

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – December 15, 2015

Selectmen James Cleary, Jeffrey Rose and Steven Osienski were present as well as Administrator Denise French. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

The Selectmen took action on the following matters:

- Reviewed and approved the December 1, 2015 Selectmen's Minutes.
- Reviewed and approved Payroll and Accounts Payable Registers for December 2, December 9 and December 15, 2015.
- Heard a report from Police Chief Bret Sullivan that the replacement police cruiser, a 2015 Ford SUV, will cost \$27,900. Chairman Cleary signed the Purchase Contract with Londonderry Ford. Arrangements have been finalized for the sale of the 2011 Crown Vic at a price of \$4,000.
- Designated Wednesday, January 13 as the Budget Hearing date and February 3rd as the Deliberative Session date. The deadline for accepting Warrant Articles is January 12th.
- Voted not to afford costs or issue any abatement to M3/L33 for winter plowing of the access road to Whittemore Lake.
- Confirmed that twenty-hour per week Transfer Station employees are entitled to 40 annual holiday hours. Other than Transfer Station personnel, employees receive holiday pay when the holiday falls on their regularly scheduled work day.
- Denied assisting a family with funeral costs due to their steadfast stance that they do not want a lien for public assistance attached to their property.
- Received notice from the Planning Board that they are proposing two changes to the Zoning Ordinance; 1) Article VII, A. Sanitary systems shall be subject to the same setback requirements as buildings; and 2) Article XIII, 7. The proposed excavation shall be situated a minimum of 50 feet from a property boundary line, except that with the permission of the abutter it may be permitted as near as 10 feet from said boundary line.
- Authorized brief closure of Town Hall while staff shares a meal offsite.
- Denied an abatement of inventory penalty for M23/L1-9.
- Reviewed, approved and signed the following documents:
 - M1/L17-HPLT Abatement
 - M7/L87-HPLT Abatement
 - M9-L21-HPLT Abatement
 - M10/L08-HPLT Abatement
 - M13/L33 Abatement
 - TDS Utility Abatement
 - M13-L3A7 Building Permit
 - M11/L5 Building Permit
 - M13/L5D1 Building Permit

Board of Selectmen Minutes – December 15, 2015

The following folks met with the Selectmen to review and discuss the Fourth Draft of the 2016 Budget – Budget Committee Members John Baybutt, Jon Charlonne, Rick Reed, Barry White and Debra Whitney; Deputy Administrator Kristie LaPlante; Town Clerk Debra Belcher; Trustsee of Trust Funds/Conservation Commission Valerie Germain; Planning Board David McKenzie; Zoning Board of Adjustment Christopher Clough; Cemetery Trustees Karen Bartlett and Joshua Segal; Police Chief Bret Sullivan; Fire Chief Michael Roina; Emergency Management Director Keith Nason; Road Agent Gary Russell; Water/Sewer Commissioner Glenn Wilson; Recreation Chair Bethany Craig; Librarian Leslie MacGregor; Library Trustees Molly Eppig and Jill Wilmoth; and Conservation Commission Joseph MacGregor.

After expressing their appreciation to the Budget Committee for their careful decisions based primarily of need and not wants, the Selectmen and the audience reviewed the proposed Budget and expressed the following:

- Monthly tuition to the Conval School District increased \$13,715 as of December 1, 2015; offsetting State education revenues continue to decline.
- Agreed not to decrease the legal budget.
- Selectmen shared their philosophy that fully funded employee health insurance is an offset for the Town employees' salary being less than most communities; the Town also pays 50% of the employees' dental insurance. Other than the mandated NH Retirement System payments the Town does not provide additional employer paid benefits.
- The Master Plan should be completed in the next four to five months. By a 3-2 vote, Planning Board members did not support funding a Natural Resource Inventory as requested by the Conservation Commission.
- Agreed to reduce line-item 4194-1-411, heat & oil for Town Hall and the VFW, by \$800.
- Increases in the proposed 2016 Police Department budget include a part-time administrative assistant and an hourly wage increase for part-time officers. Moving forward, on-call compensation will be broken out separately from over-time wages.
- Agreed to reduce line-item 4210-1-635, Police Department gas, by \$1,000.
- The Fire Chief reported that calls for service and administrative time have both increased. The Chief states working an average of fifty-two hours week. The proposed 2016 wage line-items total \$41,841; up \$11,730 from the 2015 Fire Department wages.
- Inquiries of the Fire Chief about the need for Fire Department personnel to respond to Crotched Mountain Ski and Ride for all medical calls (estimated to be 50 annually) when their medically trained ski patrol is providing patient care.
- Agreed to reduce line-item 4220-8-411, Fire Department heating oil, by \$500.
- Road Agent Gary Russell reported that seven miles of Town roads need work at an estimated cost exceeding one million dollars.
- The establishment of a Road Committee, whose purpose would be assisting the Road Agent in planning and implementing road maintenance, was conceptually discussed. John Baybutt and Jon Charlonne expressed interest in the Committee's establishment.
- Water/Sewer Commissioner Glenn Wilson reported that Antrim Water/Sewer Department has increased their hourly billing rate to adequately compensate their second full-time employee. Commissioner Wilson also reported that costs paid beyond the line repair/maintenance budgeted line-item will be reimbursed from the Water Capital Reserve Fund.

Board of Selectmen Minutes – December 15, 2015

- Interest for including money in the 2016 Budget for Whittemore Lake lifeguard staff was expressed as was the conceptual proposal to staff the beach with noncertified employees whom would be responsible for safe use of the beach and water front. A suggestion was made that a Warrant Article be put forth seeking funding for the lifeguard coverage; no decision was made.
- The end result of the Fourth Draft 2016 Budget review was a proposed operating budget of \$1,662,164; the 2015 operating budget is \$1,650,995 – a difference of \$11,169 or a 0.68% increase.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Denise French
Administrator