

TOWN OF BEDFORD
August 3, 2019
STEVENS-BUSWELL SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Stevens-Buswell Subcommittee was held on Saturday, August 3, 2019 at the Inside Scoop, 260 Wallace Road, Bedford, NH. Present were: Town Councilors Denise Ricciardi, Catherine Rombeau and Melissa Stevens. Also present: residents and Friends of the Stevens-Buswell Community Center (SBCC) volunteers Dee Caron, Beverly Thomas (Co-Chair), Gwen Brodeur, Joyce Kasiaras, and Jerry Hanauer.

Ms. Rombeau called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

The Town Councilors present expressed to attending residents the intent to use this initial subcommittee meeting as an opportunity to address scheduling, timeframes and goals for reaching agreement with Town Council as to plan for SBCC going forward.

The Town Councilors also expressed the need for additional information to guide this process. Ms. Thomas agreed to pursue an estimate for finishing the exterior of the SB building. Ms. Ricciardi raised the issue of the failed septic system, and the parties agreed that an estimate for repairing the septic system/leach field is also needed. The Town Councilors will discuss with Town Manager Rick Sawyer any helpful input to be gathered from the Town's attorney with regard to how other municipalities work with non-profit lease arrangements.

Ms. Stevens raised the possibility of introducing a budget item at Town Meeting for funding purposes and encouraging turnout to support passage, in order to get the SBH doors open more quickly, but that strategy was also not without its risks and challenges, and could backfire.

Ms. Thomas discussed the Friends' plans (to this point in conjunction with Bedford Historical Society ("BHS")) for fundraising. Ms. Brodeur indicated that a grant has funded interior fire doors and ADA-compliant bathroom. Ms. Ricciardi noted that over \$400k has been raised over the past nine years, and inquired how at least half of that would be raised in the next two years. Ms. Stevens wondered if SBCC would be able to cover remaining renovation and subsequent operating costs if town covered HVAC installation and leach field repair costs.

Mr. Hanauer introduced the desire to create a 501(c)(3) non-profit for the Friends to encourage donations. While the BHS is a non-profit, its mission is obviously broader than just the SBCC.

Ms. Brodeur asked about the possibility of a "starter" lease for two or five years to focus on fundraising.

Ms. Stevens raised the idea of whether any of SB could be used as Town office space if needed. She also stated that many people already donated to preserve and use this building, not to sell or destroy it, and we don't want to throw it away.

Mr. Hanauer expanded on the discussion of a 501(c)(3) formation, to satisfy the need for professional fundraising experience, professional construction management. He suggested (1) a memorandum of understanding for benchmarking fund-raising goals before entering back into a lease with the Town; (2) upon formation of a 501(c)(3), entering into a two-year lease to meet

first fundraising targets; (3) if those targets are met, then entering another two-year lease; and (4) the ultimate goal being a long-term lease after meeting series of targets.

Ms. Stevens and Ms. Ricciardi asked about parking challenges. Ms. Thomas stated that day time won't be as busy, that busier events would be in the evenings, and that Sullivan Framing would make their parking available to SBCC.

Ms. Rombeau asked for scenarios of operating costs, comparing different costs for opening three days per week versus five days.

Ms. Brodeur thought homeschooling families and groups would use the space.

Ms. Stevens thought the Parks and Rec Manager might be able to move her office into the S-B building once completed.

Ms. Ricciardi suggested the BHS and/or to-be-formed 501(c)(3) start hosting "pop-up" community center events in the Town Hall to build support, cultivate volunteers, and encourage donors.

Ms. Thomas stated that the SBCC cannot afford to operate the building without charging groups to use the building for events.

Ms. Rombeau asked about other communities where towns fund operating expenses for community centers. Ms. Stevens indicated that in order to place a question on the March ballot, building costs would have to be over \$1 million. Operating costs would have to go into budget in alternative scenario.

Ms. Rombeau moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:04 a.m., seconded by Ms. Stevens.