

**Board of Selectmen  
Special Meeting  
Friday, March 11, 2011**

**Present:** First Selectman Daniel Jerram, Selectman Bruce Gresczyk, Selectman Tom Klebart, Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 8:07 AM.

The order of agenda items was changed to allow for the approval of tax refunds to be the first item, followed by the Budget Workshop. The Selectmen approved this change.

**Approval of Tax Refund Requests:**

**MOTION:** by Gresczyk , second Klebart to approve 11 requests for refunds of motor vehicle property taxes as presented by the Tax Collector.

(\$43.66 to Nissan Infiniti LT due to adjustment after payment; \$4.19 to William M. or Denise L. Martha due to interest refund; \$23.61 to Nissan Infiniti LT due to adjustment after payment; \$95.68 to Karen Gegenheimer due to adjustment after payment; \$174.59 to GMAC due to adjustment after payment; \$33.10 to Chase Auto Finance Corp due to adjustment after payment; \$279.29 to CAB East LLC due to adjustment after payment;\$298.44 to CAB East LLC due to adjustment after payment; \$188.12 to CAB East LLC due to adjustment after payment; \$137.60 to CAB East LLC due to adjustment after payment; \$169.94 to CAB East LLC due to adjustment after payment;)

*Unanimous.*

**MOTION:** by Klebart, second Gresczyk to approve 3 requests for refund of real estate property taxes as presented by the Tax Collector.

(\$118.49 to William or Denise Martha due to interest refund;\$2411.64 to Wells Fargo for Roger & Dawn Geiger due to duplicate payment; \$2903.04 to Wells Fargo for Peter & Nancy Propfe due to duplicate payment)

*Unanimous.*

**Budget Workshop:**

First Selectman Jerram presented his draft budget to the Selectmen for review and comment. He noted that the Board of Finance has requested a 0% growth in the budget. Jerram commented that this budget is very close – noting that the Town Hall Employees union are still in negotiations. There is a confidentiality agreement in place. Jerram noted that the salary line item for the employees is shown as a 2.0% increase as a placeholder until the final figures are known.

Jerram informed the Board that the Public Safety Line item had a significant impact as a result of the reassignment of one of the former resident troopers. Trooper Tranquillo is no longer with the town, he has moved on to a different assignment. Interviews for a replacement were conducted and the trooper to whom the position will be awarded is at a higher pay scale than Tranquillo (approximately \$20,000). Additionally the remaining Trooper (Trooper Strolis) has reached a point in his number of years of service where his salary will be increased a step (resulting in an approximately \$10,000 increase. To offset these large increases, it has been determined that the part time constable position will be reduced from 3 days per week to one and a half days per week. The position will consist of mostly administrative duties.

A reduction in Town Hall staffing will occur with the elimination of the part time clerical assistant in the Land Use Office. It will be necessary to use existing office staff to rotate between different offices in order to provide administrative support when needed. A lay-off will occur in the highway department; however, it is anticipated that one senior member of the highway road crew may be retiring. The employee who was laid off will be subject to recall when the retirement occurs.

Town Hall utilities have been adjusted to reflect the increase in oil prices and electricity. It was suggested that Town Hall telephone be adjusted down from \$13,500 to \$11,500 based on what actual usage was in 2009/2010. The Computer Maintenance Line item includes expenses associated with having on-line access to assessor's maps. Health Insurance line item is always a large expense and is, for the most part, not known until after the budget process has been completed. The insurance company provides estimates of increases but not actual figures.

The Assessor's salary line item is fully funded as the assessor is a full time Town of New Hartford employee. Although revenue is collected from Burlington due to the fee for service agreement that exists between the towns, it is not known whether or not this agreement will remain in place. Should the present arrangement end, the Assessor would revert back to a 35 hour work week in New Hartford. Mr. Jerram remarked that he "is hopeful that the arrangement can endure."

Litchfield County Dispatch has added the City of Torrington as a client, therefore there has been a reduction in the overall assessment to the Town of New Hartford. The Ambulance Association has been running at a surplus for several years and, according to an audit obtained by the First Selectman, has a "healthy bank account." The Treasurer has stated that they would be able to function at a lower per capita cost than what has previously been requested.

The Highway Budget shows an overall increase. This is needed in order to maintain the pace of the current road program. Chip sealing has not, with the exception of last year, been done for many years. This is triage maintenance in order to extend the life of the roads. As noted previously, a lay off in staffing is already factored into this proposed budget. Also, accrued time pay-out for the possible retiring member of the road crew has been calculated into the wage line item.

First Selectman Jerram noted that the libraries both requested increases of ~ \$6,000 each. Census data shows that there has been an increase in population in New Hartford and that increase translates into more people who use the library. The Libraries provide a valuable service to the residents, especially in these tight economic times. Jerram noted that he did include a \$2,000 increase for each library. Selectman Gresczyk stated that he thought that was reasonable. Selectman Klebart agreed, adding that he would like to see more but noted that "if the Town is laying off, it doesn't make sense to increase their budgets any higher than that."

Jerram commented that in order to increase Grand List growth, there needs to be a focus on economic development issues and initiatives. He remarked that he would continue to have discussions with the Board of Finance regarding use of the CRRF Funds to be used for a economic development consultant. Klebart agreed, noting that "economic development falls on us, not the WPCA."

Capital Projects were also discussed. Jerram noted that the road grader does not have to be included in capital due to the fact that funds were approved at the recent Town Meeting. Klebart commented that he was not in favor of spending money to make the Probate offices into a conference room at this time. Jerram added a second year of funding for repairs to the Town Hill Cemetery bell. Repairs for this historic bell may be more costly than originally anticipated.

A discussion ensued regarding the costs associated with resident trooper services. Selectman Gresczyk asked “ if the town would be better served by adding an additional constable and eliminating one resident trooper.” He noted that the town only needs to have a contract for one resident trooper in order to remain in the program. The Selectmen did not pursue this discussion at this time, but noted that it is something to think about in the future. Jerram stated that he will address concerns regarding the cost of the program with Lieutenant Rice.

**MOTION:** by Klebart, second Gresczyk to accept the proposed budget with the following amendments:  
reduce the town hall telephone from \$13,500 to \$11,500 and removing road grader from the capital line item.

*Unanimous.*

**MOTION:** by Klebart, second Gresczyk to adjourn at 9:50 AM.

*Unanimous.*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant*