

**ROCKPORT SELECT BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2014  
6:30 P.M.  
ROCKPORT OPERA HOUSE AUDITORIUM**

Present: Chair, William (Bill) Chapman, Vice-Chair Charlton Ames, Tracy Lee Murphy, Geoffrey Parker and Kenneth McKinley. Also present: Richard C. Bates, Town Manager; Ann Filley, Library Director, Employees Stacey Parra and Shay Grant, press and members of the public

I. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER** – William (Bill) Chapman, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Bill – the purpose of this meeting is to hear from the Rockport residents and what they want in regard to the library.

You will need to sign in and state your position – pro or con. You should form an orderly line and we will hear your comments. The meeting will be taped and the DVD will be available tomorrow.

The objective is to hear your comments, to continue discussion tonight, to table to a later date or to cut off any more discussion. If we decide to continue later, a time and place will be determined.

Ken – thanked everyone for their participation and stated that he has read all of the emails and responses in regard to the library issue. We hope to have a resolution by the end of the meeting. We want to know if you think we should have a vote.

Geoff – it is important to understand what you see in the middle of this may not be what you see in the end.

Tracy & Charlton – stated that they are ready to listen to both sides of the issue. A fraction of the voters have voiced their opinion. This decision belongs to all of the voters and should be made by all.

II. **COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS REGARDING THE REQUEST BY THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE TO PLACE THE FOLLOWING NON-BINDING REFERENDUM ON THE TUESDAY NOVEMBER 4, 2014 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT**

Do you agree that the Town of Rockport should develop a plan for a new Library on the RES site, provided that the current ball fields are preserved and pending community input on design and budget?

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Heaven Bartlett – said that she was frustrated and that everyone should listen to each other and to make an informed decision. She is saddened to see the town divided on this issue.

Steve Smith – from his professional standpoint to have a non-binding article doesn't make much sense. You should hire a professional consultant.

Emily Lusher – 250 people completed a survey. It has been 30 years in research, serious research. In the survey 81% wanted to keep the library as is or to expand on the present site. (19% said not at RES, but within the Village.)

Helen Shaw – there have already been several surveys. All of the residents should be allowed to vote on this issue and you should consider all of the public input. It is time to let the voters make the decision.

Diana Castle – in 15 years we hardly ever use the library, we go to Camden instead. We support the families and the children.

Constance Gibbons – disapproves this. She respects all of the work. We need to do adequate research and not just a "wish list." Need to know the cost and how much space is needed (10,000 to 14, 00 is a high requirement). You will need 47 parking spaces for your plans. You need professional input and a serious study.

Sally Cook – you need a realistic cost comparison. You want a much larger multi-million dollar facility. We received a zoning change at the last election, so that we can expand at the present site.

Kerin Lindahl – I live on Mt Pleasant Street. Parking spaces are an issue; there is no place to nurse or to change a baby, and it is not accessible to the handicapped. This is not setting a good example for our children. Several people prefer to go to other places as there is no room for them at our present library. The school library is not open all year round.

Marti Stone – support and stand behind the committees' hard work. They have spent many hours on research.

Ken Gaulin – from Sea Street and is 72 years old. He doesn't often use the library, but he does give them books and makes donations. He would hate to see the library move out of the village. We already lost CMCA to Rockland. Don't believe that bigger is better. You should consider rehabbing and using the CMCA.

Bill Leone – thanked the Select Board and library committee for all their work. This project will negatively impact Rockport by the cost and size of the project. What will happen to the old library and the present site? All of our passion should be channeled to a solution.

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Nanci-Ames Curtis – in support of this project. This is a democratic society. The comp plan in 2004 revealed that we need more parking, and possible expansion. We studied eight sites and the study showed an objective rating. We need lifelong learning space for the future oriented community.

Pat Messler – there was a concern in 2003 that the lot is too small, the facility is heavily used, we need more parking, shelving, bathrooms and space for the teens. We have outgrown the space. We need a flat piece of ground that is easily accessible. The Town owns RES and 100 people signed a petition that they would like us to build on that space. There are two factions of voters. This project belongs to all the voters and the decision must be made by all of the voters.

Robert Baldwin – loves the library. He is a CPA and is retired. Everyone needs to express their opinion, but with facts. There seems to be a bond frenzy. You need to get the facts before voting.

Peter Johnson – is on the budget committee. The library is vital to Rockport. The current library has served us well and has served its purpose. RES is a blank canvas. We could have meeting rooms, ball field, etc.

Jan Rosenbaum – there was a report written in favor of a new library at the RES site, I am in favor , not because I want to move, but it is a democracy to be allowed to vote.

Fran Hodgkins – loves the library. They make do with very little space. They sometimes have to turn people away from a program because of the lack of space. There is no room for teenagers to hang out. The library is for everyone. I urge you to put the article on the ballot.

Warren Erickson – Please let the residents of Rockport decide the future of “our” library.

Rebecca Woodworth – she is bothered by all of the hostility. Why wouldn't they want a new library? A new library is the right way to go; only a few are derailing the process. We don't need more surveys. Let us vote!

Kathleen Meil – this has been unfolding for years. We need to meet the goals of the citizens. We need a learning center; I believe that it is time for a vote. We cannot answer all the questions, but there is an indication that voters support this project. We will begin to raise funds. The RES ball field is the gateway to the harbor. 225 residents signed a petition for the article to be placed on the ballot.

John Sherman – is an engineer. Recommends putting the article on the ballot as there are many short comings at the present site.

Stephanie Lash – is against the move. She has two teenage boys and does care about the children and the elderly. She is not against the democratic process. There is not a choice – only one option being given to us.

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David Barry – stop demanding that we state our position. I wrote a letter to the Town Manager yesterday and have heard nothing. The present site is still in effect on a restricted site. Do we want to change one for another? This will drive the two sides further apart. We need a simple warrant question, look at what we need and then hire a consultant that is truly independent.

Tom Murphy – we have the right to vote on this. The same is true for this non-binding article. We are trying to keep options open and to find out what people want.

Paul Charbonneau – I cherish the library and the dedicated staff. We were given a false premise that it was not possible to expand on the present site. If we vote in November or June, what are we comparing to? Are we expanding the present site at a fraction of the cost as people would love to see, or are we building on West Street? Don't leave us with no choice and a non-binding question that bigger is better.

Haines – of Pascal Avenue. The ballot should be more specific. Will it be a community center/library?

Judy Lindahl- wants to see the RES site on the ballot in November. West Rockport, Rockville and Simonton Corner want to be counted as well. The opinion here tonight is divided.

Bill Freeman – we all have the right to vote. Do the citizens know yet where they want the library to go? This committee knows where they want it to go. What are the ramifications? What do the citizens want? Let's eliminate the RES site.

John Surovek – next to Opera House. If you want to build a \$4-5 million library, then the town should consider the RES site as a revenue generation site. I have not heard this as a solution. I love the passion here tonight.

Joan Welsh – she is neutral on all of this. She loves the library. We should be taking things to the voters and letting them decide what they want. Do we pursue the idea to the Res site, absolutely? She respects both sides. Let's take it to the voters.

Owen Casaś – if this gets complex, what do we do? You should allow the people to vote.

Robert Duke – parking is the biggest frustration. The library is growing. You have to put this to a vote.

Jim Ruddy – does not support this issue. He would support voting on something better proposed. The proposed article raises a lot of questions. Why after two years of planning, why vote on a plan. You should vote on the ball field separately. How big will the library be? How much will it cost? The main question is what to do with the present site. They are “all great people;” we are just looking at the wording and would like to see a new version.

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Richard Andersen – opposes this proposal. It is incomplete, meaningless and detrimental. Yes the ball park should be preserved. If the current site is changed, the land at the library will revert back to the family. The reversion provision is that if there isn't any library then the land will be deeded back to the heirs.

William Schmidt – he agrees with the board. They are doing fabulous work. The library needs to be expanded. The cost will be some serious money. He disagrees with the wording being put forward. We should be looking at alternative sites, planning and think about the question. He thinks that the people care about the downtown area.

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NON-RESIDENTS

Timothy – from Virginia – the passion and respect being shown is wonderful.

Sharon Osbourne – from Union, there is a lot of continuity of the staff. They are wonderful to work with. I don't see how you can expand the current building. The steps are a nightmare and the parking is terrible. The office is so small. It is insane. We need more space.

Shasa A. – she has been a summer resident for 40 years. The library is very small. You should consider other places in town. Be creative. What will happen to the present site if the library is moved? Are we using “tunnel vision?”

Richard Shyduroff – You could move younger and middle aged patrons to another site such as the CMCA building. What about the original high school? It is a fabulous building.

8:30 p.m. to 8:40, there was a brief break.

III. BREAK AT 10 P.M. TO DETERMINE SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS

IV. SELECT BOARD DISCUSSION

Bill – asked the Board if they had any questions. We may have some later.

Bill – asked if the Board wanted to make a decision regarding what we have heard.

Geoff –this has been a very very helpful discussion for the last 2 hours. We seem to be at a plateau. Where should we go from here? We have received a lot of good speeches and written responses.

Ken – we have received a tremendous amount of input and I want to thank everyone for their participation. We should have a high turnout at the November election. We cannot turn away from that opportunity. Is it the perfect question to put on the ballot? We need to vote, “what direction do we go?” How do we word the question?

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Charlton – I am grateful to hear that the library needs to expand. Let's allow the voters to vote." I would like to see a choice to expand, build new or other options. The proposed petition has 225 signatures.

Geoff – do we want to read the list of names?

Bill read the sheets with the names that had been presented by Kathleen Meil. There have been many interesting statements tonight. We need to keep our options open.

Geoff – there have been a lot of presumptions for the past two weeks. There has been a lot of valuable information. We are at a plateau. In the 2002 comp plan, there was a long survey with 643 responses. The vote held in November will give us more results. Does the Board have the support to make a bold move and have nothing on the ballot?

Bill – 4-5 years ago there was a nonbinding article placed on the ballot. The wording was open and presented to us by the citizens and the committee.

Ken – should we put this on the ballot in November? It implies that it closes off the option of using the present site. I have played with the wording.

Charlton – a building and a site are just tools.

Tracy – we have been around this a number of times. We have done a lot of research that was planned and paid for by the Trust Fund. We have had multiple votes taken already. We think that it is best for the town to take this to the voters. There has been a great deal of research done. I am unwilling to recommend another survey. We need to put this on the ballot.

Charlton – they are asking for the town's public property.

Tracy – it is our job to put this on the ballot.

Bill – we will still need to make our recommendation.

Tracy – there is a difference between putting this on the ballot and supporting it. Everyone deserves the right to vote.

Ken – who is in charge of the trust? How is the money spent? Are the employees town employees and is the library town property.

It is important that the town craft a good question.

Bill – proposed options are as follows: a. former RES site, b. expand on the current site, c. neither. We could change the wording on the three options. What happens if the vote is close? Non-binding means that the vote gives us guidance?

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Ken – multiple choices are not a good idea.

Geoff – yes or no; up or down when voting there will be winners and losers as a result. We need to gently lead the town. We need the decision to make everyone feel that they have contributed something.

Ken – read three proposed articles. (See attached.) We need to develop a plan for a new library.

Geoff – The Library Committee Members are smart elected people. We need to come to an unbiased decision.

Bill – we set the question(s) that go on the ballot.

Tracy – if we change to more sites, we would have to ask the Library Board to do more survey work as we don't have the right to do that. We would be asking them to spend their money to do more research.

Ken – the current site and one other site is feasible. The work has already been done by the committee and they have recommended the RES site.

Geoff – my interest lies in the process.

Ken – what do we want to find out in November?

Tracy – a strong showing will show them their marching orders. It is less with what we want personally.

Bill – do the will of the people. We need to show leadership. I would like to see the question a little tighter. There will be other issues and further costs involved.

**Geoffrey Parker moved that we put the article as presented by the Library Committee on the ballot. Tracy Murphy seconded the motion.**

Bill – should have the Select Board and the Library Committee make recommendation.

Ken – I don't like the way the questions are worded.

Charlton – agreed with Ken. I don't think that we can do the survey. It is not a good time. I think we should consider better wording.

**VOTE: 2 FOR (MURPHY, AND CHAPMAN) – 3 AGAINST (AMES, MCKINLEY AND PARKER)**

V. SELECT BOARD DECISION

We should hold a workshop the Monday before the meeting at 7:00.

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**Geoffrey Parker moved to table this item until Old Business of the agenda Monday night. Kenneth McKinley seconded the motion. VOTE: 5 FOR – 0 OPPOSED**

VI ADJOURNMENT

**Kenneth McKinley moved to adjourn the meeting AT 9:47 P.M. Geoffrey Parker seconded the motion. VOTE: 5 FOR – 0 OPPOSED**

Respectfully submitted,

LINDA M. GREENLAW  
TOWN CLERK as RECORDING SECRETARY