

**Board of Selectmen  
Regular Meeting  
June 25, 2019**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Eric Claman;  
Members of the Public: Bud Butler, Bob Goodskey, Polly Pobuda, Jean Darlington, Madeline McClave;  
Member of the Press Kathryn Boughton (Republican-American); Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

**Operations Updates:**

*mill rate adjustment*

The First Selectman informed the Board that after the State of CT budget was approved, it became apparent that the impact to the Town of New Hartford budget would not be as what was originally thought. Education Cost Share was increased for New Hartford and the teacher pension liability was not passed on to the Town. Therefore, at the Board of Finance meeting held on June 11, 2019, he suggested that the Board of Finance adjust the mill rate to a lower rate. The Board considered his request and in an unprecedented move, approved an adjustment to the mill rate; reducing it to 30.25 mills from the formerly approved 30.416 mills. This adjustment reduces cuts the proposed tax rate and will benefit all taxpayers.

*Aquatic invasive weed monitors:*

Mr. Jerram informed the Board that he had attended the training provided by DEEP regarding invasive aquatic species. The town and the West Hill Pond Association have joined forces together to have two “weed monitors” trained to take shifts at the West Hill Boat Launch and act as weed investigators. They will be paid employees of the Town of New Hartford; however, the West Hill Pond Association and property owners will provide funding for their wages. These monitors will work primarily on weekends and Holidays when the boat launch is heavily used. There were 26 attendees at the training and several individuals have volunteered to be at the boat launch at times when the paid employees are not there. This program is educational – the monitors will explain the importance of making sure that their watercraft are free from mud, plants, fish, etc.. so as to limit the spread of aquatic invasives. Mr. Jerram noted that this program is in addition to the weed removal done by the lake association each year. He noted that their efforts to keep West Hill Pond clean are to be commended.

*Road work;*

The First Selectman stated that the highway department is gearing up for a lot of roadwork around town. Johnnycake Lane, Meadow Street, and Cedar Lane will be repaved within the next few weeks. There will also be extensive chip sealing done on several local roads. West Road, on the south end of town, is also on the scheduled to have the second half of the roadway be repaved – but that will need to wait until after some prep work is completed. There are some trees that need to be removed and a stone wall also needs to be moved.

*Other Projects:*

The engineering for the sidewalk lighting for the new Dunkin Donuts location has been completed, footings for the building have been formed.

Bruning Road culverts are still on the agenda to be replaced; the town is waiting for some state approvals.

The proposed municipal parking lot near the Post Office (near the tennis courts on land owned by the Community Club) is still in development stages. A formal lease agreement between the Town and the Community Club is being prepared.

*Fire Cisterns:*

There are numerous fire cisterns and dry hydrants that exist throughout town. These are in place due to having been required for a subdivision approval. However, responsibility of maintenance has been an unclear area. In many instances, there are no provisions for the care and maintenance of these water sources. This is important for public safety should there ever be a need for a water source. Mr. Jerram is working with the South End Fire Department to see what can be done to establish a maintenance plan.

*Carpenter Road Bridge:*

Completion of this bridge continues to be a priority. The town continues to let the contractor know that the bridge needs to be completed and that they need to make this happen. They are not allowed to stop work. The contractor would like to mediate, however, the town has stated that they need to get back to work as the contract is clear that not even mediation can cause a work stoppage. Late fees continue to accrue. Mr. Jerram stated that there has been a letter sent to the contractor stating that they need to get back to work. The contractor is seeking approval to keep the sheet piling in place so that there is no further risk of separation of the box culvert due to vibrations during removal. The contractor has asked for additional compensation to pay for the cost of the sheet piling that will be left behind. The town's position is that this was their plan; they own it. Jerram stated that if work does not begin, "terminate for cause" may be an option for consideration.

