

LYNDEBOROUGH BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
January 27, 2021
APPROVED

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Chamberlain called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Introduction of Members Present:

Chairman Mark Chamberlain, Selectman Fred Douglas and Selectman Richard McQuade
Town Administrator Russ Boland

Recorder Kathleen Humphreys via phone

Public & Media Present: Jessie Salisbury, Ashley Saari, Paul Lemire, Tim Lemire, Mary Lemire and many members of the public.

III. Appointments:

6:05pm: Potential sale of United Center Church Building – Center

The Lemire's were not present. This appointment will be tabled until they arrive.

IV. Community Forum and Public Comment:

No items to discuss.

Decision Making Actions:

Old/Tabled Business:

Annual Town Meeting & Selectmen's Town Report Submission Discussion

Selectman Douglas suggested a change. The document will be updated and pass along to Administrative Assistant Dawn Griska.

6:05pm: Potential Sale of United Church Building – Center

Chairman Chamberlain reminded the audience that tonight's meeting is only to discuss the potential sale of the church in the Center and only the potential sale should be discussed.

Paul Lemire, Mary Lemire and Tim Lemire were present to represent the United Church.

Tim Lemire provided a history of how they came to be at this discussion tonight. About a year ago, they were approached to purchase the church by a third party. They did not entertain it too seriously then but in 2020 thought more seriously about selling the church. A few weeks ago, Stephanie Roper contacted them to discuss if the church is being sold and express the Town's interest in it. Tim Lemire said if this is something the town wants to pursue, they are open to discussing it.

Selectman Douglas asked if it was their intent to sell this church? Tim Lemire answered, "To the town, yes". He reiterated they were approached elsewhere and it was not seriously considered. It is not their intent but they are considering it now with the Town. They have no future plans. Selectman Douglas asked if he is proposing that the Town

of Lyndeborough has first rights of refusal. Mr. Lemire replied if the town is really interested. He said it could be now or in five-years or so.

Chairman Chamberlain asked a few questions:

1. After seeing some background on the church, he asked if the church dissolves does the building go back to the original church. If so, that would have to be clarified for the Town to accept it.
2. A purchase would be a fundraising item so the Town would need a firm number on the price.
3. The interest is to keep it as a Town building, therefore the whole process needs to be a bit clearer.

Tim Lemire said that any sale would have a title search conducted during the Purchase & Sales process to determine if there is a clear title. They would not know until then. They can work on the details and numbers at any time with the Town.

Selectman Douglas said that in his opinion the church is an icon for the Town and has a lot of sentimental value to people who live in town. He appreciated them coming before the Board and offering it to the Town. He wanted them to understand that means a lot for the people in this town and it can get emotional.

Gretchen Hutchinson, Lyndeborough Historical Society

Ms. Hutchinson said she grew up here and that the church is very old. She asked the reason for selling this building, which has been here for 150+ years. She said she can't understand how the Church of Christ can sell this and asked their plans because she has heard a lot of rumors.

Tim Lemire said he does not know the answers to that question.

Stephanie Roper mentioned the building is in the Historic District. It is her understanding that if the church dissolves then the building goes back to the United Church of Christ.

Leo Trudeau said he has been a citizen here for 65 years. He respectfully requests the Selectmen to require of the Lemire's to show exactly what right they have to offer the building or contents to sale to anyone. If they can't produce evidence, why are they doing it, to line their own pockets?

Mr. Trudeau said, "I have been using the church since 1936; the chairs I sat in are gone, I went to Sunday school there. My mom played the organ and the organ is gone." He added, I understand Mr. Lemire was legitimately voted out as minister about 10-12 years ago by members of the church but he refused to leave. Why are we even discussing the sale of the church? There are questions that need answers.

Paul Martin, Lyndeborough resident and former member of United Church of Lyndeborough said, "I don't attend the church these days but didn't rescind my membership." He mentioned that Pastor Paul Lemire was voted out, but refused to leave. They had an attorney look at it. We had to continue paying our dues to the United Church of Lyndeborough. Many members left the church and went to other churches. I know for a fact, a lot of other people would go to the church there if it was run by everyone having a say. There were financial problems. We took a vote at our

annual meeting and voted for Pastor Lemire to leave the church and he did not. Here we are 10 years later. These churches are a heritage of these towns.

Mr. Martin went on to say that if Pastor Lemire leaves he does not see why these buildings should be sold at all. Every community has a church. When churches are sold, they are stripped out. He mentioned that Lyndeborough does not have a school anymore.

"I'm not a Lyndeborough native. My wife and 100-year old mother-in-law are natives. I heard other longtime citizens complain. I can't image what Mrs. Howe and Mrs. Howard would say about selling the church. We already sold pews and they are being stripped out. I have nothing against Paul Lemire and I enjoyed his sermons. We took a vote, at that time, and he refused to leave the church. My idea is we hire our own minister and have our own services and he can have his services. We all went our own ways. We don't have a church now. That is a Historic District up there in the center. Wilton had a church that is now an American Legion. This is their heritage. I have nothing against anybody here but if you start to sell the town's heritage that is not right."

Debra Howe asked if Mr. Lemire would like to stand-up and explain their philosophy of what they are doing. They chose not to.

Stephanie Roper: It is important we keep the building. In terms of heritage, it is part of the Historic District. She brought up if it's more important for it to stay a church or stay a public building.

Selectman Douglas said it is his understand, that neither the church or its contents can be sold for profit and asked if there is a document relative to this.

Gretchen Hutchinson said that in the 1990's there was some research done which determined if it ceases to be a church, it could not be sold, and would revert back to the main church in terms of the bylaws of the church.

Selectman Douglas asked to research the document he had in his hand and read the Article of Associations for the United Church of Lyndeborough, which does state it is a place of business in the Town of Lyndeborough, NH and should not be for material profit.

Selectman Douglas read the Articles of Association. *(See Town Office for document)*

UNITED CHURCH OF LYNDEBOROUGH ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

The undersigned, all being of full age, associate together to form a corporation under the provisions of Revised Statutes Annotated, Chapter 292, of the State of New Hampshire, by the following articles:

- I. NAME. The name of the corporation is the United Church of Lyndeborough, NH.
- II. OBJECTS. The objects of the corporation shall be to maintain public services for worship of God and the teaching and preaching of the Gospel, and to promote the interested of the Kingdom of God according to the teachings of Christ.
- III. PLACE OF BUSINESS: The principal place of business is in the town of Lyndeborough, New Hampshire, but this corporation shall not be for material profit.

- IV. The meeting for organization of the corporation shall be held at such place in Lyndeborough and on such hour and day as may be called by the first signer hereof, notifying each other signer by postage paid at least one week prior to the meeting for organization.

This document was signed Harry W. Holt, Bessie C. Holt, Peggy A. Hutchinson, Marion B. Siggins, Margaret B. Hutchinson, and Carol C. Simpson. Town Clerk, February 18, 1966, Edward H. Schmidt notarized the document. Filed with the Secretary of State on January 3, 1967.

Selectman Douglas felt from this document, that the church contents cannot be sold for profit. A guest disagreed and said it discussed "not for profit" but they can sell the land and that money go to the non-profit.

Selectman Douglas asked why is the church being sold and why are items being sold. Tim Lemire said he is not going to respond to second question about why the contents of the church across the street from the store are being sold. He said he was asked to come here to discuss this.

Lyndeborough resident & Heritage Commission Member Bob Howe.

Mr. Howe said as a member of the Heritage Commission, they had a meeting there in July and at that time, Mr. Lemire said there was an interest and they were considering selling the church. The town reassessment was discussed. That led Mr. Howe to believe they were selling the church. Mr. Howe said he is not sure what can be done in terms of a sale in the Historic District and the building itself. The exterior of the building cannot be changed. There is limited space to use it as a commercial entity. There is no water there in terms of a residential property.

Stephanie Roper addressed the Historic District Mission that addresses what can be changed in the exterior vs the interior of the building. Selectman Douglas asked if they could turn it into a barn and the answer was yes, if there is no change to the exterior, then it would have to come before the Historic District. Ms. Roper said besides the acoustics being excellent, it has interesting architecture.

Selectman Douglas said it is his understanding that the bell in the church is critical at this point relative to the structure holding that bell up and eventually it will fall. Tim Lemire said he has no idea about the bell.

Stephanie Roper said the Historic District Commission is looking at the cradle and it is sagging. Leo Trudeau added the cast iron framework that holds the bell on the wooden structure is the problem and the wood is fine. The date on the cast iron frame is 1857. One side is deteriorating, and it should not be used because it could come apart. The bell weighs about 1,000-1,500 pounds. Mr. Trudeau urged that no one should ring that bell until it is rebuilt.

