Putney Historical Society Board Meeting 11/01/18 at 6:30PM

Present:Ruth Barton, Laurel Ellis, Carolyn Handy, Tom Jamison, Betsy MacIsaac, Lyssa Papazian, Tim Ragle, Lindley Speers, Barbara Taylor, Maryann Toffolon,

Guests: Jeff Shumlin

Secretary's report:

Draft minutes of the 10/25/18 meeting previously distributed by email. A motion was made by Barbara and seconded by Lyssa to accept the October minutes as presented. Motion passed.

Old Business:

Here today to talk about future of the General Store. Paul Bruhn is not able to join us tonight but he sent an email with thoughts/ideas for discussion:

1. Advertise the business/Mike Henry, Erin Seigrist, Jim Harrison
2. Hire a manager/ Historic Harrisville adopted this approach several years ago
3. Assistant managers with oversight
4. Pay Lyssa to manage the store for a period of time so that a good solution can emerge
5. Separate the first and second floor, find use for second floor (Basketville?)
6. Historical Society should own the building, but business could be owned by a separate local group, perhaps the local lenders or others

Current debt $190,000

Individual loans total $56,000

PTV could come up with $5,000 to $10,000

Lyssa emailed Phil Steckler today, sent some projections she worked up and asked for his advice. Laurel contacted Lonnie Lisai to make him aware of our situation, he is not interested in buying the business but is willing to advise.

Jeff reminded us how much we have accomplished in almost 2 years, Lyssa and Betsy have done an outstanding job getting the store up and running, with $1,000,000 annual sales should be enough to make the business work. We need to be aggressive with advertising to list the business for sale or hire a manager. Jeff placed a call to Greg Wilson today to explore use of second floor.

Lyssa and Betsy met with a couple, Scott and Katy, who ran the Western Avenue grocery in Brattleboro for a year, Scott came here looking for a job. Lyssa and Betsy will meet with him again, not sure that he has the expertise needed for Paul’s option 2, perhaps more like assistant manager with oversight. They understand the business will be for sale. Carolyn asked how much we need to pay a manager, do we need to pay benefits? Lyssa thinks $15 - $20 per hour for assistant manager position, maybe build incentive (profit sharing or bonus) into salary compensation to encourage working toward sales increase and cost cutting measures. Are we advertising both sale of the business and hire of manager? Let’s wait to find out if Scott will work out as assistant with oversight. We need to find funds to pay for new person, asses current needs and job duties. Current payroll cost is between $12 - $13,000 every two weeks.

Where do we advertise business for sale? Some suggestions are NY Times, BizQuest.com, Yankee Magazine. Ask VT Grocers Association for recommendations. Carolyn offered to help with press release and ad. Lyssa can reach out to the guy who did the Chronicle article.

Ruth appointed Carolyn, Lindley and Tom to form a committee to list the business for sale. Lyssa has already started a draft for ad. Contact Mike Henry as Paul suggested. Need to review store books to see if we can find some funds to pay assistant manager.

Discussed various options for use of second floor space, including artist group, arts & crafts shared space, Antidote books interested in space rental for readings. Jeff will ask Greg Wilson about Basketville use of space. Can advertise second floor space rental short or long term on Craigslist. Barbara and Barry will work on developing a fee schedule for upstairs space rental.

Ruth called Vt Historical Society to ask about their photo policy, they were no help. A motion was made by Tom and seconded by Lindley to grant permission to Evie Lovett to use PHS photos in her artwork and accept her offer to pay us 10% of sale price of any piece using the photograph. Motion passed.

Next meeting will be Thursday December 6th at 6:30pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by Lindley Speers