

Sheldon Road Field Committee
Wednesday, August 24, 2011
Regular Meeting Minutes

This meeting was tape recorded. Microcassette Side:A&B, Marked SRFC 8.24.11

Location: Pachaug Town Hall.

Attendance: Chairman Paul Madonna, Secretary Michael Welke, Treasurer Steve Merchant, John Faulise and Kevin Skulczyck.

Absent: Vice-Chairman Glenn LaBossiere and John Taylor

Guest: Theresa Madonna, Town of Griswold Third Selectman.

1. Call to Order

Called to order at 7:35pm by Chairman Paul Madonna.

2. Determination of a Quorum

Quorum determined.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion made by John Faulise to approve the minutes from the last regular meeting on June 22, 2011 Meeting. Second by Steve Merchant. In favor: Unanimous.

Motion made by Michael Welke to include guest Theresa Madonna as an active participant for this meeting. Second by Kevin Skulczyck. In favor: Unanimous.

4. New Business:

a. John Faulise reported on the current status of the on-site work: The septic system is finished. Dirt has been spread on the north end of main field.

b. Treasurer's Report: No report given.

c. Construction Planning

i. Schedule of Construction

John Faulise reported that the irrigation contractor, National Lawn Sprinkler, would like to start installation of all the in ground piping within the next two weeks. Sprinkler heads would be placed later during the final installation phase. The dirt surface of the main field needs to be loosened to allow the installation to occur. Mattern Construction is getting together final pricing for creating the on-site building.

Steve Merchant has offered to mow the field which has become covered in tall grass and weeds.

d. Fundraising

i. Future plans and events

Motion made by John Faulise to table fundraising discussion. Second by Steve Merchant. In favor: Unanimous.

E. Other Business

The Town of Griswold Director of Finance Erik Christensen supplied the committee with an updated financial statement.

Motion made by John Faulise to remove the total amount of funding, \$22,00.00 from the Christie's Landscaping Open Purchase Order line and move \$11,00.00 of it to the M&M Hydroseeding line, increasing that line to \$18,000.00 and that the remaining \$11,000.00 be used for outstanding debit items. Second by Steve Merchant.

In favor: Unanimous.

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Motion made by John Faulise to withhold \$1,000.00 of the Hampden Engineering Corp. invoice # 712908 to be paid upon final installation of the scoreboard. Second by Kevin Skulczyck. In favor: Unanimous.

Paul Madonna submitted(*below*) and read a letter he wrote to fellow committee members concerning the unauthorized purchase made by Second Selectman Steven Mikutel in instructing American Industries to pave the front entrance of the Sheldon road site. John Faulise reported that he had met with Second Selectman Steve Merchant and Town of Griswold Superintendent of Roads Todd Babbitt about paving the front portion and that both he and Mr. Babbitt had indicated to the Second Selectman that neither the Town nor our committee had the funding to do the work.

Re: Disputed Invoice – American Industries - \$11,052.50

Dear Committee Members,

Tonight we are being asked to approve an unauthorized expenditure of \$11,052.50 made by Mr. Mikutel for driveway paving. This unauthorized expenditure was made by Mr. Mikutel against the explicit advice of Mr. John Faulise, a member of our Committee and Mr. Todd Babbitt, Director of Public Works for the Town of Griswold. They both told Mr. Mikutel clearly and directly that there was no money available in the Sheldon Road Field account or the Town public works budget for what he wanted constructed. Nevertheless, he proceeded to direct American Industries to begin construction.

As you are aware from our budget reports, there is no money available for this expenditure unless we cancel or reduce other expenditures. In order for us to complete the Sheldon Road Field project to the extent that children can use it and use it safely, we have been reviewing our available funding and making adjustments for many months. The item that Mr. Mikutel took it upon himself to order American Industries to construct was paving the first 75 feet of the entrance to the Field. When the invoice first appeared at the Town Hall Finance Office, it was placed in Selectman Mikutel's mailbox. The only reason we have this unauthorized invoice before us is that Mr. Mikutel pressured Mr. Faulise to bring it before our Committee.

As a Committee, we had reviewed this specific item and based upon available money decided not to include it in order to accomplish items that are directly related to the use and safety of the fields by children. This particular section of paving was considered a low priority as compared to the items we selected and approved for construction within the limits of the available money.

Our Committee has prided itself on the good stewardship we have all exercised during the Sheldon Road Field project. We have been diligent in establishing and voting upon procurement, construction and payment procedures that adhere to the highest standards of propriety, due diligence and transparency. All of our actions and decisions have been done by vote at meetings open to the public. This unauthorized expenditure by Mr. Mikutel meets none of the procedures and standards that the Committee has established.

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We are all now faced with the dilemma that American Industries is owed \$11,052.50 but that the project account has no more money left unless we cancel what many of us would consider some essential part of the project. The solution I propose is that Mr. Mikutel either pays for this as a donation from him to the project or promptly brings this invoice before the Board of Selectman and the Finance Committee and request that the Town pays for it from the general accounts of the Town.

From my perspective, this is a difficult moment for our Committee. Besides one of its members (who happens to be the second largest contributor to the project after American Industries) being inappropriately pressured to bring this unauthorized invoice to the Committee, Mr. Mikutel has placed the Committee in an embarrassing position. As an experienced State Representative and a Selectman, Mr. Mikutel understood the consequences of his unilateral action, especially knowing that there were no funds available.

We all volunteered to be members of this Committee because of our commitment to the children of Griswold. It is not logical to conclude that paving the first 75 feet of the driveway leading from the street to the fields in any way remotely takes priority over any other expenditure we have executed relating to helping the children of Griswold.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend a no vote.

I ask that this memorandum be placed in the minutes in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul K. Madonna

Chairman, Sheldon Road Field Committee

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Motion made by Kevin Skulczyk to send a certified letter to Second Selectman Steve Merchant which will include invoice # PSR2 from American Industries (paving work done at the entrance to the Field site) along with a letter signed by committee members stating that the Sheldon Road Field Committee did not vote to authorize the work performed within this invoice and that Mr. Merchant as the instigator of this invoice is personally responsible for payment. Second by Steve Merchant. In favor: Unanimous

5. Public Forum:

Guest Theresa Madonna suggested that our committee members attend local business association meetings and speak to their members about how they can become involved with the Sheldon Road Project.

6. Adjournment

Motion made by John Faulise to adjourn at 8:50pm. Second by Steve Merchant.

In favor: Unanimous.

s/ Michael Welke 08-24-2011