

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FEBRUARY 27, 2013
REGULAR SESSION

Members Present: Francis Cavaco, Robert McLintock, Gary Sagar,
David Parker, Nelson Almeida

Town Administrator: Pamela T. Nolan

Finance Director: Bruce Alexander

Chairman Cavaco opened the meeting at 6 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence.

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20, Chairman Cavaco stated that persons taping the meeting must notify the Chair. Board of Selectmen meetings are recorded via audio and video and broadcast on Seekonk Channel 15.

WORK SESSION

Chairman Cavaco stated that there would be no comments from the audience.

Library

Director Peter Fuller said that it has been a pleasure to work with Mrs. Nolan and Mr. Alexander in the budget process.

He said the Board of Library Trustees anticipates that FY 14 will be a year of transition for the library. Over the last several years, the library has experienced an increase in demand for existing and new services; and, coupled with rapid changes in information technology, has challenged their capacity to maintain current and future services. The library has taken a two-track approach to meet this challenge. The first is that they are rewriting the strategic plan. Secondly, they will try to refocus on core services and look for new opportunities to streamline the operations.

Mr. Fuller stated that this budget is conservative and does not include new services or additional staff hours. The request is approx. \$857,000 - that is \$20,000 above this year's appropriation or a 2.4% increase. Some of that represents the salary increases for library staff. Both the Director and Assistant Director have contracts that allow the Board of Trustees to award merit increases up to 3.5% - 2% is budgeted for that.

The library also reflects an increase in the operating budget of \$7,400. The biggest is a \$2,500 increase in the SAILS membership. The SAILS system probably saves a substantial amount of hours. There is an increase in the telephone line of \$4,800 for lease/purchase agreement. They have filed an application under the universal service fund hoping to get a discount on phones.

Increase in library materials is \$7,100. Also, the library has to spend a minimal amount of 16% total appropriation on materials in order to maintain state standards for certification.

He felt this budget meets the residents' expectations.

Fire Department

Chief Alan Jack stated that the majority increase is in wages and salaries. The contract negotiated last year brought the firefighters up in a series of step increases. The training line item has an increase of about \$550 and holiday pay likewise.

The EMS wages - stipends that the firefighters receive - have gone up in graduated steps. The operating side of the budget has gone up approximately \$8,000 and starting off with the first line item uniforms, radios, vehicle maintenance, repair of equipment, and advertising has stayed consistent.

The training line item was increased last year with a fixed amount of money to educate two of the firefighters in the paramedic school. They negotiated a settlement with the school to pay half of the stipend this fiscal year and half of the stipend the next fiscal year.

Motor fuel has increased. They used a fixed number of \$3.50 as per direction of the Finance Director. The State has mandated upgrades to EMS equipment. It can be done with the current operating budget. They should be able to stay within the requested budget.

Finance Director Bruce Alexander wanted to add another line item to the Fire Department budget for the lease/purchase payment and increase the amount taken from the ambulance receipts.

Mr. McLintock felt it makes no sense to lease/purchase since the Town has the money to purchase.

Mr. Alexander said the current lease is 2.62%. He would have to talk to the treasurer.

Mr. McLintock said he talked to the treasurer more than a month ago.

The line item request will be on next week's agenda.

Mr. Alexander said the lease payment is \$58,833.35. This is the third year of a four-year lease.

Chief Jack noted that this budget represents a full mandated complement of firefighters.

Mr. Almeida asked if there was any room in the budget for call firefighters.

Chief Jack responded not as proposed. It would have to be discussed with Mr. Alexander, Mrs. Nolan and by direction of the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. McLintock stated that the Chief should be able to tell the Board how he is going to man stations and both ends of town.

Chief Jack said that anywhere from 60 to 68% per month of calls are EMS incidents. The Town has elected to go forward with paramedics. Call firefighters was not the answer.

Mr. McLintock asked about separating the fire and rescue.

Chief Jack responded that is not feasible. All people are cross trained.

No further discussion at this time.

