

IN BOARD OF SUDBURY SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2015
LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
CONFERENCE ROOM "A", 290 LINCOLN ROAD, SUDBURY, MA
6:35 PM – 7:25 PM

Present: Chairman Charles C. Woodard, Vice-Chairman Patricia A. Brown, Selectman Robert C. Haarde, Selectman Lawrence W. O'Brien, Selectman Leonard A. Simon and Interim Town Manager Maryanne Bilodeau.

Chairman Woodard called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Article #41 – Minuteman Regional Vocational School District - Withdrawal

Chairman Woodard stated that he still has concerns regarding the Minuteman vote to withdraw. A preliminary discussion is needed. He would prefer to move to Indefinitely Postpone (IP) this article because:

- There is insufficient communication re: withdrawal
- We don't know what the new building will look like, who knows what it will be a year from now.
- There could be unintended consequences of withdrawal.
- One group that knows the details about this is the Vocational Education Options Committee. We haven't heard from them or their recommendation. We haven't spoken to school committees, Superintendents, other vocational schools, etc. All committees have to vote on this
- Every town has a veto, so we can veto. No one leaves unless everyone approves it.
- We need to do our homework before making a decision; need to vet this with the community.
- We need more facts to make a recommendation; there's no hurt in waiting.

Selectman Simon had a different view. He felt there should be no more studying this; we're squandering time. There are major problems at Minuteman with finances, etc. We should deal with this now. In a year we could be in a worse position. We could be responsible for additional funds. The main problem is voters don't understand the implications. We've "kicked the can down the road" for a year. We should know enough by now to explain to voters what the recommendation is. He doesn't see the benefit in waiting.

Selectman Haarde doesn't think the VEOC will recommend withdrawal. Chairman Woodard said the VEOC should make a recommendation one way or another. Selectman Haarde said that we are not voting to withdraw tonight; we are asking for the terms of withdrawal. He said that Dave Manjarrez's comments are backed up by a forensic audit. He saw serious procurement issues.

Selectman O'Brien said that we might be able to maintain more leverage if we IP this unless there's a new agreement that's favorable to us. He suggested that we take a year, look at curriculum at other schools, meet with Bella Wong and others. We do have veto power. We are one of 16 other towns. If we show we want to get out, our say may get diminished. Our obligation is to provide the best possible vocational education option to Sudbury students.

Selectman Simon shared that he suggested this exact thing be done last January (2015). This would be a good opportunity to show Town Meeting voters the problems we face with Minuteman.

Vice-Chairman Brown asked if we can we talk to Town Counsel Barbara Saint Andre about next steps. Should we meet with her to flesh everything out?

Chairman Woodard recognized resident Paul Lynch, 20 Dorothy Road, and former member of the Minuteman School Committee to make a comment. Mr. Lynch felt strongly that not enough has been studied on this

pertaining to enrollment, and cost. There should be no debate on the pros/cons of withdrawal. He suggests that the Board needs to hear from the “good side” of Minuteman. Voters need to hear both sides of the issue. He disagrees with Len that this issue has been kicked around a long time. In his opinion there hasn’t been not enough studying done. He’s passionate about the voters getting both sides of the story.

Selectman Simon asked if we should ask Minuteman regarding what are the current terms of the agreement. This letter needs to come from the Town Clerk.

Vice-Chairman Brown asked how do we get people’s attention on this issue? Most people haven’t thought about this at all. No serious consideration by voters.

Selectman O’Brien suggested that a way to get taxpayers’ attention is to say as a member, how much does it cost? What’s in it for us? Will the tax bill go up?

Selectman Haarde said that more attention goes to SPS and LS issues; he thinks this will not be a household discussion issue in Sudbury.

Chairman Woodard suggested moving to a vote.

Motion was made, seconded by Selectman O’Brien, to Indefinitely Postpone this article

VOTED: in favor; 3-2

Selectman Haarde – no; Selectman Simon – no; Selectman O’Brien – yes; Chairman Woodard – yes;
Vice-chairman Brown – yes.

Chairman Woodard reminded the Board that Selectman Haarde will make the presentation at Town Meeting.

Interim Town Manager Bilodeau suggested possibly making this a non-binding ballot question for the future? This will get people’s attention prior to a Town Meeting.

Chairman Woodard and Vice-Chairman Brown will work on providing a list of questions that we’d like to answer in preparation for making a decision regarding Minuteman. This will be ready for the next Selectmen’s meeting on May 26, 2015.

Article #53 – Town Sidewalks (non-binding resolution)

This is a non-binding resolution for walkways. The original wording in warrant was as follows:

To see if the Town will vote to prioritize the current building of sidewalks to provide walking access to public schools for all homes within two (2) miles of a public school. Where sidewalk access to school age children is not provided, the Town will provide transportation at no cost to affected households; or act on anything relative thereto.

The petitioner has since revised this original motion as follows:

Move to prioritize the current building of sidewalks to provide walking access to public schools for all homes within two miles of a public school.

Selectman O’Brien originally opposes this new motion. What does this accomplish?

Selectman Woodard made a motion not to support this article and Selectman O'Brien seconded.

However, then there was further discussion. Physical obstructions and lack of easements are the usual hindrances to building sidewalks. As a result of additional discussion, Selectman O'Brien changed his vote. He suggested that whoever makes remarks to this at Town Meeting should speak with Jody Kablack and Bill Place on major walkways, the 2-mile proximity to schools, and what the obstructions are. We need to build public awareness on this.

It was on motion unanimously

VOTED: To support the petitioner's article #53, in the words written, with the edit made by the petitioner.

Article #55 will be discussed tomorrow night.

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn at 7:25 pm.

Attest: _____
Maryanne Bilodeau
Interim Town Manager-Clerk