

Special Town Meeting – March 11, 2019
Minutes

Meeting called to order by Mayor Enzo Faienza at 6:31 p.m.

Motion to nominate the Mayor as Moderator by Dick Newton, seconded by Charles Epstein.

Motion passed for Mayor Enzo Faienza as moderator.

Motion was made to waive the call of the meeting by Dick Newton, seconded by Al Waters.

Motion passed to waive the call of the meeting.

Introductions were made by moderator to acknowledge members of Town Council, Town staff, D'Amato Construction and Bond agent who were present.

Moderator introduced the first speaker, Town Engineer, Jon Harriman. Jon gave a brief history of the project which included a slide show. He explained that the project started with a 2002 study by Robert Jahn, former public works director, of the public works, building maintenance, highway department and sewer garage that had already been outgrown and lacking adequate space. A more formal study was done in 2004 by Oak Park Architects, combining all facilities with a 63,000 square foot facility costing 9.58 million dollars. This did not move forward. In 2012, CWPCA approached this again to consider joining together. At this time the water department had their own space. In 2013, Evergreen Road was considered that location did not pass. In 2014, a new study was done by Silver Petrucelli Architects for a 39,000 square foot facility, but we did not have a parcel of land that was adequate. In 2016, the Town received a STEAP grant to widen and improve County Line Drive. In 2018, the Town swapped a parcel of land to enlarge 100 County Line Drive, land now large enough to work with. A RFQ/RFP for design –build services yielded 4 bids and decided on D'Amato Construction, the low bidder. Jon showed a slide presentation of current buildings, interior, exterior, equipment, outside material storage, gas fuel storage. Pointed out that in any of these buildings there is no accommodations for female staff. Jon showed new building slides showing the parcel of land at 100 County Line Drive. Jon explained difficulty is relocating the transfer station. Project is \$179 per square foot, certified wages push public works project higher in cost, total construction will be \$6.94 million dollars.

Moderator introduced Finance Director Marianne Sylvester as next speaker. Marianne explained the impact for financing this project and our current debt profile. There will be a drop off starting with fiscal year 2022 because our current debt will drop off and a more dramatic drop off in 2024. Slides showed a graph of our future debt. The impact on the mill rate will also be lessened due to current economic progress in town. Our AAA rating allows us to borrow at a lower interest rate. We will be borrowing \$7.5 million dollars with payments starting in 2022.

Moderator introduced D'Amato Construction to speak. Anthony D'Amato gave an overview of their company and introduced his team. They are a 3rd generation family owned company from Bristol, CT with a 50 full time labor force. Company began in 1961. Slides showed samples of other projects for municipalities.

Public Comments:

Gaia McDermott, 28 Valley Run Drive: Asked if there is a guarantee for the project to be on time and on budget? D'Amato Construction and Jon Harriman answered. The formal contract is the guaranty.

Meredith Avallone, 50 Washington Road: Asked what happens to the transfer station while this is being built and will there be any green energy considered? Jon Harriman answered. Public Works will relocate the transfer station while the new one is being built. Green energy will consist of all LED lighting, natural gas, radiant cement floor. Also incentives and programs with Eversource will be considered.

Sharon Shuford, 7 Alexander Drive: Asked is there protection against overruns? Jon Harriman answered. We have \$845,400 in contingency plan. D'Amato will honor the contract unless changes are done by the Town. A Contingency is required for Public Works projects.

Peter Tomczak, 14 Greendale Avenue: Would like to see itemized lists for furniture, etc. We should know where the money is spent. Jon Harriman answered. Standard estimate is itemized.

March Young, 4 River Park Drive: The Town is the customer so we need a project manager to be on top of D'Amato Construction. Feels we need one person dedicated to the project. Jon Harriman answered. The project will be overseen by the Town Engineer, himself, and the Public Works Director Lou Spina. It will also include a Clerk of the Works.

Steve Bulmer, 18 Ranney Street: Asked if the site is suitable for this project? Mayor Faienza answered. The site work is on Town property and is all suitable for the project. Going back to 2013 and 2014, other locations weren't right. The latest study done by the Town Council chose this site as the ideal property.

Diane Wiegert, 79 Geer Street: Asked at what point does this effect taxes? Finance Director Marianne answered. The timing of the project is such that the debt comes down when this one comes in. 2 factors are the drop off in debt and the economic growth in town. Possibly 1/3 or 4/10 of a mill.

Rich Waters, 84 South Street: Is there a late penalty if the project is not completed on time? Mayor Faienza answered. The normal standards are in the contract. D'Amato Construction added that we have 18 months to complete and doesn't see any issue for completion, but yes penalties may apply. Mr. Waters was told that the facility would be too small. Mayor and Jon Harriman answered. Many studies were done, everything will fit inside and outside with actual expansion that could occur 10-15 years from now. Plans were done by an architect. Old buildings totaled 18,668 square feet, new buildings will be 38,732. Question was can it lift a tri-axle? Answer yes.

Tony Varricchio, 6 Kowal Drive: Positive comments. Great to come up with a plan and keep all our facilities together. We have the right people on hand to do the job. Great location and hopes the project goes through.

Meredith Avallone, 50 Washington Street: She appreciates all the information. Is there a study for the benefits of bringing the departments all together? What is the economic benefit or savings? What is the means to communicate to the voters the referendum? The Mayor answered that this way all the equipment will be properly stored and cared for which brings longevity to the equipment. Mayor Faienza answered the referendum information will be on the website, a legal notice published and social media.

James Demetriades, 7 Bonnie Briar: What happens if the project fails? Mayor Faienza answered. DEEP will dictate that we make many changes any way, major fixes will have to be done. Significant money will be spent. We would have to take some of the football field for space. Our facility is not close to what it should be and what other towns have. This is a need not a want for our future.

Rich Waters, 84 South Street: Asked who's going to maintain the new facility? Mayor Faienza and Lou Spina answered. Daily maintenance will be evaluated; it will be cleaned and maintained by staff. Mr. Waters stated that Wethersfield leaves their equipment outside. Mayor said, we are Cromwell and the proposal is for the voters.

Al Waters, 86 South Street: Spoke in favor of the project. The wash bays will save money. Old buildings were built on dump sites. This is a worthy cause.

Lorraine Young, 4 River Park Drive: Asked if the roof was flat and would it hold snow? What is the life of the building? D'Amato Construction answered. Roof is rated for snow, per building code and is good for 25 years, the building forever.

Steve Bulmer, 18 Ranney Street: Thank you for the project, feels appropriate. He hopes the tech world will be involved and can save pennies here and there.

Olga Gorey, 22 West Street: Asked what will the mill rate be? Mayor answered. Thank you for addressing it, was talked about with the Finance Director.

Andrew Holt, 8 Wildwood Road: Is there anything you can take out and reuse from the old buildings? Mayor Faienza answered. The salt shed and mechanics garage may be moved. We will evaluate the old buildings. Possible use for new programs like the art district project. The Town Council will look at everything.

Sharon Shuford, 7 Alexander Drive: What are you doing with the old buildings? Town Manager answered. The Town Council will make recommendations for use of the 3 remaining structures.

Moderator asked if there were any more questions or comments. Hearing none, a motion was made for a referendum to be held Wednesday March 20, 2019, hours from noon to 8:00 p.m.

Edwin Maley, 4 Shawnee Court: Asked why the referendum is a Wednesday and not the usual Tuesday. Mayor explained the only reason is the availability of the high school.

Motion to accept the referendum was made by Al Waters. Seconded by James Demetriades. No further discussion. Vote was taken, one vote against made by Rich Waters.

Motion carries.

Motion to adjourn made by Dick Newton. Seconded by Alice Kelly. Meeting adjourned 7:58 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joan Ahlquist". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end.

Joan Ahlquist, CTCA
Cromwell Town Clerk

Dated this 14th day of March, 2019