

**Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting
Minutes
February 28, 2023**

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Laura Garay, Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward

Others Present: Via ZOOM: Kathryn Boughton (Republican-American), Mary Beth Greenwood, Elizabeth Domas; IN PERSON: Mike Leclair, Jay Bailey.

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM. He stated that this is a regular meeting. He asked his Board if there was any objection to moving Item Number 4 – Appointment to Water Pollution Control Authority to Item Number 1. There were no objections.

Appointment of Michael LeClair to Water Pollution Control Authority:

MOTION: by Garay to appoint Michael LeClair to serve on the WPCA; term to expire December 31, 2025, seconded by Kennerson.

First Selectman Jerram thanked Mr. LeClair for his willingness to come back and serve on the WPCA again.

Unanimous.

First Selectman Jerram swore Mr. LeClair in for his term of office.

Budget Brief Overview:

Mr. Jerram explained that development of the budget has taken a back seat to other more pressing items that needed to be attended to in his office.

The Capital Expenditures proposal will be presented on March 14 to the Board of Finance. He asked his Board if they would be available to meet for a special budget meeting on Tuesday.

Mr. Jerram stated that he still needs some information from the Board of Education with respect to pass through grants and special education costs. He also needs to check on town electricity contract and pension contribution amount. He has asked for information from the Tax Collector and Assessor regarding Quality Data Costs. The Paramedic Intercept contract is currently out for bid, so the costs for that are not known. There are still other line items that are uncertain and need some additional input. The First Selectman stated that there is a bright spot in revenue; a spike in interest rates has been a positive benefit for the town.

Capital Expenditures:

Mr. Jerram reviewed the proposed year 1 Capital plan. The plan includes funding for a replacement police car, replacing the underground oil tank (will also use ARPA funds to fund this), bridge work -- Lenard Engineering will be looking to see what local bridges may need some work) Town Hall equipment (includes funds for a new boiler) Town hall equipment -heat pumps and general park improvements. Selectman Kennerson asked if there are any special projects that are being planned that need the

funding from Capital for General Park Improvements since there are ARPA funds set aside for the Parks. Dan explained that the bathrooms may be more than what was originally estimated when the Grant was submitted (due to increased construction costs) Also, a bandstand is being proposed for the far end of the field and two cabins are being considered for renovations; Kennerson asked what heat source would be considered for the cabins. The capital list also includes the second payment for the costs associated with the revaluation as well as funds for downtown improvements (sidewalks and lighting).

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the capital project list for 2023 -2024; seconded by Garay; Mr. Jerram stated that the purpose of the capital plan is to alert the taxpayers of future needs of the town. There may be times when adjustments are made to the order of items being considered for implementation. This plan serves as a “heads up” regarding needs of the Town.

Unanimous

ARPA:

First Selectman Jerram reviewed the proposed ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding proposals. The plow truck will be a 2023 because the 2022 is no longer available which will result in an increase in the cost.

\$532,000 has been placed into the line extension funds for Pine Meadow. Jerram would like to see these funds remain set aside because costs are increasing all the time and there will be a need for this funding.

Rails to Trails has an allocation of \$100,000 for trail expenses. This will be used to provide the necessary funding needed if a Grant is received. There is still investigation into the costs for a Senior Center kitchen. Estimates are being sought.

The Selectmen were in agreement to fund an EDC website, therefore \$20,000 has been allocated towards this. A question remains as to what the Board of Finance might want to do with respect to the Beekley Library – should it remain at \$100,000 or be reduced to \$75,000. The Selectmen agreed to have this discussion with the Board of Finance and see what they would recommend.

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the ARPA recommendations as outlined under the Board of Selectmen “approved column” on the ARPA spreadsheet dated 02/28/2023, with the caveat that any unspent balances recommended by the Board of Selectmen and approved by the Board of Finance could be transferred to any other line on the list; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous

Operations updates:

The Recreational Trails Grant was submitted today. This grant request seeks funding for construction. There were some approvals from abutting property owners that needed to be secured before the grant could be submitted; and those were received. Kevin Grindle and Val Ferro were instrumental in helping get this application complete.

Interrogatories for the PURA filings were completed last week and submitted. WPCA sent out a newsletter to all WPCA customers informing them of the status of the sale of the assets. An additional newsletter needs to be mailed because PURA has just notified the town that there is a required

notification to all ratepayers advising them of how they can follow the proceedings. The PURA link will be included on that mailing.

Contract negotiations have ended, additional information will be discussed in Executive Session.

Fiscal year 2021-2022 Audit is complete and there are no findings. A review of the audit was done at the February 21, 2023, Board of Finance meeting. Next year's audit will require a Federal Audit in addition to the State Audit due to being over the threshold of grant funds received.

Kurt Lange, our IT consultant, will be transitioning all computers to Microsoft 360. TEAMS is the platform that comes with the software and the town may transition to using Teams rather than paying for ZOOM once the transition is complete.

First Selectman Jerram attended the P&Z meeting where there was a discussion of whether or not the town should regulate the sale of Cannibas. This is an ongoing discussion and there is a possibility that this could be a question for a future referendum.

Kennerson asked if there has been any action on the Fire department consolidation – Dan replied that Senator Seminara had stated that the resolution is complete but it has not yet been acted on.

Executive Session with possible action regarding Union Contracts – NAGE and AFSCME:

MOTION: by Kennerson to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussion related to negotiations with NAGE and AFSCME bargaining units at 8:00 PM; seconded by Garay.

Executive Session ended at 8:20 PM

Members of the public attending via ZOOM were allowed back into the meeting. Elizabeth Domas, member of the public, entered back into the meeting.

First Selectman Jerram reviewed terms of the agreements made between the bargaining unit and the Town to present for consideration of approval.

3.75% annual increase for wages.

Premium Shares for health care costs will increase from 14.5 % to 15%.

Longevity pay for employees (given in 5 year increments after the first 5 years of employment) will increase from \$2.00 per week for 5-10 years of service to \$4.00 per week (\$4.00 x 52 = \$208.00 payment once per year during years 6 – 10); increase from \$4.00 per week for 11 – 15 years of service to \$8.00 per week (\$8.00 x 52 = \$416.00 once per year during years 11 – 15); increase from \$6.00 per week for 16 – 20 years of service to \$12.00 per week (\$624.00 once per year during years 16-20) and the final adjustment for 20 years and plus of service will increase from \$8.00 to \$16.00 per week (\$ 832.00 once per year during years 20+).

Juneteenth has been added as a Holiday in both contracts. NAGE gives back Good Friday, AFSME gives back their Birthday.

AFSCME stipend for work boots has increased from \$130 to \$200 / year.

MOTION by Garay to approve the NAGE contract changes as outlined; seconded by Kennerson.

Selectman Kennerson stated that, “she thinks it is fair – a higher wage increase that is higher than normally given but minimum wage has increased as has the cost of living.” She added that “the Board of Education approved higher wages and we value the contributions made by Town Hall staff.”

Selectman Garay agreed and stated, “the town hall