

NEW LISBON TOWN BOARD—JUNE 23, 2021—7:00 PM SPECIAL MEETING ON NEW HWY. GARAGE-- TOWN HALL

Present: Supervisor Edward Lentz, Councilman Brian Ryther, Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson, Councilwoman Flo Loomis, Hwy. Supt. Donald Smith, Town Clerk Charlene Wells, Residents: Barry & Sandra Braunius, Joe & Cathy Parisi, George Newsome, Joseph Gregory Absent: Councilman Bill Whitaker

Supervisor Edward Lentz opened the special meeting on the new proposed highway garage at 7:05 PM. He explained the reasons why we are proposing a new highway garage. The present garage (approximately 5000 sq. ft.) was built in the 1960s and has a leaky roof, mold, poor insulation, poor air exchange, sketchy electric, ineffective heating, is too small for our needs, has a questionable well and septic, has no storage and no separate office. The proposed new building would be 9800 sq. ft. and would be tall enough so the truck boxes could be lifted safely for repairs. The first sketches and cost estimate came in at \$2.2 million. When we applied for a grant, we needed to have an Environmental Report and Preliminary Architectural Feasibility Report which came up with a cost estimate of \$2.75 million. We received notice that we were granted a \$700,000.00 grant and \$1.98 million low-cost loan from USDA towards the construction of a new hwy. garage. The grant amount was a lot more than we had expected and the representative from USDA today said that she also was surprised with the amount and that we just caught them at a good time when they had funds they needed to disburse. The loan would be for 25 years at 2.25% interest, coming out at an annual payment of about \$105,000.00.

Supervisor Edward Lentz explained fund balance and estimated expenses and revenues. Our goal is to keep \$260,000.00 in our fund balance for emergency situations. We would use excesses to help pay the loan on the new garage. His estimates for expenses are for 1-2% increases per year. He noted that it is important to keep our highway dept. employees' wages and benefits up to date with other jobs as it is hard to find qualified personnel. He showed several examples of tax increases ranging from 10% and decreasing to 2% over several years. The impact on a person with a property with an assessed value of \$100,000.00 over a four-year period would be a \$140.00 increase in taxes. For a person with a property value of \$250,000.00 the impact over a four-year period would be a \$360.00 increase in taxes. The increase only affects the Town portion of the property tax bill. Joe Parisi asked if we could start out with a lower increase and gradually build up as needed. Supervisor Edward Lentz noted that he can make other models of how the tax increases could be spread out. Kathy Parisi felt that any increase would be hard and asked if the Board had looked into adding on space to the existing garage. She asked what the Board members thoughts were on the project. George Newsome thought that a 10% increase was too much and the Board should do more to inform the residents of the proposal. Joseph Gregory felt that the Town did not maintain the building properly, should not have done the Spray Foam roof and that taxpayers have to make do with what they have, so the Town should also.

Hwy. Supt. Donald Smith noted that due to the type of building and spacing on the lot, we cannot add on to the existing garage. We would have to put \$250,000.00 to \$350,000.00 in the old garage to keep it operational. He did suggest that the hwy. crew could do most of the work to convert the garage to a salt shed. He felt that we should build a new garage now as the cost is going to keep increasing. Councilwoman Nancy Martin-Mathewson noted that the plans for the new building were basic and nothing fancy is included. She felt it is hard to ignore the grant award of \$700,000.00 which is basically 25% of the project cost. Councilman Brian Ryther noted that he had previously worked in the garage welding and it was a scary place to work and very inadequate. He added that he felt it was a bad decision to fix and not replace the building almost ten years ago when the cost was only estimated at about \$1.5 million. Councilwoman Flo Loomis agreed that the present garage is inadequate and antiquated. She felt we owe it to our employees to provide a safe work environment.

The Board will hold another informational session prior to the July 13th, 2021 regular monthly meeting starting at 6:30 PM. All in attendance were asked to help spread the word and residents are urged to regularly check the town website for meeting minutes and notices.

With no further business, a motion was made by Councilwoman Flo Loomis, seconded by Councilman Brian Ryther and carried 4 Ayes/ 0 Nays to adjourn at 8:30 PM.

Charlene R. Wells, New Lisbon Town Clerk

