**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**February 15, 2017**

**6:00 P.M.**

**COMMUNITY HALL ANNEX**

**OPENING OF MEETING BY CHAIRMAN:** Ms. Bacon called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Stephanie Bacon, Leroy Clark, Sheila Dibb

**ABSENT:** Wayne Walker, Michael Pantos

**OTHERS:** Margaret Nartowicz, Town Administrator and Abby Benoit, Administrative Secretary

Ms. Dibb moved to approve minutes from January 30, 2017 as presented. Mr. Clark 2nd. Vote unanimous.

Ms. Dibb moved to approve minutes from January 23, 2017 as presented. Mr. Clark 2nd. Vote unanimous.

Minutes from January 3, 2017 were held.

Ms. Dibb moved to approve treasury warrant #17 and payrolls. Mr. Clark 2nd. Vote unanimous.

**POLE HEARINGS**

Ms. Bacon opened pole hearings for River Road, Pommogussett Road and Turkey Hill Road at 6:05 p.m.

Steven Soucy from National Grid introduced himself to the Board. The three pole petitions were read.

**River Road**

National Grid to relocate 1 SO Pole beginning at a point approximately 2925 feet Northeast of the centerline of the intersection of East County Road and River Road and continuing approximately 40 feet in a Northeast direction. National Grid to relocate Pole 10-50 approximately 40 feet northeast of its existing location in order to construct a new pole line along a common driveway to serve new homes 53a, 53b, 53c, River Road

**Pommogussett Road**

National Grid to install 1 SO Pole beginning at a point approximately 105 feet Southeast of the centerline of the intersection of Pommogussett Road and Brintnal Dr. and continuing approximately 55 feet in a Southwest direction. National Grid to install new Pole 60-1 in the Public Way approximately 55 feet southwest of existing pole 60, in order to service new home on the property of 139 Pommogussett Road.

**Turkey Hill Road**

National Grid to install 1 SO Pole with Anchor beginning at a point approximately 3140 feet Northwest of the centerline of the intersection of Turkey Hill Road and Emerald Road and continuing approximately 50 feet in a Northeast direction. National Grid to install Pole 12-1 with Anchor approximately 50 feet Northeast of existing Pole 12 in order to provide service to new home at 63 Turkey Hill Road.

There were no questions from the Board or public regarding the pole placement. Ms. Nartowicz confirmed that Mr. Kellaher has viewed the locations. Mr. Soucy confirmed that all poles have been marked and are at least five feet off from the pavement.

Ms. Bacon closed the pole hearings at 6:09 p.m.

Ms. Dibb moved to approve the relocation of one pole on River Road beginning at a point approximately 2925 feet northeast of the centerline of the intersection of East County Road and River Road and continuing approximately 40 feet in a Northeast direction. National Grid to relocate Pole 10-50 approximately 40 feet northeast of its existing location in order to construct a new pole line along a common driveway to serve new homes 53a, 53b, 53c, River Road. To approve the installation of a new pole on Pommogussett Road Pole beginning at a point approximately 105 feet southeast of the centerline of the intersection of Pommogussett Road and Brintnal Dr. and continuing approximately 55 feet in a Southwest direction. National Grid to install new Pole 60-1 in the Public Way approximately 55 feet southwest of existing pole 60, in order to service new home on the property of 139 Pommogussett Road. To approve the installation of one pole on Turkey Hill Road beginning at a point approximately 3140 feet Northwest of the centerline of the intersection of Turkey Hill Road and Emerald Road and continuing approximately 50 feet in a Northeast direction. National Grid to install Pole 12-1 with Anchor approximately 50 feet Northeast of existing Pole 12 in order to provide service to new home at 63 Turkey Hill Road. Mr. Clark 2nd. Vote unanimous.

**Public Comment**

Steve Sherman, Paddock Road, discussed his concerns with the school budget and its impact on Rutland’s property tax. He asked if there is potential to renegotiate the budget to make taxes more affordable for residents.

