

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING**  
**Minutes of August 31, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Ross McLeod called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Selectmen Bruce Breton and Roger Hohenberger were present in the meeting room, with Selectmen Jennifer Simmons and Heath Partington, as well as Town Administrator David Sullivan, in attendance via Zoom.

Mr. McLeod opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, then read a statement relative to the Governor's Executive Order 2020-04 #12, which authorizes the Board of Selectmen to meet electronically provided public access is available via telephone or electronic means, followed by the phone and text message numbers and email address available for use by the public during the meeting. He then conducted a roll call of all those conferencing in, who advised they were doing so alone.

Mr. Sullivan suggested the minutes, which were the only other item on the agenda other than a non-public session, be addressed first.

**MINUTES:** Mr. Hohenberger moved and Mr. Breton seconded to approve minutes of 8/7, the joint meeting with the School Board, as written. Roll call vote – all “yes”.

Mrs. Simmons moved and Mr. Breton seconded to approve the minutes of 8/24 as written. Roll call vote – all “yes” save for Mr. McLeod and Mr. Hohenberger, who abstained due to absence.

**TIF UPDATE:** Mr. Norman advised the document had been updated with the Board's input from the previous discussion; adding that the plan is on the website and is presented as informational as to how a TIF might function. He then reviewed several areas of correction/clarification/addition, including:

- Cost of Services has been updated to 2018 numbers; those being \$1.07 per \$1.00 for residential, \$0.27 commercial, and open space \$0.11
- That developers in what would be the TIF district have shown interest in paying up front costs
- That an FAQ has been added that addresses several things, such as notification of inclusion in the District, the ability to opt out, that there is no requirement to connect, the receipt of non-binding letters of interest, the certainty of the estimates, a contingency plan, and whether a joint meeting will be held with the School District and others.
- As to inclusion of the operating costs; those had been presented to the Board in February by a consultant retained to establish those, and he had excerpted a portion for inclusion; however, it could be included in its entirety.

Gary Garfield, EDC member, noted that the document had been drafted by the group and Mr. Norman, and now incorporated the Board's questions, and the goal for that evening was to come out of the meeting able to put the draft out for public comment. He felt it was urgent to do so as soon as possible in order to get as much input from the public, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, etc., so that we are not trying to educate people about this three weeks before the election.

Mr. Hohenberger noted several concerns, including:

- Page 3, first sentence, second paragraph; asking where else it would come from. Discussion ensued with Mr. Norman clarifying he would take individual sentences under advisement and, if a qualified answer cannot be had, the question should not be there.
- Page 4, second paragraph regarding alternative water supply; DES letter reads public water supply or treatment systems, thus the latter should be included. Mr. Norman concurred.
- Page 4, second to last paragraph, add proposal for consideration by School Board, Selectmen, and County Commissioner. Discussion ensued and it was noted this is on page 5.
- As to the TIF not changing zoning or density, the water line itself could. Discussion ensued regarding required well radiuses, soil/septic dependent regulations, that the line could enable different types of buildings or ones tighter together. Mr. Norman will look into this further.

- The third bullet under objectives; include a caveat regarding immediate vicinity, as there are now many other sites far from Route 111.
- Objectives, 6th bullet; still implies that Salem is going to run this line, which is misleading as they are not interested.
- Page 6, suggested a hierarchy chart; inquiring who is the District Administrator. Discussion ensued, and this can be updated.
- Page 6, operation/maintenance in town budget; if plan is to put this on the website, then people will want to know those costs. Discussion ensued, and Mr. Norman clarified the updated version has that information, including the non-binding verbal commitments he has for money up front.
- Page 7, issuances of bonds/agreements; these sound like formal documents to be drafted ahead of time and Mr. Hohenberger would like to see those. Mr. Norman noted that if the projected commitment does not come to be, these agreements will not be done. Discussion ensued.
- Page 10, the Town is shown as paying for the first three years, which he is not in favor of doing.

Mr. Hohenberger then noted, as an overall comment, that not forcing people to join the TIF and make the commitment to connect leaves it ambiguous forever. Discussion ensued, and Mr. Norman noted he did not see that as a possibility or he would not do this. He noted, however, that he could see the small number of residential properties in the district not signing up, and a further discussion ensued regarding the function of the District, how it operates, and impacts to property owners.

Mr. Breton noted Appendix B, the list of included parcels, which appears to show the line going through the heart of the Business Technology District; seeking clarification as to where the additional tax increase goes. Mr. Norman explained that, if the assessment changes, the amount of change is earmarked for the District; adding that the tax rate is the same and the taxpayer pays the same, however, the incremental difference is captured for the TIF.

Mr. Breton questioned how, if this additional value is picked up, we get additional revenues for growth in the town and school budgets. Mr. McLeod noted additional revenues would be garnered via undeveloped property being developed, as well as through increased valuations when the bond is paid off. Discussion ensued regarding the bond payoff, shown in Appendix O, and the projections therein, as well as the Route 28 line which was constructed for free that currently has no connections, and the six anticipated parcels that will tie in to the Route 111 line.

Mr. Partington indicated he had been in support of Mr. Hohenberger's suggestion at the previous meeting regarding collecting monies up front, which had not been incorporated. Brief discussion ensued. Mr. Partington then noted he had requested additional information regarding costs; expressing he wished we could settle on some numbers at some point in time. He went on to note it would be hard for him to support the TIF District if it is not made contingent on the water line passing; adding he did not like the idea of money sitting, waiting for something to happen.

Mr. Partington then noted the cost of services is still not included in the document, just the ratios. Discussion ensued, and Mr. Norman indicated he could look into it; adding this is just a draft.

Mrs. Simmons sought clarification as to what would happen with the District if the water line failed; Mr. Norman replied as there would be no need for it, it would be dissolved and the revenue would go back to the Town, School and County.

Mrs. Simmons then inquired whether an estimate could be obtained from the 6 developers referenced as to what they would be willing to pay towards the up front cost. Mr. Norman indicated they are hesitant to put a number out there that the Town might latch on to. Discussion ensued.

Mr. McLeod made several inquiries:

- Page 3, should read it will not place a "long-term" or "ongoing" burden on the taxpayers. Discussion ensued regarding developer contributions versus the voters having to approve the bond and initially cover the bond payments.

- Page 3, sought clarification regarding it being “conceivable” developers will cover the cost via prepayment; suggesting the language should be more concrete in a document such as this. Discussion ensued, and Mr. Norman noted that the Introduction encapsulates the salient points, but could be sounding optimistic; adding it was the product of a number of authors. He reiterated the language can be changed. Further discussion ensued as to whether such language takes the focus off the TIF.
- Page 3, cost of services “clearly demonstrates residential property costs the town....”. Mr. McLeod’s concern is it only really shows that at the current land use ratios; adding he would like to see “at the current land use ratios” added. He would also like to use “will” rather than “may” as it pertains to commercial lessening the burden. Discussion ensued; Mr. Norman will look at same.
- Page 3, it is noted that development has been impeded, however, residential has not been; suggesting “commercial” be added.
- Page 5, as to district boundaries and inclusion of the Gateway Park; how realistic it is they would hook in. Mr. Norman indicated that may be a hold over from the first version, and he will look into it further.
- Mr. McLeod indicated he found the appendices very helpful and relevant.

Discussion ensued, with input from Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Garfield regarding the district boundaries and whether phase 1 was to be included and, if not, then the entire paragraph referenced by Mr. McLeod be struck; as well as the inclusion of Route 28 to assist in paying off the two bonds, the water tower planned as part of phase 2 and appropriate locations for same, and the need for the latter for fire flow to the hydrants on Route 28. It was the consensus of the Board to not include Phase 1 (Route 28) in this TIF plan. Further discussion ensued regarding the completion of Phase 1 and who will operate same.

Mr. McLeod suggested the revised draft be run through Administrative staff before returning to the Board; concurring with the need to get it out to the public as soon as possible.

Thanks were extended to Mr. Norman and Mr. Garfield. Mr. Sullivan noted the changes will be incorporated for the Board’s review on the 14th, unless they wanted it out to the public for review prior to that time. It was the consensus of the Board that it come to them on the 14th first.

**NON-PUBLIC SESSION:** Mr. Breton moved and Mrs. Simmons seconded to enter into nonpublic session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II e. Roll call vote – all “yes”.

Mr. Sullivan updated the Board on negotiations with the Town of Salem. No decisions were made.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

David Sullivan, Town Administrator

Wendi Devlin, Administrative Assistant