

**Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting
November 27, 2018**

MINUTES

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Eric Claman, Selectman Alesia Kennerson;
Members of the Public: Joe Toro, Penny Miller, Laura Garay; Member of the Press Kathryn Boughton (Republican-American); Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

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

Opportunity for Public Comment:

No comments.

Update (if any) on potential sale of water and/or wastewater assets:

First Selectman Jerram presented a brief update on the status of the work of the Asset Evaluation Team. There were 4 charges assigned to this committee when it was formed (1. to gain a working knowledge of all town owned water and sewer assets; 2. review and/or modify the proposed RFP for sale of said assets and make a recommendation to the BOS pertaining to the release of the RFP; 3. review all submitted proposals for the sale of the asset, and 4. make a recommendation to the BOS pertaining to the sale of the assets). The committee is currently in the midst of stage 4 (make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen regarding a potential sale of water and/or wastewater assets). Jerram commented that the committee continues to meet in Executive Session as they have not completed the negotiations with the bidder (Aquarion Water Company) and are not ready to make a recommendation. There are still some questions that need to be answered by the USDA regarding grant disposition. Until there is a response, the committee cannot move forward in their negotiations.

Jerram stated that Diane Johnson, an individual who works for Atlantic States Rural Water and Wastewater Association who is familiar with New Hartford as she has worked with New Hartford in the past, has been in contact with the USDA on behalf of New Hartford. She has confirmed that the request is at the National review level. This is a new situation for USDA and they will review the request; but they have not given a timeframe for a response. Jerram noted that their fiscal year ended in September, so hopefully, they can focus on this issue now. Jerram stated that he will call another meeting of the AET, but if there is no word from Washington, there is little that they can do/discuss.

First Selectman to report on meeting with Commission on Aging re request for Senior Housing

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board that he had recently attended a meeting of the Commission on Aging, at their request. He stated that they had a good conversation regarding the lack of single level housing in New Hartford suitable for Seniors. The Commission is contemplating seeking the re-establishment of some form of a housing authority. There is agreement that there is limited housing available that is attractive to Seniors. Seniors are not looking for older homes that need a lot of work and they are not looking for large, multi-level homes. The Commission on Aging has met with Leslie Higgins Biddle, an individual who works for an agency that helps Municipalities look at options for

housing for low income and the senior population. It was suggested that a study be conducted to determine what the need is in New Hartford. Ms. Biddle has offered to assist in developing such a survey. The Commission on Aging will be meeting with Ms. Biddle again sometime in January. All Selectmen agreed that defining what the needs are is a good place to start and they support the work of the Commission on Aging. Selectman Claman commented that there might be differences of opinions as to what type of Senior housing is being sought. There may be those who want the single level, but he also feels that there are others who may want to scale down a bit, but still have a 'higher end' dwelling.

Operations Updates:

Mr. Jerram presented several updates to the Board:

Light New Hartford decorating is underway and coordination of all the entities that participate in the event is being handled by new Chairman, Carissa Monroe. This is her first year running the event and she is doing very well.

Election Day ran smoothly; 76% turnout of voters in New Hartford. The Registrars are to be commended for a job well done.

The fencing at Butler Farm/Helen Butler Trail has been installed; however, gates have not yet been completed. Wet weather conditions are also interfering with being able to install bollards and the irrigation conduits that are town responsibility as outlined in the agreement.

Local police and Troop B have been heavily involved in a recent drug related case. They have been working hard to bring this case to completion. In addition to this large case, they have also been kept busy with several domestic cases and also have had an increase in DUIs; not uncommon during the Holiday Season.

Commander of Troop B Bill Baldwin will be retiring from his position. He has served the Troop well and will be missed. Jerram noted that Commander Baldwin was a great communicator and always kept the Town informed of police activities.

A replacement Land Use Administrator has been hired. Michael Lucas will take the lead in the Land Use office. He is new to the profession; will soon graduate from Central CT State University with a combination Geography/Planning degree. Jerram noted that former ZEO Rista Malanca (currently employed by the City of Torrington as Zoning Enforcement Officer) will act as a consultant to Mike as he transitions to this new career.

Selectman Claman commented that he would like to see a "better job of setting expectations for employees," stating that he would like to see them held accountable for their performance. Mr. Jerram replied to Mr. Claman, saying that he felt that comment was an insult to all current employees. Mr. Claman replied that he had had some personal experience with a former employee and felt that clear expectations lead to greater service. Jerram cautioned Mr. Claman regarding the discussion of personnel matters. Mr. Claman stated that he sees it as his responsibility to make New Hartford better. Mr. Jerram closed this debate by stating that he was happy to welcome Michael Lucas as a staff member and moved on to a different topic.

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board that he expected to bring closure to the currently vacant Senior Director within the next week.

Jerram also informed the Board of his intention to add a full time position to Town Hall staffing. A new

position known as “Administrative Office Assistant” will be implemented to assist with various duties. A job description has been developed. Jerram noted that \$4000 of the funding he had anticipated to use to cover the wages for this position were recently reallocated by the Board of Finance to the Winchester Youth Service Bureau. The Board of Selectmen had been in favor of an additional appropriation to this agency; however, the Board of Finance transferred funds from contingency to cover this increase. This was not how the Selectmen had intended to fund this agency - they were requesting an additional allocation, not a transfer.

The First Selectman stated that he had an upcoming meeting scheduled with Town Attorney Chip Roraback to discuss several items. One of them will be to request that the attorney draft an ordinance for consideration that moves the Tax Collector from an elected position to an appointed position. He stated that many area towns are making this change from elected to appointed. With an elected position, there is no guarantee that the individual seeking office has the necessary credentials or training to be a tax collector. An elected official also must be a resident of the Town in which elected, which limits the pool of potential candidates. The position would become a town hall union position and would be subject to provisions for due process for the employee; therefore it would not be at the will of any one administration. The ordinance would need to be brought before the Town Meeting for consideration.

Jerram also stated that the Town needs to pass an ‘illicit discharge ordinance’ –which allows for the investigation and enforcement of illicit discharges into the town’s drainage system. Jerram is seeking sample ordinances from other communities to use as a template.

Recommendation by P&Z Commission to fill alternate vacancy on the Commission:

First Selectman Jerram notified the Board that there has been some confusion regarding how to fill an alternate vacancy on the Planning and Zoning Commission. Attorney Roraback has been reviewing the past practice and has reviewed the town ordinances that currently exist. He notes that a former Land Use Attorney for the town had opined that it is the Planning and Zoning Commission that fills the vacancy and appoints the member. Although he is not in 100% agreement, he has stated that since this is what has been done, this is what should be done at this point and has suggested that the Board of Selectmen “endorse” the choice of the P&Z. Roraback has advised that the P&Z ordinances be rescinded and new ordinances adopted that outline the procedure.

MOTION: by Kennerson to ratify the recommendation made by the Planning and Zoning Commission to appoint Michael (Mike) Misiorski to fill a vacancy as an alternate on the Planning and Zoning Commission, seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

Review of expiring terms for Board and Commission Members:

The Board of Selectmen reviewed a listing of Board and Commission members whose terms expire at the end of December. Appointments will be addressed at the December meeting.

2019 Board of Selectmen Meeting Schedule:

The Selectmen reviewed the proposed 2019 Regular Meeting Schedule. Regular meetings will be scheduled for the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM with the exception of the December meeting.

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the regular meeting schedule for the Board of Selectmen for the 2019 Calendar year, seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

2019 Town Hall Holiday Schedule:

The Selectmen reviewed the 2019 Holiday Schedule.

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the 2019 Holiday Schedule, seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

Request for Tax Refunds:

The Selectmen reviewed the 2016 Grand List tax refunds presented for approval:

Andrew Bufkin	\$36.62
Christy Tellier	\$5.81
Richard C. Johnson	\$58.89
Nissan Infiniti	\$347.02

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve tax refunds from the 2016 Grand List payments as presented by the Tax Collector, seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

The Selectmen reviewed the 2017 Grand List tax refunds presented for approval:

Johnson H Phillips 2nd	\$644.94
Stephen M. Kayser	\$656.89
Michael J. & Nancy F. Yabrosky	\$10.92
Bruce D. & Pauline M. Durand	\$14.09
Asbestos Management Co. LLC	\$16.90
Douglas Haut	\$41.38
Nissan Infiniti LT	\$236.44
Enterprise FM Trust	\$73.92
Honda Lease Trust	\$41.77
Bonnie B. & Robert L. Slater	\$89.95
JP Morgan Chase Bank NA	\$95.15
Timothy Goff	\$115.17
Debra C. Billingsley	\$43.40

MOTION; by Kennerson to approve tax refunds from the 2017 Grand List payments as presented by the Tax Collector, seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board that Tax Collector Linda Sheffield had submitted a formal letter of resignation indicating that she would be retiring from her current position effective February 15, 2019.

Jerram stated that Ms. Sheffield has held the position for 33 years and has always been efficient and friendly. She has taken care of residents in a pleasant and effective manner. He acknowledged her long and distinguished career and stated that “she will be missed.” Claman and Kennerson agreed and wished her well.

Correspondence:

The First Selectman informed the Board that correspondence has been received from MIRA, the recycling and trash processing center that is used by RRDD#1. A mechanical failure has left the facility without the ability to process solid waste. This may lead to having to ship waste out of state to another facility; which could be a major expense. It is possible that a special assessment could be imposed on member towns to cover these extra costs. Mr. Jerram stated that RRDD is aware that it would be difficult for municipalities to fund an extra assessment mid-budget; therefore, it has been stated that they might wait until the next fiscal year so that it can be included in the budget process.

Selectman Kennerson questioned if there is any recourse for the Town to take so as not to have to pay for this failure. She asked if there was any possibility that this could be an insurance claim. She stated that she did not think the town should take this sitting down.

First Selectman Jerram told the Selectmen that a letter had been received from the Farmington River Coordinating Committee expressing concerns regarding a building located at 170 Main Street. They questioned the accuracy of measurements taken with respect to the limits of the Farmington River Overlay District and also expressed concern with what they feel is a lack of communication regarding the approvals/permitting for this building. Mr. Jerram stated that he values the FRCC and the good work they do protecting the river, but the concerns they express are false. He explained that a survey has been submitted that shows that the location of the building is outside of the overlay area; the required setbacks have been adhered to. He then addressed their commentary regarding lack of communication and stated that there were numerous posted meetings regarding this particular building. He stated that the meetings were public and that there are ways to keep informed of meetings and agendas by subscribing to news on the town website.

The second concern they stated in the letter has to do with easement for the Helen Butler Trail. A statement is made in their letter that says supporters of the trail were told that there would be no paved surfaces. Jerram refuted this, stating that there were no promises made regarding what type of surface would exist on the trail. Jerram said that at this point in time, pavement is not considered, but no promises have been made as to what might happen someday in the future. Kennerson agreed, saying “no one ever promised that it would never be paved.”

A Thank You note was received from a participant in the recent Cyclocross bike event held at Brodie Park at the end of October. This individual thanked New Hartford for being the hosts of this event.

Any Other Business to Come Before this Board:

Mr. Jerram distributed the current capital plan to the Selectmen and asked that they review this prior to the next Selectman's meeting. He stated that the Highway Department would like a wash bay installed and they feel that is a bigger priority than anything else. They want to be able to maintain and prolong the life of the equipment that they have.

Ms. Garay asked the Board if there is any timeline as to when the town could expect notification of whether or not a Grant will be awarded for the Rails to Trails. Mr. Jerram replied that they had indicated that notification could be expected by the end of the December.

MOTION: by Kennerson to adjourn at 8:55 PM; seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant

ATTACHMENTS:

Correspondence from MIRA dated November 9, 2018

Correspondence from Farmington River Coordinating Committee dated November 20, 2018

BOS meeting schedule 2019

Town Hall Holiday Schedule 2019