

At 6:00 pm the Board's meeting was called to order in the basement meeting room at the Town Hall. Present were Selectmen Greta St Germain and Brett Hunter. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. Town Administrator Heidi Carlson joined the meeting at 6:10 pm.

Selectmen reviewed the folder of incoming correspondence, the payroll and accounts payable folders for the week, and the bills for payment next week.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Selectmen reviewed the minutes for 13 December 2012. Approval was deferred until a quorum from that meeting was present.
2. Copies of the updated budget expense spreadsheets were distributed. There was discussion about remaining items to be completed in 2012.
3. Carlson asked the Board about a meeting for January 8, 2013 prior to public budget hearing to discuss any petition articles submitted. The Budget Committee will meet at 6:00 pm that night to review final information. The Board will post a meeting for 6:00 pm.

At 6:45 pm Andy Kohlhofer met with the Board to propose establishing an Economic Development Committee. He spoke with the Town of Epping who had hired a Planning Administrator to oversee Economic Development. He stated there are approximately 16 owners with land in the commercial light industrial zone on Shirkin Road. The Planning Board had done some preliminary work toward contacting the owners and seeing if they were interested in developing their property commercially.

Kohlhofer offered to look into it further by contacting LGC to learn more about establishing an Economic Development Commission or Committee. Infrastructure improvements including updates to Beede Hill Road and Shirkin Road, and bringing in broadband cable/internet services were discussed.

There was discussion about how to proceed with a possible committee, and Kohlhofer will pursue resources to see about getting it started.

At 7:05 pm Denny Wood came in to the meeting to discuss the Interim Police Chief appointment. Wood said he would be interested in continuing in the position. Selectmen said the full Board will further consider the matter at the meeting next week.

There was discussion about the status of the Police Department budget and the items that would be completed this year. Wood asked the Board about line item transfers, and they indicated that they wanted to show expenses where they were incurred, and that so long as Wood had been in discussing the changes, that he did not need to write line item transfer forms at this point.

Wood indicated he had a legal matter to discuss with the Board. Motion was made by St Germain and seconded by Hunter to enter non-public session at 7:25 pm pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3 II (e). The roll call vote was unanimously approved 2-0; Hunter – aye; St Germain – aye.

Motion was made by St Germain to return to public session at 7:44 pm. Hunter seconded and the roll call vote was unanimously approved 2-0; Hunter – aye; St Germain - aye. Motion was made by St Germain to seal the minutes indefinitely. Hunter seconded and the roll call vote was unanimously approved 2-0; Hunter – aye; St Germain – aye.

Wood left the meeting at 7:45 pm.

Town Clerk Shannon Bryant and the Newfields Town Clerk Sue McKinnon (who has been working in the Town Clerk's Office) came in to the meeting at 7:46 pm. The Board asked Bryant how it was going and she outlined her current training. She said she is still learning new things every day.

St Germain outlined the hours and how the salary line was established, for 34 hours per week, and that the schedule depending on what the hours would be, would determine the pay moving ahead for the new year. The Board had agreed to pay out the salary in 2012 when Bryant began, at the same rate as the previous Town Clerk had been earning.

Moving ahead for 2013 there is \$5,000 in the budget for training, leading Bryant to state that she felt that there would be a problem if there was not additional help in the office. She said she is planning on increasing her hours and had to arrange some evening things in her personal life as well. She said her plan moving ahead is to be in the office at 8:30 am and have open hours from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday; and from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm on Thursdays.

Selectmen explained that the prior schedule was 34 hours per week (52 weeks to get to the salary); thus the wage rate based on 34 hours works out to \$16.68 per hour.

Bryant believes she needs a backup and needs additional assistance during the busy times. Selectmen stated that their plan was not to have any additional contracted help after the new year. The Board did agree to consider Bryant's request for some additional help to transition to the new year, especially with election items that start in the middle of January (sign-ups, etc). The Town's contract with MRI for services (on Tuesdays) has been completed. Sue McKinnon is the only person assisting in the office at this point, and her time is anticipated to decrease in the coming weeks.

St Germain said the Board was hoping for evening hours and a weekend morning to support the working folks of Fremont. Carlson stated that she had encouraged Bryant to start with what she knew was manageable, and work up to additional hours as she got more comfortable. It was stated that the first day of the week is busy and the end of the month is busy. Carlson also indicated that the schedule for November and December had been designed without a lot of input from Bryant because she was out training and the times and dates were just designed to get coverage for residents to be able to conduct Town Clerk business. Moving ahead, these items will be handled by Bryant and fit her schedule.

