

**Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 28, 2017**

Present: First Selectman Daniel Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Laura Garay; School Building Committee Chairman Denton Butler; Members of the Public: Pat Spaziani, Penny Miller, Jen Zenuh, Laura Polakow, Kathleen Tancreti, Christine Sullivan, Tom Buzzi, Linda Goff, Kelly O'Dell Longhi, Karl Hermanot, Bridget Sayer; Member of the Press Kathryn Boughton (Republican-American); Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

First Selectmen Jerram called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Garay to move this agenda item to follow Request for Refund for Taxes; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous

Opportunity for Public Comment:

Ms. Sullivan asked if there would be an opportunity for Public Comment at the time that agenda items are specifically addressed. Mr. Jerram replied yes.

School Building Committee Update – Bud Butler:

First Selectman Jerram introduced Mr. Butler and offered him the floor to present information regarding the Antolini School Building Project.

Mr. Butler noted that the Antolini School Building project had been divided into two segments: the roof project and the windows, doors, air handlers project. Even though it had been broken into segments for construction scheduling purposes, the project is one project and the funding for the project was approved as one project at a town wide referendum. Butler noted that the roof portion of the project is almost ready to be closed out. The addition of roof guards was an add on due to safety concerns and those concerns have been addressed.

Mr. Butler stated that the current School Building Committee members are Bill Baxter, Ken Krohner and himself. He commented that Mr. Baxter is currently vacationing in Florida for an extended period of time and was not able to be physically present for any meetings for about 5 weeks. However, Mr. Butler indicated that he had phone conversations with the members of the Building Committee to alert them of additional work that he would like to propose to the Selectmen for consideration. They did not object to bringing the matter forward. Mr. Butler stated that he was present this evening to put forth for consideration some additional work be included into the project. He noted that the Board of Selectmen had already approved air conditioning for the gym, cafeteria and multipurpose room and had already approved the addition of a portico to be installed at the side entrance to the school. Butler noted that this entrance is widely used by those who visit the school at night for meetings and other activities. This

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portico provides protection from the elements for those who use this entrance and will help to keep the stairs less hazardous during inclement weather.

Butler presented a Summary of Statement of Work to be considered as possible change orders to the Selectmen for consideration. He requested that the Board of Selectmen consider adding to the scope of work; noting that the budget will remain intact and in fact, will remain under budget. He was not seeking additional funding, just additional work.

Butler provided an explanation of the components listed on the Statement of Work. Air conditioning in the library, piping freeze protection, and ceiling work are 3 possible change orders. Mr. Butler noted that there had been consideration of replacement of light fixtures at the school; replacing the older lights with newer energy efficient lights; however, it was decided that this project could be placed within the operating budget of the Board of Education.

First Selectman Jerram asked if the School Building Committee had met with the School Facilities committee to seek their input on these proposals. School Board member and Chairman of the Facilities Committee Jen Zenuh who was present at the meeting, interjected that there were some concerns expressed regarding air conditioning being used excessively. Concern was also expressed that if doors do not remain shut, it will cause the A/C to be used as a means to cool the entire building, resulting in excess costs. Ms. Zenuh stated that these seemed to be minor concerns as there is no intention to run the Air Conditioning 24/7, 365 days per year and it is common sense to pull doors shut in areas where air conditioning is being used. She added that tutors who provided summer tutoring last summer at Town Hall had expressed their belief that tutoring in air conditioned spaces was beneficial to student learning. Additionally, it is a known fact that computers should be in climate controlled areas. Mr. Jerram asked Ms. Zenuh if it was her belief that this add-on would be endorsed by the entirety of the School Board. Ms. Zenuh replied that she could not be certain of that, but she would make a case for the approval.

Discussion turned to the piping freeze protection and insulation of the heating system proposal. Mr. Jerram noted that there was some pipe work included in the BOE Capital budget and asked if this proposal would take the place of that. Mr. Butler stated that this is a more extensive cleaning of the existing pipes and includes a sensing unit that would be installed to insure that the proper levels of anti freeze are in the pipes at all times as an effort to prevent future freeze ups and it was his understanding that if this is approved, the other less intensive project would be removed from the operating budget.

Ceiling tile replacement was also discussed. The tiles would be replaced, but the existing grid work would remain. It was questioned whether or not they would be painted – the response was that they would remain as-is.

Selectman Kennerson stated that although she supported the projects researched by the School Building Committee, she was reluctant to take any formal action on these add-ons until she knew how

the full Board of Education felt. She stated that “we have been told that we don’t work with other Boards and I would prefer to wait and see what they think before taking any action.”

Selectman Garay stated that she thought the changes were worthy of consideration; adding that these things should be addressed as part of the project or they will be more costly later on. However, she agreed with Ms. Kennerson that it would be advantageous to see what the Board of Education thought. She noted that the project is still under-budget and would be even if these changes are approved.

The Selectmen thanked Mr. Butler for the time and effort spent on gathering the facts and presenting them for consideration.

Christine Sullivan, an educator at Ann Antolini School expressed her thanks to Mr. Butler for putting forth these proposals. Bridget Sayer, another teacher at Ann Antolini, added that “these are long overdue” and thanked Mr. Butler also.

Appointments to Boards and Commissions:

MOTION: by Garay to appoint Kay Wall to fill a vacancy and serve as an alternate member on the Historic District Commission, term to expire December 31, 2019; seconded by Kennerson.

Unanimous

Mr. Jerram suggested changing the order of the next 3 agenda items, placing Operations Updates after “Correspondence from Chairman Board of Finance Chairman regarding New Hartford Teachers’ Contract.” And “Status of Farmland Preservation re: Michael Butler Farm, Blackbridge Road.”

The Selectmen agreed to this change; no formal action taken.

Correspondence from Chairman Board of Finance Chairman regarding New Hartford Teachers’

Contract:

First Selectman Jerram announced that he had received an email from Board of Finance Chairman Jim Fitzgerald asking if the Board of Selectmen had discussed protesting the recent BOE teachers’ contract and bringing it to a Town Meeting.

Mr. Jerram stated that the contract that was approved by the local Board of Education was very similar to the contract approved by the Regional School Board. He noted that there were step freezes with respect to salary increases and of significance to note was the fact that there were concessions made with respect to healthcare cost sharing. Jerram further stated that there was no data to support that the contract was out of the realm of reasonableness based on comparisons with other teacher contracts. He added that the local Board of Ed had professional representation during negotiations. Selectman Garay asked if there has been any documentation to show that the Board of Finance may also be questioning the Regional 7 contract. Mr. Jerram replied that there had been no discussion at recently held Board of Finance meetings regarding ‘unfairness’ of the contracts. Garay asked if the

contract had been approved unanimously by the local Board of Ed; to which Board of Ed member Zenuh replied, “yes”.

Selectman Kennerson stated that she understands that there are people who may not like the increases approved, but “they are not dissimilar with what is out there.” She added that taking on a risk of litigation or arbitration based on “what ifs” does not seem prudent. Mr. Jerram commented that he did not want to undermine those who spent 3 months and \$10,000 negotiating a contract. He added that the Chairman did not supply any data to support challenging the contract. He recognizes that there is a fear of what the State may do, but those cuts are still uncertain and the Board of Ed negotiated what they thought was a fair contract in this economic climate.

Mr. Butler interjected that when he was a member of past Board of Ed negotiations committees, the Board of Finance sent a representative to be present at the meetings and asked if there was BOF presence at the meetings. Board of Ed member Pat Spaziani replied that Board of Finance member Stephen Tuxbury was present. Mr. Butler commented that he thought it “perplexing that this comes up at the 11th hour after the contract was negotiated.”

Selectman Kennerson stated that she felt that the Board of Selectmen should respond to Chairman Fitzgerald that they see no reason to take any action especially in light of the fact that there has been no communications at the Board of Finance meeting or to this Board regarding any reason to note concerns. There is no presence at this meeting tonight to express any thought process on what to challenge.

It was agreed that the First Selectman would send correspondence to the Chairman of the Board of Finance stating that no challenge would be pursued.

Board of Education Member Zenuh commented that she found it interesting that a Chairman concerned with saving money would suggest challenging a contract that could cost a lot of money to challenge.

Status of Farmland Preservation re: Michael Butler Farm, Blackbridge Road:

First Selectman Jerram stated that the Open Space Preservation Commission had made a presentation to the Board of Finance at their February 14, 2017, meeting regarding the Michael Butler farm preservation project. Some of the Board of Finance members were extremely uncomfortable with advancing this project at this time due to the uncertainty of the Governor’s budget. A signal was sent to the Open Space Preservation Commission to “slow down.”

A phone call to Cam Weimar from the Department of Agriculture confirms that there is “no expiration date” with respect to the grant funding; however, the funds are “first come, first served” and there are other negotiations underway.

Selectman Kennerson stated that she felt that in order to give this proposal the best chance of success, it should wait until there is more certainty with the budget.

Resident Linda Goff stated that it was her opinion that this is a tough time to be asking for funding to purchase development rights, considering that the land is not being purchased outright. She stated that spending money for land on the river with the idea of protecting the river when there is a town garage sitting on the river and nothing is being done to protect the river from that “is a joke.”

First Selectman Jerram replied that the town garage site has been viewed as being part of a package to

develop when and if the Hurley property gets developed. He stated that it would be best to develop that together.

Jerram further stated that the Trail along the river on the Butler property came as a by- product to Farmland Preservation. There are grant funds available and comparing that to moving the town garage is pennies on the dollar.

Kennerson explained that she preferred any funding for the Farmland Preservation to come as a receivable to the town. The General Fund should not be used for the purchase, just as was the case with the Phillips Farm development rights purchase.

Operations Updates:

First Selectman Jerram gave a brief overview of operations.

LED lights have been installed in Town Hall. This should show a positive effect on the electricity usage for Town Hall.

Jerram noted that he has made 3 trips to Hartford to testify on several of the budget proposals.

The Capital Expenditure plans for both the Local Board of Ed and the Town have been reviewed and approved by the Committee.

Economic Development continues in Town. Northwest Gymnastics held their grand opening with over 100 people in attendance last weekend.

A “visitors map” of New Hartford, Winsted, Colebrook and Norfolk is being completed by Mary Hart of “Miles of Smiles.” The First Selectman has had a couple of meetings with Ms. Hart as she gathered information for the map. She was given contact information for the Business council and area businesses.

Turning Point Realty had a grand opening ceremony.

Mr. Jerram noted that there are a couple of line items that may be getting close to being expended. He will keep an eye on them and will bring forth as needed for consideration of transfers.

Warm weather has caused high water flow at the Carpenter Road Bridge due to snow melt up north. The contractor is unable to dig and replace the box culvert at this time.

Jerram noted that there is some old equipment at the Town Garage that should be considered for sale.

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the sale of a 2005 Ford F550 and a dump body and a forklift, to be sold on the online auction “gov deals” , authorization given to First Selectman Jerram to take action necessary to dispose of this equipment; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION by Kennerson to approve the minutes dated January 24, 2017 as presented; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous

Request for Tax Refunds:

Mr. Jerram stated that the Tax Collector has presented 4 requests for Tax Refunds for approval by the Board; 3 motor vehicle property taxes (\$97.99 to Paul Hudobenko due to “transferred to Waterbury,” \$101.80 to Paul Hudobenko due to “transferred to Waterbury,” \$127.00 to Paul Hudobenko due to “transferred to Waterbury,” and 1 Real Estate Property Taxes (\$19.09 to New Hartford Donuts, LLC).

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the request for refund of taxes as submitted by the Tax Collector; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous

Capital Expenditures:

First Selectman Jerram stated that the Advisory Commission on Capital Expenditures had met on Saturday, February 25, 2017. The members reviewed the Capital plans submitted by the Board of Education and the Town. Additionally, the Commission discussed the proposed Farmland Preservation project and they endorsed the proposal by a vote of 3:1. (Mr. Jerram noted that there are minutes of that meeting that can be viewed for specifics of the discussion.) Jerram informed the Selectmen that there was a typographical error on the Capital Plan that had been approved by the Board. He has fixed the error and asked the Selectmen for a formal approval of the revised plan.

MOTION: by Kennerson to adopt the amended 5 year Capitol plan; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous

Budget 2017-2018:

The Selectmen continued their work with preparing a proposed budget for 2017-2018. They reviewed several areas and discussed some potential changes. It was noted that the Assessor line item and the Assessor clerk line items should be updated to reflect current practice. The Assessor Clerk has now become the Assessor, therefore her salary should be moved from Clerk to Assessor.

The Selectman discussed the Registrars line items. Mr. Jerram stated that they have budgeted for 2 referenda and noted that the salary increase proposed was higher than what other elected officials have been budgeted.

A brief discussion occurred regarding the lack of consistency regarding the days, times and hours worked by the Registrars. It was noted that all other offices/employees in Town Hall have schedules that they adhere to. It makes it difficult to not know when to expect a Registrar to be in Town Hall. It was also noted that there is a lack of efficiency due to the fact that the Registrars are rarely in the office together. The Selectmen discussed the fact that Registrars should have some accountability with respect to hours of work. It was also suggested that the hours of work be reduced to 7.5 hours per week in order to reduce the budget. Mr. Jerram stated that he would draft a policy for consideration that would address that Registrars would be required to work in the office on the same day with a

maximum of 7.5 hours per week. Any increase in hours would need to be approved in advance. Discussion ensued regarding other areas of the budget with some adjustments in line items (such as paving and Board of Finance supplies) being considered. A new line item “retirement benefits” needs to be added to the budget so that the expenses associated with the town’s share of the defined contribution plan can be properly recorded. Additional review of the budget will occur at a Special Board of Selectmen meeting to be scheduled at a convenient time.

Appointments (revisited):

Mr. Jerram stated that he had forgotten to discuss an appointment to the Farmington Valley Health District during the Appointments to Boards and Commissions agenda item. He reminded the Board of the resignation of Mary Winar, who had served as the Town’s representative on the Board of The Farmington Valley Health District. He noted that this particular vacancy can be a difficult one to fill due to the fact that the meetings are held during the work day. He asked the Selectmen for their consideration of his appointment to serve in this capacity.

MOTION: by Kennerson to appoint First Selectman Dan Jerram to serve as the Town of New Hartford’s representative to the Farmington Valley Health District Board of Directors. Term of office is until such time that a replacement is appointed; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous

MOTION: by Kennerson to adjourn at 10:20 PM; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant

