

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**Minutes of December 8, 2014**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Ross McLeod, Selectmen Al Letizio, Bruce Breton and Roger Hohenberger were present, as was Town Administrator David Sullivan and several department heads. Mr. McLeod called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Selectmen Joel Desilets arrived at 7:10 pm.

**BUDGET WORKSHOP:**

Recreation – It was noted that the overall budget is down \$385 this year. Ms. Haas discussed the special projects portion of the budget, in sportsfield maintenance, noting that the funding request is the same, but the prioritized list of projects has changed. Ms. Haas noted the project at Tokanel field has taken priority because it was originally funded through a federal grant and there are time-sensitive specified maintenance requirements. Mr. McLeod mentioned the request from soccer to ensure that the beginning of season irrigation checks occur each year. It was noted that this was also discussed during the discussion of the General Government budget, as groundskeeping is budgeted there, but Ms. Haas noted that she would coordinate this with the Contractor. No changes to the budget were made.

CIP / Spruce Pond fields - Mr. McLeod noted that due to his affiliation with Windham Soccer Association, and their interest in having other sports organizations utilize the Spruce Pond fields as an alternative to Griffin Park/Nashua Rd, he would step down from the Board and recuse himself from the discussion.

Mr. Letizio took over as Chair and turned to Mr. Dennis Senibaldi. Mr. Senibaldi presented the article on behalf of the Recreation Committee. He presented a picture of the current status of the area, which showed a large area piled with boulders and other material. Mr. Senibaldi reminded the Board that they had accepted the donation of materials from the I-93 project, but the proposed funding is needed in order to make the area more visibly appealing. He noted that the boulders were intended to provide crushed gravel for the parking area. He also noted that if the proposed funding passes, it would allow them to prep the upper area (2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the project) to be able to accept additional donations of material. Mr. Senibaldi noted that the article is predominantly the same as last year's article, however, the Committee is applying for a 50/50 matching grant from the National Park Service. He indicated that they may know the result of this grant process by the end of February. Discussion turned to whether the article could be written to be contingent on the receipt of the grant, as Mr. Hohenberger noted that this would make it different from the article that failed at town meeting last year. Mr. Senibaldi indicated that the Committee had not formally discussed this, but that he would prefer it not be contingent.

It was further discussed that the final CIP plan presented this project as a bond article, so that funding could be spread over three years. Mr. Senibaldi stated that he was not aware of this, and would ask the Board to consider funding the entire project, without a bond, in 2015, due to the higher threshold for voter approval that a bond article requires.

Mr. Sullivan noted that regarding the Greenway Trail grant, which is currently also a project in the CIP, based on initial scoring at the planning commission level, the Town may not receive this grant. He noted that if we find out in mid-January that it is highly likely that we won't get the trail grant, that funding (\$160,000 town portion) could be reallocated to fund Spruce Pond or another project.

Mr. Letizio asked if there is a motion to move the Spruce Pond article on to the next step in the process, which would be the public hearing on January 12. Mr. Hohenberger asked if the Committee could weigh in prior to the public hearing as to whether the majority agreed with making this contingent on receiving the 50/50 matching grant, as he would be in favor of the article only if it included this contingency. Mr. Letizio noted that he would be in favor of fully funding the project this year, but would support what was ultimately proposed by the CIP. Discussion ensued as to how to proceed and Mr. Sullivan suggested that we move forward with the CIP recommendation as is, which is to fund Spruce Pond with a bond, hold the required bond hearings in January, and if at that time circumstances change, the warrant article can be amended prior to town meeting. Consensus of the Board was to proceed as stated.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the Board also asked the Committee to return to the Board with more information regarding the proposal to renovate the former skateboard park. Ms. Haas recognized Fred Conarn and Mark Lucas from the Recreation Committee to present 3 options for the proposed project. It was noted that there is no funding currently in the budget for this project, as the Committee was just recently able to finalize adequate cost estimates working with the landscape architect.

The first option to provide asphalt resurfacing, landscaping, and sitting/retaining walls, has an estimated cost of \$125,150. Option 2 (estimated at \$196,450) adds a gazebo and partial pavers installed around the gazebo, instead of basic asphalt resurfacing as in Option 1. Option 3 removes all asphalt in the entire area and replaces it with pavers, as well as the gazebo, bringing the total estimated cost of this option to \$249,450. All quotes do not take into account approximately \$15,000-\$24,000 of goods and services that may be donated, but it is too early to finalize the donation numbers. Mr. Letizio indicated that he would be in favor of Option 3 as he feels it's best to do this project right the first time. Mr. Hohenberger indicated that he feels this is a great project but has risen to the level of the CIP threshold and would like to see the Recreation Committee go to the CIP next year for funding. Further discussion ensued regarding the pavers and the ability to get portions donated through a "buy a brick" type program and Mr. Conarn noted that

this could be added to the project but would not significantly change the overall cost of the paver installation.

