

Selectmen's minutes of meeting Jan. 11, 2016

Members present: Alice Boyd, Jeff Gray, John Skrip, Bobby O'Brien
Dolores Harasyko

Called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Bobby provided highway department updates. They continue to mow the roadsides and working on ditches. All equipment is operational. Alice asked Bobby to put sand at the Transfer Station. Kathy Burrows asked about removing the dead tree at the Library. Bobby will look into it. Discussed taking care of the town buildings and walkways during snow and ice events. Nina Carr suggested the highway department call Dolores to let her know when the buildings will be cleared and safe to open. Selectmen agreed that Jeff would call Dolores.

Reviewed highway department budgets. Will prepare the budgets for 4 employees and the road superintendent.

Discussed the mowing contract. The contract came in at almost double the cost of last year. Discussed having the highway department take on the mowing.

Discussed budgeting for the mowing equipment and a trailer as we do not have any equipment for mowing. Jeff pointed out that they are down a man. John doesn't agree, he feels it can be done with part time help. He suggested seasonal help. Bethany Perry explained that in the past it the mowing took 3 to 4 days a week with the highway dept. doing it and that was why the town decided to contract it out. Nina reviewed that many years ago she supervised a group of teenagers mowing the cemeteries. This may be a one person full time job. Kathy Jacobs feels we need a thoughtful process including the cost of insurance and equipment. John Skrip will work with Bobby on cost of equipment and review in two weeks. Alice directed Dolores to budget for the contract for mowing. Dolores asked about the expense accounts for the highway. John would like to cut all by 10% . Alice and Jeff would like to level fund. All agreed to level fund including the tree account.

Discussed operation and maintenance budget.

Discussed the repair of town buildings account. Jeff will get a quote for repairing the ramp and stairs at the old town hall.

Discussed the format of the annual town warrant. Alice explained that by combining some of the line items there could be flexibility to move money between budgets. Alice would like to have a percentage of how much can be moved without a special town meeting. If not a percentage then maybe no more than \$10,000 could be moved without a vote. This could only be done intra departmentally. Motion by John, second by Jeff, passed unanimously to change the mechanism of the annual town warrant to allow the Selectmen to move limited amounts within line items displayed, passed unanimously.

Discussed the location of the annual town meeting. Everyone likes the Firehouse #2 on Route 57. John Burrows will contact Ralph Morrison for permission.

Discussed having an all boards meeting January 25, 2016.

Jean Atwater Williams provided an update on the WiredWest/MBI situation. WiredWest and MBI were working together up to 6 months ago. They now have a different opinion on the ownership of the infrastructure. There are still 20 towns that want to stay with WiredWest, Sandisfield being one of them. Jean and Alice have been working together to continue to move forward with WiredWest. They are trying to convince the Governor that small towns cannot afford other options. MBI has been very deceptive, they are changing the rules on a daily basis. Reviewed and signed a letter to MBI questioning the RFP that we never received. Kathy asked about the impact on the budget, we may need to bring this back to the voters.

Discussed the towns website. Alice has a contract to switch to Virtual Town Hall. It takes 2 to 3 months to set up. The cost is \$4,500 which will be paid over the next three years plus \$1,500 a year for technical support. Motion by John, second by Jeff to sign and move forward with Virtual Town Hall, passed unanimously.

Discussed the hiring process for the road superintendent position. There is a committee which has met once to review the applications that were received on time. One application was received too late. The interview for Bobby O'Brien will be on Jan. 19 at 6 p.m.

Alice provided Selectmen's updates. The Senior Tax Workoff program is up and running. They are working on a filing system for the building inspector. Ann Wald and Kathy Burrows are currently working on this. Chapter 90 funding has been approved for New Hartford Road. Alice thanked Dolores for all her work on this.

Alice is working on the Route 57 bridge. John continues to meet once a month with surrounding towns. John is meeting with David Hubbard and DCR to discuss Spectacle Pond. They are hoping we can use this as a town beach.

Jean would like to review the fuel system.

Reviewed mail

Reviewed and signed warrants

Reviewed and signed minutes of meetings

Bethany Perry in to present a letter from Billy Perry in response to his executive session. She also presented her letter of resignation from the Board of Assessors.

Dolores will be out of the office on Thursday as she is holding a voter registration and absentee ballot application session at the nursing home.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Alice Boyd

Jeff Gray

John Skrip