Town of Dalton

462 Main Street

Dalton, MA 01226

**Select Board, Regular Session**

**March 25, 2019, 7:03 p.m.**

**Call to Order:**

**Members Present:** Mark Strout, Robert Bishop, Chairman John Bartels, Jr., Edward Holub, John Boyle

**Also Present:** Kenneth Walto, Town Manager; Travis Walsh, Eversource; Nancy Rosenbaum, Recording Secretary

Chairman Bartels convened the Regular Session at 7:00 p.m. in the Callahan Room. No audio or video feed available for this session.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Mr. Boyle led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:**

**Approval of Minutes:** Chair Bartels pointed out a few corrections to the minutes of March 18, 2019. Mr. Bishop made a motion to approve the amended minutes of the March 18, 2019, regular session. Seconded by Mr. Holub. No further discussion. Vote: Ayes: 5, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. Minutes of the March 18, 2019, session were approved as amended.

**Public Address to the Board:** Because Mr. Walsh from Eversource was the only member of the public at the meeting, no address instructions were read. Mr. Walsh was at the session to present information on replacing and relocating the underground primary cable and relocating an existing transformer on Grange Hall Road. Chair Bartels asked whether the agenda item should be regarding transformers (multiple transformers). Mr. Walsh said no, only one transformer to be relocated. Mr. Walsh explained Eversource is replacing the existing primary feed currently fed up from Pole 38 down on Grange Hall Road. The plan calls from bringing the feed down from Robertson Road into that line and span two poles from Hinsdale properties and go underground on the last pole and backfeed to the transformer on the top side of the mountain. At the same time, Eversource will install new conduit cables to the remaining two houses. One transformer on the opposite side of the road will be moved to the opposite side. Mr. Holub asked whether there would be a loss of power in the neighborhood during this work. Mr. Walsh said there would perhaps be a 1- to 2-hour window during which there would be no power. It will not be an extensive or expansive power outage. Mr. Walsh said Eversource was going to install new conduit and new cable and prep everything before replacing or removing a transformer, and then do one or two houses at a time. Mr. Holub asked whether Eversource would notify residents in advance, before the power is shut off. Mr. Walsh said there would be phone calls in advance, as well as on-site crews placing another call shortly before the power is shut off. Mr. Walsh said Eversource plans to address the problem of double poles that resulted two months ago when Eversource stopped removing poles because the poles were rotted and, rather than being removed cleanly, they snapped. Eversource is now returning to those poles that were not removed. Mr. Holub asked why they poles had snapped. Mr. Walsh said the poles were rotted and the ground was frozen. Mr. Bishop asked how deeply the poles were buried. Mr. Walsh said the poles are typically buried 6 feet, but some are deeper, depending on the anchor needed. Mr. Strout and Chair Bartels asked about the double pole on Jennings Avenue, near the cemetery. Mr. Walsh said he was not the Eversource Technician working on that project. Chair Bartels asked if Mr. Wood was still working on that project. Mr. Walsh affirmed it was indeed Mr. Wood. Chair Bartels asked Mr. Walsh to let Mr. Wood know that he (Chair Bartels) asked for him. Chair Bartels said questions about status of those poles on Jennings Avenue are repeatedly asked and he has no answer; he has left phone and e-mail messages and received no response from Mr. Wood. Mr. Walsh said he would relay the message. Mr. Holub asked whether the poles that had snapped would eventually be removed. Mr. Walsh explained that those poles will need to be excavated. Chair Bartels praised Eversource’s informational robocalls that warned residents of planned outages, and particularly the time frames of the planned outages. Mr. Holub commented on how infrequently he has experienced power outages compared to his relatives in Connecticut. Mr. Walsh explained it was a matter of trimming the trees. When there is less resistance to trimming the trees, there are fewer power outages. Chair Bartels commented about the extent to which the trees had been cut back on Hubbard Avenue, but he could understand why. Mr. Walsh explained Eversource’s standard was to trim trees to a minimum of 8 feet from the primary, but that they were trimming trees 20 feet away to avert problems. Mr. Holub said that on Barton Hill Road, the lines are buried. Mr. Walsh said that buried lines are a good thing, but that 40 or 50 years ago, buried lines were not placed in conduits, and as the ground shifted in the winter, there were sometimes problems. Chair Bartels asked if Mr. Walsh had anything else to add or explain about the project. Mr. Walsh said Eversource was going to leave the lower portion of the section energized for the remaining time so that, if anything happens to Robinson Road coming into Dalton, Eversource will still have that line to backfeed those customers, which Mr. Walsh said could be useful, although there was no way to know how long that cable would last. No further questions. Motion made by Mr. Bishop to accept Eversource’s proposed project on Grange Hall Road to replace the existing transformer and conduit line. Seconded by Mr. Holub. No further discussions. Vote called: Ayes: 5, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. Motion passed. Chair Bartels passed around the Eversource petition for signatures by members of the Board and indicated where Board members should sign.

**Annual Town Meeting Warrant:** Mr. Walto presented the final version of the Warrant, subject to review by Town Counsel. One article was new—an unpaid bill that has not yet been paid. The outstanding issue is whether to retain the ballot question or defer the question of funding the proposed new Wahconah. Chair Bartels asked whether the question was in acceptable form; Mr. Walto said he was awaiting review from Town Counsel. Chair Bartels sought confirmation from Mr. Walto that the question could be on the ballot for the Town Meeting, regardless of the vote on the school. Mr. Bishop questioned the value of having the question about funding on the Warrant if the school is voted down. Mr. Strout said the vote might pass, and then the question of funding would also have been answered. Mr. Strout said having the question on the Warrant would allow it to be available for discussion at Town Meeting. Chair Bartels said the question will not be discussed at Town Meeting; instead, Town Meeting adjourns to the elections, and this item is on the ballot—there is no discussion. Mr. Bishop asked, then, whether this question was a sample of what would be on the ballot. Mr. Walto said the Town must put the actual question on the Warrant. Mr. Walto said there would need to be a motion to recess until Annual Town Election, when the question will be voted on, and there could be some discussion on the matter—that decision would be up to the moderator. Someone may ask a question, but it is up to the moderator to whether there would be any discussion. Mr. Boyle said the discussion could not happen until someone makes a motion to recess. Mr. Walto confirmed. Mr. Boyle said if someone wants to say something, they are entitled to say it. Mr. Walto confirmed. Chair Bartels asked who typically makes that motion. Mr. Walto said someone on the Finance Committee usually makes that motion, by tradition. Chair Bartels said, in reviewing the Warrant, that there is nothing for the Select Board to address—it’s all for the Finance Committee. Mr. Holub asked for confirmation that the question was going to remain on the Warrant. Mr. Boyle said the question is part of Article 18. Chair Bartels said that was the topic being discussed—whether to include the question on the Warrant. Mr. Strout said he wanted to avoid a lengthy debate, but wanted to see the question on the Warrant. Mr. Holub said having the question on the Warrant was a good idea. Mr. Boyle said he believed it was the ideal time to pose the question: it’s being asked after the election, and if the vote for the school passes as part of the election, then the next logical step is to ask the residents to choose how to fund it. Chair Bartels agreed to leave the question on the ballot, because the topic will be fresh in people’s minds, given there is only 5 weeks between the two ballots. Mr. Bishop agreed. Chair Bartels asked Mr. Walto if there were any other issues to discuss relative to the Warrant. Mr. Walto said the only thing was to agree on the Warrant, subject to review by Town Counsel. Mr. Boyle asked if the whole Warrant was subject to review. Mr. Walto affirmed, noting that if there is a ballot question, Town Counsel typically wants to review. Mr. Bishop made a motion to accept the Town Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting, subject to approval by Town Counsel. Seconded by Mr. Holub. Mr. Boyle said he supported the Warrant, but if the school bonding issue is voted down, then there is still the option to bring it back for a re-vote. Chair Bartels affirmed. Mr. Boyle continued, noting the re-vote would occur within 120 days. Chair Bartels affirmed. Mr. Boyle asked whether, if the re-vote was delayed for the full 120 days, regardless of whether the District approved or did not approve, the issue of asking for funding would be problematic. Chair Bartels reminded Mr. Boyle that, in a previous Select Board session, Ms. Albano and Mr. Walto had explained that the request for funding could be made at any time relative to a capital project. Mr. Boyle summarized, noting that if the school is voted down initially and then voted down again at the re-vote, the issue of funding is moot. Chair Bartels affirmed. Mr. Boyle continued, asking whether if the school were initially voted down and then was approved at the re-vote, the question of funding would still apply. Chair Bartels affirmed. Mr. Walto confirmed and explained that, if the school is voted down but the debt exclusion is accepted, then if the school is approved at the re-vote, the debt exclusion still applies. Vote called: Ayes: 5, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. Motion passed.

