

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
November 27, 2017
MINUTES**

Call to Order

5:30 pm – Chairman Barry called the meeting to order

Present: Stephen Barry, Chairman; Richard Pitman, Vice Chairman; Fred McGarry, Andrew Robertson and Jeff Shute, Selectmen.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Barry asks all to rise and pledge allegiance to the Flag

Heritage Commission – Fran Menard

Chairman Barry recognized Fran Menard from the Heritage Commission

I am here to inform the Selectmen that the Heritage Commission plans to resubmit a petition for the elevator for a warrant article which came pretty close last year and we hope that the Board will support the petition.

Just a quick question, we already have forty signatures, does it really matter if we get pages of signatures or is it basically, is it to just get it on as a warrant article.

Chairman Barry asked the Board if they would support a warrant article for the elevator again? All Board members agreed that they would.

Chairman Barry told Ms. Menard that she didn't need any signatures, that the Board would put it on as a warrant.

Ms. Menard stated that she did check with Mr. Harrington and that they thought that the date that it had to be in was sometime in December or January.

Mr. Harrington stated it had to be in by January 9th.

Ms. Menard stated that she had a question about the offsetting funds, or maybe you have already saw that they had voted to contribute all of the remaining funds from the original existing building fund and also from our regular Heritage fund. Ms. Menard asked how that would actually work? Does that, say the budget warrant article passes and we have offsetting funds, does that mean that the difference would go into the general fund? Ms. Menard asked the Chairman if he understood her question.

Chairman Barry replied that he had a general idea and he stated that the Board would have to study exactly what the excess funds are, what their use was slated for, how much they are.

Ms. Menard stated what if it were like \$12,000.00? Would that mean that the amount of money that was raised by the town, considering if it wasn't all needed, would it go back to the general fund.

Chairman Barry stated that it would depend on how the warrant article was worded. Once it was figured out how the warrant article was worded, how much money was asked for and how much excess funds...

Ms. Menard asked if she should read the warrant.

Chairman Barry stated he thought that no but if you submit to Mr. Harrington...

Ms. Menard stated that reads as follows: That the Heritage Commission will actively seek grant opportunities to offset the costs of the project.

Chairman Barry stated that if you put up a warrant article let's say for \$300,000.00 and you found offsetting funds of \$50,000.00, we wouldn't need to raise the entire \$300,000.00, we would be able to raise \$250,000.00.

Ms. Menard stated great, okay. She just wanted to know how to explain to other members to try and convince them to go for it because obviously it has a tax impact.

Chairman Barry recognized Selectman Robertson.

Selectman Robertson stated that typically the Board does warrant articles up to the amount so we aren't obligated to raise and spend the actual amount and can adjust as necessary.

Ms. Menard replied that the way it is written/worded now, we worded it the same way as we worded the sprinkler system article before.

Chairman Barry stated that we would running the, if you submit the article, we will run it past the town counsel and make sure, he means the town attorney, and make sure that the wording is correct so that we can cover all of the bases.

Ms. Menard stated that people have asked sometimes how they offset **(not able to transcribe)**...

Chairman Barry called on Vice Chairman Pitman

Vice Chairman Pitman asked Ms. Menard if there was any way that she could come close to a number that might be able to go towards that so that it could get out to the public so that they didn't just have 300 on their mind. If you think it is 50 or 100.

Ms. Menard replied that they have estimates for the elevator and the big thing is the enclosure for the elevator. She stated that she thought that it was \$240,000.00 for the elevator and 100 for the ...

Vice Chairman Pitman interrupted and asked about the offsetting funds, is there any way that you could get an idea as to how much it might be?

Ms. Menard asked if she did right now...

Vice Chairman Pitman stated no before January 9th.

Ms. Menard stated that they are hoping to get as much as, oh you mean to put that into the article itself.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated, yes to help you out with it.

Chairman Barry stated that it wouldn't be something that we would put in the warrant article though. It would be worded up to ...

Ms. Menard stated that actually the way that the offsetting funds is worded, is if the warrant article passes.

Selectman Robertson stated, correct him if he is wrong but he thought what Vice Chairman Pitman is driving at is do you have a rough idea what we might be looking at offsetting funds for this so that we could present a more palatable number instead of saying that we need 300. If the Commission was pretty sure it would have 50.

Ms. Menard replied no that all she knows about right now is the total amount.

The Board thanked Ms. Menard and reminded her to get the paperwork in.

