

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – November 9, 2016

Selectmen James Cleary, Jeffrey Rose and Steven Osienski were present as well as Administrator Denise French. Also attending the meeting was Bethany Craig and Monadnock Ledger-Transcript reporter Abby Kessler. The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m.

Road Agent Gary Russell met with the Selectmen to discuss the following:

- Reviewed Gary's decision to fund the Highway Department and Transfer Station Budgets at the 2015 level. It was agreed that the Budgets will be reviewed again at year end for accuracy based upon actual 2016 expenditures.
- Discussed concerns received from a few individual Budget Committee members relative to not receiving a revised Highway Department budget for 2017 nor a road improvement plan as had been promised at a joint meeting of the Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen ahead of the 2016 Town Meeting.
- Verbally developed the following Road Improvement Plan:
  - **2017 – Old Stagecoach Road** \$20,000; **North Bennington Road** from the iron bridge to the Deering town-line, \$20,000; and **Old Greenfield Road** and **Dodge Road** each \$10,000.
  - **2018 – Acre Street, Eaton Avenue** and **Pierce Hill Road** from the VFW to Route 202, each \$20,000.
  - **2019 – Onset Road** \$60,000.
  - **2020 – Birch Glen Drive** \$60,000.
  - **2021 – Old Greenfield Road** and **Dodge Road** \$60,000 total.
  - Conceptually discussed requesting a \$60,000 warrant article appropriation for 2017 road maintenance funding, in addition to the usual \$15,000 annual appropriation to the Road Rehabilitation Capital Reserve Fund. The matter will be reviewed with the Capital Reserve Fund Planning Committee at their November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Operational concerns at the Transfer Station which include mixed disposals of recycled items.

From 6:55 p.m. until 7:07 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(a). Present were Selectmen Cleary, Rose and Osienski, Administrator French and Road Agent Russell. The Selectmen voted to pay one bereavement day to an employee whose in-law recently passed. The Selectmen voted to discontinue the split work schedule of the shared Highway Department/Fire Department employee as of November 28<sup>th</sup>. The employee will return to full-time status with the Highway Department.

Water/Sewer Commissioners Glenn Wilson and David Desaulniers met with the Selectmen by invitation and discussed the following:

- Two grinder pump stations located across the river near the VFW. The stations were installed during the initial sewer construction project, circa 1983. Since there are no utility easements for either 9 Hancock Road or 12 Hancock Road the determination is that each grinder pump station is privately owned with maintenance being the responsibility of each property owner.

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- Voted not to seek a re-hearing of the recent ZBA Decision for M7/L76. It has been determined that the newly constructed porch over the known water utility is a property owner issue and not a Zoning Ordinance issue. The Commissioners and Selectmen agreed to offer the property owner an alternative solution to the non-permitted structure built over Town property.
- Discussed the controversial 2016 purchase of twenty-five (25) digital water meters which will require the need to purchase a \$12,000 digital reader in 2017. Approximately six of the twenty-five meters are now installed; another 200 digital meters at a cost of \$212 each will need to be purchased in the future.
- Since the Town does not own a digital reader the Commissioners intend to bill any water customer who receives a digital water meter (prior to the purchase of a digital reader) the minimum usage of 5,000 gallons per quarter until such time as actual meter readings are available. When actual readings become available the customer will receive an adjusted bill for total consumption, minus the minimum charges billed to their account. The Selectmen requested that the affected owners receive the planned billing information at the time of installation so as not to be shocked when an adjusted bill is issued in the future.
- Water and sewer rates will be reviewed in 2017 with an eye towards possible rate increases; the rates have remained unchanged since 2010.

From 7:43 p.m. until 8:15 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(c). Present were Selectmen Cleary, Rose and Osienski, Administrator French and Deputy Town Clerk Debra Whitney. No decisions were made.

The Selectmen discussed the following matters:

- Reviewed and approved the Selectmen's November 2, 2016 Minutes. Reviewed the Energy Committee's November 2, 2016 Minutes as well as the Budget Committee's October 26, 2016 Minutes.
- Reviewed and approved a November 4, 2016 Accounts Payable Register and Payroll Registers for November 3 and November 10, 2016.
- Confirmed Chairman Cleary's decision to take advantage of a sale which will save the Town approximately \$3,500 by replacing the aged Xerox machine with a Ricoh C2800sp copier; the \$4,000 purchase price includes free shipping. Beyond the first year annual support will be \$395.
- Tabled making a decision relative to 2017 wage increases pending further information which is expected to be presented at the Board's November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Voted to add a Budget Committee member, as recommended by that Committee, to the Capital Reserve Fund Planning Committee.
- Received a written request from the Town Clerk to adjust the Deputy Town Clerk's wage by \$0.50 per hour retroactive to March 21, 2016.
- Heard a report that the Greenfield Selectmen's office and a town-line abutter are both suggesting resolution to a known discrepancy of the Bennington/Greenfield town-line in the vicinity of the Contoocook River and the railroad. The Selectmen recommended that the Administrator share an old estimate from the file with a request that a revised cost would be equally shared by both towns.

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- Received the draft 2017-2018 Conval School Budget which will be a topic of discussion at the Selectmen Advisory Committee's November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Conceptually discussed what could be done with the Sewer Capital Reserve Fund of approximately \$92,000 if 2017 Town Meeting should vote to dissolve the Fund since it is no longer needed.
- Heard a report from Recreation Chair Bethany Craig that the Town's Christmas festivities will take place throughout the day on Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>. Bethany and Jim Craig have volunteered to take over the annual commitment of finding and erecting the Town's Christmas tree at The Common.

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Denise French  
Administrator