DPW

DPW Superintendent Robert Lamoureux said that he asked the Town Administrator for an additional employee and she said to leave it in.

Mrs. Nolan said it is not in the budget right now. She had to take out all new employees from all budgets.

Mr. Lamoureux listed the functions of the department

He said most of the budget changes are contractual obligations.

They are using \$3.50 for gasoline and diesel fuel. They currently paid \$3.69 for diesel fuel so that might have to change in the budget. The gasoline price is \$3.33 so that might be sufficient.

Solid waste payroll has contractual obligations and solid waste collection for curb side collection and trash. Disposal costs will remain the same. The contract with ABC Disposal will expire this year.

Mr. Lamoureux noted that the cost of fuel will affect budgets across the board.

Mr. Sagar asked about vendors purchasing fuel from DPW.

Mr. Lamoureux explained that vendors were allowed to fuel up because most of the stations were closed due to the storm. The amount of gas used was deducted from their invoices.

In response to Mr. Sagar's question, Mr. Alexander advised that the snow removal budget is in \$15,000 deficit.

Mr. Lamoureux explained that at the beginning of the year he was able to reduce the price of salt by \$9.04 per ton; a savings of about \$25,000 this year alone.

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Mr. Almeida asked about hiring two additional employees.

Mr. Lamoureux replied that he asked for two in the hopes of getting one more.

Mr. Almeida asked why he got none.

Mrs. Nolan said they are over the 2 ½. It is under \$100,000. New positions were cut from DPW, Police, Library, Veterans, and Recreation. The Fire Department was a replacement.

She noted that Human Services will want additional employees when the center is built.

Mr. McLintock asked if the Board was ever told about being over the 2 ½.

Mrs. Nolan said this is early in the budget process. The amount is not much to be over and that will change.

Mr. Sagar recognized the additional responsibilities for DPW. He suggested that outsourcing grass cutting might be a cost savings and would free up personnel.

Mr. Lamoureux felt he would have to give that serious thought.

Mr. McLintock said he would not go over 2 ½.

Further discussion on March 20th re: outsourcing grass cutting.

Mr. Lamoureux said it would be a union issue.

Mrs. Nolan suggested discussion in executive session.

Mr. Almeida suggested getting figures from landscaping companies.

Mr. Lamoureux said he really needs an additional employee. Spring is the busiest time for the DPW.

Mr. McLintock suggested a work session for discussion.

Mrs. Nolan said she needs direction from the Board.

Mr. McLintock said that Town Meeting had authorized the position.

Mr. Sagar felt the recycling center should be open on Saturdays.

Mr. Lamoureux said it is open every day and every other Saturday.

Mr. Sagar said the payloader should be paid off and not financed.

NEW BUSINESS

Community Challenge Grant Electronic Permitting Overview with Director of Finance

Mr. Alexander explained that last year the Town was part of a consortium through SRPEDD for a grant for fire burning permitting software. Residents are able to get permits on line.

The second phase applies to a series of permits. The grant is for \$75,000 to install this software in surrounding cities and towns, including Seekonk. It will pay for a work station to be put on the counter at the Building Department.

If the Town continues to use this after the six-month grant program, a 3% convenience fee could be added.

Mr. Alexander advised this would apply to Building, Planning, and Board of Health. There is software available for the Town Administrator's office to do liquor licenses.

It is an amendment to the existing contract.

A motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. Parker, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To authorize the Town Administrator to sign the e-Permitting Extension.

Consider and Sign Contract with ModSpace for the Lease of Modular Unit

This will serve as temporary offices for Human Services until the new senior center is built.

Mrs. Nolan advised she received three bids. The Town is subject to prevailing wage.

The money will come from the building maintenance fund. The Finance Committee has given permission to replenish that with reserve fund transfer or on the Town Meeting warrant.

She thanked Mr. Alexander for his help.

She talked about the need for a ramp. The cost is high. It would cost \$9,000 to build a wooden ramp out of pretreated wood.

