

1 Town of Stockton Springs

2 Public Hearing – Future of Stockton Springs Elementary School Building

3 February 10, 2020, 6 p.m., Town Office

4 Minutes

5 Present: Betsy Bradley. Peter Curley.

6 Also Present: Jennifer King – Town Manager, Mac Smith – Recording Secretary.

7 Ms. Bradley called the Public Hearing to order at 6:00 p.m.

8 Ms. King explained the process to the assembled crowd of approximately 50 people.

9 Ms. King gave an overview of the referendum question that would be on the secret ballot.

10 Ms. King explained the expenses currently associated with the building since the Town took
11 ownership of the building and property. She explained the additional maintenance costs that
12 have been incurred. Ms. King explained the future property tax assessment of the property. She
13 explained the process and expense of mold remediation if the Town votes to not sell the building.
14 She explained the expense and process if the Town votes not to sell the building and the building
15 has to be demolished. Ms. King opened the floor to questions.

16 Ryan King asked about the survey conducted regarding the future of building. Steven Benjamin
17 also asked about the survey. He asked about the process if the property and building were sold.
18 Ms. King said the Select Board would make the choice of how to sell it if the town votes to sell
19 it. Bob Hendrickson asked about putting a reserve on the auction. Ms. King said that would be
20 an option that would be looked into. Leslie Divine asked if a commercial appraisal would be
21 invested in before the vote. Ernest Kalinisan asked where the money from the sale would go.
22 Ms. King said it would go into the capital account. An abutter to the property asked if anyone
23 had looked into changing the zoning of the property. Steven Benjamin said he was concerned
24 the minimum bid might be set too low. Mr. Benjamin said he trusted the Select Board would do
25 its due diligence in the process if the vote is to sell the property. Peter Curley said the Select
26 Board would look for advice before the property was put up for sale. Bill Sheldon said he would
27 be more comfortable if there was a second vote after the vote to sell the building, with the second
28 vote being options of ways to sell it. Ms. King explained that with a secret ballot it can only be
29 yes and no, no multiple choice. A member of the audience asked if there had been interest in the

32 property. Ms. King said there had been been. That audience member asked about possibly
33 demolishing the building and keeping the land, or keeping part of the land. Ms. King said that
34 people are not as interested in just part of the property. Jim Nichols asked about turning the
35 building into a community center and business center. He spoke of possibly getting a grant to
36 rehab the building. Mr. Curley spoke of the difficulty managing the property if it were used for
37 such a purpose. Clae Seekins spoke of the need of the town's children for a recreational facility.
38 An audience member asked about the remediation. She said the condition of the building in
39 regard to mold did not seem too bad. Ms. King said that was RSU 20's report before the Town
40 had it inspected. Bob Hendrickson asked if there was legal recourse against RSU 20. Ms. King
41 said there was not. Mr. Nichols asked if the Town had talked to the Eastern Maine Development
42 Corporation. Ms. King said she had but the options they presented were not feasible. Fire Chief
43 Vern Thompson said to be eligible for the grant that EMDC talked about the fire station would
44 have to be moved to the property. A resident asked what control over the property there would
45 be if the property sold. Ms. King said that zoning provides some control. A citizen asked about
46 the effects on taxes if the property sold. Town Assessor Amber Poulin gave the results of some
47 studies she had done. Leslie Divine asked if it was possible to look further into other options for
48 the building and revisit selling it at a later date. Bob Hendrickson asked if it was possible for the
49 Town to come before the public again for approval of who to sell the property if permission was
50 given in March to sell the property. Ms. Bradley asked Ms. King to outline the steps and
51 expenses for special town meetings and special voting days. Ms. King did. Jim Nichols asked if
52 the town had an economic improvement plan and if the property fit into that plan. Mr. Curley
53 discussed how the money was spent, which had to do with a possible expansion of the septic
54 system. Jim Shaver asked about a possible advisory committee to the Select Board on the issue
55 of selling the property. An audience member asked how many surveys had been received back.
56 Ms. King said 87 had been received out of 1,500 sent. An audience member asked about who
57 might possibly buy the property and the future use. Ryan King discussed the Comprehensive
58 Plan. An audience member said she knew of schools in the area that wanted to use the property.
59 Steve Benjamin urged the citizens to scrutinize the school budget. He said it was the school
60 administration's fault that the town was in the situation it was currently in regarding the property.
61 There was a discussion about the cost per student at RSU 20. Ms. Bradley said that three
62 Stockton students had received scholarships at the University of

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68 Maine at Orono. Leslie Divine cautioned against making big decisions without proper due
69 diligence. An audience member said he would like more control over to whom to sell the
70 property if the town votes to sell it. Mr. Curley explained the process for such a vote to take
71 place and whether potential buyers would wait that long. Kathy Kamzelski said the delay would
72 scare off potential buyers. Charlie Smith also spoke about the delayed process if the Town had
73 to approve to whom to sell the property. A citizen suggested if the vote was not to sell, perhaps a
74 committee could be formed to explore options for the future of the property. Ryan King asked
75 how much the Town had in the property so far. Ms. King said approximately \$50,000. There
76 was no further discussion.

77 **Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to adjourn the Public Hearing.**

78 The Public Hearing was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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