

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – October 27, 2015

Selectmen James Cleary, Steven Osienski, and Jeff Rose were present, as well as Deputy Administrator Kristie LaPlante. Denise French was also in attendance. The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m.

Kristie LaPlante provided the Board with an update of the Budget Committee's review of the 1<sup>st</sup> Draft of the 2016 Budget:

- The Budget Committee met with the Highway Department, Water/Sewer Commissioners, and Fire Department on October 26<sup>th</sup> to review significant budget increases in those departments. While some increases were justified, the Budget Committee ultimately went through the entire budget and cut requested increases that appeared to be a "want" and not a "need". In the absence of a communicated plan for town-wide roadway improvements, the Budget Committee denied requested increases in funding for Tar/Patch/Seal as well as Paving. Revised budgets will be sent back to Department Heads for review and comment prior to their next meeting.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> Draft of the 2016 Budget included an estimated 2% wage increase for all Town employees. However, because Social Security is not increasing in 2016, the Budget Committee has requested the 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft of the 2016 Budget to reflect a 1% wage increase.
- In the absence of forward progress with the Town's Master Plan, the Budget Committee denied funding a \$3,000 line item for the Conservation Commission for a Natural Resource Inventory. The Budget Committee has requested an update from the Planning Board on the status of completion of the Master Plan as well as feedback from the Board of Selectmen on why the Master Plan has not yet been completed.
- The Budget Committee has also requested assistance from the Board of Selectmen to implement five-year plans for Departments so the Budget Committee can better understand the global impact of budget increases and budget cuts. The Board postponed development of five-year plans until the Town's Master Plan is closer to completion so the five-year plans will better reflect the direction of the community as a whole.
- The Budget Committee has also requested the Board's feedback on creating a Road Improvement Committee that would work with the Road Agent to identify roads in most need of repair. This would help the Town determine if road improvements could be programmed in over the next several years or it would be best to request voter approval for a Bond to improve the Town's roadways.

Town Clerk Debra Belcher met with the Board of Selectmen to review applications received for the Deputy Town Clerk position. Of the four applications received, only two applicants are Bennington residents. Interviews will be scheduled with the two eligible applicants for November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The Board reviewed and discussed the following:

- Reviewed the Budget Committee's October 12<sup>th</sup> and October 19<sup>th</sup> Minutes, the Solid Waste Committee's October 10<sup>th</sup> Minutes, and the Selectmen's Advisory Committee's October 24<sup>th</sup> Minutes.
- Reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board's October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.
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- Reviewed and approved Payroll and Accounts Payable Registers for October 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> as well as Year to Date Expenditures.
- Heard a report that Town Office staff meet with AccuFund to obtain a quote for replacing the Town's financial software package. The Town Office held off on replacing the financial software in the 2015 budget year with the understanding that they would research it again for 2016. AccuFund will honor the 2015 quote of \$23,741 if the Town commits to purchase the software by December 15<sup>th</sup>. The Board requested information on what funding might be available in the remaining 2015 budget to start the purchase process.
- Voted to offer a three-year contract for Snow Removal.
- Heard a report that the Regional Prosecutor program will move from a 50% case/50% population budgeting formula to a program funded completely by case volume over a 10 year average. In 2016 the formula will change to 60% case/40% population and will adjust each year until 2020.
- Heard a report that if gravel is moved off-site of a property in Current Use then the portion of the property must come out of Current Use. The Board requested the Road Agent be informed.
- Reviewed documentation from the State of NH Department of Revenue Administration that the Town's preliminary Tax Rate has been established at \$30.58 – an increase of \$1.38 over 2014. The Board voted to accept the 2015 Tax Rate.
- Voted to renew the Solid Waste Removal contract with Monadnock Disposal Service for a period of three years. The Board declined to make a decision on switching vendors for Tire Disposal until they have the opportunity to meet with the Road Agent.
- Requested the Building Inspector's feedback on the definition of "ruined" as it is presented in Article XVIII of the Town's Zoning Ordinance.
- Scheduled the annual Capital Reserve Funding Committee meeting for Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.
- Asked Planning Board ex-Officio Jeff Rose to communicate the importance of the Budget Committee's concerns for the Master Plan as well as offer any assistance the Town Office and the Selectmen can provide to complete this project.
- Signed two Building Permits (Map 07, Lot 96 and Map 20, Lot 04) and one Intent to Cut (Map 18, Lot 02).

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante