

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Tuesday, November 22, 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 9 people in the audience.

Also participating: Phil Dechert, Joshua Durst, Andy Hodgdon, Jill Kearney, Cheryl Lindberg, Bonnie Munday, Doug Robinson, Roberta Robinson, Katie Smith, Stanley Teeter, Irv Thomaе.

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). Teeter thanked the Town for their support and all the help he has received when his house burned down. Thomaе briefly reviewed the history of ECFiber. ECFiber is a joint venture of 23 Vermont towns. There are lots of stories from the participating communities available to read at www.ecfiber.net. To date, 150 subscribers have signed up and 100 have been connected. Phase II is scheduled to start soon. Norwich will have an ECFiber informational meeting Tuesday, February 7th at 7:00 pm
 3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). The bills received to date for damages incurred from Tropical Storm Irene for the Town of Norwich are at \$404,795.23. Most of the repair work will be done by the end of November. Meetings are continuing with FEMA representatives. Work sheets will be reviewed with FEMA December 6th. The Blood Brook reconstruction is nearly done. The design was approved and suggested by the State and ANR has been down to inspect four times. Fulton has prepared a draft of a RFP on reconstruction of the Town Pool Dam for the Recreation Council's review and a public forum is scheduled at Tracy Hall for December 5th. The RFP will not go out until the Town is sure of FEMA reimbursement. The Selectboard has finished their Irene Resolution presentations. The Capital Facilities Committee will hold a public forum on Communications December 12th. The Town has received some grants for communications. Roberta Robinson and Fulton have been reviewing the draft outside audit and working on the Management Discussion and Analysis. Whether a permit would be needed to replace the Dam and height and use of the communications tower were also discussed.
 4. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Ashley **moved** (2nd Blake) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-19 for General Fund for the period from 11/10/11 to 11/22/11 in the amount of \$573,045.50. **Motion passed.** Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to approve Check Warrant Report #12-16 for Town Reappraisal Fund for the period from 11/10/11 to 11/22/11 in the amount of \$1,398.06. **Motion passed.** Blake **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #12-17 dated November, 2011 in the amount of \$2,486.04. **Motion passed.** Cook **moved** (2nd Flanders) to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #12-18 dated November, 2011 in the amount of \$90.68. **Motion passed.**
 5. Appoint Katie Smith as Alternate Delegate to the ECFiber Board (Discussion/Action Item). Ashley asked about Smith's qualifications for the position and questioned the posting process. Thomaе said he is looking for a teammate who complements his skills. Smith was thanked for her willingness to serve. After some further discussion, Flanders **moved** (2nd Ashley) to appoint Katie Smith as the alternate delegate to the ECFiber Board. **Motion passed.**
- Cook **moved** (2nd Blake) to accept Gerry Tolman's resignation as the alternate delegate to the ECFiber Board and to thank him for his services. **Motion passed.**
6. 2nd Budget Work Session with Department Heads (Discussion/Action Item). Fulton reviewed the budgets before the Board tonight and also said there would be follow-up from the November 9th meeting.

Town Clerk/BCA/BOA/Statutory Meetings – The Town Clerk budget represents 3% of the total budget. The goals of the Department were gone over. Salaries represent 90% of this budget. The election cycle accounts for the increase in Statutory Meetings. Munday spoke about doing a digital database and index with offsite storage for land records. The monies needed for this have not been included in her budget. The contract would cost \$225 a month and a scanner and a public access computer would need to be purchased. Munday said this process would eventually do away with the card files, speed up the process and help to limit microfilming costs. The system is backwards compatible and Munday has reviewed other systems that cost more. Cook questioned who would have access. After discussion, it was determined equipment costs would be \$2,000 and the contract would cost \$2,500 a year for four years. The offsite data is owned by the Town. Munday was also asked about restoration and said critical documents were being done first. The Board asked that the digital database for land records be added to the follow-up list.

Recreation Department – The Recreation mission and goals for FY13 were gone over. Wages and instructor fees are 70% of this budget. Kearney supervises 10 seasonal summer employees and coordinates events with 17 independent contracts and 12-24 volunteers per season. Special events, revenues versus expenses, online fees and Marion Cross School rental fees were also discussed. The designated fund for the Tennis Courts has been increased to repair courts 2, 3 and 4. No appropriation has been recommended for the Town Pool Dam. A part-time seasonal assistant for Kearney at a cost of \$3,000 has not been included in the budget. After some discussion, the Selectboard asked that a part-time seasonal assistant for Kearney be added to the follow-up list.

