

**Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting
February 26, 2013**

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Jack Casey, Members of the Public Maria Moore and Bob Moore (New Hartford Plus/Independent); Dan Eddy; New Hartford Constable Dan Janco, Resident Trooper Rich Strolis, Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

First Selectman Dan Jerram called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

Minutes:

In the interest of time, the approval of the minutes was tabled (minutes from previous meeting are lengthy).

Storm Charlotte/Nemo Update:

First Selectman Jerram briefed the Selectmen on the response to Winter Storm Charlotte. The snow began falling on Friday, February 8 early in the day and continued throughout the next day. The new plow truck had been delivered on Thursday and was put to the test on Friday. When it was all over, there was over 30" of snow on the ground. The highway crew worked all day Friday and through the night well into Saturday. They were sent home to rest for a few hours and returned on Sunday and were able to get all of the roads opened by Sunday evening. Power outages affected only about 12 residents. FEMA representatives were at Town Hall this past week to gather preliminary numbers so that an estimate can be compiled for Litchfield County in order to determine if the area qualifies for Federal disaster funding. Costs incurred within a 48 hour window will be used for the submittal. Some contractors were brought in to assist in clean up after the storm. Canton Village Construction, Hemlock Construction and M.E. Carroll were contracted to provide front end loaders and a wingplow to assist in pushing back the snow in order to clear intersections and widen roads. The schools in this area were only closed for one day following this blizzard; whereas in other cities and towns, several days of closing occurred. Jerram noted that this says a lot about the response efforts of the highway department and praised them for their hard work.

Three (3) of the Town's "hoop-house" structures were destroyed due to the heavy snowfall. These structures were used to store sand, salt, and provide cover for vehicles. An insurance claim will be filed and it is also possible that FEMA money will be granted to help cover the replacement costs.

Jerram stated that one of the structures was used at Antolini for sand/salt storage and it is the opinion of the Highway Foreman that the structure should not be replaced in the same manner. The foreman believes that it would be more advantageous to "make it better" – he noted that it faces into the wind which is problematic and he feels that now would be the time to orient it properly, if possible. Options should be investigated prior to making any final decision.

Budget Discussion – operating and capital:

First Selectman Jerram informed the Selectmen that he had sent notices to all departments asking for “bare bones” budget requests. The Assessor has notified him that there is a reduction in the Grand List figures since last year. Additionally, state revenues are expected to be decreased. There is also a proposal on the table which may eliminate motor vehicle property taxes. If New Hartford cannot collect taxes on motor vehicles, it would be a loss of approximately 1.3 million dollars to the town. This would obviously have to be made up with another source of revenue. No action has been taken yet, but it is something to keep an eye on.

Mr. Jerram stated that the Police have approached him regarding a desire to add additional personnel to the police force. Part time constable Sheffield will be retiring this year and the police are suggesting that a full time constable be hired to replace him. The Police have indicated that there is more demand for their services and they need additional help. At this point, the First Selectman turned the meeting over to Officers Janco and Strolis to present information to the Board.

Officer Dan Janco presented budget information from prior years. He noted that in 2007-2008, there were three resident troopers, one full time constable and a part time constable and that there has been no increase in personnel even though there has been an increase in demand for services. Currently, the force consists of 2 resident troopers and 2 full time constables with a part time administrative constable who has announced his intent to retire effective March 1, 2013. Janco stated that savings occurred for this line item when he retired from the State Police and became a town constable. Officer Janco compared New Hartford with area towns; Burlington has 3 resident troopers, 2 full time constables and 2 part time constables. Thomaston has a population of 7,890 and has a police force of 10 officers and is seeking to fund two additional officers.

Janco told the Selectmen that the police were recommending hiring one additional full time constable. The estimated increase in the budget would be \$59,000. This would cover salary and benefits.

Resident Trooper Strolis commented that the current Lieutenant at Troop B recently conducted a study of staffing levels for the Troop. Current levels are below where they should be, which often results in officers being asked to assist in other towns. Strolis stated that these assists take the officers away from what they need to be doing in New Hartford. Strolis added that since the tragedy in Newtown, additional duties have been added to the routine schedule for all of the officers. A police presence in all of the local schools has been required; in addition to attending monthly meetings at Northwest Regional School. Trooper Strolis informed the Board that the duties of those who are part of a small police force are more intensive due to the fact that officers find themselves tasked with cases from start to finish. There isn't a detective bureau or other personnel to hand off assignments to. They handle all aspects of the case personally.

The officers explained the scheduling to the Board of Selectmen, noting specifically that the two constables rotate between day and evening shifts. The Constables and Resident Troopers have three days of overlap where there are two officers on during each shift.

Trooper Strolis mentioned that if an additional constable is hired, it would be advantageous to have that

officer assigned to work an 'overlap shift' – perhaps working from 5:00 PM – 2:00 AM or some other swing shift as needed.

Both Officers agreed that due to a lack of personnel, current services to the town are 'reactive rather than proactive.' They stated that increased demand of their time results in having to triage assignments. Running radar and motor vehicle enforcement is rarely done due to a lack of manpower. Selectman Kennerson asked if a part time constable would be an option and Selectman Casey asked if there was a possibility that there might be someone who would be willing to work part time in New Hartford and part time in another town. Resident Trooper Strolis replied that part time constables cannot handle the same type of cases that a full time officer could attend to. It would be more beneficial to hire a full time constable.

The Selectmen asked what other costs might be incurred – i.e. benefits? Vehicle? Officer Janco replied that the 2003 police car that was just replaced could be used and noted that in addition to insurance benefits, a new hire would be eligible for the 457b retirement plan; which requires a town contribution of 5% of salary.

The Selectmen thanked the officers for attending the meeting and presenting their request for consideration; stating that they would discuss this amongst themselves prior to rendering any decision on the matter. Officers Janco and Strolis left the meeting.

First Selectman Jerram continued to present the budget proposal to the Selectmen. They discussed various line items as they reviewed the document. Jerram noted that the Regional Refuse Disposal District Line item decreased due to the District's decision to raise sticker fees and decrease the tipping fee subsidy. These actions result in a decrease to the assessment; although he noted that the tipping fee increase to local haulers due to the lack of a subsidy may cause some commercial businesses some hardship.

Jerram informed the Board that contractual salary increases this year amount to a 2.25% increase. He pointed out that the contracts currently in effect reflect lower increases than what has typically been given in the past. Average annual salary increases negotiated during recent past administrations were in the 3.5% range. He asked the Board members for their input regarding non-union and part time employees—should the same increase be given to those employees? The Selectmen reviewed the positions and agreed that increases should be consistent with the union employees. The highway department salary line item includes an extra 5% to cover the defined contribution benefit plan given to employees hired after July 1, 2011. Jerram noted that there is still one position that has not been filled in this department. Consideration should be given as to whether that position should remain in the budget or not. Jerram commented that staffing levels have already been reduced by having a working highway foreman assume the duties of a highway superintendent.

Selectman Kennerson stated that she wanted to question the need for a full time recreation director position. She added that she was revisiting the question posed last year by Board of Finance member Fitzgerald. She commented that when she looks at the positions of personnel in other departments who have to work hard all year long, she questions whether the Recreation Department director operates at the same capacity. She also stated that there is a request on the table for additional police personnel and she felt that if a position is not operating at full capacity, perhaps changes need to be made in order

to fund another area that is at capacity. Selectman Casey stated that the position needs to be full time in order to get quality programming. He noted that other towns of the same size have full time recreation personnel. Selectman Kennerson replied that in other towns, the recreation director has oversight of the various sports programs; whereas in New Hartford youth sports is run solely by groups of volunteers for each sport, with no responsibilities required by the recreation department. Selectman Jerram stated that the Beach and the summer camp program account for the majority of the revenues for the department. He stated that the Summer camp program does require planning ; however that should be able to be done in the spring and end with a wrap up in the early fall; it shouldn't take the entire period from the end of August to the middle of June to prepare for the next year. The Beach runs all summer, closing when school starts. All of the Selectmen agreed that the summer camp program is a program that many residents enjoy having available. Selectman Kennerson reiterated that she did not feel that the programs offered during the winter required a full time director. Selectman Casey mentioned that there are winter programs such as Zumba, Pilates, Yoga and Ski Club. Jerram clarified that the exercise programs are provided by subcontractors, with little oversight provided by the Recreation Department and stated that the largest winter program is Ski club which is not overseen by the Recreation Director. It is coordinated by a volunteer and uses parent chaperones to provide supervision. This program has been run by resident volunteer for the past few years. Selectman Jerram stated that he has had recent discussions with the Recreation Director and has asked that he find ways to increase the winter revenue.

