

SELECT BOARD MINUTES - January 6, 2011

Present: Dave DeHerd, Doug Field, Norm Russell – Select Board
Mary Fitz-Gibbon – Assistant Administrator

Meeting called to order at 7:15 PM.

Minutes: Assessors' Classification Hearing , December 15th – A motion was made by Russell, seconded by Field, and voted to accept the minutes of the Assessor's Classification Hearing. A motion was made , seconded and voted to accept the minutes of the Open meeting of the Select Board, held on December 15th, 2010.

Appointments:

Cultural Council - A motion was made by Russell, seconded by Field, and voted to appoint Andrew Kinsey, Helene Leue, Leslie Fleming to the Cultural Council. This will bring the council up to nine members.

Delinquent Dog Licenses – court filings – DeHerd said there are now only two people that continue to be delinquent. The Town Clerk will now be advised to file the necessary paperwork.

Finance Committee: Carl Satterfield

DeHerd said the first thing that needs to be done is to determine where each of the budget items is, in terms of account balances. He had asked for copies of the account balance sheets which should reflect transfers of funds to date, as well. The other information needed are the amounts and sources of anticipated revenues. There exists an excel worksheet which will be needed. Fitz-Gibbon will try to locate it. Information regarding the levy limit, etc is needed from the Assessors.

Scheduling - DeHerd laid out his vision of the schedule for preparing the budget, There are certain things that will be reinstated – like stipends for officials. Opening the dump one day during the week is another . An analysis of short and long term debt and cola stipends needs to be done. He noted the library is having trouble with accreditation and the animal control officer has concerns about his revolving fund. Last year the senior center numbers kept changing (this may have been due to the changes within the COA program). Field commented that the decision by Colrain to withdraw may have some budgetary affects this year. Town Hall accounts need to be reviewed and changes anticipated. due to the changing of positions .

Satterfield, chairman of the Finance Committee, asked if the whole Finance Committee should meet with the SB throughout this process. DeHerd thought that would be wise. "You are the number crunchers," he said. Satterfield then pointed out that many of the categories do not have even expenditures per month, so it will be difficult to tell where those budgets are in terms of their projected expenditures. He felt there would be limited benefit to spending a whole evening dealing with items where real numbers are not yet available. He also noted that this is the year federal funding to states stops. Then went on to suggest that the first budgets be those which the Select Board has some control over, like the town hall budgets, animal control and library.

After discussion the schedule developed : Jan. 13 – overview of budge (status of debt, etc); Jan. 20 & 27 would be interviews; Feb. 3 – town hall budgets , emergency management, and general government; Feb. 10 – highway/ tree warden/ transfer station; Feb. 17 – emergency services (fire, police); Feb 24 – library, park, senior center & council on aging; historical commission ; Mar. 3 – Assessors, water, sewer;

Mar. – School Committee; Mar. 17 – cultural council, com commission Planning, ZBA, animal control; Mar. 24- analysis and reassessment of overall budget; Mar. 31 & Apr. 7 – recall of depts. For reevaluation; Apr. 13 - separate meetings (SB/FC); Apr. 14 – warrant ready for signing; Apr. 22 – warrant posted; May 7 – Annual Town Meeting.

Satterfield suggested all budgets be prepared as level funded with a second showing a 5% reduction. Stipends need to be worked back into the budget by being included within the department budgets. Field said he knew the highway department would want to see a cost of living added to salaries. There had not been one last year. It was noted that no COLAs were given for persons on Social Security; even though prices have gone up, the cost of living hasn't. Satterfield also pointed out that the Town has less money in available funds, such as the reserve account and free cash than it had last year.

Questions were raised about the Town's share of the school budget. Couldn't it be reduced by 5%, as other budgets might be? Russell explained that it could not, because the Towns are assessed based upon a formula. Satterfield further explained the Schools are a separate government that is not under the Town's control. However, the tech school budgets which include tuition and bussing may actually have a surplus. Russell said there may be as much as \$65,000 there that could be redirected either into the general fund or used for FY'12 vocational education.

