

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

DEEP RIVER TOWN HALL

Regular Meeting – January 26, 2010

ATTENDANCE: Selectmen Dick Smith, Art Thompson & Dave Oliveria, Treasurer Tom Lindner
Camera Crew: Margo Hilfinger & Rich Strukus
Audience of Citizens: Tim Ballantyne & son David, Jim Budney, Lori Guerette, Cathy & Robert Jenkins, Jonathan Kastner, Tim Lee, Russell Marth, Bob Raymond, Diane Recchia
Press: Charles Stannard, *LocalOnlineNews* & Marianne Sullivan, *Valley Courier*

This regular meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Dick Smith.

MINUTES: Regular Meeting – January 12, 2010

Motion by Art Thompson, 2nd by Dave Oliveria, to approve minutes as presented.

APPROVED 3-0

Nursing Association

Smith summarized the events that led to current study of the Visiting Nursing Service (VNS).

The Board of Finance had expressed concern about expenditures *vs.* revenues. Information regarding Deep River client load had not been forthcoming during budget preparation. The Board of Finance had requested this information prior to both 2008-09 & 2009-10. The Board asked the First Selectman to establish a study committee to officially review the entire VNS operation and report back to the Board of Selectmen & Board of Finance.

The committee of six was established for that purpose. After three months of study they submitted their report to the two boards. The Selectmen concurred with the Study Committee noting that essential information was still lacking.

The Boards of Selectmen & Finance have also asked the Nursing Board of Directors to supply all relevant information. In turn VNS Board President Daniels has requested a variety of information from the First Selectman.

Thompson stated that he had completed a thorough review of all information provided to date. Summarizing his detailed comments on the situation he concluded that the gap between revenues and expenditures has increased dramatically over the past five years. He compared numbers from five years ago with the FY 2008-09, illustrated by the percentages of increase as well as actual dollars. To show the operation in the best possible light Thompson included the \$52,000 lost billings for last year as though it had been revenue received: the cost of the operation has doubled over that time period, and all indications are that it will continue to increase over the coming years. This conclusion confirmed by Daniels' comments at the prior Board of Selectmen's meeting: there is such keen competition for nursing clients among the many local nursing providers that a substantial increase in the DRVNA client base was unlikely.

Oliveria concurred with Thompson's summary and requested that we investigate the possibility of approaching another provider to see whether Deep River could continue to staff our own service, but under the management of another service.

Smith gave an update on some previously discussed issues: on January 15, 2010, he met with Michael O'Neil & Scott Bassett, of McGladrey & Pullen, LLP, the town's auditors regarding an audit of the Memorial Fund. John Bauer, Chairman of the Board of Finance, Rick Daniels, President of the Nursing Board and Candy Marien, Supervisor, were also in attendance. Due to the fact that the VNS is totally funded by the town and utilizes the town's federal tax ID number, Bassett concluded that the Memorial Fund must be included in the town's annual audit.

The Memorial Fund has since been audited. The auditors will include comments concerning certain control deficiencies in their annual management letter, as well as steps to be taken to correct the deficiencies.

Smith updated the board on his comments of concern from previous Board of Selectmen's meetings regarding the clerical salary line in the current VNS budget. As of January 25, 2010, with 42 per cent of pay periods remaining in the current fiscal year, just 30 per cent of funds in that budget line remain. The Accounts Manager found that the town had been paying ATB, a human resources vendor that supplies clerical and health aides, for the clerical services of Ann Bean (who was brought in to replace Julia Harris, the former clerk/secretary). The vouchers submitted by Supervisor Candy Marien indicated only total hours worked and the total dollar amount due. Original invoices from ATB had not been submitted. A summary of activity between 10/13/09 and 01/19/10, prepared by the Accounts Manager, showed that clerical hours worked varied from a low of 32 hours to the high of 69¼ hours. During this period the town paid ATB for two clerks at \$18.50 per hour.

Discussion among the Selectmen at this point centered around scheduling a meeting with the VNS Board at which time they could present additional information. The Board of Selectmen authorized Smith to research methods the surrounding towns use to provide their nursing services. Smith said he would ask for their annual cost and increases over the past five years; what services are provided; how towns that subscribe to regional agencies are represented; any other pertinent information required for Deep River to make an educated decision.

Thompson felt that after all information has been presented and reviewed by the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance, a recommendation should be made to the residents of Deep River concerning the future of the nursing service. Smith stated that it would be premature to make a recommendation at this time. Thompson and Oliveria agreed. All three felt that taxpayers needed to be given a thorough explanation of all aspects of the VNS.

Resident Robert Jenkins asked whether all costs associated with maintenance and operation of the building at 56 High Street (The VNA offices) had been included in the Selectmen's cost analysis. Smith replied that they had been included. The building is shared with Tri-Town Youth Services, and the maintenance budget line is for the entire building.

CRRA

Motion by Thompson, 2nd by Oliveria, to authorize the First Selectman to sign a letter of agreement on behalf of the town. It would allow CRRA to transport MSW to Wallingford.

APPROVED 3-0

Planning & Zoning Appointments

Motion by Thompson, 2nd by Oliveria, to table appointments to fill two alternate positions at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

APPROVED 3-0

The audience was asked whether anyone had questions or comments concerning this evening's meeting or other town business. None responded.

Motion by Oliveria, 2nd by Thompson, to adjourn at 7:50.

APPROVED 3-0