

**MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2015 – 7:00 PM**

Present: Chair, Lorn Buxton, David McGuckin, Selectman, William Stewart, Selectman, and Bette Jane Riordan, Secretary.
Also present: Isabelle Stewart.

Chair Buxton convened the meeting at 7:00PM.

1. Approve Select Board minutes of November 2, 2015.

The minutes of November 2, 2015 Select Board meeting were approved as amended.

2. Public Q & A. None.

3. Items. No new items.

4. OLD BUSINESS

a. Heath Trust Insurance Issues.

This matter had been tabled at the last Select Board Meeting.

Selectman Stewart explained that the current Town health plan will be offered next year only. It will not be offered after year-end 2016. Selectman Stewart reported on his research to present viable alternative options for replacement of the current Health plan for the 10 full time Town employees. He had spoken with Peter Chapel of Health Trust, current provider, who offered three options:

- POS, with the provider network primarily NH based.
- Higher level HMO with Matthew Thornton Blue. This plan has “Access Blue network” which offers access to providers throughout New England.
- Alternative HMO.

Selectman Stewart outlined the plans in more detail including the following:

The POS plan would have the same network that the existing plan has. The HMO plan would have the same network as the current plan plus the Access Blue network which includes providers in all the New England States. He also outlined the cost of each plan (total cost, amount the Town would pay, and the amount the employee would pay).

Selectman Stewart stated that the Town stays will need to sign the renewal contract or indicated it is going with a new plan by the end of the month. If the Town selects a new plan, there would be an open enrollment period in December for the employees to fill out new applications, and coverage would go into effect January 1, 2016.

Chair Buxton asked what differences the employees would see. Selectman Stewart indicated there are several differences between the plans outlined in the Cost Benefits Sharing documentation which will be made available to all employees. The Board continued discussion of the various options, noting that there have been no complaints from employees about the current plan. Chair Buxton stated currently Health Trust offers additional services outside of the actual network (wellness programs, etc.) and asked if those services would still be available with a change in plans. Selectman Stewart was aware of any affect on benefits outside the plan change. Other concerns discussed included new ACA provisions which are scheduled to kick in during 2018, Selectman McGuckin discussed revisiting the ratio (cost sharing ratio – 90%/10%) issue at a future date. Selectman Stewart noted that selecting an HMO seemed to would allow for better cost containment strategies.. An advantage for the employees is there would be no referral requirement and a larger provider network. The Select Board agreed to hold a Special Meeting for the employees to learn about the two major options, (POS or either HMO) as the existing plan will no longer be offered. The date selected is November 20, 2015 at 2:00 PM, and the meeting will be posted.

b. Setting of the new tax rate.

Chair Buxton stated the Board needed to formalize, and vote upon the tax rate. He explained the Town had submitted the rate to the DRA (Department of Revenue Administration) which has tentatively approved it. The plan is to obtain the printed bills and send them out to taxpayers by the end of the week. The due date will be December 21, 2015. The proposed rate of \$6.40 is a three percent reduction. The Town will use \$400,000 of the reserve fund, leaving a reserve of 13.6%, which is above the mean of range of 8.5% -17%. \$690,000 is left in the reserve. Selectman McGuckin thanked Chairman Buxton for the spectacular job he did to achieve the proposed rate. Chair Buxton stated that were revenues were up this past year, with a good amount of money coming from car registrations and the New Castle Common.

c. Dig Safe Violation letter from PUC.

As a result of accidentally severing a buried electric line, Steve Tabbutt, Supv. Of Public Works will attend a one day class for Dig Safe, in lieu of the Town having to pay a fine.

5. Any other business to come before the Board.

a. Budget Committee.

Selectman Stewart reported that the Budget Committee met on November 10th and appointed Gary Rumpf to the Committee to fill Selectman Stewart's slot. Tom Smith will notify Mr. Rumpf.

Selectman Stewart said the Board still needed to adopt a revised personnel policy regarding paid time off. This will be on next meeting's agenda.

b. Shipyard Commander Invitation.

Selectman McGuckin told the Board that they were invited to a reception at PNSY on December 6, 2015 from 1-4.

c. Appointment to Conservation Commission.

The Select Board signed the paperwork appointing Ron Pasquale to the Conservation Commission.

d. Phone system.

Selectman McGuckin reported that the phones at the Police Department have been down for 8 days, which is unacceptable. Part of the problem is that there are multiple service providers; Fairpoint has the telephone lines, Comcast, the Internet, and BayRing. The Board discussed the need to consolidate all of these, and authorized Pam Cullen, Assistant to the Select Board to research this issue. Selectman Stewart will work with her.

e. Library.

Chair Buxton reported the Library will be holding a Christmas Open House on December 9th with children, and a Holiday Tea on December 16th.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 PM.