

## **SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**

**MEETING DATE:** WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2019  
6:00 P.M.

**MEETING PLACE:** TOWN CAMPUS ROOM A

### **BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES**

#### **6:00 p.m. Special Session**

First Selectman Banisch called the Special Session of Wednesday, April 10, 2019 to order at 6:05 p.m. Present were First Selectman Banisch, Selectwoman Ferris (via teleconference), Selectman Goldberg, Selectman Murphy and Selectman Wilson(via teleconference).

1. Pledge of Allegiance.  
First Selectman Banisch led the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Public Comment.  
None.
3. Discuss and take action to approve including a Question on the May 14, 2019 Referendum to approve the redevelopment of Academy School as a Community Center.

First Selectman Banisch read the following statement:

I feel strongly that one of the most important things we have to do is to keep the Academy School process moving forward, as I have been doing for the past three years. It's for that reason that I have supported the idea of this referendum in May.

I believe that a vote now, asking voters to determine officially, that the Town needs to prioritize a Community Center within the Academy School Building; at a construction cost of \$14million is part of this forward movement.

I also believe that, although in the past, the Town has only brought one vote with bonding information to the public; we are not beholden to past practice when this same past practice may not be the most beneficial to the voters of this Town.

My intention in suggesting and advocating for this advisory referendum question is to allow for an official vote to keep the process moving forward. No matter what the outcome, the process will be able to continue with what I feel is a clearer path towards a resolution and future use of the building that satisfies the majority of the Town.

If the voters approve the pathway towards a Community Center at this cost, then we as a Board know that our next steps will include convening a Building Committee, conducting staffing reviews for the new services to be offered, and to bring bonding information to the public for the next official vote on how to fund the Community Center project.

If the voters do not approve this advisory referendum, then we as a Board know that our next steps will be to determine what other future uses might be brought to a vote, and if the Community Center project could possibly be brought back for lesser cost or in a different form.

With all of that said, it is also important that we as a Board work together to keep the process moving forward and that our Board is united in our vision for the future of the Academy School. The one thing I do not want to do is confuse the issue and the voters with a vote at this time that doesn't take into account the other capital needs of our town. For those reasons, and to ensure the voters that we are of a united vision, I would consider agreeing to holding off the referendum in May if we agree on the following:

That we do not eliminate from future consideration the idea of two referenda on a single topic.

That the Board of Selectmen will immediately begin work to answer questions left unanswered as by the Academy Community Center Design Committee. These questions include potential grants that may be available and total operational costs on an annual basis, which can be determined by a staffing profile study for Community Center operations;

That we agree to move a comprehensive capital plan to referendum after January 1st.

Selectman Murphy and Selectman Goldberg

**MOVED** by Selectman Wilson and seconded by Selectman Murphy to **APPROVE** tabling items 3 and 4 of this Agenda.

**VOTE:** the motion was approved unanimously.

4. Discuss and take action to approve the wording of a Question on the May 14, 2019 Referendum to approve the redevelopment of Academy School as a Community Center.
5. Public Comment.

Catherine Donovan stated that she was confused by comments that indicated that there is a "silent voter" in the Town that may disagree with the results of the two Great Blue Research polls. She added that the polls showed that if people do not want a Community Center, they want a Town park. She asked the Board to consider what would be done next if the Community Center plan fails.

Joan Walker of Stepping Stone Lane stated that the Board has a responsibility to listen to the constituents of the Town. She stated that the Board needs to listen to the residents who have made it clear that they do not want the building sold.

Carol Woodran of Overbook Road stated that when this item is brought to a vote, the public needs more information. She stated that the residents need the details of what the uses the building will allow; and what types of income these programs would bring into the Town.

Catherine Ferrante thanked the Board for taking the non-bonding referendum off of the May ballot. She stated that by doing so the Board was moving the process responsibly.

Dwight Lopes of Old Farms Road thanked the Board for simplifying this process. He asked that the First Selectman include his written statement in the minutes of this meeting.

Katherine Marsh advised the residents to go online and read the proposals and plans that were part of the work of the Ad-Hoc Committee.

6. Adjournment.

There being no objections, First Selectman Banisch adjourned the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Rhines  
Executive Assistant