

## General Government Minutes for 2/17/2021

- 1. Roll Call: Voting:** Councilors Gus Steeves, Mike Marketti, Jackie Ryan. Citizen Members Denise Clemence, Martena Shea. **Others:** Town Manager Michael McCall, Councilors Jack Jovan, John Daniel, Joe Cotrona & Dave Adams, Treasurer/Collector Melissa Zawadzki, Town Clerk Maddie Bonadies, Airport Commission Chair Rick Clemence, Airport Manager Ron Plouffe, Stantec's John Henry.
- 2. Minutes for 2/1/21:** No corrections. **Motion to accept: Marketti/Ryan. Approved unanimously.**
- 3. Move polling place:** Town Manager McCall said the need was born out of the fact the Community Center is being used for vaccinations, and those are likely to last longer than anticipated. He discussed it with Receiver /Superintendent Jeff Villar, who said he'd be willing to shift a planned in-service day at SMHS to that date (6/8/21) to ensure there are no students there so it can host the election in the gym. Law requires the council to approve the change and the town clerk to notify voters. Town Clerk Bonadies noted this will only affect this year's town election. She'll notify voters in English and Spanish by mail, on town website, and on the Armory doors. There will be regular absentee voting, but she's still awaiting word from Boston on whether there will be early voting. Councilor Ryan suggested using the emergency road signs and the Everbridge reverse-911 system. Councilors Marketti & Steeves expressed concerns about Torrey Road's accessibility, particularly for walkers, asking about using Cole Ave and/or the Common. Councilor Jovan said the EOC discussed options, but decided Cole Ave didn't have enough parking and would still have Head Start students that day, while the Common would pose a security problem. Citizen Member Clemence agreed with helping walkers, suggesting having a shuttle bus or van taking people from the armory to SMHS. It might be funded by COVID money, and Town Manager McCall said he'd look into that.  
**Motion to recommend moving the election to SMHS due to COVID: Clemence/Ryan. Approved unanimously.**
- 4. Review town's share of airport grant:** SAC Chair Clemence said the airport master plan slated the runway and taxiway paving for several years from now, but FAA saw now as a good chance to do it all at once now – about 6000 total feet plus new lights, fence, beacons and some tree clearing. Total project = about \$7.7 million, town's share 5% (\$385,000). He said the commission is looking at using solar revenues to pay the town back if we bond it all to “avoid a drain on the general budget;” it now receives \$19,600/year, but that should rise to about \$29K by the end of the 20-year solar contract. He briefly listed several businesses that have landed up there recently, noted fuel sales have been up, and said the airport is “self-sustaining on its expenses.”  
When Councilor Steeves asked about the blank grant form, Mr. Henry described the FAA process as “a little bit backward;” they need confirmation of funding and other details before the application can be filled out. Pavement conditions are “low” – 53 runway, 38 taxi-way, both well below FAA standards. This plan and the next agenda item will approve Stantec's Task Order to do design work by 4/5/21 and go to bid for grant application (due 5/1). Work should start in fall. Once done, the town will be eligible to resume getting \$150K/year in FAA funding that can be used for “revenue generating” projects; that would also require finishing the transient apron (likely in 2-3 years).  
Citizen Member Clemence was concerned about the cost and asked about using annual revenue to pay it and make sure it's “an airport project, not a town project.” She doesn't want taxes to fund it, but noted “taxpayer money is [also] at stake if we don't fix the runway” because FAA could require repayment of years of back funding. Town Manager McCall said a \$385K bond would not have a significant impact on town's bonding capacity or debt.  
Councilor Marketti asked how many town residents have planes there. Town Manager Plouffe said 4, but a total of 33 are based there, many of them businesspeople from nearby towns with many recent returnees because of the improvements. The commission last reviewed fees a year ago; they charge three tiers of rent – outside tie-down, in a community hanger, or individual hanger – starting at \$50/month.

Councilor Steeves asked how the proposal would affect the long-term plan to extend the runway. Airport Manager Plouffe said that project would require rerouting Pleasant Street. SAC Chair Clemence said it's likely to cost about half of this work. Mr. Henry said it'll require land takings and FAA doesn't see it as justifiable now.

Councilor Jovan noted doing the work is part of town's economic regrowth, and asked the TM to find a funding mechanism to make the match. Town Manager McCall said the money's not necessary until August; we could take it from stabilization.

Councilor Cotrona asked about a couple of other recent airport grants and effect on staff/maintenance, noted he sees the cost as difficult to meet with high taxes and other needs. SAC Chair Clemence noted one was for the feasibility study that led to this; the other was for tree grinding equipment, but these trees are too big. Once work's done, it'll require less maintenance for years.

**Motion to apply for the grant with the Town Manager working with the Airport Commission to find funding: Marketti/Clemence. Passed unanimously.**

5. **Fund Task Order #2:** SAC Chair Clemence and Mr. Henry said this formally funds Stantec's contract to do the design engineering and bidding plus about 100 days of construction oversight. If, for some reason, we don't do the project this year, town's share won't increase, and the engineering will still be valid when we do it. Mr. Clemence said the FAA allowed some changes to cut cost; Mr. Henry noted they already did an airspace analysis and wildlife study. Total cost = 90% FAA, 5% state, 5% town.

**Motion to recommend approving Task Order #2 and authorizing the Town Manager to sign contract and related documents: Ryan/Clemence. Approved unanimously.**

6. **New Business:** None.

7. **Adjourned at 8:10 pm.**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Councilor Gus Steeves, GenGov Chair*