

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – October 6, 2015

Selectmen James Cleary, Steven Osienski, and Jeffrey Rose were present, as well as Deputy Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

Police Chief Bret Sullivan met with the Board and discussed the following:

- The Board has been satisfied with Bret's performance throughout his first six months as Police Chief.
- The Crown Vic sedan is due for replacement in 2016. There is approximately \$33,000 in the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund. Assuming additional Capital Reserve Funding is approved in 2016 the Board supports the replacement of the sedan vehicle. No decision was made on a funding amount to be requested on the 2016 Warrant.
- The Chief discussed his proposed 2016 Budget with the Selectmen. The Chief plans to break out the accounting for on-call wages from the overtime line-item to improve transparency; he will also include funding for the part-time, as-needed administrative assistant. Cathy McGillicuddy has been working part-time for the Police Department since July completing reports and helping familiarize the Department with all aspects of the IMC software. The Chief reported she has been a huge asset to the Department – she is efficient and highly knowledgeable.
- The Chief would like to increase the pay for part-time officers from a current average of \$17.80/hour to \$20.00/hour to stay in-line with pay from area Departments. The Selectmen suggested the Chief build that increase into his 2016 budget; if the budget is approved by voters then officers will receive a retro-active pay increase effective January 1, 2016.
- The Board tabled approval of funding a line-item for undercover drug purchases pending input from Town Counsel.

Road Agent Gary Russell met with the Board and discussing the following:

- He has spoken with NHMA Legal Counsel about RSA 236:29 regarding obstructions in a highway; the only two exceptions to this RSA are typically mailboxes and culverts being placed within the right-of-way.
- Resurfacing of Pine Meadows Circle and Old Coach Road has been completed with pugmill. The Road Agent reached out to paving companies to obtain estimates for paving areas of Town over the next 3-4 years.
- The Road Agent is working with a Bible Hill Road property owner to improve drainage and erosion concerns. The property owner plans to trade the Town material from his property which has the equivalent value as the costs the Town has incurred as a result of the drainage/erosion issue.
- The Town of Francestown provided the Town with a copy of a proposal received from New England Forestry Consultants to value the material in the Tri-Town sandpit. Based on historical Reports of Excavation, the Town of Francestown has excavated over 50% of their total allowed material in the pit within the first phase alone. The Board voted not to consider selling some of the Town's material to Francestown once they reach their allowed quantity. The Board voted not to enter into an agreement to value the material in the Tri-Town sandpit at this time, but to reconsider the valuation as Phase I nears completion.

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- The Board asked the Road Agent to research slope requirements in an effort to determine liability in the area of a section of guardrail on Bible Hill Road that the Road Agent has requested to remove to help with snow removal operations. The Board also approved the Road Agent's request to work with a Bible Hill Road property owner to improve the approach from their driveway to the recently renovated section of roadway.
- Earlier this week the Road Agent asked that snow removal bids be quoted for a period of three years; the Board requested the snow removal bids be submitted for a one-year contract.

Starrett Road resident Victoria Turner met with the Board of Selectmen and the Road Agent to discuss the impact snow plowing has had on her property. The Board invited Ms. Turner in to better understand her concerns in advance of what some forecasters say will be a snowy winter. Ms. Turner expressed her concern that the top of Starrett Road near her property is plowed considerably wider than the bottom of the roadway; the extra snow causes a snow removal headache for Ms. Turner. In the past Ms. Turner has tried to provide visual markings of her property for the plow operators but those markers have been damaged by snow or removed by the plows. After considerable discussion Ms. Turner offered for the Road Agent to utilize part of her land near Bible Hill Road on which he can push back snow. The Road Agent committed to working with Ms. Turner this winter to try to reduce the impact snow plowing has on her property.

The Selectmen took action on the following matters:

- Thanked Jeff Rose for his volunteer efforts working on the Library and VFW roofs. Jeff reported that while he was on the Library roof he noted rot on the trim near the roof line and issues with the chimney which is causing a leak. He has spoken with the Librarian about his observations.
- Agreed with the Fire Chief's decision to utilize Moto's Mobile Repair for the maintenance repairs of the Fire Trucks and use of Bennington Garage for inspections and other routine needs.
- Tabled a change in the Fire Chief's compensation that would move him from an hourly employee to a salary, non-exempt employee receiving over-time compensation at the half-time rate.
- Voted a \$100 donation to the Antrim-Bennington Boy Scouts in appreciation for their community service in painting the fire hydrants.
- Heard a report from Jeff Rose that he met with Peter Martel and representatives from the LCHIP Grant program to review the Building Committee's application for rehabilitation of the VFW. A Board of 15 individuals will meet in November to review and approve grant applications.
- Reviewed the Deputy Town Clerk job advertisement and noted the advertisement did not document that residency would be a requirement. The Deputy Administrator was instructed to follow up with the Town Clerk about this omission.
- Reviewed a Non-Public communication (RSA 91-A:3-II(a)) relative to a personnel matter.
- Heard a report that Phase II of the Transportation Enhancement Project is scheduled to start in April 2016.
- Agreed to allow the Boy Scouts to utilize the VFW building throughout the winter months for holding their meetings.
- Deferred to the Conservation Committee the task of researching alternative sites for the Town well in the event the well ever becomes jeopardized or contaminated in the future.

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- Heard a report that Eversource has filed an appeal of the Town's denial of their 2014 Abatement to the Board of Tax and Land Appeals. The Town will consult with Sansoucy for representing the Town since they are the ones that determined the value; the anticipated cost for Sansoucy to represent the Town will be added to the Assessing line-item in the 2016 budget.
- The Selectmen asked that the Budget Committee be provided with wage information when reviewing the 2016 budget; in the past the Budget Committee has seen budget information void of wages because the Selectmen are the ones charged with determining wages.
- Approved the September 29, 2015 and October 6, 2015 Payroll and Accounts Payable Registers as well as reviewed the Budget through September 30, 2015.
- Approved the Minutes of the September 22, 2015 Meeting as presented.
- Approved and signed four abatements – Map 01 Lot 17, Map 07, Lot 87, Map 09, Lot 21, and Map 10, Lot 08 per the 2014 Abatement Settlement Agreement on file with the Board of Tax and Land Appeals.

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante