

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING JUNE 10, 2014

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 6 PM with Mrs. Walter and Mr. Hevy also present. Mr. Smith reminded everyone that the meeting was being both audio and video taped.

- I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 28, 2014**
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 2, 2014**
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 3, 2014**
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 4, 2014**

Mr. Hevy moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, a motion to approve the aforementioned minutes as written. So voted, with Mrs. Walter abstaining on all.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. AWARD FUEL BIDS

Mr. Smith noted that we have not received this information from the Highway Department yet, so this will be deferred until next week.

B. FY15 BUDGET

Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen met with the Finance Committee last Wednesday to present two FY15 budget options that were put forth at last week's Selectmen's meeting. A third option was added that included a 3% raise for non-union employees, and \$68,000.00 towards ALS services. The projected deficit from this option is \$211,477.00. This is the budget option that will be presented at the June 20th town meeting. (Attachment #1)

Mr. Hevy thanked the Finance Committee for their help on the budget, as well as his fellow Selectmen.

Mr. Smith also thanked the Finance Committee, stating that the Selectmen and Finance Committee have had a good working relationship. Over the summer the two groups will get together to figure out what it costs to run the town and what to do about it. There is a structural deficit built into the Town's budget that needs to be addressed. The Finance Committee is looking into ways to increase revenues. Other towns are finding themselves in this same situation.

Mrs. Walter stated that the Selectmen need to be up-front about the erosion of town services; some services cost more and are taking larger "hits." The need for town vehicles is coming back on us, and this is a potential safety issue for town employees.

This is not a budget to brag about. The Selectmen should not heighten people's expectations that things are business as usual.

Mr. Smith said that hopefully the meetings with the Finance Committee over the summer will help figure this out. No budgets have been cut, most are level funded. If Free Cash exceeds expectations in the fall then the Selectmen will develop a priority list of things to be funded.

Mr. Smith went on to state that if we eliminated the Conservation Commission, CMRPC, the Planning Board, the ZBA, the Tree Warden, the COA, Veterans Agent, the library, playground, town beach and all inspectors we would only save \$283,000.00. There is no room to maneuver with this budget.

C. NET METERING PROPOSAL

Mrs. Walter presented a proposal from Solterra for net metering credits. (Available in the Selectmen's office) She noted that the net-metering project started more than one year ago. We were approached by Solterra, a company that is developing 10 solar facilities on land in Spencer owned by the Abbey. We were asked if we use enough electricity to benefit from the net metering program. If we include the sewer, water, school and town usage we qualify. Mrs. Walter noted that we can get our electricity from any supplier, but this program will give us a credit on our electric bills.

This proposal is very extensive; we did an MOU with Solterra in June of last year that was vetted by Kopelman and Paige. This program will allow us to apply credits to our bills. There is no cost to the Town, and the process will be done by Solterra. They are guaranteeing a savings of \$60,000.00 over two years.

Mrs. Walter noted that this should help the Town's finances, we have PILOT agreements with the two solar facilities in Town that should bring in \$60,000.00 in revenue each year, and then this savings in electricity should really help.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to send this proposal to Town Counsel for review. So voted.

D. REQUESTS FOR CEMETERY AND PART-TIME POLICE PAY INCREASE

Mr. Smith presented a memo from the Cemetery Commission dated April 29, 2014 asking to increase the pay rate for the Cemetery Foreman/Manager. (Attachment #2) According to Commissioner Kirk Burnham, this employee has taken on extra duties since the passing of John Lane. This is a seasonal position that must be available as needed. Mr. Burnham proposed increasing the pay rate from \$12 per hour to \$16 per hour. Mr. Smith stated that he would like to increase the rate to \$14. Mrs. Walter asked if this employee would be entitled to a 3% increase on top of this, and Mr. Smith stated that in his opinion he would not. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion

to increase the pay rate for the Cemetery Department Foreman/Manager to \$14 per hour effective July 1, 2014. So voted.

In addition, Mr. Smith noted that Police Chief Thomasian had previously asked to increase the rate paid to part-time officers by .50 per hour on July 1st, and .50 per hour on January 1, 2015. (Attachment #3) If the Chief can recruit and maintain more part-time officers it will reduce his overtime costs. Mr. Smith noted that this is not a request for additional funds, the Chief will fund this within his budget.

Mrs. Walter noted that these officers are due for a 3% increase July 1st if approved by the voters, which is approximately .39/hour. She suggested that the pay rate be raised an additional .11 to the .50 rate for July 1st. Then on January 1st the rate would go up another .50 per hour.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the two pay increases for part-time officers. So voted.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. LETTER FROM WATER SUPERINTENDENT RE: RETIREMENT

Mr. Hevy reviewed a letter from Water Superintendent Steve Jones informing the Board of his intent to retire on June 12, 2015. (Attachment #4) That date will mark 15 years of employment with the Town for Mr. Jones. Mr. Smith noted that Mr. Jones is very good at what he does, and he has provided the leadership that the department needs. He will be difficult to replace. Mrs. Walter asked what would happen if Mr. Jones changes his mind before his retirement date, and Mr. Smith stated that if he changes his mind before we are in the recruiting process it can be addressed at that time. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the resignation with deep regret and to send a letter of thanks. So voted.

B. SIGN CONTRACT WITH FAY, SPOFFORD AND THORNDIKE FOR CDBG DESIGN PROJECT

Mr. Smith asked that this item be deferred until the next meeting so that he can review the contract.

C. TRANSFER REQUEST

Mr. Smith presented a transfer request from the Police Department to transfer the sum of \$4,355.00 from the Police Salary and Police Overtime Accounts to the Police Offices Expense Account for repairs to fire suppression system. (Attachment #5) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the transfer. So voted.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. JUNE 20TH TOWN MEETING REMINDER

Mr. Smith reminded residents that there will be two town meetings on the evening of June 20th, a Special Town Meeting at 7 PM and the Annual Town Meeting at 7:30. He urged everyone to attend.

B. DOG LICENSES REMINDER

Mrs. Walter reminded residents that dog licenses are now due. There is a \$5 late fee which will increase to \$25 after September 1st.

C. THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS NOW OPEN ON SATURDAYS FROM 10 AM TO 1 PM THROUGH THE FALL. IT IS LOCATED ON THE LOWER LEVEL AT 193 NORTH MAIN STREET.

Mr. Smith announced this.

D. HEART TO HEART PRESENTS THE 15TH ANNUAL "FUN DAY" ON SATURDAY, JUNE 14TH FROM 4 PM TO 8 PM. ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT CHILDREN WITH CHRONIC HEALTH PROBLEMS. THERE WILL BE MUSIC, GAMES, FOOD AND RAFFLES.

Mr. Hevy announced this one.

E. YOUTH CENTER ROAD RACE

Mrs. Walter announced that the annual Youth Center 5K Road Race/Walk will be held on Saturday, June 14th beginning at the school.

V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS

B. BUDGET

C. FAY, SPOFFORD AND THORNDIKE CONTRACT

D. SOLAR NET METERING AGREEMENT

E. MEETING WITH BOARD OF HEALTH AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION RE: BEAVERS

At 7:10 PM Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to enter Executive Session to conduct negotiations with non-union personnel, specifically Town Accountant Nancy Nykiel. Roll call: Smith, yes; Walter, yes; Hevy, yes. So voted. Mr. Smith announced that the Board would exit Executive Session only to adjourn.

At 8:25 PM the Board came out of Executive Session. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant