

GILLILLAND: Mr. McNally, do you have a resolution from your committee? McNALLY: Yes.

Regular Board

Monday, May 3, 2021 9

PALMER: Do you want me to read it the way I understand it?

McNALLY: Yes.

PALMER: It would be authorization to accept Federal funding for the Essex County Youth and Agricultural Center project as presented to Congresswoman Stefanik's office as a member item grant.

GILLILLAND: Do we have twelve to allow that on the floor please? GARRISON: Yes.

GILLILLAND: Discussion?

HOLZER: So just, because of committee I got a little confused, it is Monday morning so talk slow in your responses to me please. (laughter) So, to apply for this we're not saying we're tearing down the building prior to receiving the funds, correct?

PALMER: No, we would –

HOLZER: Because that is my misunderstanding because I have no problem leaving our options open.

PALMER: No, we would have to give an authorization from Stefanik's office that we would have been awarded the grant once we had that then we would come back to this board and proceed with the project based upon that funding source.

HOLZER: Okay, thank you.

SCOZZAFAVA: But in the application, the stipulation is we would build a new building, correct?

PALMER: Right.

GILLILLAND: That meets the member item grant requirement.

PALMER: Yes, it is to tear down the old building and construction of a new building based upon the drawings that you all have in front of you now and estimates.

GILLILLAND: Further discussion?

WINEMILLER: Just as a question, is there another location? Is it necessary to tear down this building? Could we install a new building and still keep and possibly in the future renovate the building that exists now? Do we have to? You know what I mean? Tear it down?

GILLILLAND: We would still have a major maintenance requirement on that building.

WINEMILLER: I understand. I understand that but I'm just, as an option –

Regular Board

Monday, May 3, 2021 10

PALMER: I have to be honest, one of the things that I think has a been an objection not only to the public in general is the condition and what you see when you drive into Westport is that building so that certainly wouldn't be my recommendation.

GILLILLAND: I don't think that would be something we could identify; or if it would be a problem with the member item grant but I can't answer that right now.

SCOZZAFAVA: I'll support this resolution because we need to move forward one way or another but I do, I hate voting in the dark here when we don't really know what it's going to cost to renovate that building. I understand what Dan stated, that's going to be costly to go out and have plans drawn up and so on. I don't know if there is any other options out there? It's just, we're all voting in the dark here, we really don't know.

PALMER: You know Tom, not to disagree but I don't think we're in the dark as much as it may seem. We have somebody who is pretty darn experienced –

SCOZZAFAVA: I don't agree with the numbers that were presented.

PALMER: Well, I'm telling you right now Jim Dougan is pretty experienced and he's done a lot of these projects and I don't think that when he tells you that you can't do this for less than \$2.3 million to renovate that building, is probably where you are and I'm not trying to put Jim on the spot. Look, when myself or Jim or anybody else that works for the board takes these positions we make people unhappy. I'm not opposed sometimes to making people unhappy but I don't think that we're so far off on that estimate that it's not, the benefit of going out and getting engineered drawings and really digging into that building to kind of get what it would truly take to renovate it is pretty costly and when you have somebody that has the expertise that Jim has sitting there I'm not sure that it is a good use of county money.

SCOZZAFAVA: I wasn't aware of the \$2.3 million estimate.

PALMER: Well, that's what the original one came back in quite a while ago to be honest.

SCOZZAFAVA: Looking at what I was presented this morning; you can't wire that building for seventy grand.

PALMER: Well, it's not only that but you're still not doing a foundation under it and I know that some people are saying that's okay but I mean it's hard to do those projects without getting into that stuff.

TYLER: That's the problem Tom some people are saying something, some people are saying another and I agree with you that we don't know exactly what the cost is going to be unless you do put it out for bid but that's what it is. I feel pretty strongly if somebody you know, if that building shouldn't be there anymore you can put anything you want and if somebody feels very strongly it should be there you can put anything you want.

SCOZZAFAVA: I mean, I think if this board has taken into consideration the historic value, the Town of Westport and the position that you're in and actually it's not bad to get a brand new building you know, you're still getting a building I mean the board can sit here and just say, you know what we really don't have a use for that building and let's just level it and be done with it because as Dan pointed out earlier this morning you know, you build a building and then you still

Regular Board

Monday, May 3, 2021 11

have costs down the road you've got to maintain that building, you've got to heat it, you have to pay the lights, so – do I think it will be feasible for Westport to take over? That's up to the Town of Westport but I can tell you you're going to be taking on a lot when you take on a building that size but that's between you and your board. So anyway, like I'm done. I will support this resolution.

MONTY: Just clear it in my head, we are applying for this million dollars, we apply for it, we get notification that we have received it, we're still not locked into doing it? We can refuse the money?

GILLILLAND: You are never locked in.

PALMER: You're never locked in but I don't want to kid anybody if you get offered a grant and you say no your chances of getting a grant the next time are pretty slim.

MONTY: I understand that completely but if something were to transpire in the next six months that somebody comes in with a concrete plan with financing, engineered already that could be less, we're not locked into taking that?

GILLILLAND: No, never locked in.

PALMER: I mean the big thing for us was getting in that door, those member item grants with Stefanik are very competitive. She has only got five for the whole area.

GILLILLAND: And this is number one, I was told.

TYLER: It's time to refresh again the numbers that we came up with were from experience. They had already done a project similar that's where our numbers came

from so in order to do a similar project you have a little experience doing it maybe you come up with a little better numbers. Maybe the numbers that the county came up with are more expensive because they are putting in things that our committee didn't feel that we needed a full basement, you don't need a full basement, the use of spray foam and things like that it's just different ways of doing things. That's where our numbers came from is from experience.

GILLILLAND: Further discussion?

WINEMILLER: I'm sorry, I'm not trying to harp I'm just – do we have to state in the resolution that this building would be demolished and build a new building or can the resolution state, we would take it and build a new building and I understand absolutely I understand it cost money to renovate what is there but is it possible?

GILLILLAND: We would rather not change the language because we don't have any facts about it if it would ruin the grant or anything else. I mean, you can always go back and investigate it and change the resolution but I would prefer not to put rules in this resolution not to jeopardize the standing we have on getting this money.

WINEMILLER: I absolutely understand.

GILLILLAND: Further discussion? Being none, roll call please.

Regular Board

Monday, May 3, 2021 12

RESOLUTION #124 – AUTHORIZING ESSEX COUNTY TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL GRANT FUNDING FOR THE NEW ESSEX COUNTY YOUTH AND AGRICULTURAL CENTER PROJECT.

This resolution was moved by Mr. McNally seconded by Mr. Merrihew and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:

AYES:

NOES: ABSENT:

2760 votes

161 votes 0 votes

(Barber, Harrington, Merrihew, Depo, Wilson, Monty, McNally, Scozzafava, DeLoria, Rand, DeZalia, Subra, Winemiller, Giordano, Gilliland, Holzer)

(Hughes, Tyler)