

FINAL

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

December 7, 2015

7:30 P.M. - MUNICIPAL OFFICE BUILDING - HANOVER, NH

The meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Peter Christie. Present were: Peter Christie, Chairman; Athos Rassias, Vice Chairman; Nancy Carter, Selectman; Joanna Whitcomb, Selectman; Bill Geraghty, Selectman; and Julia Griffin, Town Manager.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Christie opened the meeting by speaking about Vice Chairman Rassias' father, who recently passed away. He stated that Professor Rassias was a fixture in Hanover and Dartmouth, as well as around the country, for his educational techniques. He talked about Professor Rassias' attendance at the River Valley Club, where he was always laughing with others within minutes of entering the building. Chairman Christie sent appreciation and thoughts to Vice Chairman Rassias and his family.

Chairman Christie asked for Public Comment. There were no comments from the public.

2. REVIEW OF TOWN OF HANOVER FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JUNE 30, 2015 WITH TOWN AUDITORS (MELANSON HEATH).

Betsy McClain, Director of Administrative Services, introduced Patrick Mohan and Frank Biron from Melanson Heath, the Town Auditors. Ms. McClain stated that we had a successful audit for this past fiscal year. We do not always have the auditors meet with the Board, but there are some fairly significant changes to the financial statements this year, which have to do with post-retirement benefits.

Patrick Mohan introduced himself as a manager at Melanson Heath. He was on-site during the audit, reviewing papers and making sure things went smoothly. He introduced Frank Biron as the officer in charge of the audit.

He first drew attention to the Auditor's Report on page one. He stated that Melanson Heath was hired to make sure the Town's financial statements were in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and they found the financial statements to be in such accordance.

On page twelve is the Statement of Net Position, which is based on the accrual method of accounting. Our bonds payable at the end of the fiscal year were just under \$4 million for governmental activities, which is a very low, good number for a community of this size. The only major change was in principal payments. He brought attention to the OPEB Liability,

which was just under \$1.4 million. This has been on our financial statements for a number of years, and recognizes the post-employment benefits that our retirees are involved in. This number is increasing by approximately \$365,000 each year, however, it will dramatically increase in 2018 to \$4.5 million. He added that the Town isn't necessarily going to fund that amount, and it won't have any impact on the tax rate, but the full amount will need to be reported. The Net Pension Liability is new to everyone's financial statements as of June 30, 2015. The number represents the Town's proportionate share of the unfunded liability of the State of NH Retirement System, and has had a significant impact on the total net position this year.

On page fourteen is the Governmental Funds Balance Sheet. He drew attention to the General Fund column, in which cash and short term investments and unassigned fund balances are both very good numbers. The amount due to other governments represents the school and county portion of the May property tax bills, which would have been paid to them after June 30, and is a normal liability.

On page eighteen is the General Fund Budget vs. Actual report, and is like a "report card" of the Town. He drew attention to the last column, Variance with Final Budget. He noted positive revenue of \$306,585 related to motor vehicle registrations and permits, and \$261,150 of total revenues and other sources over and above budgeted revenues. Total Expenditures and Other Uses which were not utilized totaled \$107,380, which indicates that the Town is running a very tight budget. He also noted that the Town used \$185,000 of the fund balance toward supporting the tax rate.

On page nineteen is the Statement of Net Position, which indicates a cash shortage in the Water Fund. On the contrary, the Water Reclamation Fund is in a much different position. Our bonds payable are somewhat high. Chairman Christie asked for clarification on the position of the Water Fund, as he thought it was in a break-even position. Ms. McClain replied that it is not, as we have made some fairly recent investments in the infrastructure as well as in our metering system. At the same time, water consumption has decreased. We will likely be increasing rates for industrial users in order to meet necessary revenues.

Mr. Mohan stated that there is much work that goes into the auditing of the financial statements, and Town staff put in lots of time in preparing for the audit. It went very smoothly, and Mr. Mohan thanked Town staff for all of their hard work. Overall, the Town is in a good position.

3. PRESENTATION BY BIKE/PED COMMITTEE REGARDING PROPOSED SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS ON ROUTE 120.

Bill Young introduced himself as the Chairman of the Bike and Pedestrian Committee. He thanked the Select Board for welcoming the committee to make tonight's presentation. He also thanked Barbara McIlroy, who has been helping to lead the Route 120 Subcommittee, and Janice Starkey, a neighbor and community organizer in the Sand Hill area. He introduced Carolyn Radisch, Transportation Planner and Civil Engineer, and consultant to the Bike and Pedestrian Committee.

Ms. Radisch stated that Route 120 is a very important corridor to Hanover and to the region as a whole. The Bike and Pedestrian Committee's Master Plan talks about the importance of this corridor being multi-modal, but it is not multi-modal in its current state. There are a lot of walkers, bicyclists, and users of public transportation in the area, and this corridor is important. She stated that tonight's presentation has been organized into three parts: the Sand Hill neighborhood, the area from Buck Road to Greensboro Road, and the Future of Route 120.

Janice Starkey presented the first part of the presentation related to the Sand Hill neighborhood. She thanked the Select Board for allowing tonight's presentation. The neighborhood's goal is to make it safe for all pedestrians, especially children, to walk along Hanover's roads. They have had the opportunity to speak with the Bike and Pedestrian Committee, Department of Public Works, and the Police Department, all of whom support their efforts to improve pedestrian conditions.

The Sand Hill neighborhood has the highest volume of traffic in Hanover. The Mink Brook preserve, Advance Transit bus stops, Appalachian Trail, the Coop, Hanover High School, and Community Center are all within walking distance of the Sand Hill neighborhood—however, walking or cycling to any of these locations is dangerous. Accessing the nearest sidewalk involves crossing Route 120 at various times of day, or walking in the bicycle lane to reach the sidewalk where it begins at Storrs Road. There are three bus stops in the neighborhood and fifteen children among the fourteen homes, most of whom attend the elementary or middle schools. There are over 400 vehicles passing through the area in the fifteen minutes during school bus loading and unloading times. The speed limit in that area is thirty miles per hour, but has been measured as high as forty-four. There have also been fifty vehicle crashes over the last five years in this area. She pointed out the chances of survival for a pedestrian being struck by a vehicle going forty versus a vehicle going twenty, which go from one in ten to nine in ten, respectively.

She stated that, prior to 2014, the bus stopped only at Ridge Road and Crowley Terrace and they would have to cross the street to get to the bus stop, which was usually difficult. A stop was later added at her driveway.

Chairman Christie asked whether they had statistics for similar roads in Hanover. There has not been a comparison made for this purpose, but this could be done.

Ms. Starkey intends to ask for another bus stop at 89 Lebanon Street so that pedestrians do not have to navigate the curve during the winter to get to the other stop, though adding this stop would further delay traffic. Traffic behind the buses is usually backed up for one-quarter of a mile. Most of the students in this area will soon be walking to the High School and should have a safer means to navigate the walk. She also noted that the crosswalk at Carter and Brockway is an issue. Cars typically do not stop for this crosswalk. At night, the light is not focused on the crosswalk.

The neighborhood recommends a sidewalk extension, which would allow Hanover residents to access the Tanzi tract trails, children to walk to the High School and the bus stops; a reduced speed limit of twenty-five miles per hour, which would make it safer for pedestrians and

bicyclists and give vehicles a better chance to stop safely; install speed feedback signs; and improve the crosswalk at Carter and Brockway and/or provide new crosswalks at Storrs Road or 75 Lebanon Street or at the Mink Brook preserve. Ms. Starkey added that these recommendations would benefit not only residents in the neighborhood, but many others as well. She shared letters of support from John Aubin, Assistant Superintendent of SAU 70, from the Hanover Conservancy, and from Dartmouth sports teams.

Ms. Radisch thanked the neighbors present at the meeting and for pursuing the conversation of the sidewalk. She talked about a resident at Summer Park whose husband is at Wheelock Terrace. She enjoys walking to see her husband, but only does so on the weekends due to the volume of traffic on the weekends.

Ms. Radisch stated that they had suggestions for the sidewalk between Greensboro and Buck Roads, which will be constructed next summer. One of those suggestions is to connect the sidewalk to the Buck Road bus stop and provide a concrete pad there so that people can comfortably walk from Gile Hill to the bus stop and cross down to Greensboro Road, where there could be a pedestrian refuge in the median. She also suggested bicycle detection at the Greensboro Road intersection, which has been a long-standing problem. There currently is no bicycle detection there, so bicyclists must cross on a red light or wait for a car to signal the light to change. The last suggestion is to consider moving the Northbound Advance Transit bus stop to North of Greensboro Road. This location makes more sense as there is room there and there will be a pedestrian signal there. The current location requires crossing three lanes of traffic.

She also discussed making the new sidewalk and the proposed Sand Hill sidewalk multi-modal. One difficulty in this is that the section of Route 120 between Greensboro into Lebanon is maintained by the State Department of Transportation (DOT), not the Town. Suggestions include reducing the speed limit between Greensboro Road and the Mink Brook preserve, and optimizing the real estate in that section for bicyclists and pedestrians.