Stephanie Roper said the Historic Society is raising money to fix the bell at the church in the center, estimating the cost will be \$20,000 to \$30,000. They raised \$1,200 and are in the early stages of fundraising.

Leo Trudeau asked if it would prudent to speak to the parent organization of the UCC for the Center Church and the American Baptist Association before anything is removed from the church.

Paul Lemire stated the Unite Church of Lyndeborough is member of UCC, however the UCL is autonomous because we bought our own business. They can only come in if they are invited by the United Church of Lyndeborough.

Paul Martin asked who is the United Church of Lyndeborough? There was no answer.

Mr. Martin answered who he thinks it is, the members of the Church of Lyndeborough. He think before anything can be done in those churches the membership have a say. He said," Mr. Lemire is an employee. Members are members; none of them own any of that church. They worship and give funds to keep the church going. As far as I know there is no individual name on the church that owns it, only one name: E.F. Knight, who sold it 1936 back to the United Church".

Selectman Douglas asked to keep in mind individual thoughts of the separation of church and State.

This discussion ended at 6:48pm.

b. New Business:

2016 Police Cruiser Auction Results

The final bid was \$7,800 for the police cruiser on municibid.com.

VOTE: Selectman McQuade made a motion to award the 2016 Lyndeborough Police Cruiser, VIN 1FM5K8AR4GGB13121, as advertised on MUNICIBID, to Syed Ali of Chicago Auto Plex, Inc. of the State of Indiana for the sum of \$7,800. Further, the vehicle shall be not be released until such time as the funds from the bank check are cleared through TD Bank. This sale does not contain any warranties, either written or implied. T/A Boland, TC/TC Schultz and Police Chief Deware are authorized to sign the title and bill of sale at the close out of the sale of said vehicle. Selectman Douglas seconded the motion.

Roll call: Selectman Douglas, yes; Selectman McQuade, yes; Chairman Chamberlain, yes. Motion passed 3-0.

c. Items not on Agenda:

Nothing

V. Town Administrator Report

It was discussed that neighboring communities plan to do a paving project on the 2nd NH Turnpike and if the town's combined their efforts, could they get lower bids to get all the work done at the same time. It was discussed to talk to the New Boston Road Agent.

VI. Selectmen's Report

a. MACC Base Action & Agenda

Selectman Douglas said he read an article published in the Milford Cabinet regarding the need for emergency services and the need for infrastructure improvement. The article stated that if this Warrant Article [in Milford for MACC Base] passed there would be no increases to the other towns that would be serviced. Selectman Douglas brought that to the attention of the police chief in Mont Vernon that this article said "no increase to the other towns"

b. Transportation Committee

Nothing this week

c. Planning Board

The Planning Board met last week and discussed Rules of Procedures. There was not a lot of agreement on what procedures to use and several versions were submitted.

d. Heritage Commission

The Commission will meet on Friday, February 5, 2021.

The Board of Selectman thanked Jessie Salisbury for proof reading the Town Report.

e. Safety Complex

No items to discuss.

Consent Agenda:

VOTE: Selectman Douglas made a motion, Selectman McQuade seconded to accept the Consent Agenda of January 27, 2021. Passed 3-0.

VII. Information Items Requiring No Discussion

Nothing

Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (c)

VOTE: Selectman McQuade made a motion, Selectman Douglas seconded to enter a non-public session at 7:00 p.m.

Roll call: Selectman Douglas, yes; Selectman McQuade, yes; Chairman Chamberlain, yes. Motion passed 3-0.

VOTE: Selectman McQuade made a motion, Selectman Douglas seconded to exit the non-public session at 8:01 p.m. Motion passed 3-0.

Adjournment:

All scheduled items having been addressed, the public meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

VOTE: Selectman McQuade made a motion, Selectman Douglas seconded to adjourn at 8:01 p.m. Motion passed 3-0.

Next regular meeting: February 10, 2021 at Citizens' Hall at 6:00 p.m.

Kathleen Humphreys, Transcriber

Chairman Mark Chamberlain

Selectman Fred Douglas

Selectman Richard McQuade

See below for Consent Agenda

January 27, 2021 Consent Agenda		
Item #	Item Title	Approved
1	AP Warrants – January 19 & January 26, 2021	Yes
2	Payroll Warrant – January 11 through January 24, 2021	Yes
3	Request to Approve Total Notice Registry Research/Mortgage Notification Agreement, 2021	Yes
4	Board of Selectmen’s Public Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2021	Yes
5	Board of Selectmen’s Non Public Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2021	Yes