

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
Monday, January 28, 2013
356 Main Street, Farmington, NH**

Selectmen Present: Charlie King, Paula Proulx, Joan Funk, Arthur Capello and Jim Horgan

Town Staff Present: Town Administrator Keith Trefethen, DPW Director Scott Hazelton, Recreation Director Rick Conway, Planning Director Kathy Menici, Town Clerk Kathy Seaver, Assessing Clerk Bonnie Lauze, Fire Chief Richard Fowler, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dale Sprague and Public Works Director Scott Hazelton

Public Present: Neil Johnson, Stan Freeda, Deb Christie, Brian Donovan, Michelle Donavan, Michelle Elbert

Chairman Charlie King called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

1. Public Comment:

A. Brian and Michelle Donovan of 7 Hornetown Rd came forward to request an appeal for the \$33.56 interest charge they received for their tax bill. They mailed their tax check out in plenty of time but it was unfortunately lost in the mail. When they became aware of the fact that the payment was not received they immediately came down and paid the taxes in the office and put a stop payment on their check. They have historically been diligent at paying their taxes on time. ***Jim Horgan motioned to waive the \$33.56 interest charge for Brian and Michelle Donovan, 2nd Arthur Capello. Motion carried with all in favor.***

3. 2013 Budget Review:

A. Library Request - Stan Freeda presented a power point presentation that reviewed the fiscal situation of the library as well as services they provide. The library is requesting \$293,226.32 from the town this year to assist with their budget. Charlie asked what the current hours of operation are and Deb Christie, Librarian, stated they are open 32 hours now and over the summer the public hours are reduced to 29 hours because they provide programming at the schools for three hours. Charlie asked if there are state/federal agencies that would provide funding and Deb replied there are not any public funds available. Joan asked what the employee percentage is for health insurance and Deb explained there isn't any health insurance provided just a stipend.

A quick discussion was held that the budgets this year are so tight and the Selectmen do not want to bring a large increase to the taxpayers. Charlie noted that tough decisions are going to have to be made to the point where positions may be cut. ***Arthur Capello***

motioned to have a Board meeting on Wednesday, January 30, 2013 at 5:30pm to finalize the budgets, 2nd Jim Horgan. Motion carried with all in favor.

Arthur suggested cutting the difference from last year's request to this years and a discussion followed where it was noted several board members didn't want to make firm cuts right now until they see the big picture and prioritize the needs. ***Arthur Capello motioned to fund the library request at \$281,117 with the caveat that it might need to be revisited, 2nd Jim Horgan. Motion carried with Charlie King opposed.***

B. Review Town Clerk Request – Keith explained the total request is for \$172,388.22 which is a \$10,092.95. Kathy Seaver explained the part-time position is not new however this is the first year as a full year in the budget. Also, Pam, the finance administrator, plugged in a 3% increase for all staff in town and the Board still needs to discuss that.

C. Review Planning Request – Charlie asked for an explanation of line 01-4191-10-30 Master Plan and Planning Consultants for \$2500 and Kathy Menici explained that the line is for the matching amounts for grants she plans to apply for. One of the grants is for the second part of the Community Planning Block Grant in which the matching funds required would be \$1900 and another grant is to develop ordinances to help control the watershed areas with low impact development. Kathy M. explained that she was told to increase the secretary position to 29 hours to cover the time she spends covering the front desk. Kathy M. then explained the travel/training line 01-4191-10-243 could probably be reduced because there is only one conference this year available instead of two or three. The Board agreed to reduce this line to \$500.

D. Review Assessing Request – Bonnie Lauze, Assessing Clerk, was present to explain her areas in the budget. It was discussed that if the Board would like to consider changing assessing software from proval to another program like avatar this would be the year to do so because the revaluation is in 2014 and the Board would be able to request new proposals for appraisal services. Arthur asked if any of the \$38,000 in the Future Technology Fund can be utilized for the purchase of the avatar program. The Board discussed that it might be good to take \$25,000 out of that fund for the program.

