

**Minutes from Russell School Committee Meeting**

**Monday, August 1, 2022, 6:30-7:30pm**

Hybrid Meeting


Hadley Public Library Community Room, and Zoom

*Present: Courtney Meyer, Dan Regish, Lillian Weir, Alan Weinberg, Carolyn Holstein*

*On Zoom: Emma Dragon, Amy Parsons (Select Bd liaison)*

*Absent: Brandi Fill, Linda Hannum*

1. Introductions - name, your connection or association to the school - 5 minutes
  - a. Courtney - member of Hadley Historical Commission, lived here for 4 years, loves the town and the building
  - b. Carolyn - former member of Hadley Historical Commission and CPA, lived here for 6 years but has lived in the area longer, was recruited by Molly Keegan. Loves the intricate work on the building.
  - c. Dan - has been on the Municipal Building Committee since 2014, attended Russell School in 5th and 6th grade. Would like to save the building, prioritizing stabilizing the structure.
  - d. Lillian - art teacher at Hopkins, recently received a degree in grant writing. Has painted a map of Hadley. Daughter is a senior at Hopkins. Loves the Russell School building.
  - e. Alan - lived here for 45 years, on the Municipal Building Committee, cemetery committee, active at the Hadley Historical Society, and is on the board at the library. Would like to repurpose the building.
  - f. Emma - 5th or 6th generation Hadley resident, descendant of one of the settlers coming from Wethersfield. Was in the last 5th grade class to attend Russell School. Believes it's our responsibility to take care of its town and buildings.
  - g. Amy - 13th generation farmer, liaison for our committee. If we need anything from the select board or for a public hearing, she can assist.
  
2. Interest in chair and clerk positions, and election - 5 minutes
  - a. Courtney voted in as chair, unanimous vote.
  - b. Carolyn voted in as clerk (for a limited time), unanimous vote.
  
3. Swearing in status - 3 minutes
  - a. Lillian will go to town hall on 8-2 to be sworn in. Everyone else in attendance has been sworn in. Courtney to confirm with Brandi and Linda.

4. Brief review of building history - 5 minutes
  - a. The doc, "[Deciding the Future of Russell School Building](#)," has a good summary of the history. The building has been vacant since 1996, Many studies have been done on the building; the cost of current repairs, particularly on the exterior of the building, needs to be updated – chimney needs to be removed; the foundation is crumbling, the bricks need to be repointed, the portico removed, etc.
  - b. The Municipal Bldg Comm (MBC) consistently has put the building on hold, according to Dan and Alan. Our committee is charged with bringing valid information to Town Meeting in order to determine next steps for the building, and/or achieve the funds to Preserve the building. Alan & Carolyn suggested a public forum to drum up support for preservation & funding for the bldg.
  - c. All should review  [Designing and Constructing Public Facilities.pdf](#) and other docs found in the Russell School Google Doc folder.
  
5. Lofty dreams for the building/location - 10 minutes
  - a. All who were present agreed that the building should be restored/preserved. Ideas about the future of the building included: park & recreation; art center, children's museum, theater/performance space, school use, municipal uses, private/public projects, non-profit uses, elderly housing. Or can bldg be used to make money?
  - b. Something to give back to the community
  - c. Fundraising ideas were suggested, ie: a vendor event similar to the Asparagus Festival, art installations similar to painted cows.
  
6. Committee goals - 10 minutes
  - a. Make a decision on the future of the school
  - b. Save the school in some way
  - c. Receive feedback from the public on their thoughts on the building
    - i. Finalize Russell School survey and share with town residents
    - ii. Possibly hold a forum
  
7. Other business - 10 minutes
  - a. Courtney will be busy for much of August
  - b. Courtney to contact Olde Mohawk, Tuttle Consulting, and Tim Neyhart; to update numbers for stabilizing and restoring the building. Any work more than \$10,000 must go out to bid.
  - c. Amy to ask where the \$8K from CPA is, which was reserved to fix the slate roof

- d. We could possibly bond CPA money. State tends to match CPA money.
  - e. Dan said that Gary Berg has keys to the building, and he will contact him so that this committee can have a tour of the interior. This should be done before our next meeting in two weeks.
  - f. Alan to collect photos and videos of the school.
  - g. Future - possibly tour Barry Roberts' buildings, Easthampton City Arts
8. Frequency and location of future meetings - 5 minutes
- a. Every two weeks at the library and via Zoom (hybrid)
9. Determine next meeting date - 2 minutes
- a. Monday, August 15 at the library and via Zoom (hybrid)

Meeting adjourned at 7:51pm

*Submitted by Carolyn Holstein, clerk for the evening*