

The following meeting was neither audiotaped nor videorecorded.

Special Meeting
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

979 Somerset Avenue, Dighton, Massachusetts 02715

Monday, 18 May 2015, 8:30 o'clock A.M.

TOWN CLERK
DIGHTON, MA

2015 MAY 28 PM 3:57

RECEIVED

Clerk of the Board of Selectmen Patrick W. Menges called to order a meeting of the board with Rehoboth Freemason David McCarthy and Building Commissioner James D. Aguiar, Jr., in the main floor conference room of Town Hall at 8:30 A.M. on Monday, 18 May 2015, led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance to the flag, and, in the absence of Chairman Dean V. Cronin and Selectman Matthew W. Tanis, declared a recess pending the arrival of a quorum of the selectmen.

Chairman Cronin reconvened the meeting at 8:37 A.M.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the Freemasons' lodge currently housed in the Anawan Grange Hall at the corner of state routes 118 and 44 in Rehoboth is making inquiries about a possible new location, and the independent body that makes the decision concerning siting of the lodge wished to have information on, among other possibilities, Dighton's Van Gyzen Hall (on School Street). He said that the lodge has rented its present location from Anawan Grange since 1920, and that other tenants rent the hall, too, and move the lodge's belongings around. The lodge has asked the Grange for permission to make repairs and renovations to the Anawan Grange Hall, but the Grange has refused to allow it, even though the lodge has offered to pay for the renovations. "We have the money to pay for [the renovations], but they won't let us," he said.

The Freemasons' lodge in Rehoboth currently has 140 active members and at a regular meeting can expect attendance of between twenty (20) and fifty (50), Mr. McCarthy said. Building Commissioner Aguiar stated that the hall could have a capacity of 99 with the present sprinkler system; there is an exemption for a larger number for a private club, but such an organization would be allowed to have no rentals. Mr McCarthy stated that he knows that Van Gyzen hall needs work.

Chairman Cronin stated that there are many options for the Town concerning Van Gyzen hall: rent with repairs; without repairs; sell the building; etc. Building Commissioner Aguiar stated that the building needs repairs to the handicap ramp and handicap accessible bathrooms. Selectman Menges added, that the electrical system needed improvement (a new switchbox).

Mr. McCarthy stated that the Freemasons did not receive pressure to move from Rehoboth; they considered co-locating with another lodge, but did not want to. He stated that the kitchen of Van Gyzen hall is a "big draw for the Freemasons".

Selectman Menges stated that under the Uniform Procurement Act the town must solicit proposals for sale or rent of the building. He reiterated that it must be cleaned of mold. Have the access ramp repaired, bathrooms handicapped accessible, and the electrical system improved, and any other legal occupancy issues addressed, before it can be sold or rented.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the lodge is able to perform some improvements to the hall. He will report to his lodge's independent building committee the tenor of the foregoing discussion, and wait for further word from the Board of Selectmen concerning improvements and legalities essential to Freemasons' occupancy and use of Van Gyzen hall. Mr. McCarthy withdrew at 8:52 a.m.

Mike Delagato of DG Energy Partners entered the meeting room at 9:07 a.m., requesting Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Agreement for a planned six-hundred and fifty kilowatt solar power generating system at 1401 Williams St., the cap & trade credits from which will be consumed by the Menden Upton regional School District. Chairman of the Board of Assessor, Carol Beauregard, spoke in support of the request. At present, the Town receives a modest real estate tax on the real estate involved, which is low-taxed "chapter" (conservation) land. The Town will receive a commercial tax on the land amounting to c. \$11,000 a year when the solar project commences. The PILOT Agreement concerns the personal property tax on the solar generating equipment. Historically, any electrical generating equipment has generated high personal tax revenue. The PILOT Agreement would result in a fixed annual payment amount to the Town in lieu of personal property tax assessed on the fluctuating value of the solar generating equipment, for the first 20 years of the anticipated 25 year life of the equipment, saving the Town the expense of having to have the solar installation professionally appraised each year. Mention was made of the depreciation of the solar equipment over time.

On a motion of Selectman Menges, which Selectman Cronin stepped down and seconded, the board voted to refer the PILOT Agreement request to a special town meeting in late July for required approval by the Town. During discussion of this motion, Selectman Menges said that legal research would be undertaken to find permissive legislation, if any, which the Town could adopt to avoid having to call a special town meeting for each such project in the future, and if such permissive legislation can be found, it too should be proposed to the Town meeting in July.

On a motion of Selectman Menges seconded by Selectman Cronin the meeting adjourned without day at 9:40 a.m.

Patrick W. Menges
Dear S. Cronin
Matt W. Cronin
Selectman of Dighton