

SELECT BOARD RETREAT MINUTES
MARCH 25, 2019 at 6:00 pm
BECKER COLLEGE, BORGER ROOM 112

CALL TO ORDER/OPENING

The meeting had to be moved from Room 100 to Room 112 because that classroom was occupied. Chairwoman Provencher called the meeting to order at 6:09 pm. Chair Dianna Provencher, Vice Chair Sandra Wilson, Selectman Harry Brooks, Selectman Rick Antanavica, and Town Administrator David Genereux were in attendance. 2nd Vice Chair Brian Green arrived approximately fifteen minutes after the start of the meeting.

1. Discuss 3-5 Year Goals

Discussion began with a review of the notes from the last workshop which took place on March 21, 2015. Discussion on the "Best Services" bullet from those notes centered upon having Town Hall open for a half day on Friday. Mr. Antanavica noted that he gets many complaints about the Town Hall be closed on Fridays. Ms. Wilson stated that it was done originally to save energy costs which no longer applies since the School Department is now in the building. She added that most employees would likely oppose the change.

Discussion moved to the perception that the Town is not business-friendly. Mr. Genereux stated that that is a common misconception because of the regulatory process required to permit new business. The consensus of the Board was that the Town needs to do whatever necessary to attract more business to the Town.

The Board then discussed the need for affordable housing. Mr. Antanavica stated that there is a lack of available housing for lower income seniors or young people. Discussion then centered on options for the reuse of Memorial School. Mr. Genereux stated that the RFP will be open ended.

Discussion then moved toward the lack of available utilities. Mr. Brooks stated that we should be working with our representatives, as well as contacting the DPU to see if it is possible to extend natural gas service in the Town. Ms. Provencher suggested that we may benefit by contacting Spencer as they are having similar issues on the eastern portion of Route 9.

The Board then discussed employee morale and the social media policy. Mr. Genereux stated that he believed the discussion regarding the Highway override that was not supported by the Board was overtly long and negative in nature. Other recent examples of issues at other board and committee meetings was discussed, including Conservation, Parks, and Historical. Discussion revolved around the presentation and whether the commentary was overtly negative.

Mr. Brooks asked whether objectionable or false comments made by employees, board & committee members, or other individuals can be addressed legally. Mr. Genereux said that as Board members and employees are "public figures" it would be difficult to address comments by private citizens. However, boards or committees conduct could be addressed through a social media policy. Mr. Genereux agreed to provide the board with a copies of social media policies at a future meeting.

Mr. Genereux then discussed the economic development position to be funded through the Host Community Agreement with Cultivate. Mr. Genereux stated that he intended to bring it before the Board as a Highway position. Mr. Genereux explained that he felt that it was more important currently to have someone in the field rather than working at a desk. Ms. Wilson stated that the position was supposed to help out the town planner, write grants and update the Town website regularly. Mr. Genereux stated that economic development was

limited because of the town's infrastructure issues and that the Town had applied for and received grants from the major grant categories: Green Communities, Complete Streets, and the Community Compact program. Mr. Genereux said that most grants do not help fund operating budgets. Mr. Brooks spoke of the possibility of funding at least a part time position. Mr. Genereux stated that he would try to do it at Fall Town Meeting. The Board was in agreement that this position is needed.

Mr. Brooks spoke to Ms. Provencher, regarding an individual who worked part time for two different towns who may now be available. Ms. Provencher stated that she would check into the matter further. Mr. Genereux stated that he would be bring the warrant article to the Board at the next meeting.

The meeting then centered on the 2015 goals. The Board discussed some minor changes such as removing the Fire Station from near term goals and adding the Middle School project. Ms. Wilson stated that she would provide additional commentary behind the goals for clarification so the Board can better determine if they want to keep, delete or modify the goals at their next retreat.

2. Review Comprehensive Policy Manual

The Board did not elect to review the comprehensive Police Manuel due to the lateness of the hour. It was agreed that another retreat would be scheduled to further discuss the Board Goals and the Policy Manual.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Brooks, seconded by Mr. Antanavica at 9:20 pm. The motion carried unanimously.