

Minutes March 15, 2021

Present: Tom Finnegan, Harry Nelson, Graham Gitchell, Wes Staples, Bob Bartlett, Scott Talbot, Randall Walter, Mike Petrovick , Liza Sargent, Clyde Simino, and Jason Bafundi

Meeting convened at 4:00 p.m.

Tom started the meeting with an announcement that the Board of Selectmen would not be attending but would discuss the situation at their March 18 meeting at 10:00 a.m. From there, the main issue was a question of why did the vote fail?

The general feeling is that the committee failed to reach the people who do not follow the internet or social media, resulting in many people's questions that were not answered by attending any of the open public meetings.

With references to cost and site, it was noted that the town had been aware of the site, the wetlands, and the permits from town meeting articles. With a 59.5% approval, it was determined that too many people got involved with the project too late. More than half the voters were in favor of the project, but not quite enough to make the 3/5 necessary for passage.

The question became one of how to reach people to inform them of the conditions that the firefighters and their families face with the current station, of one of education regarding the specifics of the new building and the requirements placed on a fire station construction. More information is needed than just the details of the construction. The townspeople need to be told of the hardships currently faced by the firefighters and their families, of the conditions under which the firefighters are working when they respond to any call. The consequences of not going forward with the project greatly affect the firefighters' health and safety. As one firefighter put it, "We've done so much with so little for so long" the townspeople have no idea of the working conditions.

It was determined that smaller outreach groups would be helpful in spreading the word regarding the plans and the needs of the department. Face-to-face discussions will be more informative than a public session. The need will not go away, and the cost will only rise.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Bartlett