

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – December 18, 2018

Selectmen James Cleary and David Hardwick Sr. were present as well as Deputy Town Administrator Denise French. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

The following Town Officials met with the Selectmen to discuss the draft proposal of the 2019 Operating Budget: Budget Committee members Rick Reed and Judy Heddy; Police Officers Brett Sullivan and Jay LePine; Fire Chief Dave Foster; Town Clerk Deb Belcher; Cemetery Trustees Karen Belcher and Joshua Segal; Planning Board Chair David McKenzie; Recreation Co-Chair Bethany Craig; Librarian Leslie MacGregor. Amongst general conversation, the following items were noted:

- \$15,000 increase has been added to the Property Assessment budget to comply with the mandated 2019 town-wide property revaluation.
- \$8,450 increase has been added to the General Government Buildings budget for building repair and maintenance, heating oil/propane, and pest control.
- Selectmen confirmation that \$2,000 remain in the Cemeteries budget to fund Stone/Tree/ Maintenance.
- An increase of \$29,497 has been added to the Police Department budget. Included in the increase is \$15,000 to intuitively employ two officers per shift during various times throughout the year; \$10,722 includes associated payroll taxes/retirement due to staffing changes and a change to family health insurance; \$2,000 was added to the gasoline line-item. The Selectmen tabled support of the \$15,000 proposed staffing increase pending the result of a December 26th meeting with the Police Chief.
- Fire Chief Foster agreed that the Department could absorb the \$2,000 reduction in the Medical/Rescue budget.
- The Fire Chief agreed to inquire of other communities as to their plan of action for current and future replacement of Fire Department vehicles.
- The Highway Department's budget decreased \$12,851 due to staffing changes.
- Street Lighting budget was modestly reduced by \$1,500 due to limited information available as to actual savings realized from the LED upgrade of street lights.
- Transfer Station Operations has increased \$4,125 for renewal of Hauling and Disposal/ Recyclable Removal Contract.
- It was agreed to include Beach Attendants \$6,000 funding within the Recreation budget rather than request funding through a Warrant Article as has been done in previous years.
- The Rhubarb Festival is slated to become a subcommittee of the Recreation Committee.
- The overall draft proposal of the 2019 Operating Budget currently represents a \$41,027 increase over the 2018 Operating Budget.

In other matters the Selectmen confirmed a \$500 annual stipend for Bethany Craig who oversees Whittemore Beach operations during the summer months.

The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise French
Deputy Town Administrator