

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen – Public Meeting Minutes
Selectmen’s Chambers
356 Main Street

Farmington Board of Selectmen

Monday, December 15, 2014

Members Present:

Charlie King, Chairman
Trefethen

Paula Proulx, Vice Chairman

Brian St. Onge
Sprague

Arthur Capello

Non- meeting with the Town Attorney at 5:30 p.m.

Others Present:

Town Administrator Keith

Fire Chief Peter Lamb

Public Works Director Dale

1.Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance:

Chairman King called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Minutes:

December 8, 2014- page 2, first paragraph, last sentence, change reason to rest .

Motion: (Capello, second Proulx) to accept the minutes as amended passed 4-0.

December 1, 2014- Motion: (Proulx, second St. Onge) to approve the minutes as submitted passed 4-0.

3.Public Comment:

A) Ken St. Pierre came before the board requesting permission to trap on the property located between the Farmington Children's Center lot and the Sara Greenfield Business Park (Map R32, Lot 22). St. Pierre said he plans to trap fox, raccoon and beaver using water traps and some ground traps baited with commercial scents. He said that while this will be his first year trapping in New Hampshire, he has been trapping for three years in Maine and has a lot of background in the subject. Chairman King said the public also uses the property and asked how he could be sure no one will become caught in the traps. St. Pierre said the traps with large teeth have been outlawed and that the new traps do not close completely around anyone's foot should they step on one. St. Pierre said state law requires ground traps to be checked once a day and water traps must be checked every 72 once the water has frozen. Chairman King told St. Pierre he must have a state permit in hand before the board would grant approval for the request. St. Pierre agreed to complete the state licensing requirements.

Motion: (Capello, second Proulx) to allow trapping at the stated location provided a state permit and the appropriate paperwork is obtained and placed on file with the town passed 4-0.

B) A resident came forward to ask Selectmen why the snow is not removed from the downtown area. He said the snow that is left on the streets next to the sidewalks is dangerous and said he is surprised that someone has not sued the town over hazardous conditions. He added that it also makes it look like no one cares about the downtown area. He said other towns where snow removal became an issue, developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to address the problem. Later in the meeting, Public Works Director Dale Sprague said that in the past, an outside company was sometimes used to remove the snow banks resulting in over expending the budget. Snow removal was also done at night causing highway department employees schedules to be switched around. Sprague said there is not enough history to know how many times a year the snow removal was done at night. Selectmen St. Onge asked why the snow banks were not removed after every storm. Sprague said that is physically impossible, but added he would try to do so if the town gave him a snow blower to facilitate the process. Sprague said he plans to have the highway crews perform snow removal at night if the schedule permits.

4.2015 Municipal Budget Review:

A) Fire Department-Town Administrator Keith Trefethen told the board that the Fire Department budget proposal is up \$123,655 over last year. Fire Chief Peter Lamb said it was not a pleasure to bring this budget forward, but the numbers are what they are.

Proposed changes in the 2015 budget include:

Personnel and Staffing Coverage - two additional positions for a firefighter and a back-up EMS, Monday through Friday, five days a week (\$83,200) . Coverage for per diem EMS (ambulance) includes two people 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year (\$280,320). Additional funding for call firefighter/EMT for non-scheduled hours (\$22,500) . Stipends for three Duty Chiefs (\$1800), five Captains (\$1500) and three Lieutenants (\$540).

Training-Fire Service Training (\$8,816) includes in-house training, partnering with mutual aid departments, hiring instructors, attendance at state programs and a DVD firefighter training program.

EMS Training (\$8,106) includes the cost for instructors, books, a projector and re-certification courses for Emergency Medical Service providers.

Selectmen discussed borrowing or sharing the cost of the DVDs with another town, partnering with another town to share the cost of instructors, cutting the number of personnel to be trained and cutting the number of books purchased. After some discussion, Selectmen decided to leave the training proposal as presented. It was also noted that the town already has a projector the Fire Department can use.

Uniforms (approx. \$3,600)pants, shirts, job shirts, badges and name tags to provide a standardized, professional look for per diem and call personnel.