**Report of the Finance Committee:** Mr. Walto introduced the report, noting the figures in the budget were now final. Article 1 addresses permission to enter a 10-year contract for recycling processing services; permission is needed to enter a 10-year contract rather than the typical 3-year contract. All other items on the Warrant match up to the budget. Article 2 reflects that revolving funds that must be re-authorized every year. The funds are now covered by the bylaws of the Town, and the spending limit and disposition of the balance must be approved every year for the funds that exist in the bylaws. Article 3 addresses the schedule of compensation for elected officials. Article 4 is the Town budget: $7,631,650. Article 5 is for funding the CRA: $60,125. Article 6 is the Town’s share of the operating budget for the CBRSD: $7.8 million. Article 7 is the Town’s share of the transportation budget for the CBSRD: $ 406,000. Article 8 is the Town’s share of the capital budget for the CBRSD: $164,265. Article 9 is the Reserve Fund/Free Cash Transfer: $65,000. Article 10 is the transfer of funds to reduce the expected tax rate increase: $200,000. Article 11 is the annual transfer of funds from the Landfill Monitoring Continuing Appropriation Account 991 to the Landfill Closure Account 434: $600,000. The Landfill Monitoring Account is the residual of the sale of bonds to close the landfill more than 20 years ago. Article 12 is to rescind last year’s $75,000 offer to fix the broken sewer line; the money is being moved from the Wastewater Treatment Account 449 to the Sewer Maintenance Account 440 to cure that deficit. Article 13 might be a take no action, depending on what’s left in the Reserve Fund; if it needs to be replenished, there will be a number instead of a blank line. If there is no additional funding needed, there will be no action needed on that article. Article 14 is appropriations to the Stabilization Accounts: $150,000 to capital, $100,000 to general, $50,000 to litigation, and $200,000 to sewer for a total of $500,000. Article 15 is for the OPEB Trust: $1.365 million. Article 17 is $1,315 for an outstanding bill. Members of the Select Board praised Mr. Walto’s hard work on preparing the budget. Mr. Walto said the summary and Warrant accompany the pamphlet that is distributed to residents of the Town with the booklet for the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Boyle asked when the material would be delivered to residents. Mr. Walto said the plan was for the week after Easter—the weekend of April 27—2 weeks before the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Holub asked if the booklet would have a picture of the new high school on the cover. Mr. Bishop asked whether it was a photo of the Old Dalton Town High School. Mr. Walto said there was a picture of the playground at Pine Grove Park on the front cover and the Senior Center on the back cover. Chair Bartels asked whether Tom Rennick was involved. Mr. Walto said he was.

**Consideration of Holding Some Select Board Meetings at the Senior Center:** Chair Bartels said he had spoken with Ms. Pizzi, who is keen on the Select Board holding some of its meetings at the Senior Center. Opening the building is not an issue—Mr. Walto has a key. Mr. Walto affirmed he also has the passcode. Chair Bartels said he could also obtain a key and the passcode—or, because meetings at the Senior Center are not proposed to begin until after the new fiscal year, when the Board will have a new member and a new chair, the new chair or Board member would obtain a key and the passcode. As for a connection to allow for live broadcast, all that’s needed is an Ethernet cable, and there is an accessible Ethernet cable and port in the closet near the meeting room (near the kitchen) where the Board would meet. Chair Bartels said Ms. Pizzi had offered to set up the chairs and tables. The Board would need to lock up when the meeting concludes. Mr. Holub said there was one other matter to consider: someone to operate the camera. Chair Bartels said Ms. Pizzi offered to set up a basket as a suggestion box for topics from members of the Senior Center. Mr. Bishop asked whether the Board was proposing every other meeting at the Senior Center. Chair Bartels said the first order to agree to was to start after the fiscal year—in July and August. Usually, unless something urgent arises, the Select Board meets only once per month. Chair Bartels recalled the Board had met nearly weekly last summer. After those meetings, it would be up to the Board to determine how frequently to meet there—perhaps the first meeting of the month or the last meeting of the month. Chair Bartels agreed with a comment made at a previous meeting that having a set schedule would help residents get accustomed to attending meetings there. Mr. Bishop was in favor of that approach—either first or last meeting of the month. Chair Bartels asked for agreement that this was something the Board wanted to do, regardless of the schedule or frequency of meeting there—that the Board wanted to meet there. Mr. Holub suggested the Board try holding meetings there. Chair Bartels agreed, and suggested the Board try it for the two meetings during the summer and then re-assess at that time. Mr. Strout said he had initially been in favor of holding meetings at the Senior Center once every quarter, but that he now thinks having meetings more frequently and on a schedule will make it easier for residents to access and participate in the meetings. Chair Bartels said it will be a matter of getting used to a new routine. The Board and Town can get the word out about where the meetings will be held. Motion by Mr. Bishop to have July and August Select Board meetings at the Senior Center, and then decide in either August or at the first meeting in September whether to continue and when to schedule meetings at the Senior Center. Chair Bartels suggested making the decision at the first meeting in September, which would expectedly be held in the Callahan Room, and to make an announcement at the August meeting about the decision that will be sought at the September meeting. Seconded by Mr. Holub. No further discussion. Vote called: Ayes: 5, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. Motion passed.