Warrants: The Board signed warrants. There may need to be a change in the times and dates for Board members to be available for signing of warrants.

Extension of Police Chief contract: A motion, seconded, and voted to extend the police chief contract, retroactive to December 25, 2010 to January 23, 2011.

Council on Aging; Field reported the council has worked on an revised agreement that Colrain will sign.

West Road – Field said a tower was installed in the middle of the night. Today David Kulp took people up on the steeple. Fitz-Gibbon said she let them up, because she couldn't get ahold of Wayne Gardner. She understands the tower installed on West Rd is under 80 feet in height. Field said "they're" saying there should have been a building permit issued from the building inspector because it's a structure. He said he is bothered about why the installation was done at night. Fitz-Gibbon will call the person from GAW (Dwyer?) and inquire about the lack of permit.

Tax bills made it out on time. A number of persons volunteered to make this happen.

Requirement of physical for full-time Police Chief. Town Council said this should be a requirement of employment. The Board will look at the Town's Employee policy, if it is not, the Board will need to amend the policy to include the requirement.

Green Community Act: Russell reported on a presentation he attended where a state guy, who is also a Selectman from Belchertown, manages a 10 million dollar fund which grants available to eligible to Green Communities to improve energy use. Grants are available in amounts beginning at \$125,000 and are not matched by the town. Russell said this could be just what's needed to make the improvements to Town Hall – storm windows, new boiler, maybe street lights. It could be used for anything as long as it was energy related. To become a Greenown Community the Town would have to do a few things:

- 1) Accept the stretch code. The Town would need to require that all new construction be built to 1996 code + the stretch or the 1999 (Code 8) .
- 2) The Town would need to prepare a plan for energy use in town buildings.
- 3) It would also, by right, participate in a 5 year renewable energy program, such as harnessing wind energy or a solar farm – which be at least one acre site. There is a \$10,000 kicker for developing a solar site.

Russell said the first year the Town qualified it could get the grant. While it would continue to be eligible or additional grants, it would not receive any further funds until all who applied had received same. DeHerdt said the Town actually has a Green Community committee. Mary Quigley has been working on this for some time.

Police Department: DeHerdt reported that Chief Cotton called him to report that he was on his way to Westfield to confiscate an officer's weapon. It seems a certain Sgt. told the officer(Konopko) he didn't need a license to carry a gun; his uniform would be sufficient. The officer will now have to enroll in gun class. Cotton is concerned that there may have been other unlicensed officers. He will check to see if any other officers may have been under the same misunderstanding. The federal government is initiating a national ID program for police officers. Officer Wilder couldn't find any paperwork; that's how this was uncovered. DeHerdt said, interestingly, until 2008 an officer didn't have to have a federal license. Since that time one has been required. That is when career officers, who'd had a misdemeanor in their youth suddenly found they couldn't be Police Officers as they couldn't be licensed to carry.

There is new software for departments. Regional data banks are being set up and regional booking sites where small departments can go to file reports. It's a centralized data base where all departments can access information. There is an end-user agreement that needs to be signed. There is a fee for the software and an annual assessment for its use. Fire chief wants to be on the system.

Mail:

Animal Control Officer report

Municipal Mortgage Release form to be signed and notarized – sewer improvement lien

MMA trade show

Request for Pole hearing by Verizon - Apple Valley Rd

APR notice – next week's agenda

Scenic by-law committee meeting –re: RT 112

Record retention information

Fitz-Gibbon said she seems to be having trouble with e-mails being bounced. Today the municipal clerk had notice from a state agency that emails are getting bounced back.

Information has finally been received from the Building Inspector that Certificates of Inspection must be submitted with applications for establishments that serve alcohol.

Finally, a motion was made to adjourn

Respectfully submitted,

Priscilla Phelps