**Update re potential sale of water and wastewater assets:**

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board that a meeting was recently held at PURA (Public Utilities Regulatory Authority) offices in New Britain. This meeting was requested by New Hartford with the hope of getting some guidance from PURA with respect to the proposed sale of privately owned water and wastewater assets to a public utility. Mr. Jerram commented that the meeting included a lot of "we can't answer that" and provided very little guidance. He noted, however, that the one positive outcome of the meeting was that representatives from the Office of Consumer Counsel were present and they encouraged the town to come and meet with them. That meeting has been scheduled for this week. Mr. Jerram noted that meetings like these are being held now "just to make sure that there aren't any surprises later on; we don't want to find out too late that we should have done something and never did it – we are doing due diligence and seeking guidance."

**Appointments to Boards and Commissions:**

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to appoint Brian Watson and Pat Casey as members of the Economic Development Commission, Mr. Casey's term to expire December 31, 2023 and Mr. Watson's term to expire December 31, 2021.

*Unanimous.*

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to appoint Debbie Ventre as an alternate member of the EDC, term to expire December 31, 2023; seconded by Claman.

Jerram noted that Debbie Ventre also acts as a paid recording secretary for the EDC and that she has indicated that she will use a recording device for when she is seated so that she can be an active participant in the discussions.

Member Claman stated that Mrs. Ventre does a good job with the minutes of the meeting and he has no doubt that she will continue to do so and will also be a valuable EDC member.

*Unanimous.*

Mr. Jerram explained that the Rails to Trails committee, formerly an EDC subcommittee, should become a subcommittee that reports to the Board of Selectmen. Now that a Grant has been awarded to the Town and the town administers the grant, it makes sense for the group to be a subcommittee of the Board of Selectmen.

He informed the Board that he had reached out to 4 members of the public who have an interest in biking, hiking and trails to see if they would be interested in being members of an expanded committee. The following have agreed to serve in this capacity:

Pat Cunningham – he is a cycling enthusiast and has been the organizer of a Cyclo-Cross event held at Brodie Park for the past two years.

Jeremy Schaller – participates in off road biking and has extensive knowledge of several biking trail systems.

Greg O'Brien – a member on the Recreation Commission; is an avid walker who walks several miles each day and can bring the perspective of an avid walker to the group.

Jeff Peltier – Jeff reached out to First Selectman Jerram with an interest in being part of the trail committee due to his having seen the success of a popular trail in the town in which he served as a police officer.

There are three others who were members on the original subcommittee who will remain participants on this committee – Jim Brett, Bill Baxter and Dan Jerram.

First Selectman Jerram read aloud a charge of the committee that he had prepared:

1. To gain a working knowledge of the Rails to Trails previous studies and grant application.
2. To develop an RFP/RFQ for engineering services
3. To make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen for the engagement of a design professional to assist in the development of a multi -use trail design that would connect the downtown of New Hartford to the Canton town line; with the goal being to connect to the multi -use trail along the Farmington River in Collinsville.

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to expand the current Rails to Trails Subcommittee to include Pat Cunningham, Jeremy Schaller, Greg O'Brien, and Jeff Peltier in addition to remaining members Bill Baxter, Jim Brett and Dan Jerram and to approve the charge of the committee as read; seconded by Claman.

First Selectman Jerram stated that in addition to the appointed members, there will be 2 other individuals who will act as technical advisors. Rista Malanca, former Land Use Administrator in New Hartford, currently employed by the City of Torrington as Economic Development Coordinator and Susan Stagg, a resident who has extensive knowledge of trails but is not able to commit to regular attendance at meetings; will offer guidance and insight as needed.

*Unanimous.*

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to approve the Charge of the Committee as read by First Selectman Jerram, seconded by Claman.

*Unanimous.*

**Review of Items for Special Town Meeting (date to be determined) i.e. Open Burning Ordinance, Conservation Easement; Beekley Views parcel...**

First Selectman Jerram distributed copies of a draft Open Burning Ordinance that had been prepared by the local open burning officials to present to the Board of Selectmen for consideration. Jerram noted that the ordinance is intended to clarify what is permitted and what is not. It is not intended to prevent someone from having a campfire.

