

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – May 23, 2016

Selectman James Cleary, Steven Osienski, and Jeffrey Rose were present, as well as Deputy Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

After reviewing an article titled “Volunteer, On-Call, and Employees Fire Departments: Understanding the Law” that was published in the May/June 2016 edition of the NH Municipal Associations’ magazine *New Hampshire Town and City*, the Board discussed the feasibility of changing the compensation plan for Firefighters from hourly employees to volunteers receiving a nominal fee. The Deputy Administrator was instructed to consult with the author of the article and Town Council to discuss the technicalities of changing the compensation plan and what complications (if any) there may be. The Board appointed Steve Osienski to act as their representative when discussing this potential change with the Fire Department at a future date.

The Board reviewed and approved the Recreation Committee’s request for approval to move forward with the \$200 permitting process to add 10 cubic yards of sand at the Town Beach. A Committee member will meet with the Conservation Commission later in the week for their approval.

The Board reviewed a May 13th email from the Town’s engineer outlining financial responsibility options for the NEEM bill for \$1,568 for time and labor to relocate the TDS underground communication line near Antrim Road and Eaton Avenue. The Board stands by their May 11, 2016 decision that they are not the financially responsible party for this expense.

The Board discussed, at length, a request from Stantec for an extension to the existing Construction Engineering contract. With their request, Stantec cited excess time spent on office engineering support for RFIs and that construction is scheduled to last two weeks longer than the contracted 11 week Construction Engineering contract. After much discussion, the Board denied approving the contract amendment until they could meet with a representative from Stantec to better understand the need for a contract extension on a lump sum contract.

The Board met with Fire Chief Michael Roina and discussed the following:

- Consideration of changing the compensation plan for the Fire Department from the current paid-per-call employee arrangement to volunteer status with payment of a nominal fee.
 - Should this change happen then the Board will terminate the existing split-shift arrangement and Mike’s employment will go back to full-time hours at the Highway Department.
 - The Board would then determine an appropriate stipend system for the Department leadership.
- After some discussion, the Selectmen authorized funding for hose testing this year to establish a base line of the status of all of the Department’s hose. The goal is to develop a report of deficient and satisfactory lengths of hose to aid the Chief in developing a replacement program. The Board and the Chief will discuss, at a later date, the frequency of hose testing moving forward.

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The Board took action on the following matters:

- Reviewed payroll information from the Deputy Administrator regarding the Fire Chief's request to be paid salary plus overtime; no decision was made.
- Tabled approval of installation of a sidewalk at an Antrim Road business until the business can better define the entrance to the facility.
- Reviewed a report from Stantec that the Downtown Improvement Project is currently forecast to come in \$5,500 under budget.
- Agreed to allow the Boy Scouts to continue to use the VFW building in the fall.
- Agreed with the Town's Assessing contractor, Cross Country Appraisal Group, to not authorize an Abatement for Eversource until other abatement issues are settled through BTLA and the Supreme Court.
- Reviewed correspondence from the Cemetery Trustees requesting approval to encumber any unspent monies in 2016 to address stonework and fence repairs. The Board felt the project would exceed any minimal amount to be encumbered and will recommend to the Trustees that they solicit funding through a Warrant Article.
- Authorized The Friends of the Library to utilize the Town Common for vendors to set up for the June 4th Rhubarb Festival.

There being no other business before the Board the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante
Deputy Administrator