E. Review Fire/Ambulance Request – Rich noted that if the Board needs to make any cuts he could reduce the ambulance capital outlay a little since he was able to save money when he purchased the new ambulance. Arthur asked when he expects to purchase a new ambulance and Rich stated approximately 2019 with an estimated cost of \$180,000. The town historically puts away \$15,000 each year and Arthur suggested setting the line at \$10,000 this year. Keith will draft a warrant article for this capital outlay.

Rich explained he would like to purchase/lease a fire truck with no tax impact until 2014 because he would like to make the first payment with the fire truck CIP fund. Rich explained that the town has been unsuccessful in obtaining grants for a fire truck purchase and if we could purchase this pumper/tanker we could increase the life of Engine 1. At this point several members are in favor of the purchase.

F. Review Recreation Request – The total for the Parks & Recreation budget request is \$163,864. Arthur asked for a breakdown of line 01-4520-20-630 maintain parks and Rick explained this line is for the bark mulch and security cameras for Fernald Park. Arthur asked where Rick feels he could cut in his budget and Rick replied, he would \$1,000 for Hay day t-shirts for employees, \$875 from overtime and \$1500 from his salary line by not taking the 3%. Arthur then stated that he feels the gasoline should be paid through the rec. revolving fund to make the programs self-supporting. It was discussed that it would be a good idea to charge programs a mileage fee which would cover the gas and maintenance for the vehicles for programs. Rick will review his budget and bring back a revised budget on Wednesday that has a decrease of at least \$5,000.

Arthur suggested a bottom line of \$5,000 for the Other Culture & Recreation lines and no one agreed however a figure of \$7,000 was agreed upon.

G. Executive and Finance Administration Request – The biggest increases in this section is the administrative maintenance agreements and the health insurance increases. Pam noted that the bank charges us fees several times a year when our account balances are below their threshold because we are awaiting the collection of the taxes. Charlie tasked Keith to write a letter to the bank and asked them to waive the fees because we do so much business with them and this situation only occurs twice a year.

At 8:17pm, Jim Horgan motioned for a short recess, 2nd Arthur Capello. Motion carried with all in favor.

At 8:34pm the Board reconvened.

H. Water and Wastewater Request – Paula asked what the personnel liabilities line 02-4331-10-190 is for and Dale explained it is for longevity that is paid out at the end of the year. Charlie asked why Dale requested a lower amount than what was expended in 2012. Dale replied that he calculated the amount based on the personnel policy and Keith added that he would check the figures with Pam. Charlie stated that he thought the workmen's comp cost went down but the figures for these departments increased. Keith will check with Pam on these figures also. Dale explained that has discovered some options for his electricity costs and would like the Board's permission to explore a cheaper electrical supplier. The Board agreed he should explore the options and bring the information back to the Board.

Paula asked what the Meter & Equipment line 02-4335-10-740 is for and Dale stated that his meter reading machine is no longer supported by the company and though it works fine now he would like to be prepared to purchase a new hand held if needed. Paula then asked if Dale was able to do any work for the mainline renewal and Dale replied no, he was very busy with the wastewater plant upgrades and Scott was very busy with a bunch of projects and needs the machinery to do so. The plan is to install new 8" mains from Bay Road all the way down to Orange Street.

Charlie noted that there was quite a bit of money not expended from the water budget in 2012 and asked where those funds are. Dale explained the funds are in the enterprise fund checking account and will be used when the water rate is set; he expects the water rate to stay where it is.

Dale explained that according to the town's PSNH representative we are supposed to receive a \$50,000 rebate for installing all the energy efficient materials in the new wastewater plant. Dale would like to utilize the rebate funds to offset the electrical line in the wastewater dept.; by doing this he would be able to hold the wastewater increase to 14% versus 27% otherwise. Charlie asked if Dale expects the chemicals and lab supplies lines to go down over the next few years and Dale explained that he is still working on fine tuning those figures but he does not expect a large decrease.

Paula asked if a decision was ever made on how the depreciation of the wastewater plant is to be paid. Dale replied he is not sure that discussion was ever resolved but he carries 50% of the depreciation in the budget. It was noted that Wright-Pierce could help establish the figures.

4. Community Planning Grant Update:

Kathy reminded the Board the town was awarded a \$10,000 grant to identify inconsistencies between the zoning, subdivision and site plan regulations and the master plan goals. One of the outcomes is the suggestion to create a nodal development plan for Rte. 11 and create a TIF district to support those nodes. The consensus of the Board was to move forward with the second phase of the grant and Charlie asked her for an itemized bill for Jeffery Taylor's services for the first grant phase.

5. Warrant Article Development:

The Board reviewed the drafted warrant articles. The first warrant is for the operating budget followed by the public building maintenance CRF for \$10,000 and the Fire Vehicle/Rescue Pumper Capital Lease Purchase. Next is the Town Employment Financial Obligation CRF for \$10,000 and it was discussed that this year the town can probably forego this installment since there are funds in the account and if absolutely necessary the funds can be pulled from the unanticipated fund balance. The next warrant is for the Future Technology CRF fund which currently has \$37,112 in it and the warrant would add \$11,000. Charlie stated he would be in favor of not funding this fund this year and the other members were in agreement.

The next proposed warrant is for a police cruiser with a cost of \$31,000. Charlie suggested not to forward the warrant article and all but Joan agreed so the warrant will not be funded. The Board then agreed the wording of the "sale of municipal vehicles and equipment" is appropriate. Keith then explained that the next warrant is giving the town permission to expend \$60,000 out of the FSTV special revenue fund because DRA has directed that a warrant is required to do so. The same caveat is in place for the remaining special revenue funds warrant articles. A special revenue fund is being created to cover the \$25,000 for the purpose of landfill closure and ground water monitoring. The Board

discussed that this purpose would be better served as a line item in the solid waste operating budget and Keith will have Pam create a budget line.

In regards to the proposed land swap with Cameron's warrant article it was discussed that it has not been resolved as to who is paying for the legal/survey fees and such for the swap. Keith will draft the warrant to have no cost to the taxpayer and speak with Cameron's regarding the issue.

Charlie asked if the Board would consider drafting a warrant article that gives the Board the authority to sell town owned property with the town's best interest in mind for one year with the funds from any sell to go to the Public Safety Building Capital Reserve Fund. The Board was in agreement that this would be a good idea and Keith will check with DRA and Kathy Seaver to check on the logistics.

6. Review of Remaining Budgets:

Keith stated he would like to reduce the legal services line to \$40,000 from \$50,000 and the Board agreed this would be fine. Keith then stated he would like to reduce the intergovernmental welfare payments line to \$50,000 from \$90,000 and the Board agreed this would be okay too.

The Board reviewed the health agency requests. Charlie stated he would suggest not funding CASA and the Homeless Center this year because the town has not historically funded them and the Board agreed. Charlie then suggested reducing the Homemakers funding. Arthur suggested cutting all requests from outside services by 10% including COAST bus. Paula stated that the time to have the conversation with COAST about their funding request is in April/May and we need the public transportation. The Board was in consensus to level fund all outside agencies including COAST bus (except for Paula who did not want to level fund COAST). Paula asked what the Board will do when COAST states they are going to pull out of town.

7. Discussion on Proposed Salary Increases:

Keith had the current proposed budgets loaded with a 3% increase. It was noted that the federal government assessed a 2% increase to the taxes so for staff to make the same amount of money the town would need to give a 2% increase. Charlie stated that there are staff that are at the cap salary for their position and questioned if they should be getting an increase.

Charlie stated he feels the Board needs to decide what tax impact this Board feels is acceptable to bring forward to the taxpayers. Paula replied she would not want to bring in an increase of more than \$0.25. Arthur stated he would want the figure between \$0.25 and \$0.30. Jim stated he would like to keep the increase under a \$1.00 and Charlie said he would like to stay at \$0.25 or less. Joan stated she would like to wait until Wednesday to see what the department heads present before making a decision.

At 10:42pm, *Joan Funk motioned to adjourn, 2nd Paula Proulx. Motion carried with all in favor.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandy Sanger
Recording Secretary

Chairman, Charlie King

Jim Horgan

Paula Proulx

Arthur Capello

Joan A. Funk