A lane drop in the section between Greensboro Road and Medical Center Drive would allow for placement of a MUP (Multi-Use Path).

Suggestions for placement of a MUP include use of temporary pop-ups to indicate the path so that motorists and bicyclists may get used to the idea.

Barbara McIlroy asked for the project to be worked into the Capital Improvement Plan and suggested that, since much of the area being discussed belongs to the DOT, the Select Board assist them in getting DOT on board with the idea. She handed out letters of support to the Board Members.

Ms. Griffin stated that we would ideally work on the Sand Hill portion in conjunction with the Buck to Greensboro Roads section, which is being funded by Gile Hill. The Town would have to come up with the funds for the Sand Hill section, so this will be included in February's budget discussions.

Chairman Christie asked how this request for sidewalk additions fits in with the requests we have received from other neighborhoods. Ms. Griffin replied that we are not in a position to add any sidewalks without also funding additional maintenance costs. Our sidewalk plows are already at their limits related to the number of miles they can cover. However, the MUP on Lyme Road can be plowed with a pickup truck, so this may be a possibility for the proposed sidewalks.

Chairman Christie asked if this is the next priority as far as the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan. Ms. Radisch feels that it is a priority, due to the volume of traffic and pedestrians using this route and the activities going on in this area.

Selectman Geraghty asked whether there were any right-of-way issues with placing a sidewalk in the Sand Hill neighborhood. Ms. Griffin stated that work would require installing a retaining wall, which brings the initial cost estimate up to \$125,000-\$150,000, and this number does not reflect the potential costs involved in right-of-way issues.

Ms. Griffin added that the road becomes part of the DOT just North of Greensboro Road, which adds some difficulty to the proposed project. She stated that many residents on Greensboro Road, which is also a DOT road, have argued for the Town to take over maintenance. The Town could petition to do this with Route 120, but the maintenance on that road would be costly. She can also see Greensboro Road and Etna Road residents wanting us to do the same on their roads if we did that on Route 120. Selectman Whitcomb pointed out that we have not heard from those residents for such requests. Ms. Griffin feels that if we were to consider taking over maintenance of Route 120, we should look into the cost of taking over both Greensboro and Etna Roads as well. Ms. Whitcomb said that this is worth looking into if we want to become a more walkable, bikeable, sustainable community.

Ms. McIlroy mentioned that the recently improved crosswalk on the DOT portion of Route 10 in Lebanon was built by DOT but will be maintained by the City of Lebanon. We could possibly come up with a similar agreement with DOT for this project.

Ms. Starkey suggested narrowing of the lanes along with reducing the speed to create more room for a sidewalk. She added that many of the neighbors in the area have the necessary room in front of their homes for a sidewalk.

Erica Wygonik introduced herself as a Traffic Engineer and Sand Hill resident and stated that, by her measurements, putting in a sidewalk in the Sand Hill area would likely involve taking only one to two feet out of residents' front yards. She feels that most residents would be happy to lose one to two feet of yard in exchange for pedestrian safety. She also said that a new sidewalk would require some more time in terms of plowing, but the plow currently travels that way anyway, and then turns around before dropping the plow and returning to Public Works.

Rick Colt, a resident in the Sand Hill area, stated that his wife brings their dog outside at 5 A.M. each day to avoid the high volume of traffic.

David Dostal, former Chair of the Bike and Pedestrian Committee, stated that the Bike and Pedestrian Committee tends to have many priorities at once, but those priorities are often

balanced out by working on projects that “fit” with the Master Plan, and this could be the one that is most fitting now.

Malcolm Swenson introduced himself as a resident at 69 Lebanon Street. He stated that he sympathizes with the neighbors’ safety concerns, as he moved here several years ago with two children. He does not feel comfortable walking in the area because of the speed of vehicles, and is in agreement with lowering the speed limit. He is in favor of improved crosswalks with flashing lights, but is not in favor of building a sidewalk due to the cost and environmental impacts.

Eric Goldwarg from 75 Lebanon Street asked for some more information about the sidewalk between Buck Road and Greensboro Road. Ms. Griffin stated that the plan is to begin construction on the sidewalk this coming summer if the Board is to accept the funds from Gile Hill. We had applied for federal funds to assist in covering costs to also build a sidewalk from Storrs Road to connect to the Gile Hill sidewalk, but we were not granted those funds. We could reapply for those funds, but this would take a while. It is possible that the Board will decide to fund the project over two years rather than one, which would result in construction beginning in summer of 2017 rather than summer of 2016. This will be voted on as part of Town Meeting in May.

