

Board of Selectmen Meeting
Town Hall Annex
February 24, 2016
Special Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: M. Walter; S. Link; E. Malavasi

Also Present: K. Cavallo; M. Colpoys; W. Denya; R. Miller; J. Moreau; T. Quinn; F. Tencza; C. Varricchio; S. Wheeler; L. Zemienieski

1. First Selectman Walter called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. General Budget Review Workshop: Ms. Varricchio distributed updated materials and recapped the changes from the previous budget workshop meetings. She stated that the updated budget reflects leasing a new mower for the Town. In response to questions from Mr. Malavasi, she noted that the lease structure is "lease to own" and there is no buy-out payment at the end of the lease and confirmed that the same arrangement could be made for the Board of Education's capital funding requests for grounds equipment.

Mr. Walter distributed Profit & Loss, Balance Sheet and tax return information for the Ambulance Association.

- A. Parks & Recreation: Director Quinn distributed the Parks and Recreation Commission's annual report. She responded to several questions from the Selectmen and confirmed that the SCSU intern was very helpful and she is working with the University to secure another intern.

Ms. Quinn advised that she is working on a long range plan for Parks and Recreation. In response to a question from Mr. Malavasi, Ms. Quinn advised that the two individuals that had proposed the disk golf course have been working long hours on installing the course and her request for \$5,000.00 in additional funding is to provide them with some help with the work. In response to a request from Mr. Walter, Ms. Quinn agreed to cut her request for additional funds in exchange for a few days of labor from a Public Works employee.

Ms. Quinn and the Selectmen discussed the condition of the tennis courts. They also discussed her capital projects request for Nichols Field, including replacing the roofs on the dugouts, installing a pavilion, purchasing an infant swing, and upgrades to the playing fields. Ms. Quinn reviewed the capital funding requests for the Town Beach, including replacing the retaining wall by the bathrooms, hydro-raking and replacement of beach sand. She also advised that a group of high school students are working on educational kiosks for the disk golf trails and the beach; the department is providing the supplies for the project.

The Selectmen and Ms. Quinn discussed the funding request for work on the lower fields at the Old Middle School and agreed that the construction funding request of \$170,000.00

in this year's budget can be pushed out until completion of the engineering study. They also discussed the Recreation Commission's special revenue budgets for Music on the River and day camp. Ms. Varricchio stated that revenue for day camp offset expenses and noted that the Commissioners had requested the Town set aside funds from the revenue for day camp scholarships. She noted that they will make that recommendation to the Board of Finance.

In response to a request from Mr. Walter, Ms. Quinn stated she would research grants for purchasing AEDs (automated external defibrillators) for the Grange Hall, Town Office Building and Public Works.

Mr. Walter thanked Director Quinn for her input.

- B. Lakes Association: Mr. Miller reviewed the PowerPoint presentation the Lakes Association had sent to the Selectmen. He stated that the properties around the lakes constitute approximately 17% of the Grand List and noted that the threats to the quality of the lakes also threaten property values. He advised that the lakes associations want to continue to be proactive in dealing with the introduction of invasive aquatic species and storm water run-off. There was a brief discussion regarding proposed work on catch basins feeding into the lakes. Mr. Miller advised that the associations plan to meet to discuss working with the Town on the catch basins at Moodus Reservoir and Lake Hayward.

The Selectmen and Mr. Miller discussed the Association's request that the Town increase its contribution to the Lakes Association's budget to \$46,300.00. Mr. Miller noted that currently the Town is contributing less than 1% of taxes paid on waterfront properties to the budget.

Mr. Denya reviewed the work done by DEEP at Bashan Lake and noted that the residents raised approximately \$60,000.00 for corrective maintenance. In response to a request by Mr. Denya, Mr. Walter agreed to ask Public Works to install "No Parking" signs on the streets around the Bashan Lake boat launch. He also agreed to pass on Ms. Tencza's request to sweep the streets around the lake early in the season to Public Works.

Mr. Walter advised that the Town cannot increase its contribution at this time but stated it would maintain the amount at \$19,375.00.

He thanked Mr. Miller and Mr. Denya for participating in the budget workshop.

- C. Ambulance Association: In response to a question raised by Ms. Varricchio, Mr. Cavallo stated that he was not certain whether or not purchase of a new ambulance would be pushed off as a result of the delay in the current vehicle purchase. He noted that the projected expense could be reduced if the existing ambulance is able to be refurbished.

The Selectmen and Mr. Cavallo discussed Middlesex Hospital's proposal to charge towns \$1/per capita for paramedic services. Mr. Cavallo noted that the proposal is not final and

that there may be other options available to the Town, including contracting for paramedic services with an independent ambulance company. He stated that the Ambulance Association board is planning to meet to discuss alternative options to the Hospital's proposal.

Mr. Walter advised Mr. Cavallo that, in light of the potential charge for paramedic services, he will be submitting a letter exercising the Town's option to re-open the contract with the Ambulance Association for discussion. He thanked Mr. Cavallo for his input.

- D. Shared Services: Ms. Varricchio advised that she would like to expand the detail in this budget's narrative, particularly related to the progress made on Building & Grounds Maintenance. She reviewed the changes in the budget for the Selectmen.

In response to a question from Mr. Malavasi, Ms. Varricchio stated that much of the Board of Education's IT equipment is leased; however, due to the low turnover rate of IT equipment used by the Town, leases are not as prevalent. She also confirmed that the Animal Control budget is not included in Shared Services budget, it is a Special Revenue Fund.

- E. Special Revenue Funds: Ms. Varricchio reviewed the Animal Control revenues and noted that they have been holding steady. She stated that regionalization of Animal Control has resulted in an offset of revenue and expenses with a possible small profit. In response to a question from Mr. Malavasi, she confirmed that East Hampton seems happy with the arrangement and she expects they will continue participating.
- F. Other Budgets (as time permits): Mr. Walter reported that the state is scheduling a fly-over of the area for GIS mapping purposes. He stated that, as a result, Mr. Ventres advised that the Town's budgeted amount for this purpose could be reduced by approximately 50%.

The Selectmen discussed the 3-year history of funding the purchase of Public Works trucks out of reserves. Mr. Walter recommended reducing the capital request by half or \$84,500.00 and paying one half of the purchase from reserves and the other half from capital with a goal of reducing the reliance on reserves completely by next year.

Mr. Walter distributed a letter signed by the Chairmen of the Economic Development, Planning & Zoning, and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commissions recommending repurposing the salaries of the vacant Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) and Economic Development Coordinator positions to pay for the services of a Master Planner. He distributed a handout of a proposal by Centerbrook Architects and Planners outlining the services they could provide East Haddam and Haddam for development of the Village and the Route 82 corridor. He noted that a contract with a Master Planner would ultimately have to go through an RFQ process. Mr. Walter recommended not cutting the ZEO and ED Coordinator salaries from the budget.

The Selectmen reviewed the Board of Education's capital projects budget and agreed to reduce it from \$297,000.00 to \$200,000.00.

G. Miscellaneous Budgets to be Revisited: No budgets were revisited at the meeting.

Ms. Link and Mr. Malavasi discussed her recommendation to increase the First Selectmen's salary. Ms. Link proposed an increase of approximately \$8,000.00 over a two-year period. Mr. Malavasi stated that, given the state of the economy and the fact that surrounding towns are cutting the salary of their First Selectmen, he could not support Ms. Link's recommendation at this time.

3. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Malavasi, seconded by Ms. Link, to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m. Unanimous aye

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Link, Secretary