

**TOWN OF FORESTPORT
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
Regarding the Possible Purchase of Forestport Elementary School
FORESTPORT FIRE HALL
August 13, 2019 @ 6:30PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilwoman Kardash
Councilman Scouten
Councilman Scott
Supervisor Entwistle
Town Clerk, Tracy Terry

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilman Rockhill

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Entwistle at 6:30 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLIENGENCE:

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

LEGAL NOTICE:

Supervisor Entwistle read the legal notice.

COMMENTS:

Supervisor Entwistle started the meeting off by stating no one on the Board was happy about the School closing. The Town Board wrote a letter to the School Board to try keeping the School open. There have been rumors of this being a backdoor deal and this is not correct. The current Town Board has been very open and honest. The main reason they had not considered buying the School is the Board thought the School would've went well over one million dollars. However, the listing agent contacted Supervisor Entwistle and stated it was for sale at \$279,000. At this point there are multiple offers on the table. The Town has put a offer in on the Forestport School. The Board felt having a Public Hearing was best since the Public felt left out with the closing of the School and this would give them a chance to say their peace. If this goes through, it will be a building for the Community. If it is sold privately, it will be lost forever.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Mr. Bigelow, from the gallery stated if the town doesn't buy the School it would be a big mistake. Supervisor Entwistle said the School is ADA Compliant, zoned heat and has the space. The current Town Hall needs a new roof, boiler and has asbestos which is becoming an issue. Within the next three years, the Town will have to become ADA Compliant. The Town of Remsen is going through this right now with their Town Hall.
- Miriam, from the Gallery asked what would happen to the Current Town Hall. Supervisor Entwistle stated the Town has hired a Commercial Appraiser and should have the appraisal done by next week and it would go on the market if they purchased the School. The chances are, it would be marketed as a four apartment

building. Miriam asked what would happen to the building if it didn't sell. Supervisor Entwistle stated the Town would continue to mow the lawn, heat it and maintain the building. No reasonable offer would be refused. She also asked if there would be a clause in the sale stating the building would have to be kept up? Supervisor Entwistle stated there could be stipulations that it would have to be decent as it is in our Community. The outfit that has been looking at making apartments in the Community could put a lot of money into the Town Hall. Miriam asked if there is a list of other apartments owned by the Company so they could see what they are like. Supervisor Entwistle stated they currently own "Deerfield Manor" and the outfit is Buck Brothers.

- Someone from the Gallery asked where the money would come from to purchase the School and if it would affect their taxes. Supervisor Entwistle stated it would absolutely not affect the taxes because the Town could pay cash for the School. The Town could make \$40,000 a year by renting office spaces. They would have long term agreements for 1-2 years for Local Community Members. Supervisor Entwistle discussed where the Town Offices would be and the square footage. A Sheriff substation was discussed as they are currently rent free in a Fire Department. Supervisor Entwistle stated whether they pay rent or not, the response time in Forestport is lagging. It may help the Community to have them in Forestport.
- Mary Beth, from the Gallery asked if it is legal to put public businesses in Town Offices and Supervisor Entwistle stated it is. He has checked with other Municipalities and the Town Attorney.
- It was asked if there would be a Public Vote and it was answered no.
- Supervisor Entwistle stated he feels reasonably optimistic. Some people from the Gallery stated the Board of Education does not care about our Town.
- Miriam, from the Gallery asked about the playground at the Town Hall and if the School sold it to someone else, could the Town see about getting the equipment. Supervisor Entwistle stated a Gentleman from their insurance company was doing a risk assessment and made the Town get rid of the equipment that was there.
- Mark Ritter, from the Gallery asked if the Town Board was willing to go higher than \$279,000. Supervisor Entwistle stated they won't saddle the Taxpayers, but maybe they would go higher. That's something the Town Board would have to discuss.
- Mary Beth, from the Gallery stated Forestport is not a rich Community and asked if the Town could afford this without sacrificing other services. Supervisor Entwistle stated The Board has been trimming and has done very well with it. There used to be two trash days and brought it to one. It saves \$7,000 a year with only 3 tons less than what they used to have. When Parker Snead was Supervisor, they spent \$23,000 on Summer Rec and this Board has been spending \$15,000. Activities have been increased, not decreased. Senior Recreation used to spend

\$23-24,000 a year and is now under \$8,000. This is why rentals is so important. There has been discussion of a Satellite DMV renting an office space.

- Supervisor Entwistle discussed what the School currently pays for utilities and what it would cost the Town. It will cost the Town approximately \$12-14,000 more than what the Town is currently paying if they move to the School.
- It was asked if the School has asbestos. Supervisor Entwistle is waiting on a final report from that. If the School did have asbestos, it would be far better than what the Town Hall has.
- Miriam asked if the Town Hall has any historical value? Supervisor Entwistle stated it needed to meet five criteria and it only meets two. Miriam mentioned possibly having a drop off and pick up at the School and the Board stated that has been discussed and they will speak to the School District regarding that.
- Supervisor Entwistle said he will update everyone at the next Town Board Meeting.
- Sandy Miller, from the Gallery said our Town has actually lost two schools. She stated it was very hard for her when she went to the High School, as they closed when she was a Senior. She felt that they were treated very different by not only the Students, but the teachers as well. Supervisor Entwistle believes these children will have a smooth transition.

A motion was made by Councilman Scouten and seconded by Councilman Scott to adjourn the meeting.

There being no further business, the hearing was adjourned by Supervisor Entwistle at 7:37 PM. Roll Call Vote:

Councilwoman Kardash-yes
Councilman Rockhill-absent
Councilman Scott-yes
Councilman Scouten-yes
Supervisor Entwistle-yes

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy M. Terry
Forestport Town Clerk