

**Townshend Planning Commission**  
**Draft Minutes**  
**Minutes April 24, 2024**

- Present:** John Evans, Bob DeSiervo, Liza Martin, Doug Ballantine and Rick Matschke and Andrew Snelling
- 1. Call to Order:** Chairman Evans called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.
  - 2. Reorganization:**

Officer Elections: Martin nominated John Evans for Chair and he was elected with one abstention. Martin nominated Bob DeSiervo for Vice Chair and he was elected with one abstention. DeSiervo nominated Andy Snelling for Clerk and he was elected.

Rules of Order: Snelling made a motion, seconded by DeSiervo, to adopt Robert's Rules of Order as the Commission's rules of parliamentary procedure for the coming year. The motion carried.

Meeting Schedule: Snelling moved and Ballantine seconded a motion to set the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. as the date and time of regular meetings.
  - 3. Additions and Deletions:** DeSiervo requested adding a discussion on informing the public and getting input on the Town Hall work. Snelling stated that it would be appropriate to cover that under the old business agenda item for Town Hall.
  - 4. Members of the Public:** none
  - 5. Approval of Minutes:** DeSiervo moved, and Matschke seconded, a motion to approve the minutes of April 10, 2024 as submitted. The motion passed.
  - 6. Correspondence:** none
  - 7. Old Business:**

Town Plan: Snelling confirmed that the Select Board had approved the contract with WRC for updating the Town Plan and that an executed copy had been sent to WRC.

Town Hall: a) DeSiervo stated the need to inform the public and gather input on the Town Hall project. He then read a draft announcement intended to be posted in public spots. Snelling said that as previously discussed he had drafted a notice intended for submission to Front Porch Forum. Snelling read the notice to the Commission. Ballantine cautioned that the notices need to be clear that the \$50,000 is just the start of a larger more expensive project. Snelling commented that DeSiervo's notice is more descriptive about the work being considered and that his own draft is more a generalized call for input. He went on to say that both style documents are going to be needed as part of the project promotion.

b) Ballantine inquired where things stood regarding the

evaluation of the electrical wiring in Town Hall. Snelling reported that he and DeSiervo had toured the building looking for knob and tube and had only located three short runs in the corner by the electrical service panel. The wires were not directly connected to the service panel and didn't have any current flowing through them at the time of the visit. However, it wasn't possible to see where the wires went. Evans said that he had been in touch with an electrician that was willing to meet with representatives of the Planning Commission to examine the wiring. It was generally agreed to set the visit up as soon as possible and to accommodate the electrician's schedule.

c) Evans and DeSiervo reported on their visit to the Grafton Town Hall to look at their recently installed lift. The lift has a shorter travel than what would be required in Townshend because of the higher ceilings. The downstairs area is enclosed and the entrance is a fire rated door. The lift was installed with town ARPA funds and cost approximately \$125,000.

d) DeSiervo made a motion to contact Keefe & Wesner to prepare bid drawings and specs for the ramp, door openers and ADA restroom with a cost not to exceed \$3,000. The motion was seconded by Matschke. Snelling asked if the motion included an RFP and if the motion was to engage Wesner or to just get a quote. DeSiervo amended the motion with the agreement of the second, to contact Keefe & Wesner for a quote on preparing bid drawings, specs and an RFP(s) for the ramp, automatic doors and conversion to an ADA restroom. A discussion ensued. Evans questioned the need for the additional architectural work. Matschke asked about what the existing drawings included. Evans moved and Snelling seconded, to table the motion until next meeting to allow time for the two new members to familiarize themselves with the existing documentation. The motion to table passed.

e) Snelling updated the Commission on his research into the Village Trust Initiative grant as a potential funding source for the Town Hall renovation project. He reported that he had met Kaziah Haviland to get a better understanding of the grant criteria. The grant could be up to \$450,000 and is intended to revitalize community structures in historic villages with the goal of strengthening small communities. One of the examples of possible projects is "...to improve accessibility to underutilized second floors in historic town halls.." The grants come along with not only funds but technical support at building a community trust to take on the project. A potential drawback is that a community trust 501c3 entity has to own or have a long term lease on the space to be renovated for community purposes.

8.

Town Garage Emergency Power: DeSiervo informed the Commission that he had met with Southworth Electric, the

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contractor used by Newfane for installing a backup generator. He found them to be knowledgeable and open. He requested a quotation for the Town Garage.

MTAP Grant: Snelling communicated that he and DeSiervo had attended the special Select Board meeting on April 17<sup>th</sup> to meet with Gretchen Havreluk about possible projects eligible for the MTAP grant. The group discussed possible projects and ranked them by priority. The Select Board, at their April 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting approved authorizing Gretchen Havreluk and WRC to submit a grant application on behalf of Townshend for backup power at the Town Garage and fire alarms for the Town Garage, Library, Town Hall and Fire House.

**9. New Business:**

none

**10. Meeting Schedule:**

Regular Meeting: May 8, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.

Regular Meeting: May 25, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.

**11. Adjournment:**

Chairman, Evans, seeing no further business to come before the body, adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andrew Snelling