Ms. Bacon advised that there is a roundtable meeting scheduled for the five district towns. At this time the school budget uses fifty to sixty percent of the total budget.

Ms. Dibb commented that this year will be a similar situation to last year and there will be more leverage if the other district towns are equally upset. The issue is with the state formula. The budgeted growth is exceeding the ability to raise revenues.

Ms. Nartowicz will not recommend an override or debt exclusion this year. Property values will go down if the town cannot support itself.

The Board agrees that a lot of people are struggling and they will continue to look at ways of funding the budget.

**Ambulance Billing Abatements**

Seth Knipe, Acting Fire Chief, presented the ambulance billing abatements for fiscal year 2016. He explained that the write off amount is not actual debt but a contractual allowance which is the difference between the billed amount and the amount that the insurance companies will pay. The contractual allowance is $360,235.09 and the debt amount that was uncollected is $1,240.40. The total write off amount will be $361,475.49.

Ms. Dibb moved to approve the ambulance receivable abatements of $361,475.49 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016. Mr. Clark 2nd. Vote unanimous.

**Conservation Commission Appointment**

The Conservation Commission recommended that Jake Pettes be appointed to the conservation commission, to fill the current vacancy with a term expiring in 2017. The Board discussed the appointment process and transparency and posting vacancies on the town’s website.

Mr. Clark moved to appoint Jake Pettes to the Conservation Commission, filling the current vacancy, with a term expiring in 2017. Ms. Bacon 2nd. Vote 2-1.

The Board agreed that going forward they would like to see a letter of interest, a recommendation from the committee, advertisement for the vacancy and attendance at the Board meeting at the time of appointment.

**Town Clerk**

Anita Carlson discussed the resignation of Addison Redfield from the Planning Board, effective March 1, 2017. Ms. Carlson will be putting the political calendar together. This will leave one vacancy with a four year seat, which is an elected position. Nomination papers will be available February 28, 2017.

The Board can appoint someone to fill the vacancy until the election, the vacancy will be posted on the town website.

Ms. Carlson advised the Board that part of the new voting equipment was received and the rest will be arriving in a couple of weeks. Per Massachusetts Law, the Board needs to vote to discontinue the use of the old equipment and begin the use of the new equipment. Ms. Carlson will then notify Secretary Galvin’s office.

Mr. Clark moved the town to discontinue use of the current AccuVote Tabulators and authorize use of the new ImageCast Tabulators commencing with the Annual Town Election on May 8, 2017. Ms. Dibb 2nd. Vote unanimous.

There was discussion about the time for Town Meeting on Saturday May 6, 2017 and a time for the Special Town Meeting and the opening of the poles.

Ms. Carlson discussed opening the poles at 10:00 a.m. for the annual town elections. The savings would be close to $1,000. Early voting is not an option at the local level, absentee voting is still an option. Ms. Carlson expressed the importance of bringing it to the Board with a tight budget. The number of workers present is mandated.

The pole hours and start time to the Special Town meeting will be revisited at a later Board meeting.

**Police Chief Retirement**

Ms. Bacon read a letter from Police Chief Haapakoski advising of his retirement. She thanked Chief Haapakoski for his service.

Mr. Clark moved to accept the retirement of Chief Haapakoski. Ms. Dibb 2nd. Vote unanimous.

**Town Administrator, Margaret Nartowicz**

There was discussion about rescheduling the Heights Property site walk because of the weather conditions. DCR was unable to attend the site walk.

The work on the Ware River Bridge will begin soon. There will be a road closure for the construction.

MIAA advised that the town does not need to do anything with the barbed wire on the Heights Property as people are using the property at their own risk.

Ms. Nartowicz explained that she is continuing meetings with department heads regarding the budget.

Mr. Clark moved to adjourn. Ms. Dibb 2nd. Vote unanimous.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Abby Benoit

Administrative Secretary

*Approved\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*