

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

JANUARY 13, 2009

MEMORIAL BUILDING

7:00 P.M.

The following are to be considered draft minutes only until approved by the Board at their next meeting.

Present: Don Hill, John Chiarella, and Neal Huntoon.

Also present: Superintendent of Schools Jerry Frew, Business Administrator Larry LeBoeuf, and Springfield Municipal Budget Committee Member Leigh Callaway.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

School Budget: Jerry Frew and Larry LeBoeuf presented warrant articles and explained the budget proposals for the school district. The School Board is recommending an operating budget of \$35,950,200 which is a 5.9% increase over last year. The Municipal Budget Committee is recommending \$35,375,765 which is an increase of 4.23%. Mr. Frew indicated the school budget reflects the reduction of 5.5 professional positions, and 1.5 para-professionals. The challenge will be the actual positions. The Municipal Budget Committee's recommended budget will be a challenge as to where additional cuts will come from. The Kindergarten program will continue, but Sutton and Springfield may be reduced to one half-day session. This will be contingent on enrollment, which should be known by mid-March. Savings measures will be looked at through attrition and seniority versus elimination, and increased class sizes. They do not want to cut programs for kids. Leigh stated the objective of the Municipal Budget Committee is to decrease the budget. At some point this is going to have an impact on the kids and staff. The MBC offered suggestions for \$53,000 in reduction to operating costs, the rest is employees. The Collective Bargaining Agreement and raises were discussed. Teachers are due to begin working on a new Collective Bargain Agreement for 2010-2011.

The Selectmen questioned when the State may make a decision regarding the building aid fund. Leigh Callaway stated he has written to congressional members regarding the impact this will have on area towns. Mr. Frew stated the entire 1.5 million will not go away, but some may be shaved. The district has received 30% so far.

The Town of Sutton made a good presentation, supported by local police chiefs, recommending the full-time resource officer. The resource officer will be an independent officer, paid by the Town of Sutton. There may be federal funding available.

The Selectmen discussed a long-term lease agreement for the kindergarten space with Mr. Frew. The Selectmen would like to be able to enter into a longer-term lease agreement with the district for the kindergarten classroom. Mr. Frew will check with the school board to see if this is something they wish to pursue.

Emergency Management: Keith Cutting, Emergency Management Director met with the Selectmen. He and Brad attended a meeting in Lebanon regarding FEMA disaster funds for the December ice storm. A letter of intent was submitted for disaster recovery. There are also funds available for hazard mitigation. The local impact was minimal to minor, but costs will be reimbursable at basically 75% with the potential for an additional 12.5% from the State. The time-frame for submission starts 60 days from today. FEMA will send an investigator who will do a ride around with Brad to assess damages and future work projects.

John questioned whether the Hazard Mitigation money would include debris clean-up from Class VI roads. This was done following the 98 ice storm due to fire danger. Keith mentioned he was present at the fire station command center during some of the ice storm and later went to New London to assist at the shelter. There were a number of volunteers from Springfield.

Keith reported that he has completed 5 online certification courses. He will be attending the All Health Hazard Region dinner on the 16th, and will be participating in a web Emergency Operations training in Concord in February.

Keith discussed moving forward with updates of the Emergency Operations Plan. The last update was done in 1999. The Board of Selectmen are in agreement to proceed with the update. Keith will contact Jeremy LaPlante regarding funding.

Town Buildings:

Selectmen met with Mason Wheeler to discuss plumbing at the Town Hall. Anti-freeze has been pumped into the furnace and water system. Mason reviewed fixing the plumbing so the heat can be turned on and off as needed. Other general maintenance issues are needed and were discussed. A request has been received for space to hold a memorial gathering on Saturday. The fire station meeting room and library are all ready booked with other activities. The Board agreed that it was too cold for the highway or fire equipment to be stored outside during activities. A motion was made by Neal, seconded by Don and unanimously approved to allow Mason to reopen the Town Hall. The building will then be closed again as soon as possible and Mason will begin doing the plumbing maintenance. Neal moved to have Mason move forward with changing the plumbing to the crawl space, seconded by Don and unanimously approved.

Fire Department:

Dallas Patten was present to respond to the Selectmen's question regarding the number of times the turn-out gear would have been washed based on call type and volume. Dallas indicated the calls would have resulted in 41 sets of gear being washed. The Board discussed increasing the department's operating appropriation by the 3.5% they had previously cut from the budget. The Selectmen asked if the operating budget were level funded, would the department be able to handle their needs, and fund the washer? Dallas said he would discuss that with the members.

Minutes: The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of December 30, 2008.

Correspondence: The Board reviewed a letter received regarding the bid on the fire truck. Don will speak with the resident.

Board and Department Updates:

John reported he has spoken to the Department of Environmental Services regarding the Miller wetland application. He informed the DES of the process the Miller's went through before the wetland application was filed. The DES had tabled the decision process on this application, and reported they have received a number of complaints recently from the same party. They would like to see documentation of the local process for the Millers. Don stated it was reported at the Conservation Commission meeting last week that the application had been approved by the DES. He questioned if the approval had been received at the office. It had not. The Selectmen discussed their concern regarding inappropriate complaints.

John Chiarella reported he has talked with Leslie at the Eastman Recreation Department. She will let him know if there is space available in their summer recreation program for summer applicants. She also informed him of a 2 week camp the Vermont Institute of Natural Sciences will run locally.

The Board reviewed the certificates of course completion for Officer Beaulieu. Officer Beaulieu is to be commended on his commitment to continuing education.

The Selectmen reviewed the response from Local Government Center Counsel regarding SB 381, and the suggested warrant article proposed by the Conservation Commission. The LGC attorney explained that the LGC was involved in the legislative process. The SB was created to remove a grey area where some Conservation Commissions were applying the law to use their moneys to assist landowners in obtaining Conservation Easements. The RSA now requires voter approval either annually or by the blanket warrant article giving them permission to do so. There is still a lot of controversy over the RSA since the Town has no say over what happens to the land, and no control over how the money is spent once given to the land trust. After lengthy discussion, Don moved not to recommend the warrant article as he feels it is inappropriate to give blanket approval to use town funds without further voter approval. The motion was seconded by Neal and unanimously approved.

Signatures:

The Board signed building rental applications and purchase orders.

At 9:50 the Board unanimously voted to continue the meeting to Thursday, January 15, 2009 at Noon to review budgeted expenditures.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Roberts,
Administrative Assistant