

Selectmen's minutes of meeting January 20, 2015

Members present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Lisa Blackmer, Steve Harasyko, Rd. Superintendent, Dolores Harasyko, Admin. Asst.

Called to order at 7:27 p.m.

Steve provided highway department updates regarding the latest storms which were mostly ice. They have used a lot of salt and sand. More is used during rain and ice events than snow storms.

Reviewed and signed Chapter 90 paperwork.

Dolores reviewed the Snow and Ice budget. She contacted the Treasurer, Town Administrator, Finance Committee and Selectboard to advise them that we are close to going over budget. The law requires a vote by the Selectboard and Finance Committee upon being notified to authorize the highway department to expend the snow and ice removal over their approved budget. Discussion followed. Dominic Konstam asked about using less salt and more sand. Kathy Jacobs would like a threshold check. She would like to place restrictions on spending. Teresa said she gives Kathy a weekly budget expense report. Chuck Nelson suggested as the temperature warms up to mix more sand with the salt but that in certain conditions more salt is needed. Dominic Konstam asked what would happen if the vote doesn't pass. Steve explained that they would deplete the supply of salt and sand they have now in the shed and do nothing but pay the regular salary. There would be no coverage for any more winter events other than the regular 8 hour day. No plowing or treatment of the roads. Patrick explained that all the highway department workers are tax payers and take pride in their work and provide the town with the best service knowing it effects their taxes. He explained that the town has a responsibility to safely maintain the roads. If the town cannot do anything to continue operating we would then be negligent and breaking the law by not keeping the roads safe. Nina Carr does not agree with the finance committee in placing restrictions on the snow and ice coverage. Dominic stated that Steve and the highway dept. do a brilliant job maintaining the roads. He would like to see more sand used. Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to authorize the highway department to expend the snow and ice removal over their approved budget, passed unanimously by the selectboard and finance committee members Kathy Jacobs, Donna Newman and Dominic Konstam.

Motion by Patrick second by Jeff to move item 4 on the agenda to after item 7.

Treasurer Teresa DellaGiustina prepared proposed warrant changes for the FY2016 warrant.

1. The gas account. Teresa has contacted departments which use gas and diesel. She is going to create a separate revolving gas account. Each department will lower their budgets by the amount of gas used over an average of the past 3 years. The selectmen agree with this change as do the departments involved.

2. Snow and Ice budget. We will take the regular salaries out of this budget and add it to the highways and bridges budget. The only items to be applied to snow and ice will be overtime for storms, and all products used to maintain the roads during the winter.
3. All phone, internet and electric bills will be paid for from the Operation and Maintenance budget. Any departments currently paying for them from their budget will lower their budget and the operation and maintenance will increase by that amount.
4. Lawyer fees should not be paid out of general government salaries. Dolores has already created a line item titled Legal Services and has lowered the general government salaries by that amount.
5. Unemployment. Teresa explained that we are not a contributory employer, which means we are not contributing to unemployment. This is a recommendation by both the DOR and Unemployment Agency. She is proposing a revolving buffer account in which we would put \$2,000 to \$3,000 in a year for the next 5 years. Bethany Perry asked about creating an account to cover benefits in case an employee needs to get benefits during the year.
6. Truck Replacements. She is proposing setting up an account to appropriate so much money a year to help offset the cost of purchasing new trucks.
7. Ambulance revolving account. Teresa has been discussing this item with Ralph Morrison. They would both like to see the cost of the ambulance billing \$6,000 applied to this account. Teresa has reviewed this change with the DOR and as long as the original article is amended and voted on to include this then it is ok to do so.
8. Library, She will simplify the warrant article. It does not need to show all the grant breakdowns. It is a very confusing article.

Nina Carr commended Teresa on all her hard work researching these items. The Selectmen thanked Teresa.

It has come to Teresa's attention that a part time employee has been taking paid vacation time that had never been approved by the Selectboard. The department heads had approved it many years ago. Teresa feels that if one part time employee gets this then all part time employees should get it. The department allowing this has not been transparent in giving this benefit. All employees that get benefits are budgeted for in the Employee Benefits line item. This one has not been. She would like the Selectmen to address this and come up with a policy. Lisa did a survey of 12 towns, none of them allow vacation benefits to employees under 20 hours a week. Patrick responded that based on this information the employee will need to come before the board of selectmen.

Items 8, 9 & 10 on the agenda will be addressed next week.

Mail reviewed

Warrants reviewed and signed

At 8:45 the Selectmens regular meeting recessed in order to enter into the budget workshop session.

Dolores presented the selectmen with budgets.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

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Patrick Barrett

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Jeffrey Gray