

Maple Corner Community Center Board Meeting May 31, 2022

Present: President Dirk Van Susteren, Carolyn Morton, Andrew Nemethy, Peter Burke, Bill Powell, John Rosenblum, Steve Sweeney, Rick Dryfoos, Jamie Moorby, JC Myers

The Board met to continue the important discussion of replacing the existing oil furnace in the center, based on concerns it is at the end of its 20 year life span and that Conti Oil, which has been providing fuel and service, was not going to work on the unit anymore.

An extended discussion was launched when Treasurer Bill Powell caused some sticker shock that the Board's preferred option of a new wood-fired pellet boiler would cost as much as \$35,000, roughly 4 times the cost of a conventional oil furnace.

Many Issues were raised and debated at length. Dirk Van Susteren asked whether the work required to switch to wood could be done before this winter? How would the board pay for the system, a major capital expenditure it had not anticipated? Carolyn Morton wondered if the board was "gambling" when it hoped that the existing furnace could get through another winter, and also might be gambling that a wood-fired system was the right one for

the center.

JC Myers, part of a volunteer sub-committee working to explore heating options, noted that it is hard to judge when a furnace is at its end and that many go on for years after their expected life span. John Rosenblum noted as well that due to the center's usage, the furnace has not been heavily worked as it might have been in a private home.

A number of technical issues about wood pellet boilers were raised about how rapidly they can heat a space, how they work and cycle on and off, how reliable they are. JC Myers also raised a concern that if a replacement is not done this year, the prices are likely to only rise next year, with continuing supply chain issues.

In the end, despite some clear reservations about cost, the board voted in favor of proceeding with a wood-fired boiler replacement to heat the center. It unanimously voted "to authorize the committee to move ahead to replace the oil furnace before next winter with a wood-fired pellet boiler with hot air exchanger at an approximate cost of \$34,000, contingent on the ability to secure financing and reach final approval from the MCCC membership. "

Treasurer Bill Powell, who had assembled the list of heating options that included the wood-fired system based on estimates from Pellerger in Montpelier, agreed he would

go back and discuss the board's conditional decision with Pellerly and seek answers to questions raised about maintenance, wood storage and operation of the unit.

President VanSusteren said, as the board took in their decision and the potential cost, that the board was moving forward, but "This is not a final vote."