If the Board is still committed to moving, she would have to negotiate with the Knights of Columbus.

Mr. McLintock questioned the move. He said the seniors do not want to move.

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Mrs. Nolan said it was the Board's concern about fire egress.

Mr. Sagar said the Board had previously voted to move forward.

A motion was made by Mr. Sager, seconded by Mr. Parker, and it was

VOTED: 3 Ayes; 2 Nays; To move forward with the contract with ModSpace and authorize the Town Administrator to sign the contract.

The vote: Mr. Sagar – Aye; Mr. Parker – Aye; Chairman Cavaco – Aye; Mr. McLintock – Nay;. Mr. Almeida – Nay.

Prior to the vote, Mr. Almeida said he favored the move, but he wanted input from residents.

Mr. Parker noted that the Building Commissioner had indicated the building was unsafe. He didn't want to spend the money, but there is no choice.

Ms. Michelle Hines said that back in 1989 the building was deemed not suited for senior citizens. She has air quality studies from 1990. She thought about the library or other town property which could be used for the center.

Mr. Sagar said the original idea to go with portable offices outside Town Hall came from the Building Commissioner.

Mr. David Viera commended the Board for finally taking steps to rectify a bad situation. The situation there has been no secret for a lot of years. He felt if the building is not adequate for seniors it definitely isn't fit for the children of the collaborative.

He felt that notification needs to be made for people who occupy that building and the Board needs to take steps to close it.

School Committee Chairman Mitch Vieira indicated they have all necessary certificates in order to operate.

Mr. Parker noted that the Building Commissioner indicated to him that the other end of the building is in complete compliance.

Chairman Cavaco agreed with Mr. Parker. He doesn't want to spend the money, but it is a safety issue.

Update on Veterans Memorial Garden with Chairman

Mr. Donald Kinniburgh, Chairman of the Veterans Memorial Garden Committee, stated that there are rumors about moving the memorial to the library. The Committee has looked at property on the left side of the driveway into the library. However, the members have not met with the Library Trustees or Park Committee.

He said The Meadows will be there forever. It is a highly visible area and it is on the Memorial Day Parade route.

Mr. Kinniburgh assured that he would provide the Board with a monthly update. The three officers of the committee met with Mrs. Nolan to bring her up to date.

Mr. Sagar asked about a vacancy on the committee.

Mr. Kinniburgh said the matter is on next week's agenda.

As one of the two veterans on the Board of Selectmen, Mr. McLintock felt the library is certainly worth the consideration.

Mr. Kinniburgh announced a fundraiser scheduled for Friday, March 15, 2013, at the American Legion (meatball and spaghetti supper from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.) Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased from committee members or at the Town Clerk's office.

He noted that the committee had the original draft book that goes back to the Civil War to the end of the Viet Nam War when the draft was stopped.

Mr. Viera added that the committee met with Library Director Peter Fuller, who thought it was an excellent idea. They have the name of a contact person in charge of The Meadows. She will talk to The Meadows group and the Board of Library Trustees.

No matter what, they need to draw up a set of plans. They asked Tri County for help. A young man working on his Eagle Scout badge will be working with them, as well.

Mr. Sagar suggested contacting the Town Planner with respect to parking.

Mr. Robert Blanchard asked how much money the committee had raised.

Mr. Kinniburgh said a total of \$21,000.

Mr. Bob DeFontes indicated he had done his own research. The Veterans Memorial Park is long overdue. The house on The Meadows property would be an ideal place. He has a neighbor who is a stone cutter and very enthusiastic about this. He mentioned Mark Drapeau, an architectural draftsman.

Mr. DeFontes felt that every veteran would be in support of this beautiful memorial. He urged residents to come forward and support this project.

Discussion on Eagle Scout Project for Veterans Memorial Garden

Mrs. Nolan advised that a 15-year old local resident approached her about possible projects so that he could earn his Eagle Scout badge. He only has a certain amount of time. He will bring in about 30 to 40 boy scouts to help him.

