

Deerfield Board of Selectmen

March 18, 2015

A regular meeting of the Deerfield Board of Selectmen was held on March 18, 2015, at Deerfield Town Hall, 8 Conway Street, South Deerfield, MA.

PRESENT: Gilmore, Wolfram, Ness; also Kayce Warren, Town Administrator.

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 PM.

Minutes from Previous Meeting

Minutes from the meeting from March 11, 2015 were reviewed.

It was MOVED by Gilmore, SECONDED by Wolfram

To approve the minutes from March 11, 2015, as presented.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Public Comment

There was no comment from the public.

Selectmen's Comments

Ms. Ness offered a 'first alert' radio as an incentive for residents to sign up for the town's "CodeRed" emergency alert system. Mr. Gilmore also encouraged residents to sign up.

Board of Health Comments

Ms. Ness stated that she had related to the proposed Natural Gas Pipeline project, and would relay more information to the board later in the meeting.

Personnel Appointment Request

Chief Paciorek requested the board approve two appointments (Ms. Debra Austin from Greenfield), and Brent W. Griffin as a part-time officer.

It was MOVED by Gilmore, SECONDED by Wolfram

To Appoint Ms. Austin to the position of administrative assistant.

Gilmore asked about Chief Paciorek's request to grant two weeks vacation time to the employee as of July 1, 2015. Chief Paciorek explained his interest in granting the employee vacation time.

There was some discussion as to allocation of 'sick leave', and state regulations related to it.

There was also concern expressed in relation to new state regulations, the impact on town bylaws, and the necessity for public hearings in relation to those changes.

The board entertained discussion in relation to the applicability of vacation accrual time, and a comparison of the Town's allocation of vacation / sick / personal time compared to other towns.

There was also discussion in relation to the need for an employment study related to compensation rates, as well as a need for a review of the personnel policies.

The question as to whether there should be negotiation in this case. The question of equity with other potential employees was raised.

The board expressed an interest in resolving inequitable situations with individual employees; Wolfram emphasized his support for an accrual basis.

There was further discussion about making modifications to a system of allocation of vacation and personal time.

Mr. Wolfram amended his motion, as follows:

To Appoint Ms. Austin to the position of administrative assistant; further, that Ms. Austin be granted two weeks vacation time, effective July 1, 2015, as requested by the Chief, unless a new accrual system is voted at annual town meeting.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Chief Paciorek also requested appointment of Brent W. Griffin as a part-time police officer.

It was MOVED by Wolfram, SECONDED by Gilmore,

To appoint Brent W. Griffin as a part-time police officer.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Appointment letters will be prepared by the Town Administrator's office.

Presentation by DPW Superintendent

Sewer connection rates

Mr. Scarborough addressed some ideas in relation to sewer connection fees, and different ways to assess fees, based on use, connection type, connection size, etc.

An online 'Title 5 Design Flow Calculator' was demonstrated, and its function was explored as a means to set a sewer connection rate, based on estimated flow.

Mr. Scarborough presented the information as a means to consider new ways to raise revenue for long-term capital and operating needs.

Ms. Ness expressed an interest in reviewing and establishing new sewer fees at the next regular meeting in April.

Transfer Station Sticker Prices

Mr. Scarborough spoke about several items related to the transfer station, including pro-rating prices for transfer-station permits ("stickers"), the elimination of different sticker colors in favor of a single color, as well as the use of proper pens for writing plate numbers on stickers.

Mr. Gilmore suggested reduction of the sticker price to \$40 after February 1, and \$20 after May 1. Additional stickers for any given household will stay at \$10 each.

It was MOVED by Ness, SECONDED by Gilmore

To approve reduction of sticker prices to \$40 after February 1, and \$20 after April 1, said changes to take effect immediately.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

It was MOVED by Ness, SECONDED by Gilmore

To set the full-price sticker rate at \$65.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Mr. Scarborough presented a schedule of upcoming rate changes related to trash, steel, and haulage, endorsed the 'pay per throw' philosophy, and suggested an increase of bag prices to \$25 for bundle of 10 bags.

There was additional discussion about costs related to the transfer station, potential cost savings related to purchase containers vs. leasing or renting options, and other potential means to achieve long-term savings. Mr. Scarborough was encouraged to continue his work on finding potential savings mechanisms.

It was MOVED by Ness, SECONDED by Wolfram

To change bag prices from \$20 to \$25, effective date.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Finally, Mr. Scarborough spoke about the town's snow policy, related to mailbox damage and replacement. He suggested that cost of reimbursement of mailboxes damaged by direct contact to plows be limited to \$50, and the homeowner must provide a receipt as 'proof of purchase' prior to reimbursement.

It was MOVED By Wolfram, SECONDED by Gilmore

To cap reimbursement for mailboxes damaged by direct contact with snowplows at \$50, and that the homeowner must provide a receipt as proof of replacement prior to receiving reimbursement.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Ms. Ness spoke about plow-truck driver fatigue. There was discussion about regulations related to snow-plow drivers, as well as regular requirements.

Finally, Mr. Scarborough spoke about concerns related to a particular hauler, and problems related to time delays in the haulage times, and the excessive costs related to that. The hauler's service has been discontinued, and another hauler has been contracted for service.

The board thanked both Mr. Scarborough and Mr. Milne for their attention to the matter, and documentation of the problem.

Finally, Mr. Scarborough expressed concern related to the board acting on the proposed South Deerfield WWTP "Head Works" project, and the associated application for the "Mass Works" grant related to the project.

The board stated that it would not be able to support further movement on the project at this time, due to a lack of any funding, or mechanism for funding the project.

