

Selectboard Minutes  
8/17/2020

Members Present by Zoom: Christine Werneke, Katie Mather, David Sander, Roger Brown

Members Present by phone: none

Absent: Bard Hill

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Others Present by Zoom: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Kyle Kapitansky, acting Police Chief; Connie Bona, Finance; Ravi Venkataraman, Planner; Kendall Chamberlain, Water & Sewer Superintendent; the meeting was recorded for MMCTV Channel 15, also present: Jay Furr, Martha Nye, Jeff Forward, Lou Borie, Ruairi Hutchison, Ethan Tapper, Rebecca Rouiller, Laurie Dana, John Johnston (JJ), Sau, Diane Mariano, Mary Houle, John Rankin, Patti Pallito, Carole Furr, Miranda Lescaze, John, Michelle, Cori, Connie VanEeghan, Ruth Miller, Marie, Nick Neverisky, Patricia Gilbert, Swaine, June Heston, Justin Graham, Wright Preston, Sarah Heim, Zachary Maia, Steph Kamin, Colleen Decker, Karen Yaggy, Dean Slokum,

Called to Order: 7:03 PM

**Welcome by David.**

**Comments from the public:**

Mary Houle said that she had sent a letter requesting a waiver of a fee and hoped that it could be addressed tonight. David asked if we could bring it up without warning it? It was decided that it needed to be warned first and would be on the next agenda.

**I. Additions or Deletions to Agenda -none**

**II. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present**

**a) Consideration of approving Access Permit Application**

Roger moved to approve the access permit; Katie seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Katie, David, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

**b) Consideration of approval of liquor license for 39 Bridge St.**

Katie moved to approve the liquor license for 39 Bridge St.,; Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Katie, David, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

**c) Consideration of appointments to the Recreation Committee**

Ravi reported:

- that there are 5 applicants with 5 open seats,
- that of the 5 open seats, 2 of those are 1 for Bolton, 1 for Huntington
- that 1 of the 5 is from Bolton with no applicant from Huntington
- that with this appointment there would be a full quorum.
- that if all applicants were appointed then the charter would need to be changed
- that there are various ways to approach the situation.

Discussion included:

- that Katie said she liked the option to appoint the Bolton resident, then Mark Fausel and approve all applicants and expand the committee by having 2 alternate members.
- that Christine said that makes sense having alternates to be certain of having a quorum
- Christine asked who the two members are that currently serve on the committee. Josh responded that Harland Stockwell and Kirsten Santor are the current members each with 3 year terms
- that Mary Houle said she didn't think that the Selectboard had to change the charter for the recreation committee but could make the change themselves

Christine moved to add 2 alternates to the Recreation Committee board for a term of one year each, Katie seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Katie, Christine, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Christine moved to appoint Ashley Hanlon to a 1 year term, Stefani Hartsfield to a 1 year term, Mark Fausel to a 2 year term, Martha Nye – as an alternate, Chrissy Keating to a 3 year term. There was no second.

Discussion continued:

- with Martha Nye asking if she was going to an alternate and what did that mean? Josh replied that she would attend meetings and vote only if another member was absent. Martha said that she is interested, that she had ideas she wanted to bring forward from her experiences with the senior center.

Katie asked for a friendly amendment and moved to appoint Ashley Hanlon as the alternate, Stefani Hartsfield to a 1 year term, Mark Fausel to a 2 year term, Martha Nye to a 1 year term, and Chrissy Keating to a 3 year term; Christine seconded. Roll call vote: Katie, Roger, Christine, and David voted affirmatively.

Stefani Hartsfield said that having the Senior Center voice is great.

There was another friendly amendment after Ravi explained that his recommendation was that Chrissy Keating, the applicant from Bolton, be a 2 year term.