Audit/Finance Department/Debt Service/Town Appropriation/Tax/Unemployment & Workers - Finance goals were reviewed. Wages represent 96% of the Finance Department budget. The major change for discussion was moving the Finance Assistant to full time. Fulton has estimated the annual cost to be \$40,129. The base hourly pay rate for the Finance Assistant is \$16.50. The Board discussed the significance of adding a full time employee and why it is necessary. The Selectboard asked that changing the Finance Assistant to full time be added to the follow-up list. There was very little discussion of the other budgets in this category.

DRB/Planning Department – Planning goals were reviewed. Wages are 94% of the Planning Department budget. The DRB budget has been reduced by \$25. Dechert has added \$1,000 to the Planning Department budget for matching funds for Historic Preservation grants.

Town Administration/General Administration/Tracy Hall/Compensation/Support Group/Ambulance – Town Administration represents 6% of the total budget. Wages are 79% of the Town Administration budget. Fulton has a goal of better management of legal costs. Assistant is working and budgeted for 40 hours. Lindberg has asked for an increase in the Treasurer's Stipend and she spoke briefly about getting a COLA increase. The Dues etc. line item in Town Administration has been increased by \$150 for Treasurer's attendance at a conference. The designated fund for equipment under General Administration has been increased to include all Tracy Hall computers. An emergency computer replacement line item of \$1,600 has been added to the General Administration budget. No funds have been included in the budget for a classification and compensation study. The Selectboard discussed the need for a step and grade plan for non-union Town employees, the Treasurer's stipend, computers in Tracy Hall and updating the Town Personnel Policies. Childs also suggested that the Town Manager's salary needs to be discussed. The Board agreed that the Treasurer's stipend and a Classification and Compensation Study be added to the follow-up list.

Follow Up – Fulton recommended 70% funding of the HRA and the Selectboard agreed by consensus. Fulton recommends one seasonal employee for roadside mowing at a cost of \$9,000. Paving options were discussed. Childs recommended focusing on catching up with the MARCON Report. Body armor changes and an increase in training for the Police Department were discussed. Doug Robinson suggested adding \$500 to the training line item and the Selectboard agreed by consensus. An increase in the Fire Department Apparatus Designated Fund was discussed and Fulton suggested refurbishing as an alternative. After discussion, Fulton suggested using a 3.5% increase in wages and salaries for non-bargaining unit employees. The expenditure impact of reducing the HRA to 70%, adding a seasonal employee to Public Works, making the Finance Assistant full time and the 3.5% wage adjustment would be \$35,552. Other changes suggested were: \$3,500 for Town Clerk, \$3,000 to add a seasonal Recreation Assistant, \$7,500 for the Compensation Study, \$2,000 for body armor and an additional \$500 for training for the Police Department. The Board also discussed that these changes cannot be made without increasing the tax rate, prorating Irene expenses over two years and drawing down the Undesignated Fund to 10%.

Afterwards a straw poll was taken on the \$35,552 expenditures and the other changes of \$16,500. The vote in favor was 4 to 1 for both. Childs, Ashley, Blake and Flanders supported and Cook did not.

Childs asked that a half hour executive session be added before the December 7th meeting start for Litigation and Personnel.

7. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 11/9/11 Meeting. Ashley **moved** (2nd Blake) to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2011 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.**
- b) Review of Pending Items (Discussion/Possible Action Item). The pending list was left as is.
- c) Review of Next Agenda (Discussion/Possible Action Item). The Lister Committee final report and outside agencies will be on the agenda for December 7th.

Ashley **moved** (2nd Blake) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 10:35 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on December 14, 2011.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Edwin Childs
Selectboard Chair

Special Selectboard Meeting – December 7, 2011 at 6:30 PM

Next Regular Meeting – December 14, 2011 at 6:30 PM

Pending Items:

- 1) Budget Work Session (12/7/11)
- 2) Update Finance Committee Statement of Purpose
- 3) Strategic Planning
- 4) Town Boundaries

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