

Minutes of the Special Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, December 17, 2008 at 6:30 PM

Members present: Gerard Chapdelaine, Chair; Alison May; Ed Childs; Sarah Nunan; Pete Webster, Town Manager; Nancy Kramer, Assistant to the Town Manager. Absent: Suzanne Lupien.

There were about 12 people in the audience.

Also participating: Al Converse, Steve Flanders, Scooter Hardy, Dennis Kaufman, Cheryl Lindberg, Arthur Owen, Carol Owen, Sharon Racusin, Roberta Robinson, Demo Sofronas, Steve Wheelock.

Chapdelaine opened the meeting at 6:32 pm.

1. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). After discussion of a couple of items on the warrant, Childs **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> May) to approve Check Warrant Report #09-13 for the period from 12/04/2008 to 12/17/2008 in the amount of \$134,692.02; which is all General Fund. **Motion passed.**

2. Health Leadership Award Disbursement (Discussion/Action Item). Webster explained that he believes that sharing the Leader Program award with employees who participated in the program encourages employees to take part in healthy activities. Eight Town employees were actively involved in the 2008 Leader Program.

After some discussion, Nunan **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> May) to disburse the \$4,026 dollars evenly to the eight employees who earned it. **Motion passed.**

3. Municipal Education Grant Application (Discussion/Action Item). This is for a grant of up to \$800 for municipalities to continue education. Webster is suggesting a VLCT seminar on the Selectboard/Town Manager relationship.

After a brief discussion, May **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Nunan) to authorize the Chair to sign the application. **Motion passed.**

4. Budget Work Session (Discussion/Action Item). Converse, speaking for the Finance Committee, said they had looked at the revised budget and found it more than met their expectations. The Finance Committee supports the current budget and approach of the Town Manager. The Finance Committee will be holding a special meeting January 6, 2009. Converse also spoke about the Dresden Finance Committee's activities in regard to the Dresden School budget and long-term planning.

Lister Budget – Wheelock briefly discussed documents provided to the Selectboard and Town Manager which consisted of histories of the Lister budget and grand list. He does not feel using COLA is valid with the Listers. After discussion, the Selectboard agreed by consensus to accept the 3.02% budget presented to the Board on December 10<sup>th</sup> with a reduction in the dues/meetings/education line item to make the budget come in at 3%.

Cemetery Commission – Improvements to Hillside Cemetery, drainage work done and relationship with Trustees of Trust Funds were discussed.

After further discussion, May **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Nunan) to approve the appropriation request of the Norwich Cemetery Commission and ask them to come to a future Selectboard meeting to discuss what they have done and are doing at the cemeteries. **Motion passed.**

COLA – Webster supports using 3.0% even though the Northeast Urban Region CPI-U (not seasonally adjusted) for the year ending in November is 1.7%. The Town of Norwich Personnel Policies says to use the CPI “as a guide”. The union agreement states “all Police employees and Operators shall receive a COLA equal to the Northeast CPI-U”. The Board discussed using COLA plus a merit raise. Also discussed was having a compensation study done.

Health Plans – The Town Manager discussed changing to a high deductible health plan (HDHP) with health savings accounts (HSAs). He is estimating a savings to the Town of \$19,745 in FY09 and \$12,000 in FY10. Webster is suggesting the Board fully fund the deductible in calendar year 2009 and fund 50% of the deductible in calendar year 2010. Installments would be made to employee HSAs in January and July. As of July 1, 2009, those choosing to stay on the current plan would pick up 10% of the premium.

The Finance Committee supports Webster’s proposal.

After considerable discussion, May **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> Childs) to give union and nonunion employees the November Northeast CPI and a merit raise courtesy of Webster to reach 3%. The Selectboard approves the use of HDHP concurrently with the existing plan. The Town will fully fund the HDHP in 2009 in two installments of January 1, 2009 and July 1, 2009. Starting January 1, 2010 employees will pay 50% of the deductible. If employee stays with the existing plan, starting July 1, 2009 employee will pay 10% of the premium. **Motion passed 3 to 1** (yes – Chapdelaine, Childs and May; no – Nunan).

Department Head Budget Changes – The tax rate was discussed. It is a moving number presently assuming the use of \$198,391 from the Undesignated Fund.

Owen is concerned about the salt usage, or lack thereof, on Chapel Hill and Beaver Meadow Roads. Lindberg is also concerned about only salting in the middle of roads such as Koch and Willey Hill Roads.

Nunan believes the budget could go down to a 0% increase. She has \$18,000 in changes that she will put in writing and submit to the Board.

Nunan **moved** (2<sup>nd</sup> May) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:21 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on January 14, 2009.

By Nancy Kramer  
Assistant to the Town Manager

Gerard Chapdelaine  
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – January 14, 2009 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Community Communications Outreach (1/09)
- 2) Vehicle Acquisition and Replacement Policy (1/09)
- 3) Assessment Reports from Committee on Police Services and Committee to Review Town Manager Form of Government (1/21/09)
- 4) Strategic Planning Committee Organization (3/09)
- 5) Municipal Enforcement of the VT Fire Prevention and Building Code (3/09)
- 6) Class 1 Road Designation (2010)

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