

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at 6:00 PM

Members present: Ed Childs, Chair; Roger Blake; Christopher Ashley; Linda Cook; Steve Flanders; Neil Fulton, Interim Town Manager; Nancy Kramer, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 11 people in the audience.

Also participating: Jake Blum, Phil Dechert, Andy Hodgdon, Steve Leinoff, Judy Powell, Doug Robinson, Frank Schippert, Michael Scruggs.

Childs opened the meeting at 6:01 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). The Selectboard approved the Agenda by consensus.
2. Public Comments (Discussion). The Committee to Review Real Property Assessment Functions is holding a public forum November 16th at 7:00 pm. Blake spoke about a talk by Jere Daniell at the Hartford Historical Society he had been to regarding the regional cooperation of the towns of Harford, Lebanon, Norwich and Hanover that took place not only for the 250th celebrations but from the founding of the towns.
3. Presentation of Irene Resolutions to Police Department (Discussion/Action Item). Cook thanked all who participated in the Irene response and read the Resolution from the Selectboard. Judy Powell, Frank Schippert and Michael Scruggs were given personalized copies of the signed Resolution. Doug Robinson also thanked his staff and was thanked by the Board for calling in as he was out of town that day.
4. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). The Town has obtained the permit necessary from the State to do the Blood Brook repair work which will commence shortly. A major effort was put forth by all in preparing the proposed FY13 budget and supporting materials. A number of meetings have been held related to obtaining FEMA reimbursement for repairing damage done by Tropical Storm Irene. The Town has received notice from VLCT that the damage to the Norwich Pool Dam will not be covered by our PACIF insurance. The Town has asked for a refund of a portion of our premiums. The Town reappraisal is going well. Jonathan Bynum, who used to work in the Listers Office, has been hired as the new Finance Assistant. Mascoma Bank has informed the Town that the interest rate paid on deposits has decreased to 0.30%. Approximately 300 to 500 people visited the Fire Station during Halloween and the Police Department handed out 250 glow sticks as part of their Annual Lights for Visibility program. The new grader arrived on October 21st and the efficiency with the grader is good. Jill Kearney has been chosen to join the Executive Committee of the Vermont Parks and Recreation Association. Ashley asked what structures were damaged in Town by Irene and was told just the Catholic Church. Ashley also questioned why there couldn't be a stop sign on Turnpike Road at the intersection with New Boston Road and was told it doesn't qualify by State standards.

5. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Flanders **moved** (2nd Blake) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-16 for General Fund for the period from 10/27/11 to 11/09/11 in the amount of \$175,852.24. **Motion passed.** Flanders **moved** (2nd Blake) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-16 for Recreation Fund for the period from 10/27/11 to 11/09/11 in the amount of \$12,423. **Motion passed.** Ashley **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #12-14 dated 10/21/11 in the amount of \$282.59. **Motion passed.**

7. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 10/26/11 Meeting. After discussion of changes, Blake **moved** (2nd Ashley) to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2011 Selectboard meeting as amended. **Motion passed.**
- b) Review Selectboard Submission for Town Report (Discussion/Action Item). Childs was asked to include other groups involved with the 250th anniversary celebration, to include the newly developed Town Manager evaluation process, to add the new Vehicle Acquisition Policy to the list and to include Norwich citizens in the thank you for their response to Irene. Flanders also asked that his name be changed to Stephen on the document. Childs will make the suggested changes and submit the report.
- c) Review of Pending Items (Discussion/Possible Action Item). The pending list was left as is.
- d) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Approving a new alternate for the EC Fiber Board and the rest of the Town budgets except the Lister Department budget will be on the next agenda.