Regular Business:

Review of the Outstanding Minutes of 11/20/2017

Motion: Vice Chairman Pitman

Second: Selectman Robertson

Discussion: None

Vote: Yea 5, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

Accounts Payable Manifest - \$38,771.53

Motion: Selectman Robertson

Second: Selectman McGarry

Discussion: None

Vote: Yea 5, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

Timber Tax Levy - \$373.21 – Norm Makowski, 34 Perry Road

Motion: Selectman Robertson moves to levy said timber tax

Second: Selectman Shute

Discussion: None

Vote: Yea 5, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

Chairman Barry asked Selectman Robertson if the Budget Committee made a recommendation for a one-year term filling?

Selectman Robertson replied that yes, they had. At the most recent meeting the committee voted to add Andrea Hotaling as a member of the Budget Committee.

Motion: Vice Chairman Pitman moves to approve Andrea Hotaling

Second: Selectman Shute

Discussion: None

Vote: Yea 5, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

Town Administrator's Report:

Mr. Harrington stated that he had two items and he would ask the fire chief/building supervisor to go to the microphone if he wouldn't mind.

The two items, one refers to the snow blower purchase, he would like the Board to review the costs that he included in your packet and ask Mr. Tibbetts any questions. He is recommending the purchase.

The second thing is to explain why we need to consider purchasing a new flagpole out front and Mr. Tibbetts can explain why.

Chairman Barry asked Mr. Tibbetts to explain.

Mr. Tibbetts stated that the snow blower as the Board probably knows, the last twenty years he has used his truck around the building to push all the snow in different areas especially down in that area as it drifts sometimes, six, seven or eight feet when it is blowing off the roof.

He has been able to back drag and push which saved him a lot of work for a long time. There is a lot shoveling around, a lot of salt and sanding and stuff during a snowstorm and they can also use it (snowblower) at the town hall, so on and so on.

So, I recommended the three stage one just because of the snow drifts down here between the Parks and Recs. Sometimes there is six to eight feet of snow that drifts off the roofs. It is just too much to shovel.

Chairman Barry asked if that would be the \$1,439.00.

Mr. Tibbetts replied, the Cub Cadet one, three stage one. He went on to say that he has always had Cub Cadet as you know as my lawn mowers and have always had great luck with it. He went on to say that he was just thinking of the three stage one would be the best.

Chairman Barry asked if that is \$1,439.00.

Mr. Tibbetts stated that he didn't have the prices in front of him.

Chairman Barry stated that he had:

Arien's Deluxe at \$1,000.00
Arien's 30 Cut 10.5 HP Deluxe, \$1,399.00
3x30 HD 3 Stage 10 HP \$1,439.00

And that one should be the one that Mr. Tibbetts is talking about from Brentwood Power.

Mr. Tibbetts stated that that was correct.

Chairman Barry asked the Board if anyone had a problem with that.

Selectman Shute stated that he was looking at snow blowers too and that he was told that the 3 stage are not good to use if you have any dirt or gravel because it messes it up.

Mr. Tibbetts stated that most all of this is cement, hot top, stuff like that.

Selectman Shute stated most hard stuff.

Mr. Tibbetts stated that it he knows what the snow is down there and it get really iffy and he is able to push beginning here all the way down to the end and he is stated that there is a lot of snow and that he has gotten stuck there many times.

The Board agreed with the purchase of the snow blower recommended.

Chairman Barry asked what was wrong with the flag pole again.

Mr. Tibbetts stated that he and Matt Fisher have worked on the flag pole a number of times. It has broken two or three times. This time during the wind storm about three weeks ago it has broken right off the flag pole at the top. He stated that we are either going to have it have it welded or replace it. That flag pole has been here since 1951.

Chairman Barry asked what kind of cost?

Mr. Tibbetts stated that he didn't know but had called today. He stated he is looking at something like the one I donated years ago to the gazebo behind the town hall. Something in that area. A nice flag pole that would be nice out here with the building redone over.

Chairman Barry stated to just bring a price to the Board.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked Mr. Tibbetts if he had checked with the one in Concord on Main Street? That is where the new one for the fair was gotten.

Mr. Tibbetts stated that he was getting prices right now. He stated that he just started today calling.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that it is called Flag Works and it is located on Main Street.

Mr. Tibbetts stated that this might be his last meeting and thanked the Board.

Board members stated that he would be back again.

Chairman Barry asked if there was anything from the Town Administrator.

He replied that was it.

Chairman Barry recognized Selectman Robertson.

