

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of Tuesday, November 26, 2013 at 6:00 PM

Members present: Stephen Flanders, Chair; Christopher Ashley; Ed Childs; Linda Cook; Keith Moran; Neil Fulton, Town Manager; Nancy Kramer, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were 3 people in the audience.

Also participating: Doug Robinson, Demo Sofronas.

Flanders opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda (Action Item). By consensus, the Selectboard approved the Agenda.
2. Public Comments. None.
3. Town Manager's Report (Discussion). The construction on the tower was completed today and the systems will be ready for testing by the end of next week.
4. Finance – Board to Sign Accounts Payable/Warrants (Action Item). Ashley **moved** (2nd Childs) to approve Check Warrant Report #14-12 for General Fund in the amount of \$67,322.65, for Tracy Hall Fund in the amount of \$17,321.71, for Town Clerk Equipment Fund in the amount of \$2,131.83 and for Recreation Scholarship Fund in the amount of \$100 for the period from 11/14/13 to 11/26/13. **Motion passed.**
5. Budget Discussion (Discussion/Possible Action Item).

Police Department – full-time or 32 hour patrol officer: Fulton in his follow-up items memo provided the breakdown of costs for this position. The net cost for a full-time officer would be \$66,895. The net cost for the 32 hours per week officer would be \$52,365. Items discussed were: increasing the hours of patrol, concern over double shifts, the tax impact, making the decision a separate warned article and officer time spent on administrative tasks. Flanders then asked the Selectboard for their thoughts. Childs would like to put off for a year unless some middle ground can be reached. Cook is concerned about Robinson's hours worked now. Moran feels the cost is too high. Flanders sees the argument for but is leery of the costs. Ashley would like all options to be considered.

Fire Department items: Fulton provided costs and the tax impact for reducing workday calls to 1 hour paid, pay for third monthly drill, leather boots and adding two portable radios. Items discussed were the leather boots being nice but not necessary, the number of drills per month and the \$10,765 cost for pay for the third drill. Fulton does not support reducing the workday calls pay to 1 hour.

Public Works – centerline striping on priority roads: Fulton provided costs and the tax impact for Goodrich Four Corners, New Boston Road and Turnpike Road as priority roads and Montshire Road, Willey Hill and Hawk Pine as other roads. Cook suggested level funding the Dust Control line item and using that money for additional centerline striping as that is a safety issue. Moran is supportive of that. Ashley said that if this item did not make the cut for the budget that he supports the budget as presented.

Salaries: Fulton has used a 2.01% Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) increase and an additional step on the employee's anniversary. For the largest Department he has suggested a higher raise due to the responsibilities of the position. The raises for three employees include an additional step that was not included in the FY14 budget. Cook said there is nothing on record that the Selectboard wanted the pay raises done in two years. Most increases are between 3 and 4 percent. Items discussed were: restoring reductions from last year, how the step and grade chart provided by Fulton to the Board works, union pay being an Executive Session discussion and why most raises are higher than inflation.

Flanders at this time asked for the Selectboard thoughts on what they thought was an appropriate range for the Town Manager salary increase for FY15. Following a suggestion by Ashley, Flanders proposed that the COLA and step increases used for most other positions, as outlined above, also be used for the Town Manager. This was supported by all Board members except Cook.

Cook said she will put in writing for the next Selectboard meeting what she wants to see level funded in the Department of Public Works budget. Flanders suggested that any Selectboard members proposing alternative budget scenarios could seek assistance from the Town Manager in preparing their proposal for Selectboard consideration.

There followed some discussion of Department Head hours worked where Fulton pointed out that Department Heads generally work more than a 40 hour week.

6. Follow-Up on Discussions with School Board on Norwich Finance Committee (NFC) (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Flanders said the subcommittee met this afternoon but Cook was unable to attend. The Charge for the NFC was changed to say "nor have immediate family members that do so" in regard to compensation and stipulates that members are subject to the Town of Norwich, Vermont Conflict of Interest Policy. The MOU has a provision that allows waiving of any provision of the charge but that this requires a majority vote of both Boards. The effective date of the MOU and the new NFC is March 5, 2014.

7. Selectboard

- a) Approval of the Minutes of the 10/23/13 Meeting. Childs **moved** (2nd Moran) to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2013 Selectboard meeting. **Motion passed.** Ashley abstained.
- b) Town Manager Performance Review (Discussion/Action Item). Flanders handed out a copy of the review to the Selectboard stating that the Board had high praise for the performance of the Town Manager. Flanders thanked Fulton for addressing the lessons learned and his new approach to the capital facilities process. Ashley concurred. Childs **moved** (2nd Moran) to adopt the performance review of the Town Manager dated November 20, 2013. **Motion passed.**
- c) Selectboard Resource Manual (Discussion/Possible Action Item). Cook provided for the Selectboard her thoughts on items to include. Cook emphasized that new members need to be aware of the status of ongoing projects. Ashley will email his thoughts. The Board is working towards having this material ready for the new Selectboard in March.

- d) Review of Next Agendas (Discussion/Possible Action Item). The next meeting is a special meeting with the outside agencies. Agencies will be taken in reverse alphabetical order. After discussion, the Board agreed to limit comments from the outside agencies to 3 minutes and then have a 2 minute question and answer period. Sofronas spoke briefly, as one member of the Police Review Committee, about why the Committee recommended reducing the police force. Sofronas also said there might be a need now for an additional officer and that he does not believe you can run a Department efficiently based on overtime. A 30 minute budget discussion will also be on the December 4th agenda.
- e) Contract (Executive Session may be Required). Pursuant to Title 1 VSA § 313(a)(1), Moran **moved** (2nd Ashley) to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a contract and to invite the Town Manager to attend that Session. **Motion passed.** The Selectboard moved into Executive Session at 7:54 pm.

At 8:15 pm the Selectboard moved into public session. No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

Cook **moved** (2nd Ashley) to adjourn. **Motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.

Approved by the Selectboard on January 22, 2014.

By Nancy Kramer
Assistant to the Town Manager

Stephen N. Flanders
Selectboard Chair

Special Selectboard Meeting – December 4, 2013 at 6:30 PM

Next Regular Meeting – December 11, 2013 at 6:30 PM

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