Selectman Carter stated that she is in favor of lowering the speed limit in the Sand Hill neighborhood. She has worried about stopping at the Brockway crosswalk for pedestrians, and whether she is putting them in harm’s way because of the vehicles behind her that are going too fast and must make very quick stops.

Chairman Christie thanked the public for attending the meeting and for the presentation made by the Committee.

4. RECOMMENDATION TO GRANT PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENTS.

Town Assessor Mike Ryan recommended that the Board grant property taxes owed by SegTel resulting from the presence of their fiber on utility poles in the Town ROW. Judge McLeod of the Grafton County Superior Court has authorized the Town to move forward in seeking pole licenses for their attachments so that we may charge them taxes in the future. Because there were no pole licenses for 2012-2015, however, we must abate the taxes.

Ms. Griffin believes that SegTel will refuse to license their attachments, which will result in more court action.

Selectman Geraghty asked for clarification on who owns the poles in which SegTel has placed its attachments. Mike Ryan stated that the pole is owned by either Fairpoint or Liberty Utilities, or it may be jointly owned, and SegTel pays rent to the utility. The pole owner and all attachees to the pole must pay taxes. Selectman Geraghty also asked what kind of service SegTel provides. SegTel is an internet service provider.

The amount of the abatement is \$26,182.23.

Selectman Whitcomb MOVED to Grant Property Tax Abatements as Discussed. Selectman Carter SECONDED the Motion.

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO GRANT PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENTS AS DISCUSSED.

5. FINAL REVIEW OF BUDGET GUIDELINES AND UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE POLICY.

Betsy McClain has revised both the Budget Guidelines and Undesignated Fund Balance Policy based on the Board's most recent discussions.

Selectman Geraghty stated that he sought input from members of the Hanover Finance Committee on the documents. Some members have expressed that the ten-to-fifteen percent target of the undesignated fund balance is too high, and they questioned whether the General and Fire funds should be considered separately. Another point made was that we could use other means to make repairs from catastrophic events rather than having a ten-to-fifteen percent balance. The last concern expressed was that three years is a long time to allow for leveling out the balance if we exceed the target, and that two years would be more reasonable. Chairman Christie's reply to these comments was that the decisions regarding the undesignated fund balance were made as part of several previous meetings, but he did note their concerns.

Selectman Geraghty added that the Committee is currently seeking to appoint members and is hoping to come to the next Board meeting with recommendations.

Selectman Carter MOVED to Adopt the Revised Budget Guidelines. Vice Chairman Rassias SECONDED the Motion.

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT THE REVISED BUDGET GUIDELINES.

Vice Chairman Rassias MOVED to Adopt the Revised Undesignated Fund Balance Policy. Selectman Carter SECONDED the Motion.

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT THE REVISED UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE POLICY.

6. PROPOSED BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2016.

Ms. Griffin stated that we can adjust the dates of the Board Meeting Schedule as needed.

7. APPOINTMENTS: PLANNING BOARD

Ms. Griffin stated that there are two vacant seats on the Planning Board. Staff recommends that the Board move Jon Criswell and Kelly Dent up to full seats from their current alternate seats. These appointments will be through September, 2017.

Selectman Carter added that she has served with both for the last several months and they are wonderful to work with.

Vice Chairman Rassias MOVED to Appoint Jon Criswell and Kelly Dent as Full Seats on the Planning Board. Selectman Whitcomb SECONDED the Motion.

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPOINT JON CRISWELL AND KELLY DENT AS FULL SEATS ON THE PLANNING BOARD.

8. BANNER REQUESTS:

- a. Revels North**
- b. Dartmouth Hitchcock-Go Red Luncheon**
- c. Dartmouth Hitchcock-2016 CHaD Hero**

Ms. Griffin stated that the Town can accommodate these requests.

Selectman Geraghty MOVED to Approve the Banner Requests of Revels North, Dartmouth Hitchcock-Go Red Luncheon, and Dartmouth Hitchcock-2016 ChaD Hero. Selectman Whitcomb SECONDED the Motion.

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE BANNER REQUESTS OF REVELS NORTH, DARTMOUTH HITCHCOCK-GO RED LUNCHEON, AND DARTMOUTH HITCHCOCK-CHAD HERO.