A motion was made by Mr. McLintock, seconded by Mr. Almeida, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Eagle Scout project for the Veterans Memorial Garden.

Consider Approval of Cost of Swearing In Ceremony for New Police Chief

Mrs. Nolan advised that Johnson and Wales is waiving the rental fee of \$550 and also providing tables with tablecloths, ice water and coffee.

She ordered sandwiches and cookies. The general public is invited. There will be dignitaries, the Honor Guard, and piano player Matthew Jardin. She felt it is an exceptionally nice way to appoint a new chief.

The money (about \$1,000) could come from the Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, or Police budget.

Mr. Sagar suggested to do the other appointments on the same day.

Mrs. Nolan said the Chief will be asking to reorganize the department. It would be better to do promotions at a Board of Selectmen meeting.

Mr. Parker suggested using the Reverse 911 to notify residents. Residents who do not want to receive messages should take their name off the list.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Sagar, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the request for funding of the Swearing In Ceremony for the new Police Chief.

Consider Approval of Regular Session Minutes of February 6, 2013

A motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. Parker, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept the regular session minutes of February 6, 2013.

Approve Ballot Question on Banna Fire Station

Done.

Select Date for Special Town Meeting

School Committee Chairman Mitch Vieira urged the Board to establish a date in March in order to proceed with articles regarding the communications issues at the schools.

A motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. McLintock, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To set March 25, 2013 as the date of the Special Town Meeting.

Mr. McLintock talked about the issue with Kopelman & Paige.

Mr. Parker said they rule on legality.

Mrs. Nolan said she read the warrant over and over. It was looked over and handled by many people, but the responsibility falls on her shoulders. She accepted responsibility.

Board members will come in on Friday to sign the warrant. It has to be posted on Monday.

Approve New Warrant for Special Town Meeting

The heading and article 1 are the difference.

A motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. McLintock, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the warrant for the Special Town Meeting of March 25, 2013.

OTHER BUSINESS

Discuss Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chairman 48 Hours Before the Meeting

None.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mrs. Nolan announced the Swearing In Ceremony for Chief Mace on Sunday, March 17, 2013 from 1 to 3 p.m.

She announced a small business – economic pitch Create MA on March 28, 2013 at the Mass. Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development.

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Information is available at the Town Administrator's office.

Mrs. Nolan advised that Buddy Rocha from the Mass. Business Development Office met with her, Mr. Cavaco and Mr. Hansen about ideas for the industrial parks.

An East Providence business is looking to move to Seekonk next year. It would employ 8 to 10 people.

Mrs. Nolan commended the Town Hall staff for working with the high school intern.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Accounts Payable Warrant

Chairman Cavaco reported that the warrant is in order.

Mr. Parker said he heard that Walmart would not be expanding in Seekonk.

Mrs. Nolan said that Walmart Superstore and the Olive Garden would not be coming into town because of economic times.

Mr. McLintock felt the Town needs an economic development director. However, Mrs. Nolan said not at this time due to finances.

Mr. Almeida advised that Recreation activities on Saturday, March 2nd are cancelled.

Mr. Sagar requested a copy of Administrative Policies.

He asked that a representative from the Board of Health attend a future meeting prior to Town Meeting to discuss the SHARPs program.

Chairman Cavaco advised that he would meet with the Undersecretary of Housing in Boston to discuss the conditions at the senior housing in Seekonk. A representative from that office will attend a Housing Authority meeting on March 12 to tour the property.

COMMUNITY SPEAKS

Mr. Robert Blanchard asked about the Economic Development Committee.

Mrs. Nolan said there are only two members so they never met.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:48 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. Parker, to go into Executive Session to review contract for new Police Chief, Review new MCAD suit, Review actions of Town Administrator; and Consider approval of February 6, 2013 minutes; not to return to Open Session.

The vote: Mr. Sagar – Aye; Mr. Parker – Aye; Mr. Almeida –Aye; Mr. McLintock – Aye; Chairman Cavaco.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary S. Sagar, Clerk

Patricia Gamer, Secretary