

Board of Selectmen Minutes
Meeting – April 10, 2014

Present: Selectmen – Mark Gilmore, Carolyn Ness, David Wolfram
Interim Town Administrator – Kayce Warren

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm. Mr. Gilmore said the first item to be discussed is the schedule for Town Meeting. Meetings scheduled are: 4/15 BOS w/FC and maybe a BOS meeting on 4/17.

Considered was the possible need for a proposition 2.5 article, which no one wants to do. Another approach could be use of a debt exclusion article possibly the school budget. Debt exclusion votes now need only a majority vote to pass.

Ms. Ness voiced her concern, “unless we change the way we operate there could be a need for an override every year.” There was discussion of the trend to send students to charter and private schools rather than the public school and the difficulty of affording the cost of public schools.

A special election will be needed if there is to be debt exclusion, as this is a ballot question. Thirty-five (35) days are needed to do this. There was discussion of requesting town department budgets be cut by 2% and no new people be included. [Several part-time positions have been requested] In order to be fair about reducing budget requests, a memo will go out to all departments asking the department heads to decide where cuts can be made.

There was discussion of holding the annual meeting so that elections could be held, but withholding the financial items for a special meeting at a later date. Counsel recommends that the omnibus article, which contains most of the financial items, remain on the warrant. However, only a skeleton budget (those needed to keep things going) is voted at annual and a special meeting be called to address the balance. Such a meeting would have to be held before the end of June.

Deerfield is the fiscal agent for the South County Emergency Medical Service which means some time will be added to the accounting staff. Mr. Gilmore, noting there is no money for additional staff, suggested use of volunteers or a policy of using seniors work in lieu of taxes to solve this problem. He said the Town needs to figure out how to get a little leaner.

Ms. Warren said it would make sense to keep the software request for the Town Clerk’s office in the budget. It would be listed under contracted services. (\$15,000) There was a request for funds to monitor the railroad - reduced from \$5,000 to \$2,500.

Ms. Ness raised the matter of increased cost group insurance and suggested that the Town could reduce the percentage contributed by the Town. It would require a change in the benefits’ bylaw, but it might be an incentive for employees to use their spouses’ medical insurance. She noted that as the budget currently stands school employees are getting a 2% cost of living raise plus a step increase which equals a 5% raise, while town employees are getting no raise.

Ms. Ness repeated that the Town has to change the way it does business. Since the Assessors have increased stipends for its members, the thought was that all stipends should be reviewed. Comparisons with other towns were suggested as something to ask the Personnel Board to look into for next year.

Ms. Ness reported that sometime in June there will be a county-wide tour of sites, including the Oxford Pickle site, sponsored by an economic development group through FRCOG. By then she hopes the site will be cleaned up ready for showing.

The final piece of business was to continue the fuel storage hearing until April 23rd, in a motion made, by Mr. Wolfram and seconded by Ms. Ness.

A motion was made, seconded, and voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,
Priscilla Phelps