

Belmont now owns former bank building

BY GAIL OBER
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

BELMONT — The town spent a total of \$250,000 buying the former Northway Bank Building said Selectman Ron Cormier this week. The bottom line included the purchase price and all closing costs.

Two-hundred and fifty-thousand dollars was the maximum amount allowed under a warrant article passed by the voters at a special town meeting on August 21. The article passed by an eight percent majority with 164 voting for the purchase and 156 voting against.

The transfer deed was recorded October 16 with the Belknap County Registry of Deeds.

The article gave the town the right to purchase the former bank from William and Carolyn McDonough who tried unsuccessfully to sell the building to the town in 2010 for \$275,000.

Voters rejected the measure with 311 for town ownership and 421 against.

In 2008, Tony and Lorette Brown owned the building and also tried unsuccessfully to sell the building to the town for \$300,000. The vote was narrowly rejected with 134 voting yes and 143 voting no.

The McDonough's purchased the lot from the Browns in January 2010 for \$275,000.

The building has one tenant — The Vault — a hair dressing salon that is scheduled to move to 8 Church St. sometime this winter.

As part of the Village Revitalization Project, the town also voted to close Mill Street Extension, the portion of Mill Street that runs along side of the former bank building.

Selectmen have said that if they were successful in negotiating the purchase they would look into the possibility of using it for town offices.

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utors would be able cull the new registrants and determine their legitimacy.

When the Belknap County Republican Committee met Skip Murphy, co-founder of GrantiteGrok, spoke to the investigation and encouraged party members to assist with it.

New Hampshire is one of seven states that allow voters to register on election day. The others are Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Wisconsin, Wyoming and Washington D.C. In June 2011, the legislature in Maine ended same-day registration, which was introduced in 1973, but five months later it was restored by 59-percent in a popular referendum. Turnout has been between 10-percent and 12-percent higher in the states with same-day registration than in those without it.

Reynolds said that voters seeking to

register on election day must present proof of citizenship, age and domicile. A birth certificate, passport, naturalization papers or qualified voter affidavit usually serves as proof of citizenship. Typically a driver's license serves as proof of age and domicile.

However, if the address on the driver's license does not match ward or district in which they intend to vote, they must also show evidence of domicile at their stated address, such as a lease, deed, utility bill or piece of mail. Those without proof of age are required to complete a qualified voter affidavit while those without proof of domicile are required to complete a domicile affidavit.

Any investigation of the new registrants as Macdonald envisions would require determining the validity of the documentation presented at the polls on election day.

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will have five years to pay. But the oil giant still faces several billion dollars in additional claims for damage to people's livelihoods and the environment.

Separately, BP rig workers Robert Kaluza and Donald Vidrine were indicted on federal charges of manslaughter and involuntary manslaughter, accused of repeatedly disregarding abnormal high-pressure readings that should have been glaring indications of trouble just before the blowout.

In addition, David Rainey, BP's former vice president of exploration for the Gulf of Mexico, was charged with obstruction of Congress and making false statements. Prosecutors said he withheld information that more oil was gushing from the well than he let on.

Rainey's lawyers said he did "absolutely nothing wrong." And attorneys for the two rig workers accused the Justice Department of making scapegoats out of them. Both men are still with BP.

"Bob was not an executive or high-level BP official. He was a dedicated rig worker who mourns his fallen co-workers every day," Kaluza attorneys Shaun Clarke and David Gerger said in a statement. "No one should take any satisfaction in this indictment of an innocent man. This is not justice."

The settlement, which is subject to approval by a federal judge, includes payments of nearly \$2.4 billion to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, \$350 million to the National Academy of Sciences and about \$500 million to the Securities and Exchange Commission, which accused BP of misleading investors by lowballing the amount of crude that was spilling.

It also includes nearly \$1.3 billion in fines. "This marks the largest single criminal fine and the largest total criminal resolution in the history of the United States," Attorney General Eric Holder said at a news conference in New Orleans. He said much of the money will be used to restore the Gulf.

Holder said the criminal investigation is still going on. Before Thursday, the only person charged in the disaster was a former BP engineer who was arrested in April on obstruction of justice charges, accused of deleting text messages about the company's handling of the spill.

Greenpeace blasted the settlement as a slap on the wrist. "This fine amounts to a rounding error for a corporation the size of BP," the environmental group said.

The largest previous corporate criminal penalty assessed by the Justice Department was a \$1.2 billion fine against drug maker Pfizer in 2009.



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