

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen – Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 29, 2014
Selectmen's Chambers
356 Main Street

Members Present:

Paula Proulx, Vice Chairman
Arthur Capello
Brian St. Onge

Members Absent:

Charlie King, Chairman

Others Present:

Town Administrator Keith Trefethen
Police Chief Jay Drury
Fire Chief Peter Lamb
Town Clerk Kathy Seaver
Public Works Director Dale Sprague

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance:

Vice Chairman Proulx called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of minutes:

The review of the minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

3. Public Comment: None

4.2015 Municipal Budget Review-Review of All Dept. Budgets and Develop Warrant Articles:

The Town Administrator provided a revised budget proposal as of 12/29/14 following the board's recommendations at the previous meeting. Department heads were asked to review and make changes to their budgets and some modifications were made. Previously, Selectmen asked Trefethen to reduce the budget to keep the impact on next year's rate at no more than 25 cents. The budget proposal is \$222,959 above last year's budget, which would result in a 51 cent increase to the tax rate. He said some of the lines represent fixed costs which can't be changed, but after making further adjustments, \$137,000 could be removed bringing the tax rate impact down to 31 cents. The board would need to cut out an additional \$23,000 to get to their 25 cent goal he said. The figures do not include increases due to any warrant articles that may be approved by voters at Town Meeting.

Vice Chairman Proulx asked what the tax rate would be if the proposed warrant articles were included. Trefethen said he would have to calculate the cost of the articles and would provide the answer before the next meeting. He added that he felt the board was putting the cart before the horse by trying to figure the tax rate first when the tax rate is not set until next fall. He said the board has used the unexpended funds in the fund balance to buy down the tax rate in the past and based on their history, he expects they would probably do it again.

Some of the larger increases include:

Insurance-This line item is a fixed cost and is up \$84,813 over last year.

Elections-The full time Deputy Town Clerk is leaving but Trefethen said he included a larger amount for health insurance costs in case the new employee should select a family plan. The line may be adjusted depending on the replacement's needs.

Fire Dept.-The budget is up by \$87,027 (down from \$97,840 proposed in November) over last year mostly due to

additional personnel and protective clothing replacements. Proposed coverage would include a second firefighter, 3 days a week on days; two ambulance personnel on days and two on nights; and additional EMS/Fire on-call per diem as needed.

Selectman Capello asked for a break out of the per diem costs for the Fire dept. Chief Lamb said he was unable to answer the question because up to about one month ago, that information was not tracked. He said employees' wages range from \$13 to \$16 an hour, so \$15 was used as an average to figure wage costs.

Emergency Management-The line item reflects a \$10,000 increase (\$15,100 total).

River Maintenance- represents a request for an additional \$5,000 (\$5,500 total) for work around the levy that includes cutting, chemical treatments and shoal (sandbank or sandbar) removal.

Civil Defense- Currently \$1,500 budgeted, \$4,600 requested.

Plans and Support-Chief Lamb said the town's emergency plan is currently out of compliance. The line represents an estimate for two copies of the plan. The Chief said he believes a grant is available to develop a new plan, but the town would need to provide matching funds if awarded the grant. **Emergency Contingency Fund**-\$1,000 is budgeted for items needed in an emergency such as a generator or additional food. The funds will not be spent unless needed Chief Lamb said.

Radio Service-Chief Lamb reported that the radio service license was not properly renewed resulting in a loss of wattage. The renewal application is in process and funds in this line would be used to assist in reprogramming the department radios once the proper licensing is received.

Highways and Streets-Public Works Director Dale Sprague said that this line shows \$100,000 increase because the funds that were removed from the Capital Reserve Fund last year were placed in the budget this year. Selectman asked him to give an overview of the state of the roads in town. Sprague they are a long ways away from where the Selectmen and the public would like them to be. He estimated it may take another five or six years to get there. He added that the town puts money into paving, but not for the maintenance to take care of it.

Selectman Capello said the town can't pay for road maintenance and rebuilding at the same time and seems to be continually "chasing our tails" between road building and maintenance. He added that although he is not a huge fan of bonding projects, he asked if the board wanted to look at bonding the cost for all the road work and get caught up on what needs to be done.

Selectman St.Onge said that if all the roads are done at the same time, they will all have to be done at same time again at some point in the future.

Sprague added the town would be paying the maintenance costs at the same time they are making bond payments. Selectmen also discussed preventative maintenance procedures such as shimming, chip sealing and the need to shift funds between maintenance and rebuilding roads. Sprague said that at some point, the town needs to put money into chip sealing and keeping the road surfaces intact.

Trefethen said he made two adjustments as suggested by the board at the previous meeting. The Patriotic Purposes line was moved back to \$1,000 and the Other Culture line was reduced to \$2,000 which includes \$1 for Hay Day events.

Financial Administration- Selectman Capello said he is not ready to move the Assessing Clerk from a part time to a full time position and asked when the clerk's hours were bumped up. Trefethen said her hours were increased from 28 hours to approximately 35 hours during the revaluation period to address residents' concerns. Capello said he favored returning the number of hours to 28 with the appropriate adjustments to wages and benefits. A consensus of the board showed they agreed with the hourly reduction and adjustments. This reduces the wage and benefit portion by about \$15,000 Trefethen said.

Goodwin Library- Selectman St. Onge asked if the library administrators have done any fundraising on their own as discussed last year. The board discussed whether to fund the library budget at last year's total of \$273,707 or reduce it to \$250,000. The board decided to use last year's figure and ask a library representative to come before the board to

discuss their budget proposal and any progress on fund raising. Trefethen said the library director has been asked to attend the January 5 board meeting and bring the information requested.

Trefethen then told the board the changes made to this point would reduce the tax rate by six cents.

Wage Increases for Non-Union Employees-Vice Chairman Proulx asked if the budget proposal includes wage increases for non-union employees. Trefethen said it did not and asked the board to provide direction on the matter. Selectmen noted the Police and Teamsters contract negotiations have not yet been completed. Selectman Capello suggested the non-union wage increases match the 1.7 % cost of living increase received by Social Security recipients. The board agreed with his suggestion.

General Government Buildings-Trefethen then asked the board if keeping \$33,907 in both the budget request and in a warrant article would result in raising double the amount requested. The money is in a Special Reserve Fund and requires a voter approval of a warrant article to remove and expend the funds to maintain the Main Street School Facility (Municipal Building). Board members suggested removing the funds from the line item and then put them back in the budget if the warrant article is approved at town meeting. Trefethen said he would consult with Finance Administrator Pam Merrill and report back with her advice on how to proceed with the matter.

Motion: (St. Onge, second Capello) to take a five minute break passed 3-0 at 6:55 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 7:00 p.m.

Selectmen then reviewed the draft of proposed warrant articles for the 2015 Town Meeting.

Article 1 - Election of Officers-currently only includes Selectmen positions. Trefethen said he will amend the article to include the Budget Committee positions in the revision.

Article 2 - Zoning Amendments-none proposed

Article 3 -Operating Budget-the final figure will be included once the review process has been completed

Article 4 - Collective Bargaining Agreement-Police Dept. - a tentative two year agreement has been reached but wage negotiations are still on-going.

Article 5 - Reconsideration- allows Selectmen to call a special meeting to address Article 4 costs only if Article 4 is defeated.

Article 6 -Collective Bargaining Agreement-Public Works-asks voters to approve a three year contract with the Teamsters Union. Wages are still under negotiation. Selectmen St. Onge suggested the phrase "raise and appropriate" needs to be added to the article.

Article 7 -Reconsideration- would authorize Selectmen to call a special meeting to discuss Article 6 costs only if the article is defeated.

Article 8 -Future Technology CRF-to approve putting \$20,000 in the fund previously established to fund the town's future technology needs.

Article 9 -Town Employee Financial Obligation CRF-to approve placing \$ 10,000 in the Capital Reserve Fund to pay out accrued time (sick days, vacation, etc.) for employees who quit or retire. Selectmen Capello asked the board to consider capping the amount to be placed in this fund. Trefethen said he would ask the Finance Administrator to calculate a worst case scenario for what might be needed to cover these costs. Selectmen also asked to have the bold text stating the article is recommended by the Budget Committee removed until such time that the article has been approved by the committee.

Article 10 - Withdrawal from Special Revenue Fund/FCTV-to approve withdrawal of \$60,000 from the fund to pay wages and programming costs related to local cable TV and renegotiating the cable franchise agreement. This would have no impact on the tax rate.