Bryant said that she had been looking at the 2013 budget and that there is no funding in the clerical assistant line; and only \$500 for a Deputy. St Germain explained that the Board will again have an article on the warrant to combine the Tax Collector and Town Clerk positions. There is a lot of uncertainty at this point given the different positions. Selectmen said they did not yet want to appoint a Deputy until Bryant made a decision about running for the position, and felt confident enough to train someone else.

In Newfields, McKinnon said that she does a lot of work for other services and town departments as well. She said her office in Newfields is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm; and Tuesday night from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

Bryant said they have done some streamlining and updating in the office as well. Some new forms were reviewed, and Bryant had spend a little time today with the Town's Auditor as well, getting additional information from him.

Bryant said that additional Election Net and Vital Records training will be coming up in the new year as well.

McKinnon said that she thought the office needed additional assistance to run and St Germain described the Board's thought process of a combined Town Clerk Tax Collector and the goals in that regard.

St Germain said the Board wanted to keep everything open and out on the table for discussion. The Board thanked Bryant and McKinnon for their time, and they left the meeting at approximately 8:20 pm.

OLD BUSINESS CONTINUED

4. Selectmen again discussed the 250th Committee's request to have a Christmas Tree bonfire at the Highway Site on Danville Road. There was discussion about information Carlson received from the Town's insurer. After much discussion the Board decided that they would allow a drop-off but did not want to make a public event of the bonfire to burn the trees due to the liability involved.

5. Selectmen reviewed again the request from Stantec for additional engineering costs at Cooperage Forest based on Road Agent Mark Pitkin's request. There was additional work needed to verify that the construction was satisfactory, and some additional shoulder work needed to support the paving work. Selectmen agreed to the additional \$1,232 and that this was the final change to the engineering contract. Stantec has guaranteed they will complete the project at no additional cost, closing out all outstanding items.

6. There was discussion about the most recent Library water test, and the Trustees progress to date on getting estimates for the chlorination system.

7. Selectmen reviewed the Town Meeting warrant and revisited a couple of articles that do not yet have a Selectmen's recommendation. The Board was also asked to reconsider some articles based on Budget Committee discussions from 12/19.

Selectmen reviewed but did not make a recommendation on Article 4 until there is public input at the January 8th public hearing. Renee King, ACO, who submitted the article will be asked to be at the hearing to present additional information and explanation.

Selectmen reviewed Article 6 but will not make a recommendation until the night of the public hearing.

In re-reviewing their recommendation of Article 9, and the Budget Committee's request to increase the amount of the article to \$16,500. The Committee felt, and the Selectmen agreed, that the old number of \$12,500 would no longer fund half the price of a new cruiser (as it had in the past). It was felt that the prudent thing to do is increase it to half of the current actual cost. St Germain moved to increase the amount of Article \$16,500 for funding of the police cruiser Capital Reserve Fund. Hunter seconded and the vote was unanimously approved 2-0.

Selectmen had earlier discussed, and decided not to make any increase to the requested sum in Article 16 for the 250th Celebration.

The Budget Committee will also meet at 6:00 pm on Tuesday January 8, 2013 to complete the remaining warrant article recommendations.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Selectmen reviewed the payroll \$21,858.44 and accounts payable manifest \$21,443.26 for the current week dated 21 December 2012. Motion was made to approve them by Hunter and seconded by St Germain. The vote was unanimously approved 2-0.

2. Selectmen discussed the highway budget for 2012 and the possibility that there may be sufficient funding to cover two bills for building expenses. The Board agreed that if there was money in the operating budget to pay those two bills, it did not need to be removed from the Capital Reserve Fund.
3. Selectmen reviewed and signed a yield tax warrant in the amount of \$197.28 for parcel 02-156.001.006.001. The warrant was forwarded to the Tax Collector.
4. Selectmen reviewed a Presentation from NH Senate (Senator Prescott) for the Town of Fremont's participation in Wreaths Across America. This had been awarded to Chair Scribner at the event last Saturday, December 15th at the Town Hall.
5. Copies of the Fund Balance Policy were distributed to all Board members for annual review.
6. Selectmen signed a PSNH pole license for Sandown Road. This was returned to the Town Clerk for processing.

The next regular Board meeting will be held on Thursday December 27, 2012.

With no further business, motion was made by Hunter and seconded by St Germain to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm. The vote was unanimously approved 2-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Carlson
Town Administrator