6. 1st Budget Work Session with Department Heads (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton thanked Roberta Robinson for her work on the budget and then went over the introductory PowerPoint slides. There were budget goals of no increase in the FY13 budget as compared to FY12, no reduction in services and a reduction in energy use. Potential future major projects include the communications system upgrade; Public Works, Police and Fire Facilities and to digitize recorded survey maps. The major budget issues are: health insurance costs, fuel costs and paving. Fulton further discussed each of these issues saying a 13% increase had been used for projecting health insurance costs, that a moderate increase in energy costs has been assumed and that the projected tax rate with other monetary articles would be \$0.4682. As part of the projected tax rate discussion, Fulton also went over projected revenues, expenditures and the Undesignated Fund balance. Wages, salaries and benefits represent 47% of the budget. With the FEMA match of \$85,000, Fulton is projecting an Undesignated Fund balance that is 12% of the budget. Ashley questioned the \$70,000 being budgeted for full utilization of the Health Reimbursement Account. After some discussion, it was agreed this item would be included in follow up items. There was also some discussion of how Irene cleanup expenses are being funded.

Department of Public Works:

Public Works goals discussed were: responding to the Public Works Committee recommendations, analysis of the cost of implementing RSMS (which are not included in the budget), changing the paved portion of New Boston road from Class 3 to Class 2, fully funding the pavement maintenance plan and replacement of 2-cable guard rail with W-Beam guard rail. Ashley questioned why bridges were not included in the goals and was told that Hodgdon is seeking grants to do these.

Tree Warden - \$12,000 is being budgeted for this for FY13. Blum asked if there were any questions the Selectboard had for him. Cook asked about Blum's policy concerning cutting down live larger trees. Blum works with the land owners, Public Works and utility companies to keep the cutting of live trees to a minimum. Blum also pointed out that trees cut down are used not wasted.

Public Works – This Department's budget represents 46% of the FY13 budget. Wages and benefits represent 36% of this Department's budget. Paving was the big item discussed. The FY13 proposed appropriation for paving is \$260,000. Topics covered were: paving expenses for Willey Hill and Hawk Pine, bonding paving, setting up a reserve fund for paving, the MARCON Report and the importance of getting real data.

Solid Waste – A reduction is being suggested for this budget. Fulton is predicting that revenues and expenses for this department will get closer. Fulton is not recommending a fee increase at this time. Other items discussed were: reducing Transfer Station hours, Zero sort and E-Waste.

Building & Grounds – This budget has been split out for FY13. Seasonal employees have not been included in the budget. Hodgdon would like at least one seasonal employee restored to the budget. After some discussion, the Board asked that this item be added to the follow up items.

Reserve funds, equipment replacement and what Hodgdon would do if his budget was increased or decreased were also discussed.

Police Station/Police Department:

The Police Department mission statement was gone over. Police Department goals of enforcing traffic and criminal laws by adding technological enhancements, continued improvement in services and quality training for officers were discussed. Wages and benefits represent 75% of the Police budget. Reserve funds, budget increase/decrease results and overtime shifts were also discussed. The Selectboard asked questions regarding specifics on training, outer body armor vests and crossing guards.

Fire Department/Fire Station:

The Fire Department mission was read. Goals for the Fire Station and Fire/FAST were discussed. Wages are 44% of the Fire Department budget. The savings in dispatch costs by switching to Hanover, reserve funds and the projected negative balance for apparatus in FY25, goals and increase/decrease in budget impacts were discussed. The Fire Apparatus Fund will be added to the follow up items.

Emergency Management – Fulton has proposed increasing the appropriation to the Communications Project Designated Fund to \$25,000 to fund FCC required upgrades if grants are not available. Items discussed were: generators, increase/decrease in budget results, establishing a designated fund for generators, grant availability and life expectancy of generators.

Fulton will compile a list of follow up items and forward to the Department Heads and Roberta Robinson. The Selectboard agreed by consensus that the PowerPoint presentation was helpful and should be continued for other departments. Fulton thanked Department Heads and Dechert for their help in putting together and displaying the presentation.

Cook **moved** (2nd Flanders) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on November 22, 2011.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Edwin Childs
Selectboard Chair

Next Regular Meeting – November 22, 2011 at 6:00 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Budget Work Session (11/22/11)
- 2) Update Finance Committee Statement of Purpose
- 3) Strategic Planning
- 4) Town Boundaries

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