

Landgrove Remote Annual Meeting Info Session February 28 2022 6pm by Zoom

About 30 attendees participated in the remote session, which was headed by Select Board member John Ogden, moderated by Town Moderator Claudia Harris, and minutes taken by Clerk Chrystal Cleary

Call to order at 6:01pm

John Ogden welcomed everyone to our second annual remote info session and directed participants to the warning in the Town Report. He stated the widely-shared sentiment that we hope this will be the last year we have to be remote and can gather again in person next spring for Town Meeting the way we used to and love.

Jeff Cleary apologizes for missing page 2 of the General Fund budget in his layout of the Town Report. A full pdf version of the TR is available on the town website, and a separate pdf of just the 2 pages of the General Fund is also available there.

There was no discussion after the reading of Articles 2, 3 and 4

John Ogden read Article 5, which requests \$5000 in funding for construction of a stone wall at the Veterans' Memorial. Chrystal Cleary of the Veterans' Memorial Committee explained that the proposal since received from the craftsman is actually about \$2700 and the project is unlikely to run over budget.

The reading of Article 6, a non-binding resolution expressing interest in participation in the construction of a multi-town community field house in Manchester garnered much discussion. Cynthia Gubb from the Fieldhouse group was present in the session to field questions and concerns. The website for the project is www.northshirefieldhouse.org

Michael Jeffery stated for the record -but with his Select Board hat off- that due to the private initiation of this project, combined with the residents having to pay for access even if the Towns vote to approve public money that this project is a folly and not well thought through.

Susanna Gellert asks about access considerations for low income families. Cynthia G. replied that the project would be half private, half public funded and that membership figures are projected to be 'reasonable' and in proportion for other similar venues in the state, citing the slate of membership prices.

Chrystal Cleary asked what happens to the projected contribution numbers if half the Towns vote no? Cynthia answered that the project would be downsized or private fundraising increased.

Blair McCaw noted that the materials about the Fieldhouse were impressive and that the vote was only to proceed with further investigation of the project. He asked in what way participating Towns would have input? Cynthia explained that each Town would appoint a representative to the Fieldhouse Board.

Susanna Gellert asked how this came to be on our ballot, if the SelectBoard put it there? Chrystal explained the petition and voter % signature process for ballot articles. The Fieldhouse group got the question on the ballot in nine towns, largely following the footprint of the Taconic and Green school district.

Will Reed was curious about the cost per property owner? Cynthia replied that Landgrove's share of the cost would be \$109,000, and the Select Board would decide how to raise that amount, whether through a bond or increase in taxes or from saved money. Cynthia's quick estimation of the contribution based on a \$330,000 property toward a bond might be \$14.90/year. Treasurer Andrea Ogden worked out approximately .10 more to the existing town tax rate, which would put it very close to 2.00.

Ben Freeman and Jillian Joyce asked what input opportunities there might be regarding included features of the Fieldhouse. Cynthia described adjustments that have already been made based on community feedback, removing the tennis courts and pool, and directed any interested to visit the website (noted above) and contact the Group through that.

Michael Jeffery reminded all in attendance that the Town is facing extraordinary expenses this year with the Sand and Road Dept facility and land purchase upcoming. Auditor Charlie Howard noted the \$311,000 in the unallocated Reserve Fund, which Michael noted will be needed for the "Sandbox." John Ogden explained that this fund is not to be spent outright, but to make funding as affordable as possible, and that Best Practice is to maintain a certain amount in the fund available for catastrophe.

Liza Dee asked if tenants/renters would be eligible to join the Fieldhouse at the same rate as property owners? Cynthia said yes. Katharine Degan asked if the Town doesn't vote to approve participation in the project, would there not be an opportunity to contribute in the future? Cynthia said probably not. Dana McNair asked if there would be membership rates for people from non-participating Towns, and Cynthia cited those, which are available on the Northshire field house website.

John read Article 7, which was about the date for meeting in 2023, hoping we can really be live and in person again, noting (with affection) that it is also traditional at this point in our annual meeting for Lynn Eckhardt or Sally Waite to raise objection to the evening-before meeting time and propose a daytime meeting on Town Meeting Day, which is also traditionally voted down, but that he doesn't see their names on the zoom screen to do it this year. There is no further discussion of Article 7.

Claudia Harris, Moderator, relayed that Dr Roger Fox - longtime physician for our mountain towns- called to express his deep gratitude for the support the community and towns have always shown for the clinic. Dr Fox is retiring this June, and the community is grateful for his work and care of us all.

Charlie Howard thanked the Select Board for doing a fine job.

Meeting Adjourned 6:44 PM

Minutes taken, always respectfully, by Town Clerk Chrystal J. Sherritt Cleary