Selectman Kennerson asked that a summary of revenue and expenses for the winter months and a calendar of events for the winter months be prepared for review by the Board at their next meeting. She stated that this information is necessary prior to her making any recommendation regarding the position.

Selectman Casey expressed concern that if the position were to be anything but full time, it might be difficult to get quality people to fill the position. Kennerson replied that if the programming is not year round and personnel are not working to capacity, then it needs to be looked at. She stated that it isn't fair to other town personnel who work at high capacity the entire year to have someone who receives a fairly equitable compensation to not have to put in the same amount of effort year round. She stated that many of the programs get cancelled or do not run due to lack of sign ups, which may be an indication that those types of services are not what's important to residents. Selectman Casey said that he has had personal experience with seeing some of the summer canoe/kayak programs getting cancelled; however, he feels that is a result of the economy.

First Selectman Jerram stated that the recreation department has a program account that was established in order to allow the department to move towards self sufficiency. The goal was to have the income from programs pay for the expenses associated with the recreation department. There has been some progress towards this as the salaries for summer personnel and the administrative assistant for the recreation department are paid using receipts from the program account, however the general budget still funds a large portion of this department. Continued movement towards self funding is something that Jerram has been discussing with the Recreation Director. Jerram added that he has asked the director to review the camper to employee ratios in order to improve efficiency in scheduling

without sacrificing safety of those who attend the program which would lead to generating additional revenues. Selectman Casey felt that efforts should be made to increase programming and offer programs that the general public would be interested in. He stated that right now he would prefer to “light a fire under the stove rather than remove the stove.”

The Selectmen reviewed the capital expenditures request submitted by the Recreation Department. Mr. Jerram stated that he has requested that the submittal be revised and that priorities be outlined as the initial request is for \$250,000. The First Selectman noted that this cannot be considered as submitted, especially when one notes that the entire capital budget for all departments totals in that range. He identified some of the projects listed. The Challenge Ropes Course was discussed last year and the Selectmen were uncomfortable then endorsing the concept due to the proposed location of the course (an area that is currently used by scouting groups for campfires and other activities) and the fact that the Town’s insurance company had opined that such a course would have strict standards of operations to adhere to and would not be able to be used as a revenue generating ‘business.’ The Selectmen agreed that they support the concept of such a course if it is used to enhance the summer camp program and is used in the manner approved by the insurance company, but they had concerns with the location and wondered if this had been addressed. An additional proposal on the capital list is the Brodie House. The Selectmen noted that there had been an approval and inclusion of funding last year to perform ‘studies’ on this house and yet, to date, nothing had been studied. They understand that the intent is to use the premises as an alternate location for some programming. The biggest hurdle to overcome will be the ADA (American with Disabilities Act) requirements. Additional funding is being requested for Disc Golf. Jerram stated that it is an intriguing idea, but noted that having such an activity in the area known as Brodie South would need some ‘buy in ‘ from the Conservation Commission. They have expressed concerns in the past regarding the habitat area located within the park and they would need to be consulted on this matter. Selectman Casey wondered if Brodie North might be a better location, adding that there should be adequate space available there. The Selectmen agreed that the capital proposal needs to be refined and resubmitted with the bottom line being a lower total.

First Selectman Jerram commented that due to the recent loss of the “hoop house’ storage structures, as mentioned earlier in the meeting, it might be necessary to amend the Capital Budget Proposal to include funding for a sand/salt shed. The Selectmen agreed to call a special meeting on March 7 for the purpose of discussing the budget –general and capital.