Selectman Robertson stated as long as they were on the Town Administrator's Report, at the last weeks meeting or the last meeting that we had, Selectman Robertson had stated that he looked at the minutes and could not find mention of the electronic keypad system. The minutes had been misclassified when they were loaded electronically. He did, indeed, find the original October 2nd minutes and the Town Administrator had indeed had explained that he had included the electronic keypads in his budget presentation for the George B. White Building. Selectman Robertson just wanted to make that clear both to the rest of the Board and get it on the air that he was incorrect in his assessment of the prior notice.

Chairman Barry asked if anyone else had anything for the Town Administrator.

No one did.

Unfinished Business:

Chairman Barry stated that the Board needed to talk about Health Insurance under Unfinished Business. He asked if everybody had their notes from the previous meeting.

Chairman Barry stated that since Selectman Robertson usually helps the Board with this.

Selectman Robertson stated one quick thing that he wanted to mention. He talked with Bill Baltz, the broker from Malcolm and Prescott that prepared this and one of his concerns was network access to providers and he assured him that the Tufts Health network is at least as inclusive as the present one we have if not broader and has made this move with a number of other municipalities and said that the networks most frequented by people in New Hampshire are Massachusetts and New Hampshire and the networks are identical. Mr. Baltz felt that nobody would lose access to any hospital, provider, primary care physician that they presently have.

Selectman Robertson went on to say that he is currently on the same plan that is being recommended here and it includes most of the hospitals in New Hampshire. I haven't been to them personally but a number of family members have been to at least four where we had no problem with access.

I am sure that the rest of you have seen the primary difference between these plans which is co-pay for physician, primary care physician visits and specialist visits, they are a little bit more expensive. That said the maximum out of pocket on these plans is identical if we move to the Tufts Freedom Health and the way that we are set up for deductible reimbursement, he didn't think it would have much of an affect on our employees. As this stand this would save us more than \$23,000.00 a year if we made the switch.

Selectman Robertson went on to say that what he would recommend if Mr. Harrington is agreeable to it, typically the town administrator and whoever is assisting with human resources has met with Mr. Baltz to finalize and make sure that nobody is going to lose coverage and that the money is as good as it looks.

Mr. Baltz also has the ability to offer some third party administrative help. Selectman Robertson stated that taking care of the reimbursement funds that we use on a HRA basis which Mr. Baltz would be happy to explain and we have actually gotten significant additional benefit out of him in years past. I think if the Board is agreeable, Selectman Robertson would recommend that Mr. Harrington set up an appointment with Mr. Baltz and if things look good with him that we make the switch.

Chairman Barry asked Mr. Harrington if he could take care of this of which he agreed.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked when the Board needed to decide on this before the end of December. Selectman Robertson stated that he thought they would like to do it by mid-December because typically what happened is that they bring their people in to explain to everybody, that each of the employees what the benefits are and go through the paperwork that needs to be filled out. But it is a significant enough savings I think at 23 grand.

Chairman Barry stated that we should look into it and will put it on the agenda for as quickly as Mr. Harrington can hook up with him and have a discussion.

Other Unfinished Business:

Chairman Barry stated that we eventually have to look at the budget, the proposed budget, look at the bottom line and approve it. There have been some adjustments made by the town administrator. He went on to say that he didn't know if everyone was totally familiar with them or not. Let's say we are going to make a final decision on the budget at our next meeting so everybody bring your questions and such.

Chairman Barry recognized Selectman Robertson.

The budget committee, my explanation to the budget committee and their take on it, that that they are going to start looking at what typifies the low hanging fruit, things that don't change from year to year with the understanding that we haven't finalized the budget yet but that not much is likely to change and there are the four or five large departments they are going to want to get our finalization on before they move on. We have a dozen, fifteen budget segments that we can work through without finalization and they are happy to approve assuming that we aren't going to change them.

Chairman Barry stated that other unfinished business that they had received an invoice from Attorney Whitley which happens to be \$1,005.00 in excess of funds that we have.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked is that we have or that the group has.

Chairman Barry stated that we have from the group. We are \$1,005.00 short of paying the invoice.

Selectman Robertson asked what does the town's legal budget look like.

Chairman Barry stated that approximately \$3,000.00 is left.

Selectman Robertson stated that he would go out on the limb that he always goes on, that he doesn't have a problem with expending legal money on this because I don't believe that we are operating directly in opposition to Northern Pass. I think that we are operating to put the town in the best position possible, regardless of what side you are on and I would be comfortable spending the \$1,005.00 out of whatever legal money we have available.

Chairman Barry asked Selectman Robertson if he was making that a motion. Selectman Robertson replied yes.

