meeting dates as listed: Mr. Zabrowski 2nd : Mr. Guyon. All in favor. Motion Carried

III. Updates

a. AFC/Town Staff working meeting on 1/9

Mr. LeBlanc and Mr. Ferrarese met with Town Manager Mr. Salvatore, Town Engineer Mr. Harriman and Finance Director Mrs. Devoe to discuss several topics including, project status, project planning and impact, and AFC charter and working expectations. The bulk of the meeting was spent on status and planning with a few minutes spent on AFC charter. Details from this meeting are listed below in the relevant topics.

b. **Project Status:**

The project is still going through Planning & Zoning. At the previous P&Z meeting, the commission had requested additional information. Mr. Harriman has requested that information from CHA and if he gets it in time, he'll return to the P&Z meeting on 1/17 for final approval. After that CHA needs to submit final plans and budget estimate which would then be brought to the Town Council.

c. **Committee Charter and Working Expectations**

At the last meeting the committee roles and responsibilities were discussed. When the committee was created a formal charter and working expectations was not created. The committee was asked to submit a preliminary memorandum of a proposed charter and working expectations to the Mayor and Town manager for review. The AFC submitted a preliminary draft via email and then per the Mayor's direction, had a meeting with the Town manager on 1/9/24 to discuss this. It was briefly discussed at the end of the 1/9 working meeting. A final draft was sent to the Mayor and Town Manager on 1/10 for review. ideally the charter can be ratified by the town council at the next meeting.

d. **Committee Email**

At the last meeting the committee discussed ways to improve communication amongst members as well as the other groups in town. The AFC created a single email address for the committee, CromwellAthleticCommittee@gmail.com. All AFC communication will come from this email going forward.

d. **During the working meeting on 1/9, meeting members discussed the impact of this project (and others) to the town's bond rating and MIL rate. The town currently enjoys a AAA bond rating. It is not certain if adding this project, and others could have an impact to the bond rating but Mrs. Devoe, the Finance director is looking into it. Additionally, implementing this project, could impact the town's MIL rate and the Finance Director is looking into that as well.**

e. **The AFC formally invited the Town Council for a site visit to review current issues and discuss the proposed solution. Pending response from the Town Council.**

IV. General Discussion

i. **Project Planning**

As part of the working meeting with the Town manager and Town engineer on 1/9, the group discussed next steps. Given the cost of the project (estimated between \$7.5M - \$8.5M) it is required by town statute to go to a referendum. The tentative timeline of events to get to a referendum were outlined as follows:

1/17	P&Z approval
2/13	Town Council submittal
2/29	Board of Finance review
3/13	Town Council final review
3/20	Town Clerk submittal of referendum to State
5/4	Referendum

NOTE: These dates are all tentative. Any delays in any of the steps would push the timeline out.

The AFC discussed these dates and potential impacts if it is delayed i.e. it is not good to have a referendum in the summer when many people are on vacation so if not in May , then the fall would be better.

The AFC also discussed the merits of coupling the Project Referendum with the Budget referendum to aide in turnout and possibly save on referendum costs.

Next, the AFC discussed splitting the project into smaller phases. The logical separation would be Tennis Courts, Parking lot, and Track and Field. After a short discussion the group determined that doing so would most likely increase the project costs due to added logistics, increase the number of meetings and approvals needed to implement the projects, and increase the timeline and interruptions to the High School and surrounding areas. Based on this the group would not recommend proceeding in that manner.

Additionally, the AFC discussed the preliminary FAQ list that was created since the last meeting. The purpose of the FAQ list is to estimate what questions would be asked about the project and prepare response to them. The group has an action to start collecting answers to these questions in time for public discussion and to post them to the website.

Finally the group discussed the impact of this project and others on the Town's Bond rate and MIL rate. There are mechanics involved with how this would impact the bond rate that the group was not clear on and took an action to follow up with Mrs. Devoe to get a better understanding of it. As it stands, Mrs. Devoe is currently working to understand the impact to the MIL rate of this project and others.

Lastly, the AFC discussed the one of the drivers for the project; NEASC accreditation. NEASC is the regulatory body that certifies the schools for accreditation and part of its requirements is that the schools provide suitable playing facilities for it's students. In the event the school cannot provide these facilities, NEASC can revoke it's accreditation which could be problematic for graduating seniors. As long as the schools are showing progress in addressing any known issues, NEASC will work with the school as they continue their efforts. The HS is expecting an audit this October.

- ii. Sub Committees: At our last meeting, and per the Mayor's suggestion, we discussed creating sub committees in order to better accomplish our goals going forward. The following committees were settled upon with the sub-committee members as follows:
 - A. Fundraising/Grant Sub Committee:
 - a. Members, Mrs. Franklin, Mrs. Russ, Mr. Guyon.
 - b. Purpose: The purpose of this sub-committee is to work with the town to help find alternate methods of funding, whether grants or fundraising to offset the project costs.
 - B. Communications Sub Committee:
 - a. Members: Mr. LeBlanc, Mr. Zabrowski
 - b. Purpose: The purpose of this sub-committee is to streamline the communication efforts of the AFC, develop materials to help communicate to the public about the project, and work to get the message out.
 - C. Technical Review Sub Committee:
 - a. Members: Mr. Brisson, Ms. Maher, Mr. LeBlanc
 - b. Purpose: The purpose of this sub-committee is to develop the base requirements for the project, create a compliance matrix to list all requirements and work with the town staff to ensure that any proposal meets those requirements and any project ultimately meets those requirements.

Motion to approve the creation of the listed Sub-Committees and appoint members to those committees: Mrs. Russ 2nd Mrs. Franklin. All in Favor. Motion Carried (6:52PM)

V. Actions

Actions from the meeting as follows:

1. Understand rules/protocol on working Sub-Committees
2. Follow up with Finance Director on Bonding
3. Finalize FAQ
4. Begin work on informational presentation for public
5. Begin work on information website for public
6. Finalize site visit with Town Council
7. Finalize AFC Charter and Working Expectations
8. Looking into funding opportunities

VI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Mrs. Franklin, 2nd by Mr. Zabrowski. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason LeBlanc

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