Article 11 - Withdrawal from Special Revenue Fund/Police Outside Detail- to approve the withdrawal of \$80,000 from the fund to pay for Police outside details. This article has no tax rate impact.

Article 12 - Withdrawal from Special Revenue Fund/Building Inspection-to approve removal of \$45,000 from the fund to pay for the Building Inspector. This figure does not reflect his full salary, so Selectmen asked to change the amount to \$50,000 to cover his entire salary.

Article 13-Withdrawal from Special Revenue Fund/Main Street School Operations and Maintenance Fund-to approve removing \$33,907 from the fund for maintaining the facility (municipal building).

Article 14- CRF Appropriation Emergency Medical Motorized Equipment-to add \$25,000 to the fund for the purpose of purchasing a future ambulance. After some discussion, the board asked to have the article rewritten to seek approval to place \$16,000 in the fund for the purpose of purchasing a power stretcher. Chief Lamb said the department currently has one power stretcher which is moved back and forth between two ambulances. He would like to purchase a second larger stretcher so both ambulances will have a power stretcher and be able to properly transport larger people. Selectman Capello suggested the Chief also look at earmarking some ambulance revenues for the Capital Improvement Plan and the general fund budget.

Article 15-Police Cruisers-to approve withdrawal and spending of \$38,000 from the Police Outside Details Special Revenue Fund for the purpose of purchasing a cruiser.

Article 16- Withdrawal from the Special Revenue Fund and **Article 17**-Landfill Closure Fund Capital Reserve Fund-related to landfill closure costs. Both articles were withdrawn for further review.

Article 18-Sale of Municipal Vehicles and Other Equipment-to allow Selectmen to sell no longer needed vehicles and equipment and place the proceeds in the general fund.

Article 19 -To adopt RSA 162-K,which would allow the town to create a TIF (Tax Increment Finance) District.

Article 20 -To establish the area for the TIF District .This would include the number of acres involved as well as a description of where the district begins and ends.

Selectman St.Onge asked if any warrant article asking to raise and appropriate money could include the tax rate impact in the article. Selectman Capello replied that due to recent changes in state law, the town would have to approve an article which allows the addition of the tax rate impact to articles at Town Meeting and then begin including the information on the following year's warrant.

Selectman Capello asked the Town Administrator to draft language for a warrant article seeking approval for the construction of a new Public Safety Building based on the results of bids received for the project. Trefethen suggested it may be better to hold a public hearing first and get resident input on the plan. The board could share the RFP's and get public sentiment for the plan rather than making it part of Town Meeting.

Next meeting: January 5, 2015. The board will meet with the Goodwin Library Director, a representative from the Coast Bus Company and Parks and Recreation Director Rick Conway. The agenda will also include a review of changes to warrant articles, anticipated revenues, Trust Funds totals and raises for non-union employees.

5. Any Further Business:

A. Safe Routes to School-

Motion: (Capello, second St.Onge) to encumber \$100,277 for the Safe Routes to School project passed 3-0.

B. Annex demolition –

Motion: (Capello, second St.Onge) to contract with Always Recycling for the removal of the Fire Dept. Annex building at a cost of \$12,950 passed 3-0.

C. Farmington Children's Center- Vice Chairman Proulx asked if there has been any response from the daycare center. Trefethen replied there has been no response. Proulx noted that the center officials have until the end of January to reply.

6. Non-Public Session:

Motion: (St. Onge, second Capello) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (c)Police Contract passed 3-0 (Proulx, St.Onge, Capello- yes) at 7:36 p.m.

Motion: (St. Onge, second Capello) to end non-public session passed 3-0 (Proulx, Capello, St. Onge-yes) at 8:05 p.m.

7. Non-Public Session:

Motion: (St. Onge, second Capello) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) passed 3-0 (Proulx, St. Onge, Capello -yes) at 8:05 p.m.

Motion: (Capello, second St. Onge) to end non-public session passed 3-0(Proulx, Capello, St. Onge-yes) at 8:06 p.m.

Motion: (Capello, second St.Onge) to seal the minutes of the non-public sessions passed 3-0.

8. Adjournment:

Motion: (Capello, second St. Onge) to adjourn passed 3-0 at 8:08 p.m.

Respectively submitted,
Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary

Chairman,Charlie King

Paula Proulx

Arthur Capello

Brian St. Onge