Motion: Selectman Robertson moves to pay the \$1,005.00 bill from Attorney Whitley as indicated in paragraph above

Second: Vice Chairman Pitman

Discussion: Chairman Barry stated that the only reason that he brings it up is that the Board decided that we were not going to pay for Attorney Whitley and he wanted it to be a clear decision of the Board to do so.

Selectman Robertson stated that he would come back to Chairman Barry with what he said that we aren't spending this money to oppose Northern Pass, we are spending this money to make sure that Deerfield gets the best bang for its buck as this process either unfolds or doesn't.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked if Attorney Whitley has been told to stop until more funds are raised after we pay this or is it on hold anyway.

Chairman Barry stated that this point it would take action from the Board to do so.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that we have some members here, should we, can we get an update?

Chairman Barry asked, update on?

Vice Chairman Pitman stated potential, future funds.

Chairman Barry stated that we aren't quite at that point because there is a motion on the floor to pay the invoice.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that we have an outstanding balance bill to the town.

Chairman Barry agreed and went on further to say and to pay the invoice with funds from the legal expense line.

Vote: Yea 5, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

Chairman Barry went on to say that he had made a proposal that we increase the legal line substantially. Mr. Harrington has come back with a recommendation or a number of from Attorney Whitley of what he expects the expenses to be next year.

Mr. Harrington stated that the number was between \$8,000.00 and \$12,000.00.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that he thought the number was originally \$70,000.00.

Chairman Barry stated no, he was just looking at what had been done this year and how much money we have spent all together.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated, so now it is \$8,000.00 to \$12,000.00?

Chairman Barry agreed with Vice Chairman Pitman and Selectman Robertson stated that it was a happier number.

Chairman Barry stated that he would remind the Board that last year we had put \$15,000.00 in the legal fund for that purpose and we went through that in the first month. So, what does the Board, how does the Board want to handle that number.

Selectman Robertson stated that he would be comfortable with adding \$10,000.00 to the legal budget assuming that we may need to spend it.

Chairman Barry added, specifically targeted towards Attorney Whitley or Northern Pass.

Motion: Selectman Robertson moves to add an additional \$10,000.00 to the 2018 legal budget line

Second: Selectman Shute

Discussion: Vice Chairman Pitman asked where the legal line was currently. Mr. Harrington stated it was currently at \$30,000.00. He also stated that there has been some discussion with some of the members of the funding group whether or not it is specified for Attorney Whitley alone or is it Attorney Whitley and the work done by George Sansoucy on behalf of Attorney Whitley. They bill together.

Selectman Robertson stated that it should be for Northern Pass related interest of the town and not name either Mr. Sansoucy or Attorney Whitley. Just leave it generic and bland so we can maneuver as we need to.

Selectman McGarry stated that he didn't have any problem with adding the money in but based on the Attorney Whitley's estimate previously, I would be inclined to go with the \$12,000.00 rather than the \$10,000.00 but ...

Selectman Robertson stated that he would be happy to amend that if that is the feeling of the group.

Motion: Selectman Robertson moves to add an additional up to \$12,000.00 to the 2018 legal budget line using it towards any Northern Pass related legal issues.

Second: Jeff Shute

Discussion:

Chairman Barry stated that he also wanted to mention so it is November 27th. We voted to pay that invoice. There will be another invoice coming and that would leave us with about \$2,000.00 in the legal fund, the legal line for this year. How are we going to deal with December?

Selectman McGarry asked if the Board had an estimate of what the December bill may end up being?

Chairman Barry asked Mr. Harrington what the bills have been averaging, around \$3,000.00 a month. Mr. Harrington replied, he guessed.

Chairman Barry took the vote for the motion to add \$12,000.00 to the 2018 legal budget line.

Vote: Yea 5, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

Chairman Barry asked again, what, how are we going to deal with December? Do we tell Attorney Whitley to stop operating in our behalf or are we going to agree to pay?

Selectman Robertson stated that he thought that we should probably agree to pay. We've got hearings coming up that we are going to have town representatives at with Attorney Whitley, one of them being Selectman Robertson and he would just as soon have legal representation sitting there.

Chairman Barry stated that he wasn't against it but wanted to bring it up and make a clear decision of the direction that we want to go.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked if he could give the Board an idea if it is going to be \$2,000.00 or \$10,000.00?

Chairman Barry stated for the month of December?

Vice Chairman Pitman stated yes, he knows about these hearings and he must have a rough idea.

Chairman Barry stated that they could ask and Selectman Robertson stated that he thought that he would have a good idea as to how much.