Request for Refund of Taxes:

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Casey to approve the 4 requests for refunds of motor vehicle property taxes as presented by the Tax Collector totaling \$678.23 (\$86.93 to Toyota Motor Credit Corp., \$273.12 to Ally Financial (formerly known as GMAC); \$176.43 to Chase Auto Finance Corp; \$141.75 to Lease Plan USA Inc.) all due to overpayments.

Unanimous.

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Correspondence:

Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward presented a Girl Scout Proclamation that had been received and it had been requested that municipalities adopt the proclamation and proclaim March 12, 2013 as "Girl Scout Day." First Selectman Jerram read the Proclamation aloud.

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Casey to adopt the Girl Scout Proclamation as read and proclaim March 12, 2013 as "Girl Scout Day."

Unanimous.

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board that he had received a request from Economic Development Chairman Dave Childs to appoint an additional member, Bill Bohan, to the Rails to Trails Subcommittee.

MOTION: by Casey, second Kennerson to appoint Bill Bohan to serve as a member of the Rails to Trails Subcommittee.

Mr. Jerram noted that appointments to a subcommittee do not have terms associated with them as the term lasts as long as the subcommittee exists. He also stated that this subcommittee is a collaborative effort with the Town of Barkhamsted.

Unanimous.

Any Other Business to Come Before this Board:

First Selectman Jerram asked the Selectmen to consider adding an Executive Session to the agenda for the purpose of discussion related to pending litigation.

MOTION: by Casey, second Kennerson to add an Executive Session to the agenda of the February 26, 2013 regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen for the purpose of discussion related to pending litigation.

Unanimous.

Executive Session:

MOTION: by Casey, second Kennerson to enter into Executive Session at 9:54 PM for the purpose of discussion related to pending litigation.

Unanimous.

(Jerram, Kennerson, Casey and Hayward entered into Executive Session)

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Casey to exit from Executive Session at 10:45 PM.

Unanimous.

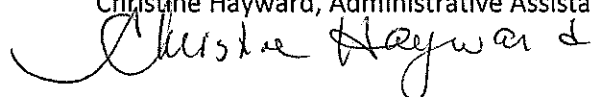
First Selectman noted that no action will be taken on any discussion during Executive Session.

MOTION: by Jerram, second Casey to adjourn at 10:46 PM.

Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant





Girl Scout Day Proclamation
A Proclamation Celebrating 101 years of Girl Scouting

WHEREAS, March 12, 2013, marks the 101st anniversary of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America, which began in 1912 when Savannah, GA native Juliette Gordon Low gathered 18 girls to provide them the opportunity to develop physically, mentally, and spiritually;

WHEREAS, 1912 was also the year in which Girl Scouting started in the state of Connecticut;

WHEREAS, for over 100 years, Girl Scouting has helped build millions of girls and women of courage, confidence, and character who act to make the world a better place; and,

WHEREAS, the Girl Scout Leadership Program helps girls discover themselves and their values, connect with others, and take action to make the world a better place; and,

WHEREAS, through the dedication, time, and talent of volunteers of different backgrounds, abilities, and areas of expertise, Girl Scouts of Connecticut offers the Girl Scout Program to over 47,300 girls in grades K-12 across the state of Connecticut; and,

WHEREAS, the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest honor in Girl Scouting, requires girls to make a measurable and sustainable difference in their community, assess a need and design a solution, find the resources and support to make it happen, and complete the project;

WHEREAS, core programs around Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), environmental stewardship, and healthy living, help girls develop a solid foundation in leadership; and,

WHEREAS, today, more than 59 million American women are Girl Scout alumnae and 3.2 million girls and adult volunteers are active members;

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the Board of Selectmen by virtue of the authority vested in us as the governing body of the Town of New Hartford do hereby applaud the Girl Scouts of the United States of America for over 100 years of leadership and expertise as the voice for and of girls, proudly proclaim March 12, 2013, as Girl Scout Day.