

TOWN OF MONSON

A Town Where Friendliness is More than Just a Word

April 19, 2018 - Select Board Meeting

Present were: Select board – Buddy Martin, Brita Cronkite, and Town Manager, Daniel Swain.

Town - Many townfolk attending: Jim Greenleaf, Mike Witham, Neal and Colleen Pinkerton, Roger and Peggy Foster, Bobbie Crockett, Dee Adams, Dave Bjork, Rebekah Anderson, Marylou Ranta, George Geise, Bob and Roberta Jarvis and around four (or so) unnamed others.

- 1) The meeting began at 7:00pm., with Daniel Swain
- 2) Selectboard reviews and signs off all necessary warrants.
- 3) Selectboard reviews unapproved meeting minutes from 4/5/18 previous meeting, and reviews submitted petition from small group who disapproved of the dismantling of the stage in the town gym, the threshold for the number of signatures was not met and no further action was taken.
- 4) Buddy Martin opened the **Public Comment** section of the meeting at 7:10pm. At this juncture, the issue was the liquor licensing of the new restaurant “The Quarry” located at 15 Tenney Hill Road.

The first person to speak up in favor of the liquor license was Mike Witham, owner of the Spring Creek Restaurant who wanted “...it to be on record that he was in favor of the Liquor License for the Quarry”.

Dave Bjork began with the questioning by asking exactly where the restaurant was located. There was a bit of explaining by Daniel Swain due to the fact that there had been a type-o in the newspaper which printed the wrong address of the restaurant causing some confusion with the townfolk.

Bob Jarvis asked if *The Quarry* was going to be open to the public. Marylou Ranta the new Quarry chef stood up and explained the way the restaurant was going to work, and in a nutshell, although the restaurant is intended for mainly service for the adult art students who are on a short-term six-week study program, the public can also use the restaurant provided the first make a reservation and only for dinner. Peggy Foster asked how much room was in the building, and if there were going to be large parties using the facility. Marylou answered that there was only enough seating for up to forty-two. Also, upon answering Bobbie Crockett’s question, the deck would be enclosed. After a few minutes of questions regarding The Quarry, Selectman Buddy Martin reminded us all that the focus needs to be on the issuing of the liquor license, and both Buddy and Rebekah Anderson voiced that they were in favor of the license. Because Peggy and Roger Foster expressed their concerns with the town issuing another liquor license, the question came up as to whether or not we could have a limit as to how many restaurants and/or pubs we allow in town that sell liquor.

Buddy Martin expressed that it is the right of every business to apply for a liquor license, and Brita Cronkite added that no other citizens have complained or said they see this as a problem. Rebekah added that it is possible for a town to cap off how many businesses sell liquor.

The conversation was switched a bit when Roger Foster asked how the town is going to handle all the parking that these places will attract. His concern was with the many big trucks coming around the bend right at the curvy intersection where The Quarry restaurant, the Monson Slate co. (Kennedys), and the North Guilford Road are located, pointing out that though the speed limit is 25, many drivers of cars as well as truckers don’t even bother to slow down in that area. Daniel and Rebekah both pointed out the many areas people can still safely park not including the main road. Daniel said that as we grow we will have to deal with it as it will become more of a problem. The liquor license was moved by Buddy Martin and seconded by Brita Cronkite passed at this point without any further comments.

Public Comment: The parts to the playground had been moved from the Monson Arts Center and brought over to its new location on Water Street. The parts were laid on the ground in pieces over the winter to be reassembled come spring. Rebekah Anderson had heard that there may have been parts of the playground that were stolen since then, such as the Tic-Tac-Toe board. Jim Greenleaf explained that last fall Brandon Bartlett ran a group of guys *raring to go* to reassemble the playground but during their attempt found out a few parts were missing. Consequently, they could not do anything until the parts were found or reordered. The Hardwood Products were willing to make a new part, but could not get it to the group until late in October, as time began to run out for the reassembly due to weather

and also trying to get the helpers reunited. Since then it was discovered that the allegedly stolen parts and Tic-Tac-Toe board were all found. Jim added that the playground was poorly dismantled to begin with making it harder than it needed to be, as some parts were damaged. Brita asked Jim how many guys were needed to reassemble the playground, to which Jim replied, that a half dozen could do it easily enough and get it all done in just a few days. One volunteer even offered his use of his backhoe. It was also asked if we still had the plans for the playground so that reassembly would be easier and the job would be done well. Jim seemed to know who had the plans.

Dave Bjork asked about the town's commitment to the Monson Historical group to remove the growing tree branches and brush covering over some areas of the graveyard next to the Monson Community Church building. Daniel assured David that the town already started this project and removed a lot of brush already, and started work on the roadway.