Katie moved to amend the previous motion to appoint Ashley Hanlon as the alternate, Stefani Hartsfield to a 1 year term, Mark Fausel to a 2 year term, Martha Nye to a 1 year term, and Chrissy Keating to a 2 year term; Christine seconded. Roll call vote: Katie, Roger, Christine, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

#### **d) Consideration of appointments to the Housing Committee**

Ravi reported that 11 letters interest were received and that the planning commission recommended appointment of 9 candidates with 2 alternate positions. The recommendation from the committee was to have Virginia Clarke, Wright Cronin, Connie vanEeghen, Carole Furr, Sarah Hem, Miranda Lescaze, Zachary Maia, Andrew Mannix, Ruth Miller as full time members of the Town of Richmond Housing Committee; as well as Mark Fausel and Jackie Pichette as alternate members of the Town of Richmond Housing Committee.

Katie moved to change the charge of the Housing Committee to allow for additional members; Christine, seconded. Roll call vote: Katie, Roger, Christine, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Katie moved to appoint Virginia Clarke, Wright Cronin, Connie vanEeghen, Carole Furr, Sarah Hem, Miranda Lescaze, Zachary Maia, Andrew Mannix, Ruth Miller as full time members of the Town of Richmond Housing Committee; as well as Mark Fausel and Jackie Pichette as alternate members; Christine seconded. Roll call vote: Katie, Roger, Christine, and David voted affirmatively.

Katie thanked Ravi for all the effort he put into securing people for the committees and the way he informed the Selectboard.

**e) Consideration of appointment to the Andrews Community Forest Committee**

Josh reported:

- that 2 members of the committee have resigned, and that Nick Neverisky would like to be appointed to one of the open seats

Katie moved to approve Nick Neverisky to the Andrews Forest Committee; Christine seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Christine, Katie and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

**f) Consideration of approval of a logger for a timber harvest at the Andrews Community Forest**

Josh reported:

- that Ethan Tapper had reported at the last meeting that he had received bids for the logging to be done in the forest and that their recommendation was to use Browns Logging & Maple.
- that the revenue from the logging is estimated to be \$20,000 and that the committee has requested that the money be available to the committee for future forestry work.

Discussion included:

- that Ethan Tapper said that this plan is using logging as a tool to educate and isn't just a logging job for revenue. That the money could be used for invasive species control and improving access for recreational uses. Ethan added that he has a good working relationship with the recommended logger.
- Mary Houle said she is concerned with the revenue asking if there is not a requirement that it go into the general fund and have it addressed at town meeting during the budget process? Roger said he thought that the revenue should come into the town with a budget allocation to the Andrews Community Forest based on need. Katie was said the counter argument is that the money might not be made available if there is a need for sidewalks or something else. Roger said, the Town Center issue is an example of why it should not be immediately allocated to the Andrews Community Forest. Connie said that this is being done during this fiscal year so the budget is set and would not be impacted because it was non budgeted revenue. Connie thought the money could go to the Andrews Community Forest Committee if the board wanted.

- that Wright Preston (ACF chair) said that logging would be limited and not this was not a yearly amount that would be realized. He encouraged this logging job income to go to the committee because it would be many, many, years before the next logging took place. He said that there is plenty of oversight because the committee could not spend the money without approval of the Selectboard.
- Roger felt that the amount was not modest and that if the Town runs out of money \$20,000 is real money.
- that Wright said Ethan would be charging for the hard costs associated with the logging and that those expenses could come out of the proceeds. He said that grants have funded most other projects. Ethan said his costs were \$300 and were already paid. –
- that Roger said he thought the Selectboard and future Selectboards would act appropriately. Christine agreed that the money should not be siloed and that the budget process is important. She would like to see a policy that money comes into the town and goes through the budgeting process.
- that Ethan said the contract is the thing that needs to be done tonight. He said that the towns he has recently worked with segregated the funds and that he is aware that in practice putting the money in the general fund has not worked.
- that Roger said the revenue is coming from Town property and the question is, if the money is the taxpayers, then it should be discussed how it is spent in the budgetary process
- that Jeff Forward suggested that the problems at Town Center have occurred because maintenance has been deferred for too long. The money coming in was not used for maintaining the building and we are now in a mess. Roger replied that he did not think that the board should lock future Selectboard's into anything. If something got deferred, he said it was deferred because there were more pressing issues.
- Mary Houle said that it was voted on to purchase the property and the money should go back to the town

Katie moved to award the logging contract to Browns Logging & Maple; Christine seconded. Roll call vote: Katie, Christine, and David voted affirmatively. Roger abstained citing personal business with the intended contract recipient. Motion passed.

David asked if the proceeds discussion should be moved to another meeting. Christine agreed. Wright Preston asked that the Andrews Forest Committee be appraised of the discussion on the funds, David agreed.

**g) Discussion of request to limit overweight vehicles on Kenyon Rd.**

Josh reported:

- that there had been a request from a resident to limit overweight vehicles on Kenyon Rd due to large vehicles creating a hazard for walkers and bikers.
- that by permit, truckers can use Richmond roads
- that to limit vehicles a traffic ordinance amendment would be necessary
- that Josh said the question tonight is whether to take it up tonight or take a longer look at it. Pete cautioned that if this road is closed to overweight vehicles it may create a problem on another road. David thought having them going through downtown would be more of a problem.
- Roger asked if David knew where the trucks were going? David said he did not really know. Roger said he wondered if we closed it if truckers would go through Williston. He wondered if Kenyon has more traffic due to Dugway being closed.

- that Dean Slokum said he is had a garbage truck and propane truck end up in his pond.
- that Patti Pallito said you're taking your life in your hands if you walk on the road.
- that Roger said the town can change the speed on dirt roads. Josh said the limit is 35, if lower than that it requires a speed study.
- Patti Pallito, the road used to be 25MPH but then went to 35MPH. David thought it was always 35MPH. Dean Slokum said the limit was 25MPH for years.
- David said 35MPH is too fast and we should check in with Pete.
- Katie asked if Pete could reach out to permit users to see how much their using the road. Steph Kamin said that people are always stopping, and she was afraid someone was going to get hurt.

#### **h) Discussion of cost of Library HVAC System and basement moisture mitigation**

Josh reported:

- that the ways to finance a HVAC system for the library was discussed at the last meeting.
- that the lawyer said the town would have to vote for any money being borrowed
- that VLCT agreed that the Selectboard has no loan borrowing authority.
- that the Town Center Fund cannot be used as it is was not budgeted
- that unassigned funds could be used but there is not enough money in the fund
- that to move ahead quickly would require a special town meeting
- that a bond vote would take 45 days, or it could wait until Town Meeting in March
- the engineer could look at just the heating without ventilation and AC
- that the Library may get through another winter per the Librarian
- that Christine said that for tonight the question is, would we like have money approved through unassigned funds some amount that could then be used for JJ to identify a phased approach for stabilizing the library heating system. Christine added that the library has \$10,000 they can put toward the project. Christine asked if JJ could address the issue before opening discussion to the public. David agreed.
- that JJ said that if there is a problem something will need to be done anyway. He said that the larger the project the more cost effective and if parts of the project were deferred, they would have to be addressed at a later time and the overall costs would go up.

Discussion included:

- that Mary Houle asked if there is a risk doing only one thing and thought there should be a bond vote. Maintenance needs to be done on a regular basis. The water in the building basement has been a problem for as long as the town has owned the building.
- Jeff Forward said there is a difference between revenue from rent and revenue from taxpayers to address capital needs between budget cycles. He suggested that the issues at the library are not going to be resolved tonight. We have an opportunity in November when voting to have a capital reserve fund established that allows the Selectboard to use the money as needed.
- Christine said that tonight we need to establish an amount that could be spent from unassigned funds.

Christine moved to spend up to \$40,000 for urgent work before a bond vote, with the library adding \$10,000 from the Library Reserve Fund for a total of \$50,000; Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Christine, Katie, David voted affirmatively. Roger could not be heard.

Discussion prior to vote:

- Roger said he would like to understand the full cost of bringing the library maintenance up to date and include the Town Center needs and what the cost of new buildings would be. He said he felt it would be irresponsible to not find out.
- Katie asked Roger if he saw the outline of information in the packet. Roger said he did and wants a longer look at it.
- that David asked if the band aid repairs of \$50,000 would mean spending more money. JJ responded that it would mean spending more money.
- Roger asked JJ if the library was in good shape. JJ said the inside has very little deficiencies. JJ said the roof and siding need replacement and the heating and basement need work. JJ did not have a number for those improvements and repairs. Roger asked if in the next 20 years there will need to be structural repairs. JJ responded no.
- that Katie asked if we could correct for worsening conditions in the basement, and what happens if the pipes freeze? JJ responded that a zone or two lost for the heating would mean bringing in electric heaters. For the moisture there could be some work done to mitigate moisture.
- Jeff Forward said he wanted to respond to Roger's thoughts saying the buildings are iconic buildings, that are well loved, and he thought having an extended conversation about them has been done. Roger said his talking about being irresponsible meant having the conversation. Jeff said that it is not just the dollar amount, that this was not the time to have the discussion, and that there are many people who have feelings about what should happen. Jeff suggested that this be a subject for the next meeting with an article for November to vote on and clarify the use of the Town Center fund. His concern was spending more than was needed by only doing part of what needs to be done.
- that Mary Houle said mini splits might be viable adding that every asset the Town owns is important.
- that Connie said the motion is to jump to unassigned funds, the library has a reserve fund of over \$40,000 why not use that? Christine replied that the \$10,000 of the library reserve would be used toward the repairs in her motion. She said this assumes there will be a vote in November and that this would mitigate problems to get us through to January. She said that JJ is being asked to identify what can be done without having to spend additional money later. Connie asked if there was another use earmarked for the rest of the reserve. Christine said there are a number of other issues they need to address. They were looking for a share from the town. Laurie Dana said that the shingles on the addition are falling off, that the rest of the money will be spent on that. Connie asked if that is something that can be budgeted for next year. Laurie said most of the tar paper is showing on the roof and that they were going out to bid on it. JJ said he has not looked at the roof recently.
- Roger said when you spend hundreds of thousands of dollars you get on a path, maybe it should be looked at whether these building are going to take us into the next 80-100 years.
- that Roger asked if we have enough money in unassigned funds. Connie said she did not know but would have a better idea in 6 weeks after the audit. Josh said at

the end of FY19 there was \$215,000 and that the amount is a culmination of several years and that the amount will go up or down for FY20. Josh said that the amount is based on each year's over/ under spending. It is not a reserve fund. Roger said it is unrestricted. Connie said yes.

**i) Update from the Town Center and Library Buildings Committee**

Christine reported:

- that JJ will look at what is possible for phasing in the HVAC project up to \$50,000
- that the plan will come back to the Selectboard at the next meeting
- that the committee has been looking at the Town Center building and that they would like to see how the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor could be used to have town staff located on one floor
- that simultaneously the committee has been engaged with MMCTV about space
- that the committee met with MMCTV and discussed a lease and rate which is equivalent to what the school was paying
- that there is work that needs to be done but none of the work should impact MMCTV's business
- that more details will be brought to the Selectboard for consideration.

**j) Follow up on parking on the eastern end of Cochran Rd. and the town owned lot on Cochran Rd.**

Josh reported:

- that since the last SB meeting there have been several other meetings
- that the Richmond Land Trust set up the temporary parking in the Bombardier field
- that he had set up meeting with Mary Houle about temporary parking which generated several questions/ ideas/ concerns:
  1. Did FEMA need to approve any structure build on there, like a fence? Josh said he has inquired but has not gotten a quick answer back.
  2. That a neighbor farmer is worried about safety, risk to the land and theft. Josh said she has stated that she will appeal the zoning process and we would be beyond the date for temporary parking to be useful.
  3. Trespassing on Mary's property
  4. Take trees into consideration
  5. Signage to trails
  6. Updating of the ordinance

Discussion:

- David said that there is a large dead tree that would need to be removed before we considered parking
- Mary Houle asked if the permit that was posted was valid. Josh responded that after consulting with Suzanne Montegna, the zoning officer, it is a valid permit. Mary said she will not tolerate this, she said she is not satisfied with the decision as Josh was aware and that it is being appealed
- Michelle said she is the tenant farmer at Mary Houle's property and is thankful that her concerns were reported accurately. The environmental concern is that she is in conflict of having a parking lot in the middle of the agricultural land. She said soil compaction, pollution, vehicle pollution, were problems and she asked how we are

valuing the land, that it should be agricultural adding that if this proceeds she will appeal the process.

- John Rankin said the land ultimately is owned by the Town, and the idea that a small number of cars is an environmental concern is not realistic. He asked that the Board continue with the process.
- Katie said she would take people at their word, so what we are trying to do cannot happen as quickly as the Bombardier property but long term we need to move forward. She was not convinced that the land will be more impacted and believes the process should continue
- David said he looked at the property and did not believe this season would work but that a plan could be put together for the future
- Marie from Jonesville Estates asked the Board to continue to look at long term solutions there.
- Christine said that if there was parking there, there is no clear path to the river. David agreed saying that if the land was used there would have to be very clear directions on how to get there without crossing private land. Katie agreed, we need a plan and signage. Roger said we cannot do it right now because of the promise of an appeal. He asked what do we do to move forward? Katie said we need to make this a priority and to make a long-term plan. Katie asked if we are going to hand this off to the Transportation Committee or continue with the permit process. David thought both. Katie thought it should be kept on the agenda and come up with a plan.
- Mary asked, if the board does not think it can be completed this fall would the permit be withdrawn? She said the budget needs to be addressed and should include fencing on 3 sides.
- Katie thought the plan should be withdrawn and a plan be made including the Transportation Committee's thoughts
- Christine asked Mary Houle if there was any way there could be a path to the river. Mary responded saying the Richmond Land Trust wanted her to give her property away. Mary said that there was no way that she would give up any of her rights to the property.
- Diane Mariano said if we are going to put any parking in we should protect Mary. While this is town owned land she said, we need to see a big view, she suggested a special committee.

#### **k) Update on agreement regarding curation of artwork on town property**

Josh reported:

- that this discussion was continued from the last meeting
- that Rebecca R was going to work on an agreement and is still working on it
- that the plan is to review it prior to the next meeting with the lawyers

Discussion included:

- that Katie offered to review the agreement saying she thought Bard would also
- Mary H. said on the previous topic you did not decide whether you were withdrawing the permit. Mary also asked how to get an abortion kills on the boards at Town Center. Katie said that is the reason for the agreement and it would contain the process by which artists will have the ability to use the space. David said the decision was to withdraw the permit.

#### **l) Consideration of prioritizing roads for speed studies**



David said a number of roads have been identified. Josh said we have talked about the process and which areas to study. He said that the roads identified were: Hinesburg Rd., Huntington Rd., Cochran Rd, the south end of Kenyon Rd., Williams Hill Rd., and Jericho Rd.

Discussion included:

- that Roger said the Town of Jericho did a series of speed studies and he was working on getting the one for Jericho Road. He said it may or not be useful.
- that Josh asked to identify the roads by importance
- Roger said he is interested in seeing Jericho's study and talk to Hinesburg about how they justified getting 35MPH on their ends of the roads.
- that Josh said the State has been notified that we are requesting a speed study for Route 2 because it is a state road it is a separate request
- Mary Houle said Cochran Rd has that new sign so it should be self-limiting, saying she thought a traffic study on Cochran Rd was unreasonable. David responded that he did not agree with Mary because of all the people recreating on Cochran Rd.
- Roger thought the roads used most heavily should go first. Katie said let's table it until you have information from Hinesburg. Katie asked if the Selectboard could empower Josh and Roger to prioritize the roads it could move along more efficiently.

Katie moved, to have Josh and Roger prioritize the roads for the study; Christine seconded. Roll call vote: David, Katie, Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

#### **m) Update from the Racial Equity Group**

Christine reported:

- that the group continues to meet weekly
- that they are considering a larger group that would meet bi-weekly for educational purposes
- that she wanted to encourage people to visit and join the community discussion
- that the group is working on an educational calendar
- Ruairi Hutchison said that the speakers coming in are vital to the community and that he would like the town to be more welcoming to black people
- Sau asked if town staff or elected officials go through bias training. Kyle responded that the police do have training. Josh said other employees do not.
- Mary Houle said Kyle would be able to present information he has learned. Ruairi said that in no way should a white officer lead these discussions. Mary said she felt Ruairi's comment was racist and said she would not be baited and neither should the Selectboard or anyone else.
- June Heston thought it would be valuable to hear what the police are doing for training adding that recommendations cannot be made without knowing.

