

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – November 20, 2013

Selectmen Steven Osienski and Jeffrey Rose were present as well as Administrator Denise French. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Budget Committee members John Baybutt, Melissa Clark, Rick Reed and Debra Whitney met with the Selectmen to discuss each others' expectations in processing the draft 2014 Operating Budget. The Second Draft Budget which was distributed included an across-the-board wage increase of 2.25% and benefits for an overall increase of 5%. The Budget Committee was asked to return at a later date with a Budget proposal which the Committee would be comfortable in supporting.

From 7:00 p.m. until 7:50 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(c). Present were Selectmen Osienski and Rose as well as Firefighter/EMT Michael Hoiriis who was present by invitation. No decisions were made.

Police Chief Steve Campbell met with the Board and discussed the following:

- The recent news article about \$50 missing from the Town Offices; the Chief is confident that the shortage seems to result from a bookkeeping error.
- Newly hired Officer Bret Sullivan is doing well acclimating himself with the Bennington community and its Police Department.
- A part-time officer's availability has become somewhat restrictive.
- Verified that a Starrett Road resident had not communicated with the Selectmen about the past due requirement of registering her dog – as had been recently stated to the Judge in Hillsborough District Court.
- Summarized the recent rash of daytime burglaries lately, the issuance of warrants for the known offender and a citizen's complaint relative to responding out-of-town police officers.
- The tone of The Villager's November 15th article which captured the Antrim Selectmen's discussion about merging Antrim and Bennington Police Departments.

In other matters the Selectmen took the following action:

- Reviewed and approved the November 6<sup>th</sup> Selectmen's Minutes; reviewed the Energy Committee's November 6<sup>th</sup> Minutes.
- Reviewed and approved November 13 and November 20, 2013 Payroll and Accounts Payable Registers.
- Received the Department of Revenue's final determination that the 2013 tax rate has been established at \$25.40, an overall increase of \$0.50 or 2% from 2012.
- Heard Selectmen Rose's summation of the regional meeting with area Towns and Public Officials who gathered November 12<sup>th</sup> to discuss PSNH's decision to close the Hillsborough Office. Jeff reported that the decision was made by the utility company ahead of receiving public input and is a done deal.
- Tabled 2013 expenditure of funds for the rehabilitation of the soccer field since the volunteer labor did not materialize.

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- Received verbal confirmation that the towns of Antrim and Bennington will be liable for interest costs on the Bridge RAN until pavement repairs are completed in the spring and until such time as the Department of Transportation accepts the bridge and reimburses the balance of DOT funds.
- The Bridge “walk through” identified the need to raise a drainage cover and expand the width of pavement near the Bible Hill Road intersection. The curved guardrail that appears to protrude into the driveway of M22/L1A is actually within the Town’s right-of-way as is the owner’s fence.
- Reviewed and accepted S.E.E.D.S./Margaret Dillion’s proposal for energy consulting services.
- Tabled discussion on 2014 Whittemore Lake staffing until the full Board is present.
- Approved health insurance reimbursement stipends which will be retroactive back to July 1, 2013 as follows: Single \$1,675, Two-Person \$3,350 and Family \$4,525. These annual stipends are paid over a twelve month period and represent 20% of the health insurance cost.
- Agreed to close Town Hall at noon on Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Appointed David McKenzie to the 2013 Capital Reserve Funding Committee and scheduled the Funding Committee meeting for December 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.
- Authorized the Administrator to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Revenue Administration and the Town regarding the Municipal Data Sharing Pool relative to database sharing of tax maps and information (Mosaic Parcel Map).
- Agreed to authorize the Southwest Region Planning Commission to release Bennington data to Geostellar for solar power mapping purposes.
- Tabled the Welfare Director’s November 12<sup>th</sup> request until the full Board is present.
- Heard a report that the Conval School District has paid the Town \$30,118.20 which represents Bennington’s portion of the LGC refund of health insurance premiums.
- Approved allocation of the Fire Chiefs Salaries \$3,000 line-item amongst five officers.
- Approved a \$100 donation from the Selectmen’s Contingency line-item for the Fire Department’s “Breakfast With Santa”.
- Reviewed and approved a Revised First Issue Tax Warrant to correct a number wrongly stated, three Second Issue Tax Warrants, and Abatement for M10/L2 and an Employee Time-off Request.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Denise French  
Administrator