**Wahconah School Building Committee/CBRSD School Committee Reports:** Chair Bartels said there was nothing new to report. There will be a meeting of the School Committee on Thursday, March 28, and Chair Bartels will report on April 8. There is no meeting of the Select Board on April 1.

The School Building Committee has no new meetings scheduled until after the April 6 vote. Chair Bartels said he had investigated whether, if the initial vote was no and there was a re-vote, whether that re-vote would be on a different plan or cost. The answer is no, the vote and re-vote are for the exact same project and the exact same cost. As for whether there would be a second vote, that decision is up to the School Building Committee and the School Committee—there is no requirement for an automatic second vote. If the vote is no, the decision might be to go to Plan B. Mr. Holub asked if there was a Plan B. Chair Bartels said no, there is no real Plan B. Chair Bartels said the question had been raised about what costs were not reimbursable. Chair Bartels distributed a print-out from the CBRSD website. Those interested in details about the total project budget can access this information as follows:

1. To go the CBRSD website (http://www.cbrsd.org/).
2. Click on the Wahconah Building Project option to access a dropdown menu.
3. From the dropdown menu, click on the Building Project Artifacts.
4. On the Building Project Artifacts page, enter Form 3011 in the Search field.
5. Form 3011 can be viewed online or downloaded and printed.

Chair Bartels advised that it is easier to view Form 3011 online than to print it and try to read the tiny print. Non-reimbursable costs are those figures in Column 2 in red highlighting. There are brief explanations of what is not reimbursable. Mr. Boyle said the non-reimbursable numbers are for relatively small amounts, except one for $1,523,166; Mr. Boyle asked what that line item covered. Chair Bartels said it covered site work, engineering of the building, and 8% of the building costs, which is ineligible for reimbursement. Mr. Boyle asked whether site work included replacing the fields and the parking lot. Chair Bartels said he believed it did, but when everything is all added up, the $14,990,644 represents construction costs in excess of the reimbursable construction costs based on the state reimbursable rate of $333/sf, plus marked-up demolition and asbestos abatement, and services associated with the auditorium, that that is a small amount. Mr. Boyle said just because an item isn’t reimbursable doesn’t mean it’s not important, like the playing fields and the parking lot. Mr. Boyle said you can’t not pay for site work. Chair Bartels agreed. Mr. Boyle said that’s why site work is included as required. Mr. Boyle said he hoped those who had addressed the Board and expressed interest in excluding some items should reconsider. Chair Bartels said the one big cost was the auditorium. The auditorium gets lots of use for Town activities and functions beyond the school. To cut the auditorium from 500 seats to 250 seats makes no sense. Mr. Boyle said the auditorium is a community asset. Chair Bartels agreed, which is why that cost so much more. Chair Bartels said Form 3011 is the only answer he can provide to the question of what costs are and are not reimbursable. Chair Bartels addressed the question of what needed to be fixed in the existing building and what costs were associated with those repairs. Those interested in details about the repairs and costs can access this information as follows:

1. To go the CBRSD website (http://www.cbrsd.org/).
2. Click on the Wahconah Building Project option to access a dropdown menu.
3. From the dropdown menu, click on the Building Project Artifacts.
4. On the Building Project Artifacts page, enter Base Repair Summary in the Search field.
5. The Base Repair Summary can be viewed online or downloaded and printed.

Chair Bartels mentioned repairs that would be needed in the next 5 to 10 years if residents vote down the new school. Needed repairs include the roof, building envelope, HVAC, and other expenses. The subtotal is $38 million. Fees and contingency costs add another $7.6 million. Chair Bartels asked Mr. Walto whether $7.6 million represents approximately 20% of the total estimated cost. Mr. Walto affirmed. Mr. Holub and Mr. Boyle thanked Chair Bartels for finding and sharing the information. Mr. Bishop asked about a note on the Base Repair Summary page: “may not be eligible for reimbursement by the MBSA.” Mr. Bishop said there was considerable false information being broadcast about absolutely no money being available for renovation. Mr. Bishop said this sort of information misleads the public. Chair Bartels asked who was providing this misinformation. Mr. Bishop said various websites. Chair Bartels said the work may not be eligible for reimbursement by the MSBA—and emphasized “by the MSBA.” Chair Bartels said there are possible sources of reimbursement, such as green community grants and environmental grants, but once Wahconah is out of the MSBA program if this project is voted down, there will be no money from the MSBA, with the possible exception of perhaps a state grant for roof repair, which Chair Bartels believed the CBRSD was planning to use for Nessacus. That sort of thing might be done for Wahconah, if the new school is voted down. Chair Bartels said it’s possible to spin the information in a variety of ways. Mr. Boyle asked what the latest figure was for reimbursement. Chair Bartels said $42 million. Mr. Boyle said the $46 million in repairs could be spaced out over time. Chair Bartels said the repairs are estimates, and they are not as specific as those in the project costs. There is a question of how those projects conducted over the 5 to 10 years would be bonded, and it has to be agreed by all of the towns involved—in separate votes. Chair Bartels recalled, 6 or 7 years ago, when there was a vote on Cummington, and the project was voted down. Mr. Walto said Dalton voted the project down. Mr. Bishop asked about Cummington’s position—whether they were in or out. Chair Bartels said Cummington was in. There are so many more steps to take in this process before Cummington can leave. Cummington is responsible for its contribution to the OPEB. If the school is voted in and Cummington is obligated to pay its share and doesn’t want to, there will be a debate. The towns have to vote on whether they will allow Cummington to leave the District. Mr. Bishop asked who voted. Chair Bartels said all of the towns must vote, and Chair Bartels believed it was either 5 of the 7 towns or 6 of the 7 towns must agree to allow Cummington to leave the District. Even if the towns agree that Cummington can leave the District, DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) must approve Cummington leaving, and Cummington would need to present an educational plan for the students in the town, which includes the identities of the schools the students will attend. Mr. Bishop asked where Cummington students go to school now. Chair Bartels said 11 of them attend Wahconah, but said he did not know how many were in Craneville or Nessacus. Mr. Bishop asked whether any Cummington students went to Mohawk. Chair Bartels said some did. Chair Bartels asked whether Worthington had its own elementary school. Mr. Boyle said they did—there had been an effort to close Gateway, but it was still open. Chair Bartels said Gateway was no longer part of the region. Mr. Boyle said there were elementary schools in Ashfield and Goshen. Chair Bartels said there are elementary schools to which Cummington could send its children, but there is no transportation from CBRSD—parents must drive their children to and from school. Mr. Boyle asked about Cummington and a demand to not be assessed any amount for the vote and that the state should change its mind about the potential project, and an article in *The Berkshire Eagle* mentioned the town was consulting with legal counsel and were going to write a letter. Mr. Boyle asked whether Chair Bartels knew anything about the letter. Chair Bartels said he did not, but that matter might be discussed on Thursday at the School Committee meeting. The matter of Cummington leaving has been discussed for some time, with the exception of the Wahconah issue. For Cummington to leave, there would need to be a change to the Regional Agreement, which states that Cummington is responsible for paying their share, and a change to the Regional Agreement must be voted on by the towns. Neither Chair Bartels nor Mr. Walto could recall the sequence of events—agreement by the School Committee, agreement by the towns, agreement by DESE . . . a big process. Cummington was seeking to streamline the process because the vote is rapidly approaching, but the date of the vote has been known for a long time. The conversation should have been initiated long before now if Cummington wanted to leave the District. Chair Bartels said that the School Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent made presentations at the Finance Committee meeting last week on the proposed project, after which the Finance Committee voted (the next evening) and unanimously voted not in favor of the project. Mr. Boyle asked on what evening the presentation was given—Wednesday—and whether there had been deliberations, and that the vote had been held the next night. Chair Bartels affirmed. Mr. Boyle asked how many members of the Finance Committee had been in attendance on Wednesday evening. Chair Bartels said there were 6, but 1 of them (Jeff Noble) recused himself from the vote. Mr. Walto said Mr. Noble left the meeting before the vote. Mr. Holub said the Wednesday meeting was broadcast live, and the Thursday meeting was on YouTube. He expressed surprise at the vote. Chair Bartels said he had no comment on the vote.

**Town Manager Updates:** Mr. Walto presented updates on a few projects.

***Cow Power:*** Mr. Walto said Cow Power is “almost there”—project is producing power for the farm, but is not returning power to the grid because Eversource has not yet completed the connection, but Eversource is working on it and will be done by the end of the month. Even if the connection is completed by the end of the month, Rockwood Energy must undergo testing procedures with no guarantees of when in April the testing will start. Rockwood will have an open house on or about May 2 and the Select Board will be invited to attend. Mr. Boyle sought confirmation that the end of the month referred to March. Mr. Walto affirmed.

***OPEB Actuarial Report:*** Mr. Walto discussed the Town’s contributions to OPEB and the Town’s overall liability. There is a total liability as of June 30, 2018, of $6.5 million. The Town has set aside $1.67 million for a net liability of $4.8 million. The Town is covering 189.2% of the covered payroll. As of June 30, 2017, the Town should have put in $541,000, but actually put in $600,000. Then the Town should have put in $481,050 as of June 2018, but actually put in $415,682 more than was required. The OPEB plan includes 98 people, 56 of whom are retired and 42 are active employees. Chair Bartels expressed surprise at the number of retirees. Mr. Walto said if the Town had been in the state’s pension plan, the Town’s net OPEB liability would have been substantially less. If the Town had not joined the trust fund and Dalton were able to continue to contribute $300,000 per year, the trust would be fully funded in 2035, and the Town would not need to make contributions for 5 or 6 years. Having joined the state trust fund and if the Town is able to continue to make $300,000 contributions every year, the Town’s portion of the trust will be fully funded in 2025 and the Town will not need to make contributions for more than 20 years. Chair Bartels asked whether the Town was contributing $300,000 this year. Mr. Walto said the Town was contributing double the amount--$600,000—to reduce the liability. Once the trust is fully funded, the Town can draw from it to pay retiree benefits.

***Online Bill Paying:*** Mr. Walto introduced an e-mail he had received from Gary O’Grady, Assistant Vice President of Government Banking at UniBank. Dalton will soon be set up with a Merchant ID to allow residents to pay their tax bills online. Mr. Walto expects the online bill pay feature to be “live” for the May 1 tax bills. Melissa Davis, Town Collector, will monitor UniBank’s activities. Mr. Boyle asked about the credit card station. Mr. Walto said this feature will allow residents to pay their taxes with a credit card, if they want to, on May 1—at least that is the targeted dated. Mr. Boyle asked whether this was the project that was supposed to have been completed for last April. Chair Bartels said the project was on schedule. Mr. Walto said the Town Counsel had concerns about the contract with UniBank, but eventually a deal was reached. Mr. Boyle said a number of people had asked him about online tax payments.

Mr. Walto mentioned he had received a debt service schedule from the City of Pittsfield regarding the wastewater treatment plan project cost estimates. Mr. Walto acknowledged his estimates were higher than actual costs because the City will be funding the project through the Clean Water Trust, which offers a 0% interest construction loan, with long-term financing at 2%, which will significantly lower costs. Rather than a projected $65 million with 4% interest, the project is estimated to cost $61 million with a 2% interest rate.

Chair Bartels asked if there was any news on the white house. Mr. Walto said Ms. Rebecca Slick, Town Planner, had provided a sample RFP to Mr. Walto and to Town Counsel. Chair Bartels asked about the process, after Town Counsel approves the RFP. Mr. Walto said he believed the RFP would be posted to COMMBUYS—the statewide online procurement system—and the Central Register. Mr. Walto said COMMBUYS had not superseded the Central Register, but is a different form of required electronic advertising. Chair Bartels thanked Mr. Walto for the information and noted he had asked about the white house because Habitat for Humanity is keenly interested in bidding and has already been working on its proposal. Mr. Walto said the sample RFP was for a property in Stoughton that was a Habitat project.

**Items for Future Agendas:** Chair Bartels listed items that could be removed from the agenda. Upon mention of the white house, Mr. Boyle repeated his concerned for the property being rehabbed because the building is small, decrepit, and on piers, and is located on the property line. Mr. Boyle asked whether Habitat was aware the Town would prefer to building to be in the middle of the lot, which means new construction. Chair Bartels acknowledged Habitat was aware the structure needed something more solid than piers to build the structure on. Chair Bartels also mentioned the current structure was very close to the property line and would make more sense to move it “over and in.” Mr. Boyle suggested Habitat should not waste its time, effort, and money on a bid without knowing the Select Board’s expectations for a new structure in the middle of the lot, either on a foundation or on a slab. Alternatively, Habitat might build a bigger structure. Chair Bartels said Habitat was aware and had done great work on the other Habitat house in Dalton. Habitat fits the construction to whatever family is partnering with Habitat to build the house. Mr. Boyle said Habitat is known for rehabbing existing structures. Chair Bartels corrected him and said if the existing structures can be rehabbed. Mr. Boyle said the Board should tell Habitat what the Board prefers and to not waste their (Habitat’s) time and money on anything else, like engineering and drawing and drafting and office work. Chair Bartels In the case of the other Habitat house in Dalton, rather than remove the roof and build up to rehab the existing structure, they razed the existing structure and rebuilt from the foundation, after improving the foundation. Chair Bartels said Habitat wants to look at the existing structure, and he has referred them to look at the lot and, if they want to see the house, to speak with Ken. Mr. Boyle said if they want to rehab the house in its current location, they might be in violation of Town zoning laws and creating a non-conforming use because there is no foundation. Chair Bartels pointed out that it’s Habitat’s time and what they care about is doing it right, whether that means tearing down the existing structure and putting a new foundation elsewhere on the property or building a foundation under the existing structure. Mr. Holub praised a Habitat project in Connecticut. Chair Bartels praised Habitat’s work on the Housatonic Street property. Mr. Boyle said the driveway in front of the Housatonic Street property is a muddy mess because the road was raised 18”.

Chair Bartels returned to the matter of the items for future agendas. Mr. Holub mentioned the agricultural issue—the growing season. Chair Bartels asked Mr. Strout if he wanted to include the volunteer recognition issue. Chair Bartels said Chief Coe would have an update on the junk cars project.

**Remarks of the Select Board:** No remarks.

**Announcements:** Chair Bartels read announcements:

* **On Saturday April 6th** the Town will vote on the proposal to build a new Wahconah Regional High School. Balloting will be at the CRA, 400 Main Street, from 10:00 AM until 4:00 P.M.

**Residents may obtain an absentee ballot** by contacting the Town Clerk’s office. Call 413-684-6111 Ext. 14 or 15, or stop by the office in the Town Hall, 462 Main Street, Monday through Wednesday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or Thursday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

* **The Dalton Police Department** is reminding the citizens of Dalton of the Winter Parking Ban which went into effect on November 15, 2018 and will be in effect until April 15, 2019.
* **John W. Bartels, Jr**., holds office hours by appointment at the Dalton Town Hall when available and at the Dalton Senior Center every 4th Thursday of the month from 4:30 PM until 6:00 PM.  To reserve time at the Dalton Senior Center, please call 413-684-2000.  For further information, or to schedule other appointments, please call 413-684-6111 Ext. 11. or Mr. Bartels' home number at 413-684-2526.
* **State Representative Paul Mark** holds office hours at the Dalton Town Hall, 462 Main Street, in the Callahan Room on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with the exception of the third Tuesday of each month. On the third Tuesday, office hours are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Town Hall and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Dalton Senior Center. You can reach his office at his district number which is 413-464-5635.
* **The Green Dalton Committee** is looking for new members. If interested, contact the Town Manager’s Office. 684-6111 X11.

**Executive Session Meeting:** Declaration by Chair Bartels that holding an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on negotiating position of the public body relative. Motion by Mr. Bishop to go into Executive Session and to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with union and non-union personnel and not return to open session. Seconded by Mr. Holub. Roll call vote: Ayes: 5; Nays: 0; Abstentions: 0.

Next scheduled meeting of the Select Board is April 8, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. in the Callahan Room.

**Regular Session concluded at 8:20 p.m. Recess before Executive Session**