

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON  
JOINT MEETING  
GREAT BARRINGTON SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 15, 2012  
6:00 P.M. – TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:**           STEPHEN BANNON  
                          ANDREW BLECHMAN  
                          ALANA CHERNILA  
                          DEB PHILLIPS  
                          SEAN STANTON  
                          KEVIN O'DONNELL, TOWN MANAGER

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**  
                          TOM BLAUVELT – Chairman  
                          BUD ATWOOD  
                          MARK LEFENFELD  
                          ANDY MORO  
                          JIM STARK

**6:00 PM - PUBLIC SESSION - BOARD ROOM**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Sean Stanton called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

**2. FY 13 BUDGET**

a. Building Inspector

Ed May, building inspector, said that there is a slow rise in building permits and, therefore, in dollars. Kevin O'Donnell said that there has been an increase in home remodeling. There is a cap on renovation fees at \$10,000.

Ed May explained trench permits and said that anything deeper than 3 feet requires a permit that has a fee of \$30, which is a flat rate.

There was discussion among the Selectboard about the possibility of increasing the fees.

b. Health Operations

Mark Pruhenski reported that there is no change in the animal control budget.

Kevin O'Donnell said that Mark has done a great job getting dog licenses 'up and running' and paid for.

Mark Pruhenski reported that the Board of Health budget does not have an increase this year, nor does it have any cuts in services.

As the Animal Inspector, Mark Pruhenski said that he has eliminated the supplies account. This has resulted in a decrease in the Budget this year.

*Craig Okerstrom-Lange gave a report from the Chamber group regarding the Main Street Reconstruction. He said that they have heard from merchants and residents who all agree that it is important to let everyone know that Great Barrington is open for business. Craig said that 2 marketing firms were interviewed and they have chosen Greylock Marketing. Greylock Marketing has presented several ideas for logos during the reconstruction. A banner over the street was recommended, as well as, on lamp posts. He added that the billboard has been leased already for 2013 for ads including the logo. There will be 'parking in rear' signs visibly posted and WSBS will give free ad time at 8:00 and 5:00 for a construction update and company advertising. There will be a dry run for this with the upcoming water district project. Facebook, E-mail blasts, promotional events and a ground breaking in the beginning of the project followed by a street party at the conclusion were all ideas that were presented. Craig said that the chamber is funding \$5,000 - \$6,000 and they are looking for a \$10,000 commitment from the Town. He would like to have a soft-roll out in a month.*

#### c. Fire Department

Fire Chief Jennings reported that his department budget is level funded. The only increase is a salary increase for himself and part-time inspectors. Chief Jennings reported that he has 44 volunteers currently. He is in the process of applying for a grant that will pay for 4 firefighters plus benefits for the first 2 years. This grant is due on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Kevin O'Donnell said when the grant expires; the Town would be responsible for paying for these positions at \$50,000 a year plus benefits, each. Kevin said that a 'part-pay' department may be needed if volunteers 'dry-up.' He added that our fire department holds a high standard of protocol. They would like to use other departments' men, but they would require more training. Fire Chief Jennings added that there is a charge for false alarms and they conduct quarterly fire inspections at Simons Rock.

Alana Chernila suggested creating incentives for businesses to employ fire department volunteers. Kevin O'Donnell said that he will present a list to the Selectman of the businesses who allow fire department volunteers to work there so that they can be acknowledged. There was a consensus among the Selectboard that Kevin O'Donnell will look at ways to create incentives for businesses to employ fire department volunteers. Andy Moro asked the Chief if he feels that his position is more Fire Chief or Fire Inspector. Chief Jennings replied that he is more an Inspector than a Fire Chief. He said that inspections are the heart of what his part-time employees do. Andy Moro asked if there was a decision made to reduce the fire vehicle replacement. Chief Jennings replied that Engine 2 will not be replaced. Andy also asked if there have been discussions about looking for ways to replace the Fire Chief when he retires. Kevin O'Donnell said that there will be a transition plan laid out.

#### d. Police / Communications

Police Chief Walsh said that the Great Barrington Police Dept. will be accredited in 2 years or less. He announced that they are fully staffed for the first time in 9 years. Andrew Blechman asked if there are any female officers. Chief Walsh replied that there are not. Tom Blauvelt said that there has been a modest increase in citations and suggested that there needs to be more focus put on slowing people down on Main St. and stopping for people in the crosswalk. Chief Walsh said that they are always trying to keep on top of it. Alana Chernila said that the police presence in other parts of town has been successful and she would like to now see an increased presence downtown.

Sean Stanton said that he hopes that crosswalks are not painted until there is a standard determined so they all look the same.

Kevin O'Donnell said that the DOT gives suggestions regarding crosswalk design.

Sean encouraged the Board to pick one.

Jim Stark said that he would like to have the topic of dispatch being moved to Pittsfield reconsidered.

Lauren Sartori said that this would be a 6 month project to research.

Kevin O'Donnell said that they can start the research process in the summer.

Chief Walsh reported that 6 police vehicles are being used and 1 squad car will be replaced in 2013.

Alana Chernila said that the Green Communities Act requires that they look at energy efficient vehicles.

She suggested that this is a direction that should be taken.

Alana spoke about a conversation in a past meeting regarding idling and mileage. It was said that police vehicles have to idle in order to keep warm. She suggested that this could be remedied if they were put in a building.

Chief Walsh said that the cars are used all the time and the garage available only fits one car.

Andrew Blechman asked if the cars could last 3 years (instead of 2) if there was less idling.

Chief Walsh responded that this would increase the maintenance cost. He reminded the Board that a police officers' one basic tool is the squad car.

Alana Chernila said that this is not just about the money that it costs for the car, but about the cost to fuel the car and the general efficiency of the use of taxpayer dollars.

Kevin O'Donnell said that he will get more information about idling to the Board.

Jim Stark said that he feels that joint meetings are dominated by the Town Manager and said it would be better if the Finance Committee met alone. He feels that this would give everyone the opportunity to express themselves. Jim said that the Chairman of the Selectboard doesn't keep control.

There was discussion regarding the inception of joint meetings and the need for them.

Jim Stark made a motion to delete the plan of the assessors to audit personal property (\$28,000) because he feels that it won't save any money.

There was no second to the motion.

Alana Chernila presented an E-mail drafted to other Boards to come to the upcoming 4 board meeting to discuss energy, agriculture and land use. Sean read the E-mail.

**MOTION:** Deb Phillips to allow Sean Stanton to send the E-mail with any corrections that he and Alana Chernila determine to be necessary.

**SECOND:** Steve Bannon

**VOTE: 5-0**

### **3. ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion by Bud Atwood, seconded by Mark Lefenfeld, the Finance Committee adjourned its meeting at 8:00 P.M.

On a motion by Alana Chernila, seconded by Deb Phillips, the Selectboard adjourned its meeting at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Cara Becker  
Recording Secretary