Burning Official Bob Goodskey explained that this ordinance was created by using an existing ordinance from another town and modifying it to fit New Hartford. He explained that there is currently no vehicle in place to allow for any kind of reasonable action to be taken if someone is not following the guidelines with respect to open burning.

Resident Bud Butler offered his thoughts on the topic. He noted that burn permits state that the fire should be put out at 5:00 PM. He feels that this is too early and suggested that a change be made to a later time. He also questioned who would determine what constitutes a nuisance, stating that anyone could call anything a nuisance.

Mr. Jerram stated that the Town Attorney had not yet reviewed this ordinance and he would forward it to him for review and comments. Following review by the attorney, it will come back to the Board for additional consideration.

*Conservation Easement:*

The First Selectman informed the Board that the easement is still being completed. It is not yet ready to be reviewed and adopted by this Board.

*Beekley Lease:*

The town attorney is working on completion of this document, but he has opined that there should be some kind of protection for the Town if the town expends money to make improvements.

The Selectmen would like to hold a Special Town Meeting in late July to approve the Conservation Easement and the Open Burning Ordinance. They agreed to have a Special Meeting on July 16, 2019 if documents are ready for review by then. A Special Town Meeting could then be held on July 30, 2019.

**Discussion of USDA loan payment structure – extend modification of payment schedule:**

Mr. Jerram explained that when the Town first received the loan from the USDA for the upgrade to the wastewater Treatment plant upgrade, a modified payment schedule had been agreed to with respect to the payments made by the WPCA toward this loan. At that time, there was the hope that additional connections would be made to the system which would result in increased revenues to the WPCA. Unfortunately, that has not happened and the WPCA continues to struggle to make regular payments even at the modified rate. At that time, the approval was also given to allow the Board of Selectmen the authority to extend the modification, if it was needed. Currently, since the agreed upon modification period has expired, the WPCA should be paying the full amount of their obligation, without a modified rate. Since that is not happening, the auditors are recording the lack of the full amount as a receivable. They would prefer that a formal extension of the modification be agreed upon so as to keep records 'clearer.' The Selectmen discussed what might be an appropriate extension to this agreement and Claman suggested 3 years, which includes this current fiscal year (18-19), thereby extending the arrangement for 2 additional years. The Selectmen agreed that this seems reasonable especially since there is the chance that the systems will be sold and this will become a moot point.

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to extend the current WPCA modified loan payment schedule for fiscal years 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 and through 2020/2021 at a discounted rate of \$66,147.00; seconded by Claman.

Jerram commented that this schedule will be subject to review and possible modification at the end of fiscal year 2021. The Selectmen agreed to this statement.

*Unanimous.*

**Line Item Transfers:**

First Selectman Jerram updated the Selectmen of the status of line items and departments within the budget. He stated that the Bookkeepers line item will be over the budgeted amount due to the change from a part time to a full time position. Computer Maintenance has funds remaining, but there are invoices outstanding for this line item. The Department is underspent and there will be no problem covering the over expended lines within the department.

The Constable line item has funds remaining due to the extended absence of one constable due to a medical issue at the beginning of the year. Some of these funds have already been approved to be transferred to fund a furnace replacement at the Bakerville Library. This was a one time special request for additional funding by the library that was previously approved by this Board.

The Zoning Legal and Professional line item has additional legal fees that will be posted to this line, but it can be covered by savings in the zoning officer's salary line item in the same department.

The First Selectman pointed out that the Assessment Appeals Board line item is over budget due to the fact that this was a revaluation year and the members serving on that Board put in a lot of hours holding appeals meetings and conducting premise inspections. They each received a stipend as has been a practice in Revaluation years.

**MOTION:** by Kennerson add Approval of the minutes of the May 28, 2019 Board of Selectmen meeting to the agenda; seconded by Claman.

*Unanimous.*

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to accept the minutes of the May 28, 2019 BOS meeting as presented; seconded by Claman.

*Kennerson, Jerram – approve Claman – abstain*

*Motion Passed*

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to adjourn at 9:05 PM; seconded by Claman.

*Unanimous.*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant*