

May 5, 2016
Final Minutes

Attendees

Board of Directors: Lori Mix, Amherst Trustee of the Trust Funds, Nate Jensen, Amherst Board of Selectman, Peter Hansen, Representative to the General Court from the Town of Amherst.

Also in attendance were: Marie Grella, Amherst Cemetery Trustees; Tom Grella; Bill Birchard, Amherst Land Trust; Matt Conley, Fire Chief and Steve Brady, Deputy Fire Chief Amherst Fire Rescue Department.

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Lori Mix
2. Board of Directors reviewed the Bertha Rodgers Trust Guidelines:
 - a. The Bertha Rodgers Trust Fund is a restricted, non-expendable trust fund from which only the interest may be expended for the purpose of the betterment of the Town of Amherst.
 - b. The Directors may recommend every three years to the Board of Selectman, as agents to expend, the award of grants to not more than two organizations serving the citizens of the Town of Amherst.
 - c. It is the intent that the interest within this Trust Fund accumulate for a minimum of three years between grants so that any grant can make a major impact on the organization receiving the grant.
 - d. It is the request of Town Meeting that, where applicable, any facilities constructed or renovated with the Trust Fund grants be named after Miss Rogers, the Rogers' family, or the Hartshorn family in order that Miss Rogers' gift to the Town is properly memorialized or take action relative thereto.
3. Lori Mix confirmed the available income balance in the Bertha Rodgers Fund of \$78,136.04 as of end of April 2016. The fund has been in existence since 1993. The requirement that only 75 percent of the income generated by this Trust be expended in the first twenty years has passed. The full amount of the income balance is available for award.
4. Review of proposals submitted for consideration of award – in order they were reviewed.
 - a. Amherst Heritage Commission (AHC) Stone Wall Restoration along Scenic Roads and Stone Wall Whitepaper. The proposal seeks to fund a pilot project to improve the structural integrity and appearance of walls along a stretch of designated scenic highway. The whitepaper will provide a study of all old farm walls throughout town.
 - Grant request: \$15,000
 - Estimated completion date: Fall 2016

Peter expressed concerns that the rebuilding of old stone walls would require constant maintenance and up keep. Stone walls are easily damaged by trees and weather. Lori also

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expressed concerns that the likelihood that funding would be available to continue the restoration of other walls appeared low and had a minimal impact on the “betterment of Amherst.”

- Major impact on organization: Unknown
- Betterment of Amherst: Historic preservation is limited to walls along one street only.

Peter moved, seconded by Lori that this proposal be removed from consideration. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

- b. Town of Amherst Cemetery Trustees Granite Wall Restoration and Rebuild. The proposal seeks funding to repair a collapsing wall about 30 feet to the right of the Town Hall door.

- Grant request: \$21,550.00
- Estimated completion date: No date provided

Discussion: Lori asked Marie Grella why other cemetery funds could not be used to repair the wall. The Cemetery Trustees currently maintain an Unrestricted Fund with an income of \$43,402.11 and a Perpetual Care Fund with an income of \$171,672.52 as of April 30, 2016. Marie stated that these funds were maintained to cover emergency repairs that may occur at some point in the future, and plans to apply a portion of the funds’ income toward the development of a new cemetery. Nate asked for more information about the importance and condition of the stone wall. Marie stated that there were several internments below the wall designated by plaques imbedded in the wall. She also stated that the Cemetery Trustees believed improving the condition and appearance of the wall enhanced the scenic beauty of the village of Amherst and the area around Town Hall.

With a total of \$215,074.63 in available trust income to repair the wall, the project cost would require only 10% of available funds. While current trust income can be used to fund unexpected emergency repairs, the purpose of the both trusts is for ongoing maintenance and repair and should not be solely maintained for unknown future potential emergency. In addition, the use of any portion of the perpetual care funds cited above for the development of a new cemetery will require the approval of the New Hampshire Probate Courts.

- Major impact on organization: The Cemetery Trustees currently have trust funds available to cover the cost of repairing the wall without significantly impacting the ability to cover other unanticipated repairs.
- Betterment of Amherst: The project is a visible part of the village of Amherst, and to those that visit Town Hall and its cemetery.

Lori moved, seconded by Nate that this proposal be considered for further review at the next meeting. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

- c. The Piscataquog Land Conservancy Hazen Land Conservation Project, Amherst, NH seeks to permanently conserve 227 acres of forested land located approximately 1.5 miles southeast of

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Amherst center. The Hazen land overlies one of Amherst's highest yield aquifers which provides recharge to nearby residential drinking water wells, and could be a significant public drinking water source for the town in the future.

- Grant request: \$35,000
- Estimated completion date: Unknown

Discussion: Nate brought to the attention of Peter and Lori that more than half of the purchase price remained unfunded, and it was uncertain whether the PLC could secure the funding to purchase the land. The risk that Bertha Rodgers grant funding would be used toward a project that might not be completed was deemed too uncertain by the Directors to approve this project.

- Major impact on organization: The grant request of \$35,000 represents only 3.3% of the total land purchase and project costs of \$1,070,000. The Town of Amherst has committed \$500,000 to the purchase: \$50,000 from the Amherst Conservation Commission's existing conservation fund and \$450,000 from a special appropriation (Article 31) approved by town voters on March 08, 2016. However, \$570,000 of the purchase price remains unfunded. The proposal provides a list of other possible income sources.
- Betterment of Amherst: While there is value in maintaining open space for overall quality of life as described in the proposal, Amherst has considerable conservation land and zoning laws that maintain open space and a rural designation. The need for the area to provide a drinking water resource to a larger Amherst community is unknown at this time.

Nate moved, seconded by Lori that this proposal be removed from consideration. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

- d. The Town of Amherst Fire Rescue Acquisition of modern equipment to meet current prehospital treatment guidelines and provide Advanced Life Support Care. The proposal seeks funding to purchase the following: 3 monitor defibrillators each with CPR device, and 20 automatic external defibrillators (AEDs).

- Grant request: \$164,000
- Estimated completion date: Summer 2016

Discussion: Matt Conley and Steve Brady provided a demonstration and a discussion of the benefits of the monitor defibrillator and CPR devices requested in their proposal. Modern monitor defibrillators include Bluetooth technology to enable EMS personnel to transmit EKG information to the hospital prior to the patient's arrival to provide more rapid and accurate treatment. The Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Chest Compression system provides prolonged, consistent, and more effective cardiac and cerebral perfusion increasing the survival rate from cardiac arrest.

Peter asked why the department hasn't budgeted for these expenses and that they and the Town should work together to plan for and cover cost of updating and modernizing equipment. Mike

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responded that updated and new equipment needs are identified each year but budget cuts have reduced this line item to \$1000 for FY17.

Peter asked that Matt and Steve prioritize their requested equipment list given that their proposal exceeds the amount available in the fund for award. The equipment request was prioritized as follows: 2 monitor defibrillators at an estimated cost of \$32,000 each = \$64,000, 2 Chest Compression Systems at an estimated cost of \$15,000 each = \$30,000 and the 20 AEDs at \$33,000 total. Peter asked whether one monitor defibrillator would be sufficient due to the cost of two and the impact it would have on the funds available for another award. To ensure consistency of monitoring equipment on the emergency vehicles, Matt and Steve would prefer to purchase two monitor defibrillators at the same time. They revised their priority list and requested 2 Chest Compression Systems if awarded funds from the grant.

- Major impact on organization: Currently, the Amherst Fire Rescue department's new equipment budget is \$1000 for FY17.
- Betterment of Amherst: Provides improved emergency response services to all Amherst residents.

Lori moved, seconded by Peter that the purchase of 2 Chest Compression System devices using funds from the Bertha Rodgers Trust be approved. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

- e. The Amherst Land Trust (ALT) Joshua's Park Project. The proposal, amended in an email dated May 02, 2016, requests that the Bertha Rodgers Trust fund the following items: Playground surface preparation and foundation-installation costs \$10,000; Split-rail fence behind playground \$4,600; Handicapped swings for the playground \$1,000; Handicapped walkway extension into the woodland \$25,000.
- Grant request: \$40,600.00
 - Estimated completion date: End of 2016

Discussion: Nate expressed concerns that the ownership and ultimate use of the park remained in question. The BOS needs to accept, on behalf of the Town of Amherst, ownership and responsibility of the park. The ALS is unable to open the park to the public due to liability and insurance costs. Two public hearings are scheduled for May 9th and May 23rd at the BOS meetings to allow the public to comment on the proposed ownership transfer of the park from the ALT to the Town of Amherst.

Peter noted that the amount of grant funding sought would have little to no impact on the ability of the ALT to complete the project, and that much of the funding was already in place to complete the project.

Bill of ALT stated that the Directors were being biased in their assessment of the project and that the ALT was being penalized for their fundraising efforts. Lori called his attention to the evaluation

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of all other proposals thus far that followed the same evaluation process and criteria, and pointed to the Directors' Hazen Land purchase review and decision.

Bill explained that unexpected cost increases such as the playground foundation installation costs, and the decision to purchase more expensive play equipment increased the estimated costs. Peter responded that cost increases need to be managed and that decisions often need to be made between "must haves" and "nice to haves" during any construction project.

Bill stated that Bertha Rodgers funding for these items was critical to the development of a park for which all of Amherst could be proud. Lori replied that the request for grant funding was going primarily toward "nice to haves" and would play no role in the project's completion or "betterment of Amherst" that is also part of the fund's evaluation criteria. Lori expressed concern about Bill's statement suggesting that the ALT's proposed spending of over \$460,000 would not result in a quality recreational area unless an additional \$40,600 was granted by the Bertha Rodgers' Trust.

- Major impact on organization: The request for \$40,600 represents 9% of the total estimated project costs to-date.
- Betterment of Amherst: The Joshua Park project has received overwhelming support from the community, however issues remain with some of the abutters and the outcome of two public hearings is unknown. If the Town were to vote against accepting the gift of the park, the park would remain closed to the public. This would have an adverse impact on the intent of the Bertha Rodgers Trust.

Lori moved, seconded by Nate, that this proposal be considered for further review at the next meeting following the outcome of the two public hearings and further review of the ALT's list of items to be funded. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

- f. The Amherst Heritage Commission Amherst Town Hall Vault Historical Documents Preservation and Conservation Project. The purpose is to identify, catalogue, properly store and preserve the holdings that are in the Town Hall vault.

- Grant request: \$8,915.00
- Estimated completion date: January 2017

Discussion: Nate discussed the benefit of cataloguing and properly archiving historical documents for title searches. Lori also expressed the importance of the work in hopes of uncovering additional trust fund information that would be beneficial to trustee decision making.

- Major impact on organization: Unknown. More information is being requested for the next meeting of the Bertha Rodgers Board of Directors.
- Betterment of Amherst: Makes Amherst historical and heritage documents and artifacts accessible for research by all Amherst residents, and improves the longevity of our records.

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Lori moved, seconded by Nate that this proposal be considered for further review at the next meeting following an additional information request to the Amherst Heritage Commission regarding the impact on the organization and the benefits to the Town of Amherst and its residents. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

5. Lori Mix moved, seconded by Nate to set a second meeting in early June to review the remaining three proposals following additional information inputs described above. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

6. Lori Mix moved, seconded by Nate to adjourn meeting at 9:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Lori Mix, Amherst Trustee of the Trust Fund

Action items:

1. Lori will follow up with the Amherst Heritage Commission regarding additional information request
2. Nate Jensen will put on the BOS agenda of 5/23 the review and approval of the Bertha Rodgers award to the Amherst Fire Rescue Department.