

SELECT BOARD MINUTES – February 3, 2011

Present: Dave DeHerdt, Doug Field, Norm Russell – Selectmen
Mary Fitz-Gibbon – Administrative Assistant

Meeting called to order a 7:05PM

Minutes: A motion was made, seconded and voted to accept the open meeting minutes of January 26th as written.

Solar Opportunity: DeHerdt reported that he received an email about a program that affords municipalities the opportunity to site solar panels on properly situated buildings. There is a company that will install the panels and manage them for two years, after which the town may purchase the panels for \$1.00 plus assume management and upkeep afterwards. These are collectors for generating electricity. DeHerdt said he had not had a chance to investigate this. He did have a number of questions. First it had to be determined that there were any suitable town buildings. Also, whether the panels have to be on the buildings or can be located near them. The board thought this program might be worth investigating.

Highway Budget : Highway Superintendent, Tom Poissant sent a letter to the Board requesting that his budget be postponed. With the mess he's had to contend with in the past few weeks, weatherwise, he has not had time to prepare one. He was scheduled for a meeting on the 10th to present highway, tree warden, and transfer station budgets. Given the circumstances, this was a reasonable request, prompting an examination of the schedule to fill the space for next week.

A second issue seems to be that because of the way that highway labor for winter roads was voted in the current budget, there is a question about whether a special town meeting will be needed. All are aware that the winter roads budget is the only one that can be deficit spent. However, with labor for winter roads moved to another line item. Although the winter roads budget was not actually reduced, it appears that the winter roads budget was . If that were the case the Town's ability to deficit spend this budget would be eliminated. DeHerdt thinks this is not correct; he believes DOR was consulted prior to making this change. Since the labor for winter roads appears in another account, the funds were in fact not reduced. He said Ted Murray explored this quite thoroughly during last season's budget process. This question will be raised again with the Finance Committee later in this meeting.

Mutual Aid: Currently the fire departments within the county have a mutual aid agreement. There is no agreement with towns outside of the county. Public safety departments do not have mutual aid agreements. The State is asking towns to agree to a statewide mutual aid agreement for fire departments and public safety (police) departments. The intent is to include public works departments, but that agreement is not ready at this time. The proposed agreement states that the requesting party (town) will be responsible for and indemnify the responding parties. As Russell explained it, if a fire fighter is driving recklessly and has an accident resulting in a loss of life, the Town requesting aid would be liable. However, the sending party (town) would be responsible for paying salaries, etc to the persons it sends, just as existing mutual aid agreements do. This is a change from the mutual aid agreements currently in place. DeHerdt wanted to know if municipalities had met to discuss this. He was not ready to take any action until this was investigated. Fellow board members agreed more information is needed; therefore, it was tabled for tonight and put on the agenda for next week.

Finance Committee: present – Ted Murray, Carl Satterfield, Janet Rogers – Finance Committee

The first question to be addressed was the concern raised in a letter from Tom Poissant regarding the Winter Roads budget. Murray recalled speaking to Terry Williams from DOR about the movement of monies for labor out of the winter roads budget and placing it elsewhere. The money was still in the budget just not under the line item for winter roads. He would have to check further. However, Murray said the understanding at the time was that if funds got close a special town meeting could be held. This did not address the issue of being allowed to overspend the account. Satterfield asked for clarification of when the overspent account had to be funded. He recommended that Terry Williams be contacted. It could be that as long as the account shows no deficit at the end of the fiscal year, there might not be a need to have a special town meeting at this time. This will be explored further.

Rescheduling of the Highway, Tree Warden, and Transfer Station budgets was discussed with a new date of March 10th agreed upon. Fitz-Gibbon will arrange to have other budgets for next week.

General Government budgets - Present- Anne Dunn

Fitz-Gibbon explained a worksheet that she had prepared. Russell had questions about the location of the \$20,000 set aside for claims against the Town.

In the FY'11 budget, office staffing positions funded were Town Administrator, Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk totaling \$42,880. Looking at the current combined positions of Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, and Assistant Administrator the requested salaries would be roughly \$49,298. Treasurer's expenses have increased to include a payroll service. On the plus side, there should be a FRCOG cost reduction for payroll software that will not be needed. DeHerdt noticed that no education and training funds are included in some of the administrator budgets. He thought there should be something. He also questioned that the Treasurer's salary did not show a reduction even though payroll had been outsourced. Russell said her work load had not actually decreased because she was then able to take up matters that there had not been time to address previously. He made the point that the staff still had work that needed attention. A discussion of the process for paying expenses was reviewed. The concern of the dual role of treasurer-collector was discussed.

Town Hall utilities include heat, electricity, water, etc. With the cost of oil and electricity increasing, the assumption should be that there will be an increase in this item. On the plus side, the cost of the mistake of ordering too much oil in FY'08 or '09 has been paid. That expense will not reappear. (The Sewer Commission has agreed to split that cost.)A decision was made to plug in \$15,400 for utilities.

Town Hall expenses for maintenance were set at \$7,000, the same as previously. It was hoped that with a Town Hall Steward to oversee building use, some reduction might be realized.

Russell reported the news that Towns should expect a 10% decrease in local aid from the state.

In the FY'11 budget all stipends were eliminated, with the promise that they would be restored for FY'12. There was discussion of restoring stipends at half of the previous amount. For Select Board members that would be (2@ \$650 and 1 @ \$750). Russell noted that some stipends were already so small that to reduce them by half would be, in his words, an insult.

Select Board expenses could be reduced to \$600 and Town Counsel to \$5,000.

There have been computer issues which seem to have been worked out. Also there was a computer for the Assistant Administrator. DeHerdt thinks the \$2,500 number is a good one.

The Board took a moment to sign reports requested by the Town Clerk. (Notice to the ABCC of resident population and a report detailing licenses issued.)

Note was made that it is difficult to know how money in various budgets is being spent without more of a breakdown. Ex: For Town Hall show a breakdown utility costs (electricity, heat, etc.) Satterfield asked if it was possible to design a worksheet that provided a way to see comparisons for FY'11, proposed FY'12, and the % of change. Fitz-Gibbon said she could use some help building a template for creating worksheets. Murray said he could assist her.

Emergency manager budget - Field said he had been told he had to budget for 10 hours, which he felt was ridiculous. He has requested \$2,000 for FY'12, knowing that in FY'13 the dam will have to be inspected again. The dam is classified as high hazard because it's an earthen dam and there are residences just below it, thus the frequent inspections. He has included \$1,000 to cover an emergency event. He hasn't used it this year. The only thing he has to do is upgrade the plan annually, which is mostly changing names of persons. He has no plan to buy emergency supplies – flashlights, etc. he said there is no need with the emergency trailer located in Greenfield.

Mail – To be reviewed next week.

A check has been received from Sanderson Trustees for its share of the insurance for the barn at the ball field. The check needs to be returned because the Town does not own the building, nor, to the best of anyone's knowledge, does it have an agreement to provide insurance on the building, so it should not be included on the Town's insurance. Fitz-Gibbon will verify this. If this is correct and the barn isn't listed as a town property, the check will be returned to the Trustees.

Fitz-Gibbon reported a change in the language of the Elwell Trust. She said it referred to terms related to Donna and Will Elwell being consulted prior to use of the funds.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Priscilla Phelps