

Board of Finance
Subcommittee Meeting (Joint with BOS)
April 1, 2019 — 6:00 PM
Town Hall
MINUTES

Members Present: Secretary Meghan Bruce

Others Present: Selectmen Glen Coutu and John Bendoraitis; Administrative Assistant Bernard Dennler; Chief John Lyon, Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department; Deputy Chief Mark Elliot, LVFD; Assistant Chief Alan Olenick, LVFD; Captain Todd Kulman, LVFD (arrived at 6:10 PM)

1.0 **Call to Order**

G. Coutu called the joint meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

2.0 **Continued discussions regarding short and long term capital planning**

G. Coutu noted that the meeting was warned for discussions only and the Board of Selectmen would take no action.

J. Bendoraitis stated there were four major issues to cover: the ladder truck, paid staff, formalizing mutual aid, and the possible substation and garage lease at Lake Williams. J. Lyon agreed.

The group discussed financing options for the proposed ladder truck purchase. The Fire Department representatives said they would return to the Board of Finance this week. J. Bendoraitis said if it cleared the Board of Finance successfully, the Board of Selectmen could schedule a special town meeting.

T. Kulman arrived at 6:10 PM.

On the topic of mutual aid, J. Lyon said he had sat down with some area fire chiefs. M. Elliot said they still need to get the wording for these agreements, but then it would be a matter of getting the other parties involved to sign. J. Lyon said the language would likely refer to “all emergency responses.” J. Lyon also noted that they could follow the recommendation from the JLN study to adopt a mission statement by pulling a statement that already exists within their bylaws.

J. Bendoraitis said the substation topic is a more immediate issue than paid staff. He said paid staff is something that needs to be looked at now, but is not something that would be adopted this budget cycle. He said paid staff is a matter of “when” not “if” so they should work out some of the details now to simplify the process later on when it becomes necessary to execute. G. Coutu and J. Bendoraitis both noted it could still be years away but there should still be a plan.

G. Coutu said they may be able to figure out a way to “ease into” having paid staff and mentioned stipends for volunteers. He also said they did not want to lose the “volunteer” status of the department. M. Elliot referred to “augmenting” the department with paid staff. M. Elliot discussed the options of having a few paid staff for full time shifts versus per diem. He noted going per diem would require hiring more people which would mean purchasing more equipment at the outset.

M. Bruce arrived at 6:18 PM.

G. Coutu and J. Bendoraitis said there were a lot of variables that would need to be worked out and analyzed such as whether paid staff would be considered employees of the Town or employees of the LVFD. G. Coutu mentioned the possibility of a committee to study this issue that could provide information to groups including the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance.

T. Kulman said their primary goal is to remain an all-volunteer organization. J. Lyon said they are planning a new outreach campaign to recruit volunteers. He noted that the bylaws allow for associate members to allow volunteers who are not Lebanon residents.

G. Coutu said he sees the need for a substation, but he said he is struggling with the proposed facility. He mentioned the mixed-use of the campground and the town potentially sinking fund into a building it does not own to make the necessary improvements. J. Bendoraitis noted that proposed lease only covers up improvements in lieu of rent up to \$30,000.00. G. Coutu said he would be willing to consider the possibility of constructing a new building that the Town actually owned. G. Coutu also expressed concerns about the mixed use of the location and issues of liability.

J. Bendoraitis said he has a lot of reservations about it but would be willing to move forward with it on a temporary basis to see the effect of having a substation on that end of town.

J. Lyon asked about potential development in the town over the next 5 to 10 years. He asked whether there was any forecast for development over the next decade or so. He and G. Coutu discussed how quickly things can change and be developed. J. Bendoraitis mentioned it is always possible a developer could buy 100 acres on the south end of town and put in 40 homes which would change the needs of the needs of the town. He and G. Coutu agreed there is no way to know whether something like that is going to happen.

M. Bruce said she struggles with the mixed use of the facility as well and noted that the facility has changed hands several times. A. Olenick said it had only changed hands three times. M. Bruce responded that the perception remains that the property is not viable.

J. Bendoraitis said he does not share that concern. He noted in a worst-case scenario the town would only be walking away from a \$30,000.00 investment paid in lieu of rent.

A. Olenick and G. Coutu said it seemed they were at an impasse with the conversation. A. Olenick proposed a sit-down meeting with the property owners. G. Coutu said before this can be presented at Town Meeting, there is a lot of information that needs to be gathered. G. Coutu said he wants a figure to compare the costs of building a new facility versus the rental proposal. J. Bendoraitis noted that it would take time to get that figure and it still would not include the cost of whatever land the Town may be able to purchase there. M. Elliot and G. Coutu both noted they are mostly in agreement on the geographic location of a substation, meaning there are limited properties available to purchase and the lack of supply could lead to a higher price than desirable.

J. Bendoraitis said he can see this as a stop-gap measure on the way to a permanent substation but he does not want this to become the crutch for not pursuing a proper substation. He said he really does not feel this is the "right solution" for the long term.

J. Lyon again raised the possibility of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance meeting with the Lake Williams Association which owns the property. G. Coutu, J. Bendoraitis, and M. Bruce indicated that was possible.

3.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bernard W. Dennler III
Administrative Assistant

Please see the minutes of future meetings for any corrections hereto.