Selectman Shute stated that we could tell Attorney Whitley that as a max he had \$1,500.00. Chairman Barry stated that yes, we could say that.

Chairman Barry asked the Board what they wanted to do.

Selectman Robertson stated that he thought that the Board should ask Attorney Whitley what he thinks are the estimates of costs.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that we aren't stopping hi.

Selectman Shute stated if he says that it is \$4,000.00 ..

Chairman Barry stated that he is still operating on the town's dime and while we are just paying these invoices from early November. The Board needs to clearly state one way or another. Are we going to cover his costs for the rest of the year?

Selectman Robertson stated that he thought we should cover his costs. It makes no sense to me to put all this money that we put into it and then for the last, and we are looking for maybe the last three months here, just say at the end, go away, we can't afford to pay anymore. That doesn't make any sense to me at all so I think...

Chairman Barry stated that he just wants the Board to be clear on the direction they want to take so I am hearing that we will cover his costs until the end of the year.

Selectman Robertson and McGarry agreed.

Selectman Robertson stated associated with this and I will just say this so that the Board is aware, he had a conversation with the police chief last week and I know that Northern Pass representatives are going to be contacting both the fire chief and the police chief to see what they have for concerns about the project. If they have any particular concerns about the transformer, I assume it is mainly just reaching out to say they did it, however, I did caution Chief Duquette that when transformer components come to town, the last couple of times it's happened, it has meant thousands of dollars in detail expenses that we weren't ready for. It has meant essential shutdown of Route 107 from the Candia border on into Cate and told him that if he's talking to any of these representatives about community concerns and safety concerns that he should, that that would be a good thing to focus on because he believed that we have been notified sort of backhandedly by the freight and shipping company that that is indeed going to happen and the last time it happened, he thought that we ended up in the hole because we hadn't budgeted accordingly something on the order of \$30,000.00 for details.

Chairman Barry stated that we now have the detail fund so that should solve most of that problem.

Selectman Robertson continued but it's still a big headache for the police as far as scheduling and traffic and that sort of thing.

Chairman Barry stated especially when it gets stuck or stopped and held up at the bottom of the hill for a day and a half.

Selectman Robertson continued to say that Chief Duquette is definitely going to take that. Selectman Robertson's concern is not so much the construction and the chances of the transformer exploding but find out they are going to do this three times over the next eighteen months.

Chairman Barry asked if there were any other, new or unfinished business.

No non-public session needed.

Citizen's Comments:

Kate Hartnett – Thurston Pond Road and Northern Pass groupie.

I have spent my whole life attending these meetings and I want to thank you for your recent discussion on the budget and what Andy says is absolutely true. Both of us will be on the stand sometime in December in front of the whole SEC committee of seven members and being cross-examined by Northern Pass attorneys which is very daunting experience based on what I have seen happen to other people.

But on another note, about this discussion I wasn't really following, with that being said, what you raised about the issue of a transformer coming to town. I think you mentioned Northern Pass. Is that something that you can tell us more about because

Selectman Robertson stated that he couldn't say a whole lot and it isn't, and he didn't think it was Northern Pass related but Eversource related, but we have been advised that there is a piece of equipment coming sometime this year he believed and he didn't recall the specifics.

Chairman Barry interjected, 2018 to which Selectman Robertson agreed.

Selectman Robertson went on to state that he didn't believe that it is being billed as anything related to Northern Pass. It is just improvements and upgrade at the transfer station, not the transfer station but the substation. He has also had in the back of his head that if Northern Pass moves forward that we may see move of this and that was his reason for speaking with the police chief about it.

I wanted to clarify that because of various representations that we may or may not have heard with the Northern Pass process. They haven't talked about any such work at the substations.

Selectman Robertson stated that he believed that it was just an upgrade.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that is what they assured them in the note that it was strictly Eversource.

Chairman Barry stated that this wasn't an ongoing conversation.

Ms. Hartnett didn't want to go over it but just wanted to understand what the Board was talking about. She stated that she just needed a clarification on that. Otherwise, Happy Holidays. Thank you.

Chairman Barry stated, same to you.

Chairman Barry asked for any other Citizen's Comments

Motion: Motion to adjourn at 6:05 pm by Vice Chairman Pitman

Second: Selectman Robertson

Discussion: None

Vote: Yea 5, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

Next Meeting: Monday, December 11, 2017 at 5:30 pm

*The Minutes were transcribed and respectfully submitted by Dianne L. Kimball, Recording Secretary
Pending approval by the Board of Selectmen*