

Board of Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 24, 2017
Sessions Conference Room – Town Hall
7:00PM

The meeting was called to order at 7:20 pm to discuss the following agenda items.

- Item 1. Approval of Minutes
- Item 2. Operations Update
- Item 3. Building Inspector Position
- Item 4. Update on Exclusive Service Area (WUCC)
- Item 5. Ski Sundown Letter of Endorsement
- Item 6. Appointments to Boards & Commissions
- Item 7. Requests for Tax Refunds
- Item 8. Correspondence
- Item 9. Any Other Business to Come Before the Board

In attendance were First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, and Selectman Laura Garay. Kathryn Boughton and Adam Choquette also attended.

With regard to Item 1. First Selectman Jerram distributed proposed minutes for Special Meetings held on January 5th and January 10th. After reading the proposed minutes, a motion was made by Garay, seconded by Kennerson to approve the January 5, 2017 minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously. A second motion was made by Kennerson, seconded by Garay to approve the January 10, 2017 meeting minutes as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

With regard to Item 2. First Selectman Jerram indicated that with bad weather occurring he would limit his updates. Jerram indicated that we have taken delivery of our new plow truck noting that the Selectmen had seen the check for just over \$164,000 in the business office. The truck was "on the road" and operational. Jerram noted that he had been reviewing the 2015/2016 Annual Audit with representatives of King & King questioning an adjustment to the "fund balance" estimate included on page 24. He stated that in audits from prior years, the "ending fund balance" of the prior audit had been used as the "beginning fund balance" of the next year. During the last couple of years small adjustments had been made by the Auditors to the "beginning fund balance", sometimes increasing and sometimes decreasing the figure. This year, Jerram noted that a very large adjustment was made that was in excess of \$1,000,000. He questioned the rationale of the adjustment to the auditors during the past week. They had indicated that the figure was usually attributed to work done off-budget. After discussing the adjustment, the Auditors indicated that the figure needed to be corrected. Jerram indicated that corrected pages to the Audit are being issued. Kennerson asked if any other pages needed to be corrected? Jerram indicated that he would check. Jerram also updated the Selectmen on the "Syntac" situation in the Industrial Park. A newspaper article indicating that a fine had been levied against a local business (Syntac) was released. It indicated that the fine was related to air pollution; although the article didn't make clear if the violations were due to reporting requirements, an illegal emission, or a combination of the two. Jerram stated that some people using social media had tried to portray that the town was aware of the investigation. First Selectman Jerram indicated that neither the State (DEEP) nor the Federal government (EPA) had ever contacted the Town to inform them of the investigation. Jerram indicated that he had called DEEP for more information, but his call has not been returned to date. Jerram indicated that the

Butler Farm proposal was moving forward but the State had not yet finished the survey so we were all in a “holding pattern”. Lastly, Jerram informed the Selectmen that he had applied for and been approved for a CT Green Bank conservation grant for \$9,000. Originally proposed for use as a “charging station” near the new Dunkin Donuts, Jerram indicated that he was informed that if we didn’t move forward quickly we may lose the grant funding due to the state budget crisis. After reviewing the budget, Jerram indicated that he decided to use the grant funding to offset the cost of installing LED lights in Town Hall. Roughly 75 new lights will be installed, hopefully reducing our electricity bill. The Selectmen were enthusiastic about the upgraded lights.

