**Meeting of the Board of Selectmen February 23, 2021**

**Phone: 669-224-3318**

**Access Code: 220-595-605**

**Executive Session – 6:30 p.m.**

Chairman Patricia Riley called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Donald McKinnon Meeting Room at Veterans Memorial Town Hall, located at 558 South Main Street. In addition to Chairman Riley, Selectmen Joseph Pacheco and Richard Schiavo were in attendance, along with Town Administrator Graham Waters. Selectman Schiavo made a motion, seconded by Selectman Pacheco, to enter into Executive Session in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, Section 21, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. On a roll call vote, Mr. Pacheco, Mr. Schiavo, and Ms. Riley each voted “I” to go into Executive Session.

**7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting – with Remote Public Access**

Chairman Riley called the open meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Donald McKinnon Meeting Room at Town Hall. In addition to Chairman Riley, Selectmen Joseph Pacheco and Richard Schiavo were in attendance. Ms. Riley announced, “Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L.C.30A, §18, and the Governor’s 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people who may gather in one place, this meeting of the Raynham Board of Selectmen is being conducted with the Public Body members in person at Veterans Memorial Town Hall and with the general public following the proceedings remotely. Every effort has been made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. For real time access, residents can join the live broadcast on the Raynham Channel, use the “gotomeeting” online feature, and/or call in using their phone. The Town will post a record of this meeting on the Town’s website as soon as we are able. Also, in accordance with the Executive Order, other town officials and staff participating in the meeting and in attendance include Town Administrator Graham Waters, Fire Chief Bryan LaCivita and Police Chief James Donovan, as well as Rick Pomroy and his Associates involved in the Public Safety Planning Committee.” Ms. Riley also said, “This meeting is being recorded, and, for the record, we are returning from Executive Session with nothing to report at this time.”

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Ms. Riley led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Acceptance of the Minutes**

Ms. Riley asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Selectmen’s meeting held on February 16, 2021. Mr. Schiavo made a motion to approve, Mr. Pacheco seconded, and Ms. Riley made it unanimous.

**Completion of Old/Continuing Business**

1. **Public Safety Building Committee Update**

Rick Pomroy of Pomroy Associaates stated that he was in attendance to update the Board on the progress of the Public Safety Building plans and he introduced his associates in attendance: Taylor McDonald, Project Manager, and Glen Gillard and Don Walters of Dorr & Whittier, the Project Architect. Mr. Pomroy explained that there have been some refinements. He said, “We were given some fairly lofty goals. We have gone back to the Building Committee and the two departments, collectively, and we are here to present this feasibility study to you. The main factor is cost, and there are different options for design solutions, material selections and an overall layout.” Mr. Gillard discussed the previous studies of the current building. He believes that the new site is perfect for size, site lines and not being in a heavily-residential area. The new 50,000 square foot floor plans are a good size to accommodate both departments for what’s needed and will allow some room for expansion. The Animal Control Office has been accounted for with feedback from the Building Committee and can be on the site next door. He continued, “We would allow about $200,000 in the budget for it. This is only the first part of the process. This hasn’t come before ConCom or any other committees. That will come afterward. Once we get the ok on this, we will get a survey done and a topography study. The exterior has been simplified to cut costs but still retain the farmhouse look to fit nicely on the site. The schedule is still on track and the next step will be the schematic design for the Town Meeting. The project budget was updated. The Public Safety Building is now 50,190 sq. feet. The owner’s construction contingency is 2½% with a general construction contingency of 5%, a $1m allowance for the out-building and $200,000 for the Animal Control Office. The hard cost is $31,819,000 and with the soft cost, there is a net project cost of $34,079,941, and that includes a 16% growth.” Mr. Pacheco said, “I appreciate the work that you have done to cut the costs, but when I said $30 - $35m including the stabilization, that is where I am at. To me, these numbers are still over that and need to be cut more. Since that meeting I have received many emails from residents saying the cost is too high and not something they can support. There is nothing more that I want than to see this done, but we have one chance to do this and we have to do this right and be cost-conscious and a $37.8m project with $34m going out for bonding is still high. I said a few weeks back $30-$35m with stabilization funds put into it, so to me we are still $2.2m off where I would feel comfortable moving forward on something that I believe would have a chance to pass at Town Meeting. We could explore doing a Phase Two on this. I’ve seen some of the things that have been done to reduce costs and I appreciate that, but that’s where I’m at. There is more that needs to be done to cut costs to make this project palpable for our residents and the ballot.” Mr. Schiavo said, “You have done a lot to cut costs, but I don’t know why we are trying to do this in May. Why don’t we do this in the fall with all the uncertainty and where the land is still in play? My second comment is that maybe doing this in two phases would bring the cost down. I think it’s great moving the ACO to the right as it forms a municipal complex.” Mr. Pomroy said, “I would like to respond to the $35m. The only thing we can do now is cut square footage. We can talk to the departments and see what sacrifices they want to make.” Ms. Riley asked about Mr. Schiavo’s comments regarding the Fall Town Meeting. She asked, “Will you be ready for the Annual Town Meeting?” Mr. Pomroy replied, “Based upon what we have now, we are ready, but I believe the Selectmen want to look into this further and we have to make the right decision.” Ms. Riley asked to hear from the Chiefs. Chief LaCivita said, “I believe this is an aggressive schedule, but I believe you have to follow it. The Fire Station has issues with heating and leaking roof issues and there is no fresh air circulating in there. Since the pandemic, it is very difficult for the Firefighters to keep socially distanced. If we had a female Firefighter who applied for a job, we couldn’t accommodate her because of the limitations of the building, and this could become a liability for the Town.” Ms. Riley said, “I remember the presentation that Pomroy & Associates did regarding the existing building and how it is substandard.” Chief Donovan said, “In one of the last storms, we had water pouring in and we are still in the middle of the pandemic. There have been some towns that built facilities and were already too small the day they walked in. I won’t support something like that. I think we have shrunk this down as much as we possibly could. If this is something that won’t support us for a long time, I won’t support it.” Mr. Pacheco said, “I have no issues with the timeline. My concern all along is that we can go to bat for this, but if it fails, then I don’t know where we are. The issues of the existing facility are still there. We spent the money and have gone through the process and we’re left with nothing to show for it and my concern is that we have to reduce the price a little bit. We have to get it through Town Meeting and by the ballot. This is a $37m project in the middle of a global pandemic and a recession.” Mr. Schiavo said, “To be clear, a far as I’m concerned, I have no problem going for May. It’s just that I think you have a lot on your plate. The cost that I have per square foot is $760 and I think Selectmen Pacheco’s point is well taken, and we will go with it.” Mr. Pacheco asked about Ms. Riley’s thoughts on it. She replied, “I would like to see the cost reduced, but, at the same time, I don’t want to see them outgrow a building like at the Raynham Middle School when they reduced the size of the auditorium to cut costs. I understand what you’re saying. We don’t want to go to Town Meeting and not have it approved and it would be hard to get it approved at the ballot box.” Chief Donovan said, “It would be helpful to know the impact on the taxpayers.” Mr. Pacheco said, “Recognizing that the average single-family home is valued at $413,200, and the average tax bill is $6,070, at $35m, it would be $355.64 on average per year per household. If you went down to $30m, it would be $304.32. The $40m project, to put it in perspective, would be $406.08 per year per household. So, at $37m, my guess is that you are probably at about $380.00.” Mr. Schiavo said, “That doesn’t seem like a lot of money, but the rates go up every year, so it’s not just that, it’s an accumulation of things. You have to remember that there are many people in this Town who are on fixed incomes. The water rates go up, and the sewer rates go up. The $35m is a lot of money.” Mr. Waters noted that Treasurer/Collector Michael King explained that the first payment will be the highest. Then it will decrease over time. Ms. Riley asked if there is any chance that the Town could get a good deal on the borrowing rate or construction costs similar to what the School District recently received for the construction of the new school in Bridgewater. Mr. Pomroy said, “We can’t tell what the market is going to be doing in the next year. The construction bids are between 8 – 11% below estimates which is right where you want to see them. If we get Town Meeting approval and the election allows it to go forward, we have escalated our bid numbers out for next spring.” Mr. Pacheco suggested that the matter be tabled until next week for further consideration and he noted that there may be some new options that could be brought forward as well. Mr. Schiavo seconded the motion and Ms. Riley made it unanimous.

**New Business**

1. **Discussion and Action: Finance Director/Town Accountant Search and Position Update**

Mr. Waters said he has drafted the new job description and the advertisement went out Thursday. Ms. Riley said, “We really want to thank the Search Committee for all of the time and effort they have put into this search.”

1. **Discussion and Action: CERT Team Leader Position and Job Description**

Mr. Pacheco said, “I spoke with Chief LaCivita and he will have it finalized next week for the Board’s review. Essentially, he would be the coordinator of the CERT volunteers and, because of the work and the grants involved with it, I believe a small stipend would make sense. It would be appointed by the Board and would fall under the oversight of the Chiefs.” Mr. Pacheco added, “As soon as it is finalized, we will have it back on the Agenda for the Board.” Ms. Riley called for the vote to table the matter. Mr. Pacheco made the motion, Mr. Schiavo seconded it, and Ms. Riley made it unanimous.

**Town Administrator’s Report**

Reviewing his report, Mr. Waters stated, “The search committee is conducting interviews for the HR position this week.” He also stated, “I am working on assembling a draft Town Meeting warrant by the end of the month. A copy will be submitted to the Board, Town Clerk, Town Moderator, and Department Heads for review.”

On another matter, Mr. Waters reported, “The proposals for the Town Auditor RFP have been received and are being reviewed. We received proposals from four auditing firms.”

For upcoming business, Mr. Waters reported, “The next regularly scheduled Selectmen’s Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Don McKinnon Meeting Room of Town Hall, 558 South Main Street, Raynham, Massachusetts. The public will be able to participate via the GoToMeeting platform or by watching the RayCam channel on Verizon, Comcast, or a recording posted later on YouTube. The Finance Committee will hold a tele-meeting on February 24th at 6:00 p.m. The Capital Planning Committee will hold a tele-meeting on March 4th at 6:30 p.m.”

Mr. Waters also noted that the Search Committee for the Human Resources position would like to meet with the Board next week. Mr. Pacheco noted that the discussion would have to be in open session rather than executive session. Ms. Riley agreed and said, “We should put in on the agenda next week.”

**Selectmen’s Report**

Mr. Pacheco said, “I spoke with Sen. Pacheco’s Office last week, and, as of last week, they hadn’t received a package from us, so I reached out to our Assistant Deb. This was something that was supposed to be sent a while ago. They haven’t passed it yet as they have to file the legislation, so it’s there now, but I think it would be prudent for us to continue to communicate with them as they are doing us a favor.” Ms. Riley said, “Yes, an important one.”

Ms. Riley said, “R.A.V.E. is going forward with Read Across America, and the Raynham Channel is going to record some of the guest readers so their classroom visits can be done virtually in light of COVID restrictions. She said there are many V.I.P. readers that have volunteered.

Mr. Riley also noted that Kevin Ellis, Chairman of the Cable Commission, is requesting, on behalf of the Commission, that the Selectmen extend a contract to Cable Attorney Bill August to work with the Cable Commission to represent the Town in negotiations with Verizon for a successor contract. Ms. Riley said it can be put on the agenda for a vote at a future meeting. She noted that as the process goes forward, the Board will have to confer with the Cable Commission about the required ascertainment hearing.

**Performance of Administrative Duties**

Mr. Pacheco motioned to approve the Town of Raynham Payroll and Invoice Warrants dated February 23, 2021, as submitted, Mr. Schiavo seconded, and Ms. Riley made it unanimous.

Mr. Schiavo then made a motion to approve the Police Department Payroll and Invoice Warrants dated February 23, 2021, as submitted, Ms. Riley seconded the motion and Mr. Pacheco abstained. Miss Riley asked for a roll call vote: Mr. Schiavo said, “I”, Mr. Pacheco abstained, and Ms. Riley said, “I”. It was so voted.

**Adjournment**

At 7:59 p.m., Mr. Pacheco made the motion to adjourn the meeting and sign the bills with no further business to be conducted. Mr. Schiavo seconded the motion, and Ms. Riley made it unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Murphy