



Office of the
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
272 Main Street
Townsend, Massachusetts 01469

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SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 7, 2012 - 7:00 P.M.
SELECTMEN'S CHAMBERS, 272 MAIN STREET

I PRELIMINARIES

- 1.1 The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:01PM and roll call showed Chairman Nicholas Thalheimer (NT) and Clerk Robert Plamondon (RP) present.
- 1.3 NT announced that the meeting is being tape recorded.
- 1.4 Chairman's Additions or Deletions: delete 2.1 and 2.2. Items 3.4 and 3.5 have been added.
- 1.5 Review/Approve Meeting Minutes: RP moved to approve the minutes of October 23, 2012. NT seconded. Unanimous.

IV APPOINTMENTS OF PERSONNEL/OFFICIALS

- 4.1 Appoint James Normington to the Fire-EMS Headquarters Building Committee for a term concluding when the project is finished. RP moved to appoint. NT seconded. Unanimous.

III MEETING BUSINESS

3.1 Review request by Capital Planning Committee to amend the FY2013 capital plan. Mr. Sheehan provided information on an amendment to the capital plan for the automated water meter project and Genova conservation land purchase. He recommended the BOS vote to amend the plan to include both projects. The amounts are as follows:

- Water meter project: \$150,000 in addition to the \$75,000 approved at the May 2012 Annual Town Meeting for a total of \$225,000 to be funded from retained earnings from the Water Department enterprise fund
- Genova land purchase: \$52,775 requiring no funds from the general fund and contingent upon the Conservation Commission receiving a grant.

RP moved to amend the capital plan as described above. NT seconded Unanimous.

3.2 Review request by Capital Planning Committee in reference to the FY2014 Capital Budget. Mr. Sheehan explained that the BOS received a letter from Capital Planning requesting a budget figure for the FY14 capital plan prior to them reviewing capital requests. Mr. Sheehan estimates the amount to be around \$200,000. The BOS will provide a specific target to Capital Planning by the first of the year.

3.4 Approve letter of commitment to MassDOT-Highways for the design of Route 13 improvements. Mr. Sheehan explained that MassDOT will do the construction if the Town does the engineering. The funding will come out of Chapter 90.

Motion made by RP to approve letter of commitment. NT seconded. Unanimous.

3.5 Approve license for the Lions Club to sell Christmas trees on the Common from 11/23/12 to 12/24/12. RP moved to approve. NT seconded. Unanimous.

3.3 Discussion of FY2013 budget amendment, special override election, and Special Town Meeting. At the request of the BOS Mr. Sheehan reported he looked more closely at the budget. There have been some changes over the last couple of weeks which have altered the picture going into Town Meeting. Most importantly is the inclusion of the \$50,000 transfer from ambulance receipts to offset the operation of the Fire-EMS budget. The BOS had previously expressed its desire to keep funding for the Communications Supervisor position. He suggests funding that position for 6 months allowing the Chief to fill the position on January 1, 2013. The cost of the COA meals coordinator is offset by a grant, allowing \$6,000 to be reduced from the budget. A number of previously discussed reductions remain. All told, the revised budget amendment identifies \$271,117 in reductions. That results in a running deficit of \$22,632. He suggested using free cash to close the deficit, thereby alleviating the need to reduce hours.

Mr. Sheehan pointed out that this action creates a structural deficit going forward and there will be difficult choices to be made as the FY14 budget is developed. Among the items contributing to the structural deficit are the full year of funding for the communications supervisor, fully funding the COA meals coordinator, honoring the commitment to the Fire Chief to use only \$250,000 in FY14 in order to allow him to replenish his reserves for identified capital acquisitions, accounting for winter operations costs under the snow and ice deficit, and the use of free cash.

RP asked what the certified free cash number is. Mr. Sheehan said it is \$773,528. With everything set aside; \$200,000 for Capital Planning, \$200,000 for the Spaulding roof, \$3,300 for additional election expenses, \$8,000 for a health benefits consultant, and \$22,632 for operating budget, that leaves a \$340,000 balance. That will be used for the snow and ice deficit and the remainder will be carried over to the next year.

Mr. Sheehan added the override election doesn't become less important. Under any other circumstance these cuts would not be recommended and they put us in a tenuous position. If the override is successful we have a manageable budget going forward. If the override fails, we have a contingency plan that will get us through but won't get us out of the woods. We will have to be very careful in how we create the budget next year.

RP noted the hole to fill next year would be significantly bigger. The question at this point is whether or not to utilize money from free cash to avoid the cuts. NT suggested \$23,000 is not a lot. Mr. Sheehan agreed the amount is manageable. He will recommend to FinCom that this is an appropriate course of action. There would be no need to close this building, library or senior center or reduce individual hours. Employee health insurance and curbside trash collection are two of the biggest cost centers within which we may be able to find savings.

NT stressed that this solves the immediate problem, but not the underlying problem that still exists. This represents a decent compromise given the facts. When we start putting the FY14 budget together we will be aware of this problem. RP said he doesn't like enabling a structural deficit but it is an unusual circumstance.

Mr. Sheehan will make the information about the override and town meeting available to the public. He will work with Town Counsel and the Town Accountant to craft the motions and fill in the final numbers for town meeting.

RP reiterated that the override election is Tuesday the 13th from 8-8 at town hall. The Special Town Meeting will be on the 14th also at town hall.

V WORK SESSION

5.1 Board of Selectmen Updates/Reports: RP read the scouting for food to benefit TEO flier. NT read the flier for the VFW Veteran's day ceremony.

5.2 Town Administrator Updates/Reports: Mr. Sheehan thanked everybody who voted in the Presidential Election, everybody who worked the polls, and the clerk's office. He noted it is a long day for the workers. NT stressed that we should keep sight of the fact that we are able to vote and do so in a reasonably efficient manner.

Mr. Sheehan added that the special election for the override is on Tuesday here in the great hall in town hall from 8am-8pm. It's a ballot question for proposed operational override under a proposition 2 ½. The next night at 7 o'clock also at town hall is the Special Town Meeting. It is the normal town meeting that we do every fall. The two big items are the budget and the petition from the Water Department. Information will be put on the website and be available at town hall as well.

RP moved to adjourn at 8:14. NT seconded. Unanimous.