

Town Council Meeting
April 7, 2022

The April 7, 2022 Town Council Meeting was called to order by Denise L. DiFranco, President, in Foster, RI at 7:00 p.m.

The following members were present:

Denise L. DiFranco, President
Heidi Rogers, Vice President
Chris Stone
David Paolino
Cheryl Hawes

Also present:

Kelli Russ, Finance Director
Julia Chretien, Solicitor

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. NEW BUSINESS

**1. Restructuring of Foster
Public Libraries**

Matt Haynes, Johnson Road, Library Board President, said the current plan for the libraries are that they are working with a landowner in town; he co-owns the parcel where Foster Feed currently is. They are in planning to divide that parcel into smaller parcels. They would then purchase the front parcel. They chose that spot for its visibility and access. They stand ready to purchase the land.

Heidi Rogers asked how the funding would work. Mr. Haynes said they have an endowment that they have been steadily increasing. Heidi Rogers asked if that was sufficient to buy the land. Mr. Haynes said that it is sufficient to buy the land but not to build. There are a number of possible ways to go about building. They come down to using prevailing wage which will allow them to access more State and Federal money, or not to use prevailing wage which would make the cost far less. Heidi Rogers said then you would have to go out for bond. Mr. Haynes said they would have to rely on fundraising efforts and would sell Tyler. They also have a major donor for 30 percent of the project. Heidi Rogers asked how much he expected it to cost. Mr. Haynes said he doesn't have the numbers, but he was estimating 700 to 800 thousand dollars. Heidi Rogers asked about the timeline. Mr. Haynes said they are still working on the land purchase. Heidi Rogers asked if he thinks the funding from the town will go up. He said he did not yet know. Mr. Haynes said it would be an 8,000 square foot building.

Eva Szosz, Old Danielson Pike, interjected that when they were looking into other libraries, the costs were the same as ours. Mr. Haynes said they would build it efficiently. Cora Morrigan, South Killingly Road, said the size was recommended by a consultant.

The following people participated further in the discussion in support of the library:

Wendy Soares, 77 Central Pike; Marc Parmentier, Biscuit Hill Road; Karen Dalton, Snagwood Road; Lynne Rider,

Burgess Road; Eva Szosz, Old Danielson Pike; Matthew Haynes, Johnson Road; Robert Moreau, Central Pike; Paul Oueidat, Hartford Pike; Alicia Mansolillo, Pierce Road;

Kelli Russ, David Paolino, Lynne Rider, and Denise L. DiFranco discussed current budget funding.

Discussion continued with Marc Parmentier; Donna Mansolillo, Pierce Road

Item 4 Charter Change, Land
Trust *moved here*

Denise L. DiFranco asked that Item 4, the Charter Change be moved to this position.

Cheryl Hawes moved, Chris Stone seconded, to move the Land Trust Charter Change to this position.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

Linda Tibbets Land Trust Chair explained that the conveyance tax is a fee paid by anyone purchasing a house anywhere in the State of RI. The money goes to the State. In 2004, they said they would send part of it back to the municipality where the house was sold. At the same time there was a Charter Change saying that rather than taking money from the taxes collected, the Land Trust would be funded by this money from the State. The amount changes depending on property sales. To change that you would have to put in a Charter Change in the general election. Every Charter Commission has been in favor of keeping the funding because of what we do. We have to pay our own insurance, we have to have money aside for maintenance. At one point, this conveyance tax was only for the purpose of purchasing property but the more recent Charter Changes allow us to use it for maintenance funds.

Mike Carpenter, Danielson Pike, submitted a handout sheet. He noted that they hire no one. They do all the work themselves and maintain 1000 acres, using their own tools and fuel. Mr. Carpenter asked about debt service. Kelli Russ explained that there is not a cash flow problem. Linda Tibbetts said they have been very sound with the money they have. Ms. Russ said they are not asking for money back. Ms. Tibbetts said that if the townspeople want to change the Charter, that's fine. By Town Council vote, we have to cover our own expenses. David Paolino asked what she sees as an attainable percentage change? Ms. Russ was thinking a flat amount that she has to have would be a better way; you need at least \$20,000 a year to operate. Last year you received \$75,000, the year before it was in the 50s, so in the last two years we've given away \$125,000. She isn't saying she

is not doing good things, but when the town has such limited resources and can't fund the rescue. It's not personal that she thought she could decrease. If they could just move forward with a Charter Change this November and make sure you have a solid fund balance.

Matt Haynes, Johnson Road, spoke about the sale of development rights. Ms. Tibbetts said all of the Land Trust properties have development rights protected by the State. He suggested selling the development rights before donating town land to the Land Trust.

Mike Carpenter reviewed the rest of his information sheet, and suggested that the town borrow money to make up this temporary deficit. Ms. Russ said that debt service will affect the 4 percent cap. They could plug the hole by taking the money out of the savings account, but that doesn't correct the problem. David Paolino said this is to change the course for the future to stay solvent. Mr. Carpenter said you don't solve an immediate problem with a long-term solution. If you have the money, you spend it.

Walter May, Anthony Road, suggested building a solar site. Denise L. DiFranco said they had tried but it got shot down. Mr. May suggested they ask the Senator and Representative go to the public utilities commission. David Paolino said it was put on hold because National Grid was sold to another institution that didn't like all the contracts. Mr. May said he used to be the DPW Director and at the time the school Superintendent and Principal was Gerry Tetreault. He requested that DPW plow the school and that he would compensate us. To his knowledge, they have never billed them and the money is in their budget. The school budget is \$4,579,398.00. We have 235 students. We have 12 students in pre-K, that's babysitting as far as he is concerned. He's been called old school, and he is. They budget \$8K a year for snow removal. Ask for that money. Ms. Russ said that was for the roof.

Patti Moreau, Central Pike, said that when we are talking about the land the town owns, that most of it is landlocked and very wet and there's nothing we can do anything with.

Other people who spoke are David Rathbun, Donna Mansolillo, Paul Ouiedat, Lynne Rider, Linda Tibbetts, David Paolino, Cheryl Hawes, Patti Moreau, Tom Boyden, and Kelli Russ.

Denise L. DiFranco stated that May 12, Trash [Removal] will be on the agenda.

Dennis Therrien invited people to come to a Land Trust meeting.

2. Resignation of Building
& Zoning Official

Denise L. DiFranco said that the next item was the resignation of the Building & Zoning official. David Paolino said that Larry left him a voice message on March 29 at 2:47 p.m. He said to call him back and he was putting in his resignation. Denise L. DiFranco said that she checked with Atty. Tourgee that they can accept a verbal.

Heidi Rogers moved, David Paolino seconded, to accept the Building & Zoning official's resignation with regrets. Motion passed 5 - 0.

Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

3. Advertisement for
Building & Zoning
Official

Denise L. DiFranco next was to advertise for the position. They have an ad to use and they will place it in the same places. David Paolino noted that George Dumont will help out with permitting and inspections.

4. *Charter Change – Land
Trust moved up*

Heidi Rogers moved, Chris Stone seconded, to place an ad for a Building & Zoning official.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

Future Agenda Items – Trash April 14, RI 4-H Fair Request, and Tues 4/12 budget workshop at 5 p.m.

III. ADJOURNMENT

David Paolino moved to adjourn. Chris Stone seconded. Motion passed 5 - 0.

Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Submitted by,

Susan M. Dillon, Town Clerk