Mr. Gilmore encouraged Mr. Scarborough to further pursue regional options as may be presented. There was further discussion about regional options, costs for upgrades to the ODWWTP and SDWWTP.

Assistant Highway Superintendent Job Description

Job Description is before the Personnel board, with the next meeting on April 6.

Budget Reviews

Mr. Scarborough presented updates to department budgets, including snow removal, transfer station, highway payroll, and highway expense.

Ms. Ness asked about reduction potential in the highway expense budget.

Mr. Scarborough proposed:

GEN HIGHWAY-VEHICLE MAINT RPRS – reduce to \$40,000

There was some discussion about the specifics of any given budget, the means by which information is dispensed to the public, and the necessity of a narrative accompanying each department budget. Also discussed were the strategies employed to balance department accounts, given underfunded specific budget items.

There was concern expressed by the board in relation to specific moneys being appropriated for one purpose (i.e., 'tree service') that were later allocated to another purpose in the same department (i.e., 'road materials').

Gilmore: "Will the numbers be sufficient to do the job? The answer might be that we might not be able to give it to you."

Scarborough: "If you want to do everything proper, everything at 100%, these numbers aren't going to cut it. You have to look at more revenue, whether that is a Prop 2-1/2 override, or something else..."

Scarborough: "The very first thing we hear is 'what can you cut'. I can't cut anything, without something giving..."

There was discussion about the impact of budget cuts related to loss, or reduction in quality, of services. There were questions and answers related to increases in expenses.

There was ongoing discussion about specific services (tree removal, lawn mowing, etc.) and costs for same.

The board suggested that a new budget format that shows both appropriated and expended amounts for each of three previous years would be helpful in budgeting.

No Highway Department Budgets were approved. The Board requested a written narrative from the Highway Superintendent in order to be able to more fully understand the budget request.

MCCPO Designation

Ms. Warren requested that the board approve her status as Certified Procurement Officer.

It was MOVED by Wolfram, SECONDED by Ness

To designate Kayce Warren as the Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official for the Town of Deerfield.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

One Day Wine/Malt License for the Arts Bank

It was MOVED by Gilmore, SECONDED by Wolfram

To approve the Section 12 "One-day" Beer and Malt license.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Tax Incremental Financing Project for NENB

Ms. Warren outlined the timeline to review and approve a potential TIF agreement with NENB in relation to their development of the Oxford property.

It was MOVED by Ms. Ness, SECONDED by Gilmore,

To appoint Mr. Wolfram as the Selectmen's appointee to the TIF Committee

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

FY2016 Budget Forum

A draft outline of the proposed information session was reviewed. Ms. Warren reviewed the outline, and the rationale behind it.

A possible title "Deerfield Public Awareness Meeting" was suggested.

There was some discussion on the format, the amount of time allocated to schools, etc. Potential contributors to the meeting were also discussed. The form of a narrative was also discussed.

The overall format would be reviewed again on April 1, with a potential department head meeting on Friday, April 3.

Closure of Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Ms. Ness proposed to add a warrant article that would fund consultation services related to the proposed TGP / Kinder Morgan pipeline. The cost to Deerfield of the potential services would be about \$8,500.

There was discussion related to recoup of these monies through a 'peer review service fee', similar to those employed by Planning Board or Conservation Commission.

Ms. Warren suggested that language for the article must be presented before the warrant can be closed, and stated that the warrant must be posted no later than March 27.

The money would be the first payment towards an effort to file detailed information in relation to natural resources that lie in the path of the proposed pipeline.

The Conservation Commission will be meeting on March 26, and may have input.

Proposed placeholder:

"To see if the town will vote to fund \$8,500 to vote for services related to the prefiling and phase one of the Kinder Morgan Northeast Direct pipeline project, or to take any action thereto."

It was MOVED by Ness, SECONDED by Wolfram,

To close the annual town meeting warrant and post by March 27, 2015, reflecting the changes as directed.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

There was further discussion on the nature of the additional warrant article, and the potential impact

Special Town Meeting

Ms. Warren suggested that there may not be a need for a special town meeting article, and that Town's Counsel and the Town Moderator would rather not.

The selectmen decided not to hold a Special Town Meeting.

Police CBA Agreement

It was MOVED by Gilmore, SECONDED by Wolfram,

To sign the Side Letter of Agreement, closing out the Collective Bargaining Process.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Town Administrator's Report

The Personnel Committee is reviewing the Superintendent's job description, and will be meeting on April 6 to discuss it. The Personnel Committee also recommended that the board of Selectmen act on COLA adjustments. Some options were considered. More research is recommended.

The Personnel Committee also recommended a Classification / Compensation study, funded by line item, and suggested it was overdue. Gilmore suggested that the Class Comp study could be done in-house, or by the board.

A request was received from EverSource (WMECO) to replace the existing tower with a new one. Cost of the new tower is expensive, and would need to be approved by Town Meeting. Town Administrator requested approval of a long-term lease.

There was some discussion related to the monitoring wells, and discussion with Weston and Sampson. The board approved release of the report to the DEP and other sources.

Town Administrator requested a date for a 'layout hearing' for Merrigan Way to be accepted as a public way. That public hearing will be on April 1.

Upcoming Meetings and Agendas

Next Meeting: April 1, April 8

Adjournment

There being no further business, it was MOVED by Wolfram, SECONDED by Gilmore

To sign the vendor and payroll warrants upon completion and at the convenience of the Selectmen.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Meeting adjourned at 11:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas C. Finn

Document list:

Proposed Personnel Bylaw Changes