#### **n) Discussion of health insurance for Town staff**

Josh reported:

- that Hickock & Boardman was hired last year to help with keeping costs down.
- that we moved from BCBS to MVP and offered two plans.
- that having them onboard earlier will help
- that MVP asked for a 7.3% increase and that a 2.7% increase was approved. Josh said that we would not know what the actual increases look like for a few months. Connie said that some plans could go down and others go up more than 2.7%.

- Roger said he would like to see about offering more plans like the low cost option. He thought looking at how we are going to do health insurance for the next 5 years was important.
- Connie said we shouldn't make any decision until we know which plans are going up and which are going down. She thought looking to Hickock and Boardman for advice on what other towns are doing related to health insurance would be a good idea. She said most employees have been pleased with MVP but there is one family that is having an issue, adding that they had the same issue with BCBS. Roger thought Hickock and Boardman might be able to help and asked if the family had reached out to them. Roger said looking at the benefits administration is going to be important in the future. He asked to have it on the agenda for the next time.

**o) Follow up on diesel prices**

Josh reported:

- that he called 6 different suppliers all of them were right around Patterson.
- that Champlain Valley Fuels were quit a bit different .18 cents per gallon less
- that Patterson was called to see if they could do better being the local company, they dropped their pricing by .10 for a savings of about \$1300 a year.
- that Josh said he'd like to stay local but will keep tracking prices and see if can be lowered.

Discussion included:

- that Roger appreciated Josh's work and likes buying local but we should bid it out, he doesn't like being over charged by local companies. David said he was ok with Patterson. Josh will see if they can do better.

**p) Follow up on status of online forms**

Josh reported:

- that looking at zoning all the forms are online. Some are fillable some are not.
- that an online credit card is harder due to having to use a 3<sup>rd</sup> party but is usually more work for the financial person
- that user fees are paid by the person paying, not the town

Discussion included:

- that Connie said when she does one or thirty payments by credit card it takes 15 minutes. Roger thought we should add a fee to pay for Connie's time.

**q) Update on Police Chief hiring process**

Josh reported:

- that there are 17 applicants
- that the committee members have been finalized
- that they have been working on refining the written exercise and interview questions
- that the committee will narrow the applicants down to 4-5
- that interviews will be done and reduce the number of applicants down to 2-3
- then second interviews will be done

**r) Update on Bridge St. infrastructure project**

Josh reported:

- that it is nearing completion
- that the extended line is complete and was retested today

- that the system will be completely tied in later in the week
- that Thursday is the second walk thru with the punch list.
- that water will be out on Thursday

**s) Update on Dugway Rd. project**

Josh reported:

- that we are still waiting on the archeology study from UVM
- that we are still working on the easement with Richmond Land Trust
- that it is not looking like we will go out to bid for the fall

**Minutes:**

Katie moved to approve the Minutes of 8/3/20, Christine seconded. Roll Call Vote: Katie, Roger, Christine, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

**Invoices and warrants:**

Roger moved to approve warrants as presented, Christine seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Katie, Christine, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Josh will send the warrant out for signatures using DocuSign.

**Purchase Orders:**

Roger moved to approve PO #4021 to Sullivan and Powers for the audit in the amount up to \$19,820; Katie seconded. Roll call vote: David, Katie, Roger, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Connie said this didn't include the breakout for water and sewer.

Roger moved to approve PO #3767 to Reynolds & Son for the repeater for the Fire Dept.; Katie seconded. Roll call vote: David, Katie, Roger, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Roger moved to approve PO #3986 to Champlain Door Systems in an amount not to exceed \$27,985 for 7 new overhead doors for the Highway Dept; Katie seconded. Roll call vote: David, Katie, Roger, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

**IV. Discuss Items for Next Agenda**

Waiver

Transportation Committee charge – Josh will put together an outline

Library update

Art agreement

Landscaping update

Update of website related to police stuff

Town Website

Healthcare/ insurance

**V. Executive Session if necessary-** none

**VI. Adjourn**

Katie moved to adjourn; Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Katie, Christine, Roger, and David voted affirmatively.

The meeting adjourned at 10:48 PM