Protective Clothing-(\$15,000)includes updating protective clothing (turn-out gear, loose equipment such as gloves, boots and helmets)as required by town and state policies. Chief Lamb said he is applying for a federal matching grant for 10 sets of turn-out gear (\$14,179)with the remainder to be used for loose equipment.

Foam-(\$3,440) Chief Lamb said he seeks to re-establish the firefighting foam program with a multi-purpose emulsifier foam. Three of the town's fire trucks hold 30 gallons each so he plans to purchase 100 gallons of foam, leaving 10 gallons in reserve he said.

Equipment Expense-(\$15,817.50) Selectmen discussed the need for 50 traffic cones(\$1097.50), salvage covers(\$920), 600' of 1 3/4" hose(\$900), 1600' of 2 1/2" hose(\$7,200) and a deodorizer and case of fluid(\$795). Selectmen suggested removing the deodorizer from the budget.

Air Packs- includes an increase in the number of supply cylinders to assist with re-filling the air cylinders in the self contained breathing apparatus. Chief Lamb said he was requesting the additional cylinders to help put off purchasing a new air compressor.

Selectmen also discussed phasing in the additional personnel, additional work days and some equipment purchases if possible. Chief Lamb said he would try to adjust his budget accordingly, tighten up some line items and resubmit his proposal.

5. Ambulance Billing Write-off:

Town Administrator Trefethen reported that despite attempts by COMSTAR and the Fire Department, \$31,902.96 from 2009 remains uncollected. All possible attempts to collect the remaining debt have been made including sending patient bills, letters, setting up payment plans and suing in small claims court with little success. If the person has died, the bill is sent to their estate for collection he said. Trefethen characterized 2012 and previous years as a "train wreck" and asked permission to remove any debts on the books for five years or more. He speculated that the debts may still exist because some people just ignore the letters, the town may not have current contact information or because some people can't afford to pay. Chairman King suggested that the town should look into what other legal options may be available before writing off any debts. Vice Chairman Proulx said that previously, Selectmen have looked at the cases individually and forgiven those debts of the people who were unable to pay. She suggested the board find out what they can do first before taking any action.

The matter was tabled to allow the Town Administrator to determine what options are available and give the board time to consider those options. Trefethen then suggested the board may want to develop a policy to determine how collections should be handled and at what point debts should be removed to avoid going through this process again. Selectmen agreed and asked him to draft a policy proposal for review at a future meeting.

Motion: (St. Onge, second King) for a five minute recess passed 4-0 at 7:50 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 7:55 p.m.

6.2015 Municipal Budget Review:

A) Highway-Part time help highway (\$25,000). As of 12/11/2014, \$14,547 has been expended and Selectmen questioned why there is approximately \$10,000 more budgeted than actually spent. Sprague said the budget item includes salaries for five plow drivers and the department is looking to add another driver. He added that during the last two years, actual expenditures for the line total approximately \$20,000.

Rebuild/Repave/Repair Roads (\$260,000). Sprague said plans include extensive work to reclaim Ridge Road by grinding the whole road, adding four to five inches of gravel to the base and a one inch top. Selectmen suggested Sprague look into purchasing gravel already crushed to save costs associated with crushing done by the town employees.

Sprague told the board he is budgeting for a increase in electricity rates next year. PSNH is expected to raise rates by 22% he said. The board asked Trefethen to check into any proposed electric rate increases scheduled for next year.

Motion: (Capello, second St. Onge) to take a five minute recess passed 4-0 at 8:50 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:55 p.m.

7. Transfers to Water/Sewer Capital Reserves:

Trefethen said he received a request from the Public Works Director to transfer funds from water and sewer into a Capital Reserve Fund for infrastructure upgrades.

Motion: (St. Onge, second Capello) to approve transfer of \$5,000 from the Water Department budget to the Capital Reserve Fund passed 4-0.

Motion: (Capello, second St. Onge) to approve transfer of \$50,000 from the Sewer budget into the Capital Reserve Fund passed 4-0.

8. Draft Citizens Comment/Complaint Policy:

Trefethen told the board he added a section to the Citizen Complaint Procedure to address residents who wish to lodge a complaint by phone. The proposed amendment states that phone calls should be directed to the Selectmen's Secretary who will complete the form on behalf of the caller. The Secretary will then follow the rest of the existing procedure. Selectman St. Onge noted that the last line in the first paragraph of the complaint procedure needed to be changed from "Secretaries" to "Secretary's". Selectmen also reviewed the written complaint form. Selectman St. Onge noted that the section of the form that asks the resident to choose what the complaint is about, contains no choices. He also suggested more space for comments be provided and that the form should include space for staff use only that details what action was taken on the complaint. Trefethen said he would modify the form to make it read better.

Motion: (Capello, second St. Onge) to approve the amendment to the citizen's complaint procedure as proposed passed 4-0.

9. Land Sale Cameron's/Town:

Trefethen requested Selectmen's permission to attend the closing of the land swap on behalf of the town.

Motion: (King, second Capello) to authorize the Town Administrator to attend the closing and sign the paperwork on behalf of the town passed 4-0.

10. Any Further Business:

A) Document signatures-Selectmen signed copies of deed waivers, a supplemental tax charge, a Notice of Intent to Cut, an elderly tax exemption and a one year contract with Cross Country Appraisal Group.

B) Resignation- Trefethen reported receipt of a memo from Planning Director Kathy Menici confirming her decision to resign her position with the town. Her last day will be Tuesday, January 6, 2015. She recommended Mike Garrepy of Garrepy Planning Consultants as an interim planner.

Motion: (Proulx, second King) to accept the Planning Director's resignation with regret passed 3-0-1. (King, Proulx, St. Onge-yes, Capello-abstained). Selectman Capello said he abstained from the vote for personal reasons.

Selectmen discussed whether to post for a full time or part time replacement. Selectman St. Onge added that he would like to see Economic Development duties added to the Planning Director's job description. Chairman King suggested the Town Administrator contact Garrepy and the Strafford Regional Planning Commission to find out if anyone is available on a temporary basis and what the cost for services would be. Trefethen said he would provide the information at the next meeting.

C) Vice Chairman Proulx asked if there has been any response from the Farmington Children's Center. The Town Administrator said neither he nor Code Enforcement Officer Dennis Roseberry has been contacted by daycare officials and no permits for the work needed have been pulled. He said he will check to see if the deadline for response has passed and bring the letter requesting a response to the next meeting.

D) Proulx also asked who will handle the Safe Routes to School program for the town. Trefethen said it be taken over by the Planning Director's replacement.

E) Insurance rebate-Trefethen reported there has been no response from the Health Trust regarding the number of employees that must remain on the plan to be eligible for the rebate to be awarded by the company.

F) Auditor Review-Trefethen reported the auditors have completed a review of the town's internal control procedures. He is awaiting receipt of their report he said.

12.Non-public session:

Motion:(King, second Capello) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II(c)Police Contract passed 4-0 on a roll call vote(King, Proulx, Capello, St. Onge-yes) at 9:32 p.m.

Motion: (King, second Capello) to end non-public session passed 4-0 (King, Proulx, St.Onge, Capello- yes) at 10:20 p.m.

13.Non-public session:

Motion: (King, second Capello) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Teamsters Contract passed 4-0 (King, Proulx, Capello, St. Onge- yes) at 10:21 p.m.

Motion: (King, second Capello) to end non-public session passed 4-0 (King, Proulx, St.Onge, Capello-yes) at 10:30 p.m.

11.Non-public session:

Motion: (King, second Capello) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Auction of Parcels passed 4-0 (King, Proulx, St.Onge, Capello-yes) at 10:31 p.m.

Motion: (King, second St. Onge) to end non-public session passed 4-0 (King, Proulx, Capello, St. Onge-yes) at 10:32 p.m.

Motion: (King, second Capello) to seal all non-public minutes discussed in Item 12,Item 13 and Item 11 passed 4-0 (King, Proulx, Capello, St. Onge-yes) .

14. Adjournment:

Motion: (Capello, second St. Onge) to adjourn passed 4-0 at 10:36 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Chairman, Matt Scruton

Paula Proulx

Arthur Capello

Brian St. Onge

Charlie King