With regard to Item 3. First Selectman Jerram described the current operation of the building department. Revenues have been surging. In 2015/2016 over \$99,324 in building permit revenue was taken in by our part time inspector. Year to date (through December 31, 2016), \$72,253 in permit fees have been collected. Jerram informed the Board, that the new building inspector had requested consideration of additional compensation to cover the cost of insurance noting the inspector was currently paying Cobra at \$1,200 per month. Jerram indicated that there is a shortage around the state for qualified building inspectors and good ones with experience are hard to find. The current employee is knowledgeable and receives very few complaints. The current salary for the job is \$35 per hour based on a 20 hour work week. In many cases, towns bid to take qualified inspectors away leaving small towns without a qualified employee. He noted these inspectors deal with home owners on a daily basis and we have to have a qualified employee. The Selectmen questioned if a 20 hour employee could receive health insurance from the town. Jerram indicated that our insurance carrier has stated that a minimum was 30 hours per week. Kennerson questioned what a plan cost. Jerram indicated near \$20,000 per year, not including the extra 10 hours per week. Garay indicated that she would like to see an agreement reached. Kennerson asked why only health insurance was being quoted that usually dental insurance is offered with health. Jerram stated that we didn’t have enough funds budgeted for the health insurance let alone the additional hours to bring the position to the minimum 30 hours, so he didn’t include it, but could provide the information if necessary. The Selectmen agreed to complete further research in an attempt to resolve the matter at their next meeting.

With regard to Item 4. First Selectman Jerram briefed the Selectmen on the status of the Exclusive Service Area designation. After submitting the Town’s revised declaration to the State Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC), Torrington Water Company and Aquarion Water both withdrew their applications leaving Connecticut Water with a standing claim for land in the southeastern corner of New Hartford primarily owned by the State of Connecticut and the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC). Additionally, a prior claim by Torrington Water Company along Whitbeck Road still exists. Jerram indicated that he discussed the matter with WUCC representative David Murphy indicating that the Town was trying to resolve these last claims by June. The Town is still contesting these claims; although Jerram noted that there were only two residential properties within the Connecticut Water Company claim that are located on Ramp Road, one of which that was just purchased for preservation. With regard to Whitbeck Road, while Torrington Water Company had been given authority by a prior Board of Selectmen, Jerram believes that no Town Meeting was ever held to gain legislative approval and the terms and conditions of what area may or may not be serviced along Whitbeck Road was ever determined.

With regard to Item 5. First Selectman Jerram reminded the Selectmen of the proposal put forth by Ski Sundown to acquire water from MDC to help with snowmaking. Jerram indicated that he was preparing a letter in support of Ski Sundown’s proposal and invited the Selectmen to join him in signing the letter of support.

With regard to Item 6. No appointments were made at the meeting.

With regard to Item 7. No requests for refunds were made at the meeting.

With regard to Item 8. No correspondence was presented at the meeting.

With regard to Item 9. Any Other Business to Come Before the Board. Selectmen Garay made a statement regarding what she called “disparaging comments” made by the First Selectmen on Facebook about the peaceful protest held on Inauguration Day in front of Town Hall. Garay indicated that she was “disappointed” in his comments stating that an attempt should have been made to bring these people together trying to get them involved. First Selectman Jerram indicated that he would die defending any protestors right to free speech, but in doing so – he would never give up his own. He added that while he supports everyone’s right, if people wanted to put statements on a cardboard sign, they needed to be willing to defend it to others that disagreed. Jerram indicated that he was very disappointed to see a locally organized event that featured signs that read “Abort Trump”, “Impeach Trump” and “He’s Not My President” before the President was even inaugurated. Kennerson agreed. Jerram added that when he sees these type of signs, he believes it just perpetuates the bitter partisan divide that exists in Washington today. Garay indicated the she believes we should be more inclusive and try to bring these people together not challenge them on the internet for not attending local meetings. Jerram asked Garay if she thought the “He’s Not My President” sign was appropriate asking her if President Trump was her President? Garay said he was, laughing and jokingly stating that “we all know that Trump is going to fix everything”. The Selectmen furthered the discussion in a respectful fashion agreeing that hopefully there would be more bipartisanship in Washington instead of the typical gridlock where most politicians are worried about their elections instead of working for the families of New Hartford and other communities.

As there was no other business to attend to, a motion made by Garay, seconded by Kennerson, to adjourn at 8:40pm. The motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Jerram, First Selectman