Mr. Breton indicated that he likes the project but he has not made a decision regarding funding. Mr. McLeod and Mr. Desilets agreed that the project should go through the CIP process. Mr. Hohenberger made a motion to request the Committee refine the plan and bring forward to CIP in 2015, and Mr. Breton seconded. Passed 5-0. Mr. McLeod noted that a great effort was put forward as the Committee was tasked with providing cost estimates in a short time-frame, but more time will benefit the proposal. It was also recommended that the Committee come back to the Selectmen in the June timeframe, before a final proposal is submitted to CIP, to get additional feedback. Other members echoed their thanks to Ms. Haas and the Recreation Committee for their efforts.

Library – Mr. Heidenblad noted that the operations area of the budget (non-salary/benefits) increased approximately \$900 over last year. The only significant changes are an increase in scheduled hours for two part-time employees, one from 12 to 25 hours per week and another from 20 to 25 hours per week. This is primarily to increase the emphasis on programming at the Library. Mr. Desilets commended the Library for focusing more on this area going forward. No changes to the budget were made.

Elections – It was noted that the budget is down overall because there is one local election in 2015 whereas there were three elections in 2014. In discussion the Elected Officials Salary line item, two of the Supervisors, Eileen Mashimo and David Bates, presented the Board with a summary of the various tasks they are responsible for, beyond the specific election-day duties. Mr. Bates noted that the change in 2013 to the stipend per election arrangement, versus hourly pay, is not equitable because each of the Supervisors work a different amount of hours depending on their schedules. It was noted that this change was made because there was no budgetary cap on the number of hours Supervisors would work. Mrs. Mashimo noted she has researched the average hours for odd-year elections, and it has run about 200 hours, although Mr. Bates noted this was before the 3 Village Districts were in place, each of which require similar duties of the Supervisors. Discussion turned to the amount of work that is done throughout the year, and not just at election time, which is not currently factored into the stipend arrangement. The Board agreed to remove the stipend and budget a total of 250 hours (for all 3 Supervisors) for 2015, with the understanding that the Supervisors will return to the Board during the year if they find that this is not sufficient.

Discussion then turned to the hourly rate of pay for the Supervisors as compared to area communities. It was noted that the previous pay of \$7.00/hr is low, and that \$8.00/hr might be more reasonable. Further discussion ensued regarding the Supervisors hourly rate, as well as that of the ballot clerks, which are paid at \$7.75/hr. Mr. Letizio motioned and Mr. Breton seconded to increase the Supervisors' hourly rate to \$10.00 per hour. Motion passed 3-2 with Mr. Desilets and Mr.

Hohenberger opposed, noting that they were in favor of a change to \$8.00/hr. No changes to the ballot clerks' hourly rate were made. The Board discussed other areas of the Elections budget, and no further changes were made.

Town Clerk – The Board discussed the Town Clerk's budget, noting that the main area of increase was in the Elected Official Salary line item, with an offsetting decrease in the Contracted Services line item. Mrs. Call noted that because the Town Clerk is paid on a fee-basis, based on number of registrations, this portion of the budget is prepared by Finance based on actual # of registrations estimated for the year. The increase in pay budgeted is based on an increase in actual experience the past several years. Discussion turned to the Town Clerk being paid on a fee versus salary basis and Mr. Letizio asked why this is. It was noted that the fees are based on State statute, and that many communities have moved away from this, but as stated in previous years, it would require a warrant article to change from fees to salary. Mr. Sullivan further explained that in the previous year, the Board had asked Administration to perform an analysis of the cost of moving the Town Clerk off fees, and pay via a combination of annual salary and benefits, such as health insurance and retirement, which the Town currently does not provide to Mrs. Bottai. It was noted by Mr. Sullivan that the Town had proposed Mrs. Bottai be paid on an existing Town scale for that level of position, but that because there is a benefit component to the compensation, the proposed annual salary would be significantly lower than the amount of pay the Clerk receives today, on fees. Mrs. Bottai agreed that she had discussions with Mr. Sullivan, but that she could not agree to the proposed level of salary, thus she was not in support of proposing a warrant article to change the payment structure at this time. She also noted that she would not be in favor of changing the position from elected to appointed. Additional discussion ensued and no changes were made to the budget.

Mrs. Call noted that as part of the 2014 Town Clerk budget, it was contemplated that the Town Clerk would begin accepting credit cards for payments processed through her office. Mrs. Call noted that the Clerk's office had completed its implementation of the new Clerkworks software, and was ready to move forward with the credit card component, but by policy, we need authorization by the Board to execute the documents. It was noted that the credit cards would be offered on a convenience fee arrangement whereby the cost of providing this service would not be funded by the Town, but would be paid by the consumer. Mr. Hohenberger motioned and Mr. Breton seconded to authorize the Town Clerk to proceed. Motion passed 5-0.

Tax Collector – The Board had no questions for Ms. Robertson, and no changes to the budget were made.

Assessing – The Board had no questions for Mr. Norman or Mr. Fedele, noting that the large decrease in the budget was due to the data technicians that were hired for 2014 only, and no changes to the budget were made.

Historic/HDC – It was noted that the proposed budget is level funded. Mr. Letizio asked if the Board could schedule a workshop with the Committee to ensure they are on track for preparing for the 275<sup>th</sup> anniversary coming up in 2017 and that they have what they need to make this a priority. Mr. Letizio noted that they had previously come to the CIP for funding for this event, but he has not seen anything since then. Mr. Letizio noted the Methuen festival of trees as an example of a fundraising effort for historic infrastructure, and that he believes Windham is very similar from a historic preservation standpoint. Mr. Sullivan noted that the Town is currently advertising for members for a subcommittee for this purpose, and there are new members of the HDC that have re-energized this effort.

Cable – No changes to the budget were made. Discussion turned to the recent difficulties with audio/video and the broadcast of the meetings. It was noted that some of the problems are due to Comcast service issues, not equipment issues. It was discussed whether the broadcast equipment is high definition and even though we have purchased new equipment, it was questioned whether we are putting new equipment into old technology. Mrs. Coish noted that the equipment is HD compatible but Comcast does not broadcast local access channels in high definition. Mr. Hohenberger, as liaison, explained that the Cable Committee has discussed this in the past, but it would be a complete overhaul and the Committee has not found this to be a priority. Mr. Hohenberger noted this is the first he's heard of these audio/video quality issues. Mr. McLeod asked that anyone that has experienced issues to please contact members of the Cable Committee and let them know. Mr. Desilets echoed the sentiments and asked for a plan to come before the Board for the upcoming year, as he noted that the delay in obtaining video on demand and the inability to efficiently watch or download the videos should not be occurring in this technology age. Mr. Letizio motioned to ask the Cable Committee to come back to the Board with the steps and cost to get the Town to the next level in broadcasting local access; Mr. Desilets seconded but wants improvements to include live-streaming and file formats that are portable and readily accessible; Mr. Letizio agreed with that addition to his motion. Motion passed 4-0-1, with Mr. Hohenberger abstaining as Cable Committee liaison.

Searles – The Board briefly discussed the budget, which contains primarily building utility costs, and the revenue fund for marketing and maintenance, and no changes to the budget were made.

Conservation Commission – The Board had no questions for Mr. Morris, however, he did note that the Board could reduce the budget by \$540 representing dues for the State Association, because the 2014 dues will cover 2015 as well. No other changes to the budget were made.

Information Technology – The Board discussed the IT budget with Mr. DeLong, who noted some of the areas that changed within the service agreements and maintenance support line item, due to additional modules

within existing software, as well as changed in maintenance required as a result of different servers. Mr. Breton noted that this line item is fairly significant and should be scrutinized by the Board, and Mr. Letizio agreed, but noted that the individual items within this budget appear reasonable to him. Mr. Desilets also noted that much of his review of these budgets was done prior to the meeting, as the information has been posted for the Board's review, and he did not have any specific questions. Discussion turned to the funding to replace the Town's plotter and what type of equipment is needed with new technology in place. No changes to the IT budget were made.

The Board then asked Mr. DeLong to explain the features and limitations on the Town website involving the "Search" function. Mr. Breton noted that he was unable to search certain documents and Mr. DeLong explained that the Town is working on this with its webmaster, but that older files had to be moved to different folders when the new content-management based website was developed. Mr. Desilets also noted that he believes the menu structure of the Town's website is not mobile device friendly, and would like to see a change in that area. He also felt that there should be some kind of notification on the website that the search feature is available.

#### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS:**

Mr. Sullivan reported to the Board that he had followed up regarding the permanent discontinuance of sections of old Route 111 that have been conveyed to the Town by the State, and had discussions with the Dubay Group. Mr. Dubay is willing to do the work on these Town properties at no cost to the Town, as he is doing other work in the area for private entities. Consensus of the Board was to move forward with the work needed in order to prepare an article for Town meeting.

Mr. Sullivan also reported back on the Blueberry Road lots. Discussion ensued regarding the amount of work that would need to be done and whether the Board wishes to prepare two buildable lots for sale, or sell the land as is. Consensus of the Board was to have Mr. Sullivan contact the Town's consultant engineer, Keach-Nordstrom Associates, and report back to the Board with additional information at their next meeting.

Mr. Sullivan provided a request from Ms. Scott to consider the release of two financial guarantees, which had been previously approved by the Planning Board. The first is for Cricket Ridge Subdivision. Mr. McLeod read Ms. Scott's memo into the record, noting the request was for a bond release from \$104,574.50 to \$43,669.70, based on review by the Town's Fire/Highway departments and consultant engineer. Mr. Breton motioned and Mr. Hohenberger seconded to release the bond as stated. Passed 5-0. The second is for Homes of Winslow Subdivision. Mr. McLeod read Ms. Scott's memo into the record, noting the request was for a bond release from \$238,266.25 to \$115,941.60, based on review by the Town's Fire/Highway departments and consultant engineer. Mr. Breton motioned and Mr. Letizio seconded to release the bond as stated. Passed 5-0.

Mr. Hohenberger motioned and Mr. Desilets seconded to adjourn. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dana Call*

*Asst Town Administrator-Finance*

NOTE: These minutes are prepared in draft form and have not been submitted to the Board for approval.