

Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of
Wednesday, December 2, 2020 at 6:30 pm

This meeting was conducted via teleconference using ZOOM, in order to maintain appropriate physical distance under COVID-19 precautions. Members present: Claudette Brochu, Chair; Roger Arnold, Vice Chair; Robert Gere; John Langhus; Mary Layton; Herb Durfee, Town Manager; Miranda Bergmeier, Assistant to the Town Manager.

There were about 15 people in the audience.

Also participating: Doug Wilberding, Linda Cook, Bonnie Batchelder, Pam Smith, Bonnie Munday, Cheryl Lindberg, Rod Francis, Brie Swenson, Jennifer Frank.

1. Approval of Agenda. Selectboard (SB) members agreed to proceed with the agenda as drafted.
2. Public Comment. Doug Wilberding asked if the SB has considered limiting trail access by non-hunters during hunting season. Wilberding said he will send the SB a white paper by UVLT regarding premises liability.
3. Consent Agenda. Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to approve the consent agenda. **Motion approved unanimously.**
4. Request from Fire Warden for Grant Submission. Linda Cook, Fire Warden said this is a yearly 50/50 grant purchase for wild land firefighting. Cook recommends purchasing 2 hoses and 3 headlamps to aid fire fighters. Fire Chief Northern said the Fire Dept. has sufficient funds to pay for the town's share of the purchase - \$227.85 is that amount. Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to approve the grant application request by the Fire Warden and Fire Department to purchase wildland fire gear in the amount of \$455.70, half of which cost - \$227.85 – will be offset by said grant, for a net town expense of \$227.85. **Motion approved unanimously.**
5. Independent Auditor's Report. Bonnie Batchelder, the town's independent contracted auditor, said that the town is in a strong financial position. The General Fund is positive now, with FEMA money having been received. The town was ahead of budgeted expenses by just under \$1.2 million. TM and Becky worked well with Batchelder to get the audit done timely. There is one finding related to the BEC scam last summer. Langhus thanked Batchelder for her work. He asked about supplementary disclosure – were there any disagreements between management and the auditor? Batchelder said that no, there weren't. Arnold asked about the management letter bullet point; Bonnie explained it. Brochu asked about Batchelder's opinion about the town's level of indebtedness. Batchelder said the town's level is not too high; our fund balance is healthy.
6. Department Budget and Capital Budget Presentations. Town Manager Durfee displayed the master budget spreadsheet. Durfee said that the budget as currently presented is rather high; he is looking for input from the SB about appropriate funding levels, depending on SB's priorities. Durfee said the Professional Services line item is high, partly because of paying back the Church Street sidewalk grant money. Durfee discussed several budget items, as highlighted in pink [on spreadsheet included in 12/9/2020 SB packet]. Bonnie Munday, Town Clerk, asked the SB if they have questions about her budget submission; her proposed budget is approximately level-funded. Arnold asked if Munday would have wanted any items she did not include in her proposal. Munday said increased funding for records restoration and buying a laptop for use in elections at the polls.

7. Department Budgets cont'd. Cheryl Lindberg said the Listers are looking to hire a new administrative assistant at 17.5 hours per week, so they don't need more than \$18,000 for the administrative wages line item. Langhus asked about the Listers suggestion for designated fund (reappraisal) contribution. Lindberg didn't know exactly, but said they will get an estimate to the SB for a future meeting. Rod Francis, Planning Director, said that his department's proposed budget is a 1.8% increase, but there are no significant changes. Arnold asked what could Francis ask for that would help in the Planning Office's work. Francis said that digitizing the permits and land records would be very helpful, with an accompanying rehaul of the town's IT infrastructure (server, website, speed of web access, computerized town records, etc.). Brie Swenson, Recreation Director, said that her FY22 proposed budget has some increases in playing field care and an increase in tennis court maintenance, but they are hoping to have fund raising to offset the cost of fixing the tennis courts. Arnold asked what additional item(s) would be helpful to the Recreation Department. Swenson said that hiring a part-time athletic director to run the sports programs would be very helpful and would expand her department's ability to offer a wide variety of programs. Police Chief Jennifer Frank presented PowerPoint slides with information about the Police Department's (PD's) proposed budget for FY2022 [slides to be included in 12/9/2020 SB packet]. Arnold asked if the PD is planning to lease new vehicles. Frank said it is better to own them, because of residual value at end of useful life. Arnold asked about staffing needs and expenses. Frank said it's only been 1 month over the last year that the department was fully staffed. Ideally, Frank would look at hiring an additional officer with training and job duties in investigation and/or social work.

8. Town Manager Update. Durfee said that his monthly written report will be provided at the next SB meeting on 12/9/2020. Durfee also asked the SB to take action to remedy financial transactions made without following proper procedures and controls. Cheryl Lindberg said she opening a new account to collateralize \$3 million. After some discussion, SB members agreed to take up Durfee's proposed remedial action and policy amendments at their December 9th meeting.

9. Adjournment. Layton **moved** (2nd Langhus) to adjourn. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm.

By Miranda Bergmeier

Approved by the Selectboard on January 13, 2020

Claudette Brochu
Selectboard Chair

Next Meeting – December 9, 2020 – Meeting at 6:30

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