

**Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, November 26, 2013**

MINUTES

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Jack Casey; Board of Education Chairman Josh Adams, Board of Finance members Jim Fitzgerald, Reggie Smith; Others Present Joe Toro, Bob Moore (New Hartford Independent), Kate Hartman (Register Citizen), Bud Butler, Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

First Selectman Dan Jerram called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

Agenda item not addressed due to lengthy agenda

Operations Updates:

First Selectman Jerram stated that there had recently been an informational meeting regarding the Carpenter Road Bridge and the Antolini School renovation project. The bridge presentation went well. Jerram noted that although the design and the project are in the early stages, it is important to get the word out that the bridge needs to be replaced. Jerram stated that there may be an opportunity for grant funding through the local bridge program. He will continue to pursue this funding and will reach out to Representative Simanski and Senator Witkos for endorsement.

Jerram informed the Selectmen that core testing and chloride sampling has been completed on the Maple Hollow Bridge; but results are not yet available. The Maple Hollow Bridge is currently the worst rated bridge in New Hartford and needs to be addressed. The testing will determine the course of action needed to repair the bridge.

Mr. Jerram stated that he and Don Stein, First Selectman of Barkhamsted had recently attended a meeting that included Scott Jellison of the MDC. Jerram and Stein “made a pitch” for the “Rails to Trails” idea that is a joint initiative under consideration by Barkhamsted and New Hartford. MDC agreed to meet in March to discuss the Rails to Trails initiative.

Old Steele Road cul-de sac is being paved. Having this cul-de-sac provides room for plow trucks to maneuver without having to back up or use private property to turn around. Jerram noted that later in the meeting, the Selectmen will be setting the Call for a Special Town Meeting where easements for properties on Old Steele will be presented. Jerram stated that all of the property owners had given verbal consent to proceed with the cul-de –sac prior to formalizing the easements, as they were in agreement that the paving needs to be completed prior to the closing of asphalt plants in the area. Jerram indicated that there are some drainage issues that will need to be completed in the spring. The additional sand/salt shed site at Antolini will be reviewed by personnel from the MDC. They have indicated that they are concerned with potential water run off from the site and the potential impact to the watershed area. Jerram stated that the Town will address any concerns expressed.

Jerram announced that CL&P has completed their tree cutting/trimming and has moved out of the area. First Selectman Jerram stated that he would like to repeat the “Where is Santa” contest at local

businesses again this year. The Selectman agreed to support this contest, with the hope that local businesses will benefit from this contest.

The First Selectman stated that he has given advance notice to the Department of Emergency Services that he intends to modify the Resident Trooper contract, reducing the number of Resident Troopers to 1 rather than 2. Jerram announced that Officer Kevin Wilkinson began his employment with the Town of New Hartford police yesterday. Officer Wilkinson was previously a detective with the Canton Police Department. As an aside, Jerram mentioned that he spoke with the police alerting them to the need for increased traffic enforcement. He noted that his office receives many complaints related to speeding and he has asked the police to try and devote additional time to this task, if at all possible.

Discussion of WPCA debt service/USDA loan repayment “split”:

First Selectman Jerram stated that the wastewater financing subcommittee had recently met and they had discussed having committee members go back to their respective boards and discuss whether or not they would be accepting of a 19% user share of the debt service. The Selectmen, although members of the subcommittee, have not discussed this as a Board and this meeting presents the opportunity to do just that.

The First Selectman stated that he was not against advocating for some sort of compromise regarding the current debt repayment structure, but noted that he was uncomfortable with the present situation where there aren't any policies in place regarding shut offs and collecting payments from several accounts that are in arrears. Another concern is the lack of enforcement regarding requiring those who currently about the sewer line to hook up to the sewer system. He stated that he had little faith in expending funds to extend sewer lines if there are those who could be hooked up and aren't.

Addressing those areas with a mitigation plan would help to show the public that the WPCA is moving in the right direction.

Selectman Casey stated that he understood Mr. Jerram's concerns, but added that it was not the users 'that ran up the debt credit card.' Member of the Public Roy Litchfield commented that "the WPCA didn't stick to their own rules and guidelines." He noted that connection fees had originally been set at \$8,000 and those fees have since been reduced to \$200.00. Litchfield stated that if abutters had been forced to connect and had been assessed the connection fees, the WPCA would be a lot better off.

