

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

DECEMBER 1, 2014

MEMORIAL BUILDING

7:00 P.M.

The following are to be considered draft minutes until approved by the Board.

Selectmen present: Chairman, Donald Hill; Leigh Callaway, and George McCusker.

Department members present: Road Agent, Peter Abair; Chief of Police, Tim Julian; Code Enforcement, Tom Duling; Fire Chief, Peter Lacaillade; Deputy Fire Chief, Kevin Roberts; Librarian, Steve Klein; Library Trustees, Art Bobruff, and Joyce Guinther; Budget Committee member, Bryan O'Day. Mike Lawlor was also present.

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Review:

Library: request for increase of \$750.00 to pay for substitute librarian when Steve is on vacation, and \$250.00 for additional training for trustees. Would also like to request \$1,000 to hire a consultant to study the most efficient use of space and services that the library offers. Several scenarios for the appropriation of the \$1,000 were discussed. If the funds were transferred to the library, they would return the money to the general fund at the end of the year if they were not able to find a consultant or the entire \$1,000 was not spent. Leigh suggested adding new lines to the library's budget to reflect these changes. The library has kept their budget flat for 6 years, and received a \$400 increase last year. Wages for substitutes should be handled through the town's payroll system, as was noted by the auditors as well. Leigh noted that the town is considering some consulting in space needs for other areas as well, and Jeff Milne has volunteered to work with the committee as he has experience in that field. Art stated the trustees are trying to push forward and come up with some long range planning. A consultant would help them decide on library business and practices, space needs for the library may be incidental to that study. The Board agreed for transparency, a consultant for the library should be shown in a separate line.

Joyce mentioned the need to replace library computers. This was discussed at the Selectmen's Pre-CIP meeting. The trustees were advised to decide if computer replacement is something they want to include in 2015 or 2016. They will get in touch with Ken Jacques regarding placing them in the CIP plan. The estimated cost would be about \$9,000.

Don stated about 6 years ago when the selectmen were watching jobs and the economy, Steve asked for directions regarding the library budget. At that time, he was asked to keep the budget flat, and he responded "if that is required, than that is what we'll do". He has done so every years since then. The ability to keep the budget flat was very much appreciated. Steve and the Trustees are looking forward to see how best to make the library and services better for the community and part of the community. The Selectmen thanked Steve, Art and Joyce for their input.

Leigh noted the Kearsarge Municipal Budget Committee is holding their final hearing on Thursday, December 4, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at the High School.

Police: Tim reported his budget is essentially unchanged. The department's Tasers are no longer supported, and are being phased out. If they were to break they would need to be replaced. They are currently able to purchase vehicle fuel cheaper at Circle K than through the State. Don noted that the fire department radios need to be changed, and if so will it affect the PD. Tim stated he was able to obtain 4 portables through the grant. They are obsolete and not supported for maintenance, but they will still work for the PD.

Highway: Pete's budget is also essentially unchanged. Leigh reported Pete has requested a new zero turn mower for use at the rec field, town office, and cemetery. A new zero turn was purchased for the cemetery in 2013. There is also the Ariens tractor and the older zero turn which was estimated to be 9 or 10 years old, but is 42" wide and is able to get in between the stones at the cemetery. Estimates for a new zero turn with a 60" deck were received from Awl and All in a range of \$5900 - \$8100. A 60" deck would decrease the amount of time mowing at the rec field, and the open spaces at the cemetery. George asked if it would be feasible to purchase a small tractor with a pull behind mower. The Board discussed the advantages/disadvantages of several options. Pete suggested if a new mower is purchased this year, he would get rid of the Ariens, patch up the old white mower for this summer and replace it with a 42" zero turn next year. A decision was not reached about a mower. The Board agreed the appropriation for a mower should be in the grounds and buildings budget rather than in the highway budget.

Pete is recommending purchase of a chipper. He believes they would be able to get a lot more done if they were able to cut and chip instead of having to load brush and haul it away. When Durgin and Crowell were shut down during the storm in July they hauled brush to the cemetery which they now have to burn. There is always brush to be cut. Leigh asked about renting a chipper. Pete stated he was able to rent a chipper with operator for \$600.00 a day for 3 days this summer, but after a storm that may not always be available. Kevin Roberts questioned what would happen if Durgin and Crowell no longer operated their chipper or started charging for brush? Don noted at the moment Durgin and Crowell's lot is open and they have always been willing to provide this service to the Town. Pete stated it takes a lot of fuel and time spent running brush to Durgin and Crowell.

Leigh noted there may be grant money available through Homeland Security to offset the cost of a chipper. He recommended if a chipper purchase goes to town meeting, it should be through a warrant article funded through the unreserved fund balance. Don recommended going forward, Pete try to keep track of the amount of time spent cutting and hauling brush.

Leigh noted he believes there will be close to \$80,000 unspent in the operating budget. He recommends rolling over as much as they can from the fund balance to a warrant article for paving, with an additional \$80,000 appropriated in Pete's operating budget. Paving was put off this year due to the need for emergency replacement of the septic system.

Pete reported he is not sure of the ETA on the new truck. There are 5 or 6 other trucks ahead of ours. Fairfield ordered a bunch of bodies, and when they came in they were the wrong ones.

The Selectmen noted the bank has processed the loan. Payments for the loan will be coming due and it may make sense to pay the amount that was appropriated for the first year's payment and interest back to the bank, since the money has already been raised and appropriated through this year's taxes.

Fire Department: Budget is staying essentially the same. There are no major purchases planned. The breathing apparatus has been pressure tested for the last available time. They may purchase a new pump for the forestry truck.

Pete reported the seals on the new garage door still need to be repaired/adjusted. He has been in contact with the contractor who will get here as soon as possible. Leigh noted the town is holding the \$1,000 deductible and may need to encumber the funds if the door is not repaired by the end of the year.

Don noted at the CIP meeting the electrical situation at the fire station was discussed. There are also other areas around town that need looking into. It was suggested that the simplest thing may be to run a

new subpanel to the kitchen and to the highway garage and run new circuits, and then evaluate the rest of the building on a case by case basis. Codes are always changing and it may not make sense to plan on changing out the wiring but to look into how to improve the areas that cannot handle the loading. Pete Lacaille noted, Larry, one of their members is an electrician and has looked at it on a consultant basis, not as someone who wants to do the work, but the panel is not meeting the load requirement now. Leigh recommended \$10,000 as a "place marker" and suggested funding through the unreserved fund balance. Don stated the need to be careful about the number of articles against the fund balance. There is a need to get a contractor in there as soon as possible to gather information about what is needed.

Leigh noted the septic system replacement came in at \$26,478 and was done in 39 days start to finish thanks to Pete Abair's efforts.

George voiced concern that came from the joint Planning and Zoning meeting with Wonderwell. One is the water supply and whether it is public or not. The other is his impression and concern with fire safety. He believes the fire chief may have found violations and if there are violations, Wonderwell is not addressing or speaking to them in the hearing process. Perhaps the Selectmen need to get involved and take action. Pete Lacaille stated some fire department members have done a walk through to familiarize themselves with the building to prepare for an incident. It was not an inspection. Wonderwell residents were given the name of a contact from the State Fire Marshall's office that will come out on a consultant basis to provide information and resources before the State Fire Marshall does a full inspection. Pete noted the fire department has inquired about follow up but they haven't gotten any information back. Don asked if the Fire Department could kick this up to the State Fire Marshall's office. Pete stated Wonderwell should have gone through this whole process before they started using the building for this purpose. He stated he would make some phone calls to see where Wonderwell is at with the information they have been provided. He noted, when they go there, it is unclear just who is in charge. They have also been advised they need procedures in place for accountability if an emergency occurs.

Don noted concern that the Town has a responsibility to protect the fire personnel that respond and people who are at the facility. A call to the State may be in order. Pete will try to get in touch with someone and get back to the Selectmen. Janet will give him contact information for the President of Natural Dharma Fellowship.

Minutes:

November 10 (x2) unanimously approved after motion by Leigh, second by George.

November 12: Don noted change in "syntax" on page 1. Instead of: ~~The Board felt they could comfortably take up to \$75,000 from FB to maintain the town tax rate at \$4.00,~~ change to: In order to maintain a tax rate of \$4.00 the Board would be willing to take up to \$75K from the unreserved fund balance. Motion by Leigh to approve as amended, seconded by Don. Leigh and Don voted in favor. George abstained as he was not present at the meeting.

November 19: George moved to approve, seconded by Leigh. George and Leigh voted in favor. Don abstained as he was not at the meeting.

