

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – January 10, 2019

Selectmen James Cleary, David Hardwick, Sr., and Mark Mackesy were present as well as Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

The Town's revaluation contract with Commerford, Neider & Perkins does not include utility values. The Selectmen reviewed two contracts from George E. Sansoucy for assessing services to provide values for Utilities in Town and to provide assessing services for developing revised values for the Monadnock Paper Mill.

The Utility contract provided by Sansoucy would provide 2019 values for Eversource, TDS Telecom, the 4 dams and 3 hydros owned by Monadnock Paper Mill, transmission easements right of way, and the taxable components of Comcast Cable including use of the public right of way, as well as value updates for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. The cost of the contract would either be \$60,000 up-front or the Town could pay \$14,800 a year for five years. The Selectmen discussed the lengthy appeals process with Eversource and proposed settlement values that differ significantly from the initial values provided by Sansoucy and the settlement agreement reached between the Town and Monadnock Paper Mills and the astronomical cost of the contract, the apparent monopoly Sansoucy has on assessing Utilities, and the appeals process with each utility because of the initial values, and tabled approval of the contract. The Selectmen would like an opportunity to explore their options for assessing services for these projects before making any decisions. As a precaution, the Selectmen agreed to put the \$60,000 up front cost for assessing services in the Budget in advance of the Budget Hearing.

The Selectmen reviewed a \$30,000 proposal from Sansoucy to conduct a full revaluation of the Monadnock Paper Mill. When the Mill was last valued in 2014, the value established by Sansoucy caused a lot of concern from both the Town and the Paper Mill. Rather than dispute the values through the Board of Tax and Land Appeals process, the Selectmen met with the Monadnock Paper Mill and reached a settlement to incrementally adjust their values. In recognition of that experience, the Selectmen voted not to sign the \$30,000 proposal for valuing the Monadnock Paper Mill.

The Selectmen recessed their meeting at 6:45 p.m. to the Library room at Pierce Elementary School for the Town's 2019 Budget Hearing. The Hearing began at 7:07 p.m. The Selectmen made no decisions at the Budget Hearing.

The Selectmen's meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante, Town Administrator