

**TOWN OF FRANCONIA  
ASSESSING PROPOSALS REVIEW AND  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2021 AT 5:00PM AT TOWN HALL  
\*\*\*\*\***

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dan Walker, Jill Brewer

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Kim Cowles, Jenny Monahan, Carol Wills, Sally Small, Peter & Mary Grote, Virginia Mike, Lynn Terres

**The meeting was called to order at 5:04pm**

**APPOINTMENTS/WORK SESSIONS:**

**5:00pm – Assessing Proposals Review Work Session:** The committee reconvened after getting clarification on some questions they had. It was established that the proposal from Avitar Associates is \$176,760 over five years and the proposal from KRT is \$236,600 over five years, however there were still questions about some of the terminology and further clarification was still needed.

Selectman Walker said that he consulted with an individual who was part of Littleton's town government and they said that while they were pleased with KRT's service as a resident and tax payer, from a municipal standpoint, their services were very "a la carte" and bills were received in addition to the contractual obligations. Carol Wills said she had heard the same. The other towns that have used KRT also said they had to use another company for their commercial assessments.

Dawn Steels asked if the hours spent in the town should be specified in Avitar's proposal rather than indicated as "as needed". She proposed that a set number of hours should be specified in that proposal and suggested asking Avitar to update their proposal to include that. Dawn also suggested asking that property photos are updated every four years and that a monthly review be conducted of properties for sale on a real estate website/s to verify the accuracy of the assessing information.

There was discussion about the availability of informal public hearings (which is in Avitar's proposal in section 6) and asking that the companies specifically state that they carry insurance.

Dawn asked if the committee should meet with both companies via Zoom to ask questions. Dawn also wondered why KRT can't use Avitar's system entirely.

The hours KRT offered to be in the town were discussed and it was decided that it would be fair to ask KRT to update their proposal with less hours as they quoted more hours in their proposal than the town would require.

Chairman Brewer commented that considering the two proposals offerings and bids and Avitar's familiarity and history with the town, there would need to be a very compelling reason to switch companies.

Dawn would like to clarify with Avitar that the \$54,000 for the revaluation is included in their total price of \$176,760.

In summary, Selectman Walker said the committee would like Avitar to clarify the hours they are giving in the price, for KRT to provide an updated quote with less hours, for Avitar to confirm that the revaluation is included in their quote, for a statement of insurance to be included in the proposal and clarification of the statistical update definition and to confirm the availability of public hearings with KRT.

The committee will meet again on Monday the 29th at 5pm.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dan Walker, Jill Brewer

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Kim Cowles, Jenny Monahan, Carol Wills, Sally Small, Peter & Mary Grote, Virginia Mike, Lynn Terres, Sheila Vaughan, Jim Garvey, Meredith Pratt, Aaron Johnson, Karen Foss, Janice Cole, Mike & Tina Betley, Thad Presby.

**The regular meeting was called to order at 6:01pm**

#### **APPOINTMENTS/WORK SESSIONS**

None

#### **TO SIGN/APPROVE:**

The November 22, 2021 transaction list was reviewed and signed by the selectmen.

The minutes of November 8th, 2021, were approved as written on a motion from Chairman Brewer and a second from Selectman Walker with all voting in favor.

#### **TO DISCUSS/REVIEW**

**Setting the Tax Rate:** Town Administrator Cowles said she received the tax rate from the Department of Revenue Administration and it is \$12.95 per thousand. Tax Collector Carol Wills hopes to have the bills out by November 29<sup>th</sup>.

**HealthTrust Surplus Refund:** Town Administrator Cowles said the town received a surplus refund of \$18,781.28 which will be deposited tomorrow. 75% of the money will be returned to the town and 25% will be reimbursed to employees.

**Town Wide Mask Ordinance:** Before the board began this discussion, Town Administrator Cowles said she has an appointment with Dr. Duffy tomorrow to discuss Covid so the board opted to hold off on making a decision on that until Town Administrator Cowles speaks with Dr. Duffy. Chairman Brewer commented that she has concerns of enforcing a town wide mask policy but suggested the town could provide signs to businesses that want them that state that the Town of Franconia recommends wearing masks when in indoor public spaces. Selectman Walker said he would support mandating masks at all town functions.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Chairman Brewer had a card from Profile's Student Council thanking the town for the use of the pavilion.

## **ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION**

Town Administrator Cowles said there is now a Square Terminal at the Transfer Station so they can accept credit card payments. The company charges 6% of each transaction so she and Tim are considering a \$2 surcharge for sales under \$50 and adding 6% to sales over \$50.

The Wobble and Gobble will be held Thursday, beginning at the Iron Furnace Brewery parking lot.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Broadband Initiative:** Selectman Meth said the Grafton County Broadband Committee meeting scheduled for last Wednesday was cancelled. There was a Zoom meeting between the tri-towns and Carol Miller (former state Director of Broadband Technology) to discuss the National Collaborative on Digital Equity's program to assist towns with their broadband initiatives. The town's representative, Doug Weisman attended and is interested to meet with Town Administrator Cowles to discuss collaborating with Sugar Hill on a broadband project.

**Chamber of Commerce:** Selectman Walker said the annual meeting was held last Wednesday via Zoom. Kevin Johnson stepped down as president and Rusty Talbot accepted the nomination. Emily Cote took over as Vice-President.

**Conservation Commission:** No update at this time, they are still trying to set a meeting date for December.

**Energy Commission:** Selectman Meth said the EC met on the 18<sup>th</sup> and discussed EV charging stations, the Welcome Center and Profile School putting in a ground mount solar installation.

**Planning Board:** Selectman Meth said the Planning Board met and discussed the ordinances and the Master Plan.

**CIP:** Selectmen Walker said the CIP did not meet last week and next meets December 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Meredith Pratt asked why the agricultural exemption was removed from the Noise Ordinance.

Mike Betley asked about the total town assessment increasing by 30% and which year's budget the next tax bill will be from.

Dawn Steele said she is concerned that the town is paying our police too little and they may opt to go to another town that pays better. She thinks the board should act now rather than wait for a new budget year.

Dawn Steele commented that while Social Security is increasing so is Medicare so it won't be a gain in earnings. Dawn also said the federal raise increase is 2.2%.

Vignia Mike commented on the raises given to employees that have absorbed responsibilities from the

Public Works Director position and lamented that the police have not been considered for an increase this year.

Dawn Steele reiterated her previous comments about the police salaries.

Karen Foss suggested reinstating the Wage & Benefit Committee from previous years.

Janice Cole asked if the board has had the chance to review the email from the Trustees of the Trust Funds. It was suggested this be a future agenda item.

Another resident commented on retaining the police force for safety reasons.

Tina Betley commented that she too thinks it is important to act now to retain the town's police officers.

The board entered non-public session at 6:40pm for reasons of personnel.

The board left non-public session at 7:25pm.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm on a motion from Chairman Brewer and a second from Selectman Walker with all voting in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jenny Monahan  
Administrative Secretary