November 24: One correction. Leigh also stated that dropping the rate by \$.36 would ~~by~~ be myopic. Motion by Don to accept with correction, second by Leigh. Don and Leigh voted in favor. George abstained as he was not at the meeting.

Don reported tax bills just got out after a “super human effort” by office staff to get them in the mail quickly after a tax rate was set on November 24th. He noted his frustration that the Selectmen agreed to hold a special Selectmen’s Meeting held on November 12th to discuss possible scenarios and come to a decision regarding the tax rate and possible use of the unreserved fund balance to offset taxes, so in his absence the bills would not be delayed. The tax rate information was received on the 18th but a rate did not get agreed on, so the rate did not get finalized and the bills did not get printed until the 25th.

Projects List:

Leigh proceeded to review the list of proposed repairs he had come up with to add to the project list for consideration in 2015 was reviewed. Don noted he was in agreement, and hearing no comment from George asked George if he was in agreement as well. George stated he was not in favor of all of them, but told the Board to proceed with the list.

Don noted that several have mentioned that it might be a viable option to put solar panels on the roof of the memorial building. There are no tax advantages to the town to do so, but there could be a large savings in electricity going forward. He noted there are some companies that buys and installs and sells as leased equipment with rate benefits.

Leigh noted that Jeff Milne has volunteered to be on the space needs committee to review space needs and requirements for this building.

Leigh reported the screens for the fire department meeting room have been replaced. They will be installed in the spring.

Purchase order was signed for the white truck. Pete and crew have replaced the old chain that was broken and had been repaired in two places in the past. Motion by Don to approve the purchase of \$1700.00 for the sander chain, seconded by George and unanimously approved.

Meeting schedule: Selectmen meet on December 8th and December 22. The Budget Committee has a preliminary meeting on December 9th. Leigh shared his budget spreadsheet and asked the other two Selectmen to review them for the meeting on the 8th. He hopes to get ahead with the department budgets to dovetail with the budget meeting. He noted that the Selectmen have not discussed possible pay raises yet, so he won’t have numbers for those line items.

Board and Department Updates:

George noted his concern about the public water supply at Wonderwell. He feels they underrepresent the number of people and how many days they use the water. He would like to see this brought up further with Planning and Zoning. Bryan stated guidelines for public water supply regulate use once there are more than 24 people being served 60 days or more per year. George felt with church every Sunday, and the other events that are taking place there, they meet this capacity. Don noted there seems to be a discrepancy in some of the numbers they (Wonderwell) put forth in the public forum.

There will be another joint meeting with Planning and Zoning regarding Wonderwell on Thursday, December 18, 2014 @ 7:00 p.m.

George stated he is concerned with safety issues. Wonderwell cannot continue to do what they do without meeting state requirement for life safety. If there are discrepancies, updates are needed.

George reported he does not believe there is a change planned for the Conservation Commission budget. George will double check at their meeting on the 4th.

George stated the trustees have discussed replacing computers in the library. Don noted it appears the trustees may want to do sooner, but they are pensive about doing so as Steve does not feel it is needed at this time. George stated the Trustee's need to decide and if they feel it is important then they should be prepared to make their case about it.

Correspondence:

Letter from Pixie Hill, representing the volunteers who made the wreaths and swags, to request permission to hang a 4' wreath centered between the windows on the front of the town hall. They would like them in place on December 6th. The fire department has agreed to install a wreath. Leigh moved to approve, seconded by George and unanimously approved.

Signatures:

Leigh moved to approve a request from the Tax Collector for an abatement of interest for \$97.00 for first bill 2014 for Bryan O'Day. Motion seconded by Don and unanimously approved.

HealthTrust renewal contract signed for Health and Short-Term Disability benefits.

Agreement representation letter for the 2013 audit was signed by Don. The Treasurer needs to sign.

Municipal Assessment Data Sheets were completed by George Hildum. Assessments were reviewed and the form was signed by all three Selectmen.

Intent to Cut Timber was approved for Aaron's Ledge Inc. off Deep Snow Drive.

At 9:00 p.m. the Board voted unanimously to enter into non-public session per RSA 91: A: 3 – personnel.

At 9:10 p.m. the Board moved to seal the non-public minutes, and entered back into public session and adjourned.

Submitted by,

Janet Roberts
Administrative Assistant