9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: NOVEMBER 16, 2015

Selectman Geraghty MOVED to Approve the Minutes of November 16, 2015. Vice Chairman Rassias SECONDED the Motion.

THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 1 ABSTAINED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 16, 2015 (Selectman Whitcomb Abstained from the Vote).

10. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS.

Ms. Griffin stated that budget hearing season is upon us internally. She and Betsy McClain will be working on budgets with department heads in the coming weeks.

The annual staff holiday party will be next Friday, December 18th at 8 AM at the RW Black Recreation Center.

11. SELECTMEN'S REPORTS.

Selectman Bill Geraghty

Selectman Geraghty stated that the Finance Committee is working on filling two vacancies on its board.

Parks & Recreation group has an active committee and is doing well.

Vice Chairman Athos Rassias

Vice Chairman Rassias had nothing to report.

Selectman Nancy Carter

Selectman Carter had nothing to report.

Selectman Joanna Whitcomb

Selectman Whitcomb stated that the Chamber's Soup for a Cause event was this past Saturday. It was a great way to get people into stores and they raised over \$1,500 for social service agencies.

Chairman Peter Christie

Chairman Christie had nothing to report.

12. OTHER BUSINESS.

Chairman Christie MOVED to Follow the Request for a Non-Public Session to Discuss Items Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c) and (e).

SELECTMAN GERAGHTY VOTED YES; VICE CHAIRMAN RASSIAS VOTED YES; CHAIRMAN CHRISTIE VOTED YES; SELECTMAN CARTER VOTED YES; SELECTMAN WHITCOMB VOTED YES. THE BOARD WENT INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION AT 9:03 P.M.

Vice Chairman Rassias MOVED to Exit the Non-Public Session at 9:32 p.m. Selectman Geraghty SECONDED the Motion.

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO EXIT THE NON-PUBLIC SESSION.

13. ADJOURNMENT.

Vice Chairman Rassias MOVED to Adjourn the Meeting at 9:32 p.m. Selectman Geraghty SECONDED the Motion.

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanna Whitcomb, Secretary

Minutes prepared by Adriane Coutermarsh.

SUMMARY

- 1. Selectman Whitcomb MOVED to Grant Property Tax Abatements as Discussed. Selectman Carter SECONDED the Motion.**

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO GRANT PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENTS AS DISCUSSED.

- 2. Selectman Carter MOVED to Adopt the Revised Budget Guidelines. Vice Chairman Rassias SECONDED the Motion.**

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT THE REVISED BUDGET GUIDELINES.

- 3. Vice Chairman Rassias MOVED to Adopt the Revised Undesignated Fund Balance Policy. Selectman Carter SECONDED the Motion.**

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT THE REVISED UNDESIGNATED FUND BALANCE POLICY.

- 4. Vice Chairman Rassias MOVED to Appoint Jon Criswell and Kelly Dent as Full Seats on the Planning Board. Selectman Whitcomb SECONDED the Motion.**

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPOINT JON CRISWELL AND KELLY DENT AS FULL SEATS ON THE PLANNING BOARD.

- 5. Selectman Geraghty MOVED to Approve the Banner Requests of Revels North, Dartmouth Hitchcock-Go Red Luncheon, and Dartmouth Hitchcock-2016 ChaD Hero. Selectman Whitcomb SECONDED the Motion.**

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE BANNER REQUESTS OF REVELS NORTH, DARTMOUTH HITCHCOCK-GO RED LUNCHEON, AND DARTMOUTH HITCHCOCK-CHAD HERO.

6. **Selectman Geraghty MOVED to Approve the Minutes of November 16, 2015. Vice Chairman Rassias SECONDED the Motion.**

THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 1 ABSTAINED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 16, 2015 (Selectman Whitcomb Abstained from the Vote).

7. **Chairman Christie MOVED to Follow the Request for a Non-Public Session to Discuss Items Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c) and (e).**

SELECTMAN GERAGHTY VOTED YES; VICE CHAIRMAN RASSIAS VOTED YES; CHAIRMAN CHRISTIE VOTED YES; SELECTMAN CARTER VOTED YES; SELECTMAN WHITCOMB VOTED YES. THE BOARD WENT INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION AT 9:03 P.M.

8. **Vice Chairman Rassias MOVED to Exit the Non-Public Session at 9:32 p.m. Selectman Geraghty SECONDED the Motion.**

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO EXIT THE NON-PUBLIC SESSION.

9. **Vice Chairman Rassias MOVED to Adjourn the Meeting at 9:32 p.m. Selectman Geraghty SECONDED the Motion.**

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.