

Legislative Task Force Meeting Minutes 5.4.2023

7:00 PM Call to order – Town Councilor James MacEachern

Present: State Representative David Milz, State Representative Jodi Nelson, State Representative Erica Layon, Councilor James MacEachern, Councilor David Granese, Councilor Erin Spencer, School Board Member David Clapp, School Board Member Cairnie Pokorney, School Board Member Michael Thiele, Town Clerk Tina Guilford

Nomination of Chair

Town Councilor Granese NOMINATES, Town Councilor James MacEachern seconded by Representative Milz

All Agreed

Nomination of Vice Chair

Town Councilor MacEachern NOMINATES Representative Milz, seconded by Representative Layon

All Agreed

Review of Bylaws by Councilor MacEachern

MacEachern reads the bylaws for everyone and discusses how this is to bring the three legs of the stool, The Town, The School and Pinkerton together with the help of the Legislators for the betterment of Derry. Pinkerton currently has not responded to the invitation and Senator Birdsell is on vacation. He will have Sheila email the bylaws to everyone, so they have a copy and proposes dates for future meetings. The second Thursday of the month so that they can be televised in the future. June 18, September 14, December 14, and April 11, 2024. Dates are agreeable to everyone in the room.

Legislative Update – Milz, Layon, Nelson

Adequacy Grants - \$30,878,652.00 for Derry, with the Floor Amendment passed in HB2 becomes \$33,174,620.00 for the next two years. The budget is now in the hands of the Senate. Legislation for the School Board to be able to leave being a cooperative school district as the bonuses for being one have now been eliminated. SB272 is now in the House and will be voted on soon. Some concern from school board members about the ability to file lawsuits by parents and increased costs on the school district. Milz wants to make an important distinction. State Representatives are not the Town Council who make decisions just about Derry or the School Board who makes decisions just about the Derry schools. State Representatives make decisions that affect the entire State. Just because it seems like there is a bill that might help Derry, there are another 10 that will hurt it. Sometimes the art of compromise is very important. On the State level Business Enterprise taxes are up and Dividends & Interest are lower but are being phased out. HB 639 the Cannabis bill, has a 12.5% wholesale tax rate and will structure the sale of Cannabis through the liquor commission. Money will be used to pay down retirement debt (20%) and will also go towards offsetting SWEPT (50%). It's teetering on collapse in the Senate. Speaking of retirement, the more the State supported retirement, some towns over hired and it ballooned. There needs to be some control because some towns abused the system.

Town Update – MacEachern, Spencer, Granese

The Town completed the budget process. Total Town tax rate \$5.94. It is a 4.3% increase on a 7-0 vote. The Town made some adjustments to the CIP funding and corrected a bad funding mechanism so that future Councils are in a better financial position. On a \$450,000 home, the increase is about \$120.00 a year. MacEachern offered that he spoke to Councilor/County Commissioner Chirichiello and the County Budget sits around 4-4.1% increase.

Representative Milz interjected to explain that a State Representative becomes part of the County Delegation and also oversees the budget process for the County.

WRB Village District projects – Cabinet Warehouse (Former Dollar Bills) is looking at some 2 story buildings with businesses on the ground level and apartments above. The Butterfield Project that abuts the WRB Middle School will be coming in at the end of May beginning of June with a final proposal that has Market Rate apartments and businesses down in front and across the street at Humphry. SBM Clapp interjected that they had already come to a School Board meeting to show the project plans and that they look really nice. Exit 4A – there will be some things on the police side of the street and there is a TIF District up by Londonderry, we don't really want to try competing with Woodmont, we want to compliment it. Exit 4A is being done in multiple parts, A, B, C & D. This will really impact traffic flow in Derry for 2026-2027. There is also the Abbot Court project in Downtown. The Solar Project has some delays due to supply chain issues but will be a huge benefit once online. Pinkerton was at the Planning Board for plans to build a \$21 Million-dollar new Social Studies building. We are also still working on where we vote.

School Update – Clapp, Thiele, Pokorney

The Consolidation Plan – it is a 5/6 and 7/8 model. Which will have an elementary school close. Envelope studies were completed during school vacation so we should be making a decision on that soon. We had a goals setting meeting and are looking at Facilities, Curriculum, strategic planning and Communication. We are looking at a total of \$44 Million in repair costs over the next 10 years. \$12 Million in the next 1-3 years. Roofs are the #1 priority. The Warrant articles passed so the \$1.8M warrant will go directly to the roofs and the \$700,000 will go to other dire repairs. There are some ESSER 3 funds that will need to be spent by 9/1/2024. Honeywell will also be coming back with info on other needs. The Barka Bond and the Hood Bond are going away. With that said, we want to start the budget process earlier. Give Jane more direction and try to stop the time wasting that is happening with the fiscal advisory board. We also want to address loss learning. How do we fix it? Is what we have been doing showing an improvement or not. We cannot do the same things repeatedly and expect a different result. Listening Sessions, listen to the public be transparent. We need a long term plan, a vision. We are also working on a letter about special education as discussed at the last meeting. Representative Nelson asks about the timeline for the new model. The new model will be implemented for September 2024. There are meetings happening now discussing curriculum changes and we have brought teachers, parents, and the school board together to discuss implementation. Representative Layon asks about changes to Public Comment time. Those changes are being discussed in the policy committee and we are talking about moving it to the front of the meeting and lifting the restrictions. Pinkerton Contract question – negotiation was nonexistent last year. We are hoping for them to use some endowment funds to ease the burden for sending towns, especially for this new building.

Conclusion

MacEachern - For crafting future agendas, email the chair about goal setting. Maybe we should add a public comment section, we can discuss that further.

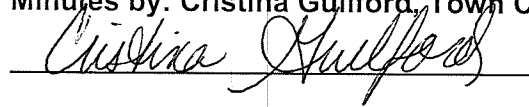
Just wants to add that back in the late 1990's the tax rate was going crazy, it was a roller coaster for taxpayers. That is where the Growth Management Ordinance came from. It was a point system for long range planning so that we can keep the rate stable for taxpayers in the future. We need to work together for the betterment of the Town, we need to do a better job. Don't be keyboard warriors, don't go all nasty on social media, its just not productive. It will ruin everything.

Milz – In the past, this has not been the best committee, but I am pleased with how things were done tonight. Let's move ahead and get something done.

Meeting ADJORNED by Chair MacEachern

Adjourn: 8:36PM

Minutes by: Cristina Guilford, Town Clerk

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cristina Guilford", is written over a horizontal line.