

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – December 30, 2013

Selectmen James Cleary, Jeffrey Rose and Steven Osienski were present as well as Administrator Denise French and Deputy Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m.

Department Heads were invited to meet with the Selectmen to finalize the Proposed 2014 Operating Budget. Present were Budget Committee members Rick Reed, Debra Whitney and John Baybutt, Library Trustees Molly Eppig, David McKenzie and Jill Wilmoth, Library Director Leslie MacGregor, Fire Chief Michael Roina, Police Chief Steve Campbell, Conservation Commission member Joseph MacGregor and Town Clerk Debra Belcher. Absent with notice were Road Agent Gary Russell and Welfare Director Debra Davidson. Notables from the joint Budget Review were:

- The Budget Committee found areas to cut that totaled \$30,000 while still providing funding for the effective operation of the Town; the proposed wage increase of 2.25% was trimmed back to 1.5%.
- Due to an extra pay week, all payroll and associated expenses will be adjusted to reflect the 53rd week of wages.
- By Statute, the Selectmen have no jurisdiction over the Town Clerk or the Library budgets and have, therefore, moved associated payroll and benefit costs from account 4155 (Personnel Administration) to accounts 4140 (Town Clerk) and 4550 (Library).
- Added \$1,500 to line-item 4150-2-301 (Auditing Services) to reflect the federal government mandate that a Single Audit be done for federal funds that the Town received and spent. The expense is tied to the Antrim-Bennington bridge construction project and represents approximately ½ of the total audit cost which will be shared with Antrim.
- Added \$2,000 to line-item 4151-1-340 (Trustee of Trust Funds Investment Services) to reflect costs associated with investing some Capital Reserve Funds.
- Added \$3,100 to line-item 4195-3-120 (Cemetery Labor) to reflect the cost of spring and fall cemetery clean-up which used to be done at no charge by the Hillsborough County Correctional Workers before the program was modified.
- Proposed encumbering \$1,299 from line-item 4195-3-440 (Cemetery Stone/Tree/Maintenance) but later during the Selectmen's meeting discovered that the Cemetery Budget was overspent by \$356 which negated the planned encumbrance.
- The 2013 expenditure of line-item 4196-1-520 (NHMA PLT Annual Premium) was under spent by \$3,886 due to a 2013 "holiday credit". Without the credit the expense would have been \$25,807 with only \$23,500 budgeted.
- Line-item 4210-1-180 (Police Special Detail Wages) of \$13,006 is offset by the income from the grant detail agencies and is not funded by tax dollars.
- Line-item 4210-1-391 (Police Dispatch) was reduced by \$204 to reflect actual 2014 cost.
- Proposed encumbering \$3,000 from line-item 4220-4-820 (Fire Department Training) but later during the Selectmen's meeting discovered that there were not adequate unspent funds in the bottom-line Fire Department budget.

Board of Selectmen Minutes – December 30, 2013

- The Selectmen voted to encumber \$10,000 from line-item 4332-3-430 (Water Line Repair/Maintenance) as proposed by the Budget Committee.
- The Selectmen voted to encumber \$2,000 from line-item 4589-1-001 (Edward E. French Scholarship) as proposed by the Budget Committee.
- Pro-longed discussion regarding the Library Trustees' decision to add one hour to the part-time Library employee's schedule which will then mandate enrollment in the NH Retirement System since the employee's weekly work schedule will meet the Retirement System's threshold of 35 hours.
- Conceptually discussed increasing all energy line-items by 10%; no changes were made.
- Conceptually discussed adding a new \$2,000 line-item to the Conservation Commission budget for future land purchase opportunities; no decision was made.
- Later during the Selectmen's meeting the Selectmen voted to encumber \$2,000 from line-item 4225-4-820 (Medical Training).

The Selectmen acted on the following matters:

- Heard a report from Fire Chief Michael Roina of his need to issue a written warning to Crotched Mountain Ski Area for not enforcing the Life Safety Code to vacate their occupied building when the fire alarm system was activated.
- Agreed with Police Chief Steve Campbell that all part-time police officers should be compensated at a rate of at least \$17.00 an hour.
- Reviewed and approved the December 25, 2013 Payroll and Accounts Payable Registers as well as the December 30, 2013 Accounts Payable Register.
- Reviewed, approved and signed Assessing Contracts for the following:
 - George Sansoucy LLC for the special assessment project of the Monadnock Paper Mills complex, M9/L21
 - Cross Country Appraisal for the 2014 town-wide Revaluation
 - Cross Country Appraisal for 2014 General Assessing.

From 8:33 p.m. until 8:41 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(a). Present were Selectmen Cleary, Rose and Osienski as well as Administrator French and Deputy Administrator LaPlante. No decision was made.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Denise French
Administrator