George Geis expressed his concerns regarding his concept of the possible influx of European influences, and with them bringing many different ideas of what is lawful and what is not, suggesting someone should speak to Libra regarding bringing in people from the Eastern part of the globe too fast. Along with that had some concerns about artists and the demands they may have regarding marijuana uses. Buddy Martin also added that as we move toward becoming a tourist and college town, it could become an issue. Dave Bjork said that even though marijuana is certainly legal, we all agree that public pot smoking is considered illegal. Daniel added that Monson does have an ordinance against the retail sales of marijuana and that at this time store front sales are not allowed in Monson. We voted or need to vote to limit recreational use agreeing that medical marijuana and private use is not the problem.

George Geis asked about Libra and whether they pay taxes. Daniel recapped from previous meetings that Libra is a no-profit organization and although they do not have to pay taxes, they offered to pay them anyway. Rebekah added that Libra has no history of going back on their word, and the many other counties they have restored have no complaints. George brought up additional worries about problems with drugs coming into town, screening people etc., and much discussion revolved around the subject as Jim Greenleaf, Brita and Rebekah consoled Georges concerns with solid answers like the fact that Haystack's Stu Castenberg does indeed screen artists, who tend to be older graduates, and added that we do not screen people that enter our town as it is not a practice *for any town* to screen tourists, or anyone who sets up a legitimate business, or moves here.

The conversation changed when Dave Bjork asked if any transportation would be available for the incoming artists. Rebekah Anderson wondered if we were due for an ATV update, and Daniel encouraged the update. Daniel asked Mike Witham's Spring Creek restaurant was getting any additional business this past year because of the ATVer's, to which Mike said indeed they were. Permanently approving the ATV trail was agreed to be brought up at the next meeting. Buddy Martin closed the Public comment and moved the meeting on to...

...Old Business:

The gym is the topic for old business. Daniel reports his follow-up to the group after making contact with several other town managers in our area to find out what they charged the general public for rental of their large venues, gyms, and the like. As it turns out, what we ask for renting out the gym is in the exact same ballpark. We ask for \$100.00, and \$50.00 is returned to the renter if the gym is restored and deemed clean. More discussion revolved around our policies regarding the gym, the locking door, whether or not the gym is supervised.

New Business:

Daniel brought up the petition that someone in town started to try and keep the town from tearing the gym stage down. The petitioner was unsuccessful in getting enough signatures for the restraint, however, the problem the petition caused brought the plans to a temporary halt and now we have to reorganize the demolition and the contractor has to be rescheduled. At this point Jim Greenleaf expressed his dismay over the many people who did not attend any of the selectboard meetings all year long and that the planning group and the gym committee were all open and candid about all they were doing in and to the gym and that it was all engineered and professional. He went on to briefly explain all the problems they ran into that caused them to realize that taking the stage out was the very best solution for all, and that if we needed a stage, we could purchase a roll-out portable stages easily. Dee Adams suggested that maybe if the blue-print type plans could be posted in the town office for anyone to see might help.

Bob Jarvis asked if a new date has been scheduled for the demolition of the stage. Daniel explains that we can do this as soon as possible, as soon as we can get everyone back and reorganized. Bob Jarvis expressed concern that if we do

not get on this right away we risk losing the Killam's time and also those who have volunteered their time prior to the petition.

Spring/Summer projects: Daniel assured the group that he was still planning to ride the roads all around Monson to assess them. He asks everyone if there was any more that he could do. Dave Bjork brought up a town-wide event called Dump-day, where upon a selected Saturday, the town was invited to toss trash at 2 for 1, and it was an opportunity to get rid of old tires and junk.

Dee Adams asked about our Town-wide spring clean-up and added that we have volunteers to clean up the roads.

Dave asks if we have anyone under contract to sweep the roads. Buddy Martin said we did not. Dee said that in the past our sidewalks were often done by kids during their vacation week.

Brian Turner suggested talking with Lucas Butler to try and find out if Libra plans to do any street or sidewalk sweeping.

Brita Cronkite brought up the fact that the Steward Road is in dire need of repair, and we agree that it is not just because of this past winter but it is because of years of neglect.

Dee wondered if it would be practical to reclaim the sand from the roads in that Guilford does it already. Daniel will talk to Guilford, but added that it may not be worth the effort, and some discussion turned to used sand being too silty and unusable – possibly turning to mud, and, that it has salt mixed in with it.

At this time the meeting was called to end by Buddy Martin at approximately 8:25pm.

The next Selectman's meeting was set for three weeks away on **May 10th**.