

Minutes of Bethel Town Hall Finance Committee

February 28, 2008  At Bethel Public Library at 7 p.m.

Present were committee members Amy Bergamo, Chris Masters, Janet Burnham, Rick Benson and Winslow Ayer; Mary Floyd arrived at 7:40. Also present were Geneva Gaiko, Davis Dimock & Victoria Weber.

News since last meeting:

- We have learned that across-the-board cuts in the omnibus federal budget bill that included our earmark reduced the amount of the Leahy / Save Americas' Treasures grant from \$305k to \$301K.
- As of today the 1892 Fund stands at 242 donations totaling \$39,097.99. This includes the recent \$10K grant from Mascoma Savings Bank.
- Selectboard meeting minutes for February 25, 2008 include:
"Chairman Fox then welcomed Amy Bergamo, who in turn asked if she could discuss matters related to the Town Hall Rehabilitation project with the Board, to make certain the public is being consistently informed on the status of matters associated with that project. It was reaffirmed that the next phase of work would be the foundation, drainage, and brickwork, coupled with any other related work which would be prudent to include at the same time. It was also agreed that a meeting would be scheduled on March 6, 2008 with the architect to obtain assistance in preparing an appropriate scope of work/cost estimates in relation to the grant from the "Save America's Treasures" program, and to correlate with any other anticipated sources of funds."
- The fifth *Friends of the Bethel Town Hall Newsletter* was completed by Victoria in early February and was distributed to local stores and also posted in a color version on the Bethel website at: <http://bethelvermont.com>. The town hall website information will probably migrate to the town website in the near future. No Town Hall Fund monies were used to create the *Newsletter*.

Amy called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

1- The minutes of the January 31, 2008 meeting were accepted by the committee members present.

2- Victoria is making arrangements to show the **students' Power Point slideshow** at Town Meeting, but it will need to be in the hall behind the gym and not play during town meeting itself.

3- Amy said that Senator Leahy very much appreciated the thank you notes we sent. We do not know whether the Select board has sent an official thank you from the town yet.

4- Rick explained **where the Select board is at this time**. They are undecided about a bond, wanting to focus first on just what we will endeavor to do. To this end:

- They have scheduled a meeting with architect Laz Scangas for March 6th to determine what the 'scope of work' will be and also what we will use the money for.
- They hope to "correlate with other sources of funds". This means that Dell Cloud will seek to obtain an ADA Accessibility grant to use for something like enhanced exits or a door through the façade. The ADA grants are on a first-come-first-serve basis, need a 50-50 non-federal match and can be as high as \$150K, but probably less.
- The select board needs to identify what more will be needed to get people into the building.
- The Save America's Treasures grant time frame does not begin until we return a contract with the 'Scope of Work'. There can be extensions to carry out the physical work if we have raised the matching funds.

5- **Bonding to match the grant.** Winslow believes people might balk at taking a \$500K bond as the annual fees might be too high, but they probably would accept a \$300K bond because the amounts would be within the \$25,000 we have been allocating annually.

Davis responded that they might not balk at \$500K if they knew what it was for within the Scope of Work, and if it was clear that amount would allow us to be able to begin to use the building.

Rick said a loan was also possible, either for the entire period, or until the next semi-annual Vermont Municipal Bond Bank date comes around. Probably for a loan at this level we would need voter approval.

6- **Town Meeting** is coming up next Tuesday. No matter what, we need the \$25,000 appropriation to pass at town meeting. It might be used to help match the ADA grant. Currently \$26,729 is available, and with another \$25K we would have over \$50K.

Janet wants to prepare a "How Far we've Come" handout for town meeting showing all monies raised for the project as well as what has been spent. [A copy of this document is attached for information purposes.]

7- **Committee changes.** Amy said she and her husband will be moving to Stuart, Virginia in 1 to 1½ years and so someone will need to take her place by doing things like going to the Select board meetings, making phone calls, providing consistent follow-up, keeping clippings, attending to little fires that break out and keeping ahead of everything. For the time being, however Amy will stay on as Chair.

With an eye to the group restructuring to accommodate Amy's eventual leaving others offered their strengths:

Janet will do fundraising. Victoria can write things. Rick Benson volunteered to be liaison with the select board. This is much appreciated. Davis can connect everything together, and he is available to help Amy with whatever she asks him to do. Rick labeled Davis as "our speaker". Winslow said he is a good sounding board. Davis thinks of Winslow as an interpreter between construction folks and the committee.

8 – **Involving Bethel Builders and Contractors.** Robert Tracy had told Mary Floyd that local contractors need to be more involved. He has a list of 24 people who could be involved. The group discussed the fact that in their meetings the Select board has spoken of wanting to involve local people from the beginning, although everyone has to go through the bidding process as we must do the work competitively. Local contractors could donate their work and take a tax write off for the value of the work. Winslow said that for large projects like this workers need to be bonded, which is a protection. It amounts to re-insurance to guarantee the work is completed. Winslow suggested having an open house for local builders and contractors where they could tour the building and see what is needed and be encouraged to bid on these jobs.

We hope that Bob Tracy and Dave Eddy – who has been somewhat involved with the Hall - would be involved at the beginning of planning an open house and help bring in the 24 people Bob has listed.

9- **BBA Annual Meeting.** The Wall-to-the-Hall will be the topic of this meeting on Wednesday, April 2nd. Mary Floyd is helping Kirk White (BBA President) gather information on this downtown planning process which began in 1993, and which the Hall is the last major portion of. [See Bethel Town Hall Newsletter #5 for more on the "Wall-to-the-Hall" project, including the methodology and goals.]

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm

❖❖❖ Minutes respectfully submitted by Victoria Weber ❖❖❖