Member of the Public Reggie Smith commented that he was 'open to help solve the problem.'

Selectman Kennerson added that the Wastewater treatment plant financing debt service is not the only thing that is causing financial difficulties. There are issues with accounts receivables that add to the problem.

Mr. Jerram interjected that there has been some improvement in WPCA finances; noting specifically that the audit shows that 4 years ago the WPCA was near bankruptcy but they are now 'in the black.'

Mr. Litchfield stated that for the past few years, nothing has been accomplished. Member of the Public Bud Butler pointed out that there is an existing ordinance that states that the WPCA is to operate at a break even or profitable outcome. He stated that it was his belief that the WPCA has not been run right

for at least the past 5 years. He added that there needs to be a logical business plan in place for the WPCA to become successful.

A brief discussion regarding having a loan fund established for those who cannot afford the connection ensued;

Discussion of School Security Project:

First Selectman Jerram stated that the Board of Finance has been in support of this project since its inception. The Board of Selectmen, however, wanted feedback from the public prior to considering taking this to a public vote. A grant is available from the State of Connecticut to offset the expenses associated with the purchase and installation of the equipment.

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Casey to endorse the School Security Project and take such proposal to Town Meeting.

School Board member Josh Adams asked why the Selectmen were not going to take this to a formal referendum. Mr. Jerram replied that there is a consensus among Boards that the costs are reasonable due to the reimbursement proposed by State and they saw no need to take issue to an all day vote.

Unanimous.

Set time, date, manner of Special Town Meeting:

MOTION: by Casey, second Kennerson to call a Town Meeting to be held on Thursday, December 12, 2013 in the Senior Center/Meeting Room of the New Hartford Town Hall for the purpose of addressing the following items: Acceptance of Easements on Old Steele Road that allow for the creation and paving of a cul-de-sac on Old Steele Road; Acceptance of a drainage easement from Donna and Daniel LaPlante on Stedman Road; to appropriate funding for purchasing and installing Security equipment and improvements at the New Hartford Schools; adoption of an ordinance that ratifies the merger of the Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials with the Northwest Council of Governments and to consider a Charter amendment to the RRDD#1.

Unanimous.

Appointment of a Municipal Tax Assessor:

MOTION: by Casey, second Kennerson to reappoint Elizabeth A. Paul to the position of Municipal Tax Assessor for the Town of New Hartford.

First Selectman Jerram noted that there is an ordinance that requires that the Selectmen appoint an Assessor. Jerram stated that 'Beth is great and I fully support her as the Assessor' All agreed.

Unanimous.

Approval of 2014 Board of Selectmen meeting dates:

MOTION: by Casey, second Kennerson to set the regular meeting schedule of the Board of Selectmen as the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM as outlined on the attached schedule, with the exception of the month of December. December meeting will be held on the third Tuesday of the month.

Unanimous.

Approval of the 2014 Holiday Schedule:

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Casey to approve the 2014 Holiday Schedule as attached.

Unanimous.

Opportunity for Public Comment:

Joe Toro encouraged the Selectmen to consider investigation of sources of funding for sewer hook ups.

Request for refunds of Taxes:

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Casey to approve a request for refund of Motor Vehicle Taxes as submitted by the Tax Collector.

Unanimous.

Correspondence:

None

Any Other Business:

Selectman Kennerson commented that she would like an update on the recreation department at the next meeting. Specifically, she asked that there be a report of revenues earned since camp ended. Jerram stated that the office for the Recreation Department will once again be located at Town Hall during the “off season.” This makes it more practical for collaboration between staff.

Executive Session:

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Casey to enter into Executive Session at 9:00 PM for the purpose of discussion of pending legal action (Case vs. Town Of New Hartford).

Unanimous.

Kennerson, Jerram, Casey entered into Executive Session. Administrative Assistant Hayward was invited into the session.

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No action to take regarding Executive Session.

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Casey to adjourn at 9:30 PM.

Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant