



**Minutes & Notes of
Bethel Town Hall
Finance Committee
October 25, 2007
At Bethel Library at 7 p.m.**

Present: Amy Bergamo, Janet Burnham, Winslow Ayer, Chris Masters, Paul Feeney, Victoria Weber, Davis Dimock.

Amy called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

1- The **minutes** of the September 27th meeting were accepted as written.

2- Roof work by Summit /Catamount Construction has just been completed. The rot that was discovered around the chimney caused the job to take two days longer than estimated. Otherwise all the work went as planned and not much rot was found until the rot right around the chimney. So hopefully the total won't be more than the estimated \$152,000.

3- In order to obtain **estimates for the next phase of work**, the wallboard and other coverings need to be removed from the lower level of the hall to make the insides of the foundation walls visible. Construction chair Paul Feeney reported that he had spoken with Selex chair Neal Fox about volunteers being able to do this work. Mr. Fox's response was that he had never been against volunteers working in the building, but we will have to get approval from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, which insures Bethel now, and any work would need to be of a non-structural nature. Winslow defined 'structural' as anything that bears or holds up anything else. Thus taking wallboard off would not be 'structural work'. By contrast, any work involving the foundation walls themselves would be considered 'structural work'.

Paul and Winslow had also checked with Mel Washburn who sells insurance. He said that since contractors have Builders Risk insurance they could volunteer to do some structural work. However they could not have unpaid volunteers helping them, although they could have paid volunteers, who would be covered under the contractor's insurance. If contractors offered to do this work at no cost to the town, they still might need to put in a bid, which could be for \$00.00, and thus they could win the bid.

4- Town Hall Committee. Mr. Fox had conveyed to Paul Feeney that the Selectboard wants to be kept apprised of what the Town Hall committee is doing, and also who is on the committee. The group present is completely aware that the committee has no power of its own, and serves to assist the Selectboard. The town hall building belongs to the town, and as such, the Selectboard makes all decisions, particularly financial decisions, concerning it.

[Note: The 11-9-06 newspaper article reporting on the November 6, 2006 Selectboard meeting states that the Selectboard "appointed several new members to the town hall restoration committee". The full subcommittees are thus as follows:

Steering: Neal Fox, Amy Bergamo, Paul Feeney, Mary Floyd, Chris Hemond.
Financial Committee: Amy Bergamo, Rick Benson, Sheila Jacobs
Public Relations: Sandy Levesque, Janet Burnham, Chris Masters
Construction: Chris Hemond, Paul Feeney]

Winslow Ayer has been working with Paul on construction elements, and the group would like his name to be considered for addition to the Construction SubCommittee.

The group felt that, especially with Amy resigning as chair in March 2008, now is the time to attract more members to the committee, to get new energy and more people involved, whether or not they are on the committee. Paul would like to invite more people to come to the monthly meetings. This is fine – anyone may be invited, and anyone may come on their own. This is not a closed group. The meetings take place the last Thursday of each month, and the minutes are available on the Bethel web page under ‘Municipal’. < <http://bethelvermont.com> >

5- Town Meeting appropriation. For at least the past 5 years the voters at town meeting have passed an appropriation to support town hall restoration. Paul felt that town hall funds should be voted on and decided by the people, rather than being embedded in the town budget as they were in 2006. Therefore he made a motion that “An Appropriation of \$25,000 be added to the town budget as a separate line item for the 2008 Bethel Town Meeting.” This motion was seconded by Janet and unanimously voted in favor by all members of the committee present.

6- Users. Amy pointed out that she regularly forwards news of the project to Ted Brady on Senator Leahy’s staff, to former fundraising consultant Don Hirsch and to Ann Cousins of Vermont Historic Preservation. Ann and Ted respond wanting to know how much money we have raised and what the estimate is for the next phase of work. They also ask about users, as they want to know who will pay to use the building so it can be maintained by itself, rather than being supported by the town as it is now. Grantors want to know the building will be supported in the future. We only need ball park figures, but we do need to work these into a written ‘business plan’.

Therefore we need to continue to identify potential users of the building. There will be regular users, such as groups which hold regular meetings in the hall, and also irregular users, more one-time events, such as parties or weddings or concerts.

Several months ago Sheila had sent a questionnaire to users who had been identified about 7 years ago. Now we need to follow up with phone calls and ask them what their needs and issues are and find out what they need to know from us. Amy will ask Mary Floyd if she wants to do this.

Janet said that the League of Vermont Writers is interested in using the building.

7- The 1892 Campaign to raise money for the next phase is beginning to get rolling. We want to take advantage of the positive energy the beautiful new roof has created. This is our main push now and each of us needs to speak with people to explain the campaign and encourage everyone to participate. Again, the amount of money given is not as important as the number of people (and pets) who get involved by contributing something.

Davis and Victoria have mailed copies of the 1892 letter to the 173 out-of-state landowners. Chris Masters is working on mailing the letter to the people on the Grand List. He is donating not only his time, but also postage. Thank you Chris!

8- **Bethel Schools participation.** Victoria had spoken with Marie Kittel and also Andy West, principal of the Bethel Schools. Marie's Community Service class is finished and she is working to finish up the power point presentation the students created during the fall. Mr. West is willing to include the 1892 letter in his next newsletter to parents, and Victoria sent him a memo of ideas of how the kids might be involved, emphasizing the future use of the hall by the school for functions which now take place in the gym. This would free the gym for more athletic activities.

9- **Whitcomb High Alumni Association.** At the last meeting Rick Benson had indicated that Christi Bollman, who keeps the alumni association mailing list, would phone Victoria back about whether the association mailing list might be available to us to send the 1892 letter to, or at least to people who no longer live in the area. Since Christi has not yet called, Victoria will contact her.

[Note: I did speak with Christi on November 3^d. She had tried to call earlier. She had spoken with the other 5 board members of the alumni association after my message last month, and they were not interested in sharing the mailing list. They work very hard to keep the association focused on the classes themselves, and they have turned down requests such as ours, as well as requests to speak at their annual meeting at graduation time. They even turned down a request from the Bethel School Board, so this is a policy issue and does not reflect our particular issue. Christi did say she would put the issue to the full meeting in June.]

10- *Herald* Reporter Mary Anderson could not attend this meeting, but would like to write a little article on the receipt of the **\$5,000 grant from the Lamson-Howell Foundation** in Randolph and the high points of this meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm

Minutes & notes of information subsequently found *[in italics]* respectfully submitted by Victoria Weber, Scribe, November 11, 2007