

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, January 4, 2012
356 Main Street, Farmington, NH**

Selectmen Members Present: Paula Proulx, Charlie King, Gerry McCarthy, Joan Funk and Jim Horgan

Town Staff Present: Interim Town Administrator Gary Stenhouse, DPW Director Scott Hazelton and Fire Chief Rich Fowler

Public Present: Neil Johnson, Mrs. Tsirois, Arthur Capello and Steve Henry

Chairman King called the meeting to order at 6:02pm

1. Public Comment:

A. Mrs. Tsirois explained she is the owner of the home on Water Street that burned down the other night and asked if the Board would waive the demolition fees at the landfill in order for them to clean up the fire debris. Charlie asked if the clean up is covered by insurance and she replied no. Gerry stated that the Board has granted this request in the past in the case of a fire with the stipulation that any hazardous material be taken care of properly. Charlie noted that at this point the town is still operating a landfill so the cost to the town is just for the town landfill employees to take of the debris at the landfill but when the town changes over to a transfer station there will be a larger cost to the town and such requests might not be granted. *Jim Horgan motioned to waive the demolition fees at the landfill for Mrs. Tsirois to dispose of the debris from the fire at 20 Water Street, 2nd Gerry McCarthy. Paula Proulx offered friendly amendment that any/all hazardous material be taken care of properly, the clean-up be completed by March 31, 2012 and note that the Board is willing to waive the fee at the point because the town is still operating under a landfill. Jim Horgan and Gerry McCarthy accepted the friendly amendment. Motion carried with all in favor.*

1. Summary Budget Discussion:

Jim stated that the budget as it stands is appropriate as far as he is concerned but he would like to see a few things done. First the Board needs to work on the Salary and Wage Scale, he would like to see the funds in the capital building fund used to create a design for a new fire/police facility and he would to consider moving some town staff upstairs. Gerry stated that he does not agree with putting forth a \$0.66 increase to the tax rate that is currently proposed in the budget. Charlie agreed that the wage study needs to be looked at but recognized that it will take a few months longer to come up with a firm plan so he questioned if the Board would like to set money aside in a budget line for pay raises if there is going to be any. He also recognized

the Board needs to come to a consensus on what type of pay raise (if any) is going to move forward because right now the budget is loaded with 3% raises across the board.

2. Employee Wage Increase Discussion:

Jim stated he is in favor of a 3% increase for all town employees. Paula said without knowing what the final budget looks like without any pay increase she is uncomfortable setting an increase even though she knows the employees deserve it. Gerry noted that the employees have not received a raise in several years and once again the Board has not completed the wage and class study and he feels something needs to be done for the employees this year. Gary suggested the Board put money aside in a budget line so that funds are available to make wage adjustments when the wage and class study is accepted. Joan stated that she feels the employees have been patient and loyal and deserve a 3% increase. Charlie stated he would be more in favor of 1.5% to 2% after recognizing that the employees have not gotten a raise in two years but also that these are hard economic times. Gerry added that any increase should not be given on merit because the town does not have a good evaluation procedure. A consensus of the Board was to load a 2% wage increase in the budget. Charlie then asked Gary to have MRI come up with the figure of what the cost increase would be to bring everyone into the minimum pay scale.

3. Budget Discussion:

A. The \$55,000 budgeted for repairs was discussed. Repairs include two fire escapes at the town hall, trees downtown and repairs to the fence at Edgerly Park. The Board would like to keep these repairs but could cut the funds for the trees if needed.

B. Fire Budget - Right now the project budget for the fire department is \$490,152.50 and Charlie asked Rich Fowler if he had any adjustments to make. Gary stated it after new calculations the per-diem line needs to be increased \$10,000 and the new total with some cuts is \$474,722.25.

At 6:55pm, Charlie King motioned for a five minute recess, 2nd Jim Horgan. Motion carried with all in favor.

At 7:02pm the Board reconvened.

Rich stated that he could cut an additional \$12,000 from his budget if the insurance buyout is increased as previously discussed. The Board discussed that if they were to increase the buyout to \$5000 it would decrease the fire budget but other budgets would increase because there are other employees who would get an increase to the current buyout rate. Consensus was reached to not change the buyout this year but to put it on the "to do" list for next year. Charlie asked for an explanation of the new equipment line and Rich explained \$7,000 is for a thermal imaging camera and noted that the line was decreased to \$10,000. The administrative assistant

position is for 15 hours a week which would be for 8 hours of doing fee collections and 7 hours of scheduling inspections and such.

Rich stated there is currently \$131,000 in the ambulance capital fund and the town needs to purchase a new ambulance to replace the 1997. The estimated replacement cost is \$147,000 so if the \$15,000 is budget again this year there will be enough for the purchase. The Board was in agreement to keep the \$15,000 budgeted for the emergency medical vehicle capital fund. Consensus was that a warrant article should be created to purchase a new ambulance.

C. Landfill Budget – Scott explained that the bids for the transfer station were opened and based on the low bidders the budget lines will need to change. The low bidder had a cost of \$22,815 for hauling of solid waste, \$61,231 for disposal of solid waste and will bring in \$4,343 in revenue for single stream recycling. These figures bring the landfill budget down by \$11,954. Scott stated that this year with single sort recycling he has a net revenue of about \$35,000 but with the proposed single stream the town would receive \$4,343. If we go to the Co-op for single stream we would recognize an \$8,000 revenue. Scott's recommendation is for the town to stay with the current single sort recycling but the vertical baler that is used for the recycling would not be available as is because it needs to be removed from the landfill. Charlie asked if it could be relocated and Scott replied yes, but there would be a cost to do so and he also has been looking at figures for a new vertical baler.

D. Health Agencies and Hospitals Budget – Gary noted that all requests were budgeted for and the Board can do as they wish. The Rochester District VNA submitted a request for \$13,572 and stated in their letter that if the town is unable to make a payment to them they will not be able to provide Medicaid services to the town residents. Last year the Town cut the requested amounts by 20% due to budgetary constraints. Paula suggested level funding all these lines from 2011 and consensus was to do so.

E. Welfare Budget – This budget has a large increase but it is a historically true figure since this budget has been historically overspent for the past several years. The Board agreed to leave it as budgeted.

F. Strafford County CAP Budget - The Board agreed this should be flat funded like the health agencies and hospitals; the line should be \$2,880.

G. Recreation Budget – Arthur Capello noted that an accounting of the Rec. Revolving Account was requested and has still not been provided. The Board also requested this. Gerry stated that he is also waiting for the RSA regarding the governing of funds from Bingo. He believes the 50/50 raffle that is done at Bingo could be used to purchase a new bingo board. Neil Johnson also asked if an accounting was ever done to see if the functions were self-supporting as discussed last year and Gary replied this information is put in Rick's monthly report.

H. River Maintenance – Scott stated the river maintenance line can be reduced to \$5,000.

I. Library Budget – This year the library budget is approximately an \$11,000 increase. Charlie proposed level funding the library. Jim stated he believes they provide a quality service to the community. Gerry suggested splitting the difference and budgeting \$270,000 and the Board was in consensus to do so.

J. Other Culture & Recreation Budget - Arthur asked why this town pays for Hay Day and doesn't fundraise to do so like other towns do. Arthur suggested cutting the line to \$2,000 with the expectation that the line will be zeroed out in 2013. Gerry suggested level funding at \$3500. The Board was in consensus to budget at \$3,500.

K. Coast Bus Budget – Arthur suggested level funding but Joan mentioned that they have added an additional route to Market Basket. The request is less than last year's request but an increase from the 2011 budgeted amount. Joan stated she is comfortable with the request because ridership is up and they added a route. Consensus was to leave the line as requested.

L. Capital Outlay – This section includes \$40,000 for a 7 year lease for a 10 wheeler. Gary said he received a quote for a 6 year lease for \$33,000. Paula suggested waiting a year to make the purchase and maybe we might be able to trade in one of the vehicles we got through surplus to get a cheaper price. Plus \$20,000 could be put in a capital fund for DPW trucks. Charlie asked Scott Hazelton if he will be able to manage without a new truck and Scott replied he cannot guarantee the current trucks will stay running and without a new truck he would need to level fund his vehicle maintenance line. Joan stated she would like to move forward with leasing a new truck. Jim and Gerry both stated they would like to move forward with the lease purchase.

The next increase is under Bat Control and Gary stated there is a bat issue at the Municipal Office and this figure would include removing the bats and then relocating them. The other lines are to erect the building that was obtained for free and update the bathroom at the Municipal Office to make it handi-capped accessible to meet the requirements for the federal funding source for the waste water treatment facility.

M. Capital Project Funds – Charlie asked why the FCTV line is so large and Gary explained this line has no tax impact and Robert needs to buy some new equipment.

N. Budget Summary – Gary asked the Board to give him a bottom line to meet if they are not happy with where the budget is at now. Charlie stated he would not want to see more than a \$0.25 increase and Gerry agreed. Jim and Joan stated they think it should stay where it is at. *Paula said she would like to see it within the \$0.20 to \$0.25 range. Gerry McCarthy*

motioned to set a budget target of \$0.20 to \$0.25 increase to the tax rate, 2nd Charlie King. Motion carried with Joan Funk and Jim Horgan opposed.

4. Sheepboro Road:

Gerry asked if the issue on Sheepboro Road that was previously discussed has been resolved. Scott stated that it has not been resolved. They have fixed the road and he has come up with a solution that he would like to try to see if it will work. Gerry asked if it is still a public safety issue and Scott stated the granite posts have not been removed yet but he would like to present his plan to the Board at a future meeting.

At 9:08pm, Charlie King motioned to go in non-public session under RSA 91A.3.II (a), 2nd Jim Horgan. Roll call – Charlie King (yes), Paula Proulx (yes), Gerry McCarthy (yes), Joan Funk (yes) and Jim Horgan (yes).

At 9:32pm the Board came back into session and Charlie announced the non-public minutes were sealed with a unanimous vote.

At 9:32pm, Jim Horgan motioned to go in non-public session under RSA 91A.3.II (a), 2nd Gerry McCarthy. Roll call – Charlie King (yes), Paula Proulx (yes), Gerry McCarthy (yes), Joan Funk (yes) and Jim Horgan (yes).

At 9:37pm the Board came back into session and Charlie announced the non-public minutes were sealed with a unanimous vote.

At 9:38pm, Gerry McCarthy motioned to adjourn, 2nd Joan Funk. Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandy Sanger

Recording Secretary

Chairman Charlie King

Jim Horgan

Joan A. Funk

Gerald McCarthy

Paula Proulx