

The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

December 8, 2014

7:00 p.m.

Town Council Meeting

Approved Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER: Present were Mayor Sullivan, Council members Katharine Leggett, Mary Ann Kuhn, Town Attorney John Bennett, and Town Clerk Laura Dodd.

Council members Jerry Goebel, Patrick O'Connell, and Gary Schwartz were absent. At 7:05 p.m. Mayor Sullivan discussed that the Town thought that there would be a quorum present even though Mr. O'Connell was out of the country and Mr. Goebel would be absent due to work but Mr. Schwartz had taken ill suddenly and was in the emergency room so there was no longer a quorum. He discussed that there would be no voting that evening especially on the vacant Council member position.

He discussed that the intention was to call a special Council meeting for Monday, December 15th, assuming there would be a quorum. He asked the three applicants for the Council member seat if they would be available on the 15th and they all said yes. He asked the candidates to hold off making any kind of statement until the special meeting and discussed that the minutes and the Treasurer's Report could not be approved.

He discussed that the Christmas Parade, by his calculations, had had 240 participants with 40 plus entities and 500 to 600 people attending. He thanked Judy deSarno, who had overseen the entire day including the Artisan's Market, and who had done a fabulous job. He also thanked Thom Pelikaan for his great parade organization, Bernie Olsen for organizing the Artisan's Market, Kim Nelson for organizing the volunteers, and a whole range of other people who deserved incredible credit for a lot of hard work.

He discussed that the Christmas Party would be on the upcoming Sunday starting at 5:30 p.m. and he encouraged everyone to bring food and to coordinate that with Ms. Dodd.

He discussed that the Rapp News had done an article on the Post Office last week and what he had learned from the Inn at Little Washington was that the Post Office was not going to renew its lease, which expires on August 31st of next year. He discussed that he was interested and concerned and that the Post Office was not shutting down in the Town of Washington, it was not leaving the Town of Washington, and was not consolidating. He discussed it was a question of where were it was going to be. He discussed that he had talked the week before to the gentlemen who was the new point person for the Post Office resolution regarding the Post Office in the Town of Washington, who had not been involved with the negotiations between the Post Office and the Inn to date but he seemed like he would be a good person to work with. He discussed that the Post Office and the Inn were still in ongoing discussions as to whether the Post Office would stay in that building, which would be his desire. He discussed that contrary to some impressions out there the Inn would like the Post Office to stay there but if those negotiations did not come to fruition and the Post Office did not stay in its current building then it would look for alternative space within the Town. He discussed that from the Town's and the Post Office's stand point they would be looking for a center of town space that would be

convenient. He discussed that the criteria that the Post Office would be looking for, which also applied to the current building, included improved accessibility, improved handicapped accessibility, and greater safety in the current building which had two levels. He discussed that although money was an issue it was more an issue of location and accessibility.

Mr. Gary Aichele asked if Phase II of the three way cooperation among the Town, the Trinity Church, and the Inn would be affected in anyway by the Post Office leaving.

Mayor Sullivan said yes and that it was all connected and interrelated. He discussed that Mr. O'Connell was concerned with improving the functionality of the building. He discussed that his understanding was that all the plans for improving the parking lot and the street would be fulfilled. He discussed that he would keep everyone informed and that everyone was interested in finding a solution that would meet the needs of all the parties and that would be good for the Town, the Inn, the Post Office, and the County.

- PUBLIC FORUM: Mayor Sullivan opened the Public Forum:

Ms. Nancy Buntin asked if the Post Office moved its location what would be the options.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that he had run through the options keeping in mind their locations, parking, how accessible were they, who owns them, were they rented now, and would they be interested in renting to the Post Office. He discussed that he was uncomfortable pinpointing any buildings but he said he could assure everyone depending on how the negotiations between the Post Office and the Inn went that he would try to be proactive in achieving as good as a solution as could be come up with.

Mr. Aichele asked if it was the Mayor's sense that it would have to be an existing structure. He discussed that in driving through many small towns he had observed that many Post Offices were located in structures that seemed to have been specifically designed to be Post Offices and asked if that might be an option.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that he thought that unlikely and that he had asked the new Post Office man if they might be a buyer and he had said that he did not buy. Mayor Sullivan said in his opinion he doubted if they would consider the expense of building a building when their space requirements were not large and their rent was not a lot of money. He discussed that the Post Office was interested in longevity and stability and that they were not looking to move or consolidate.

Mr. Bennett discussed that all the Post Offices in new buildings were leased and built by the property owner with typically 15 year leases.

Mr. Roger Plantadosi asked if this was a negotiation over rent.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that he had talked to both sides and for whatever set of reasons the Post Office had decided not to renew its lease. He discussed that the new Post Office man had said that he had not been involved in past negotiations and it was now his job to solve the problem and he was not going to waste time figuring out who had said what to whom and that he was just going to take the situation and deal with it.

Mayor Sullivan closed the Public Forum.

- ADJOURNMENT: At 7:25 p.m. Mayor Sullivan adjourned the meeting.

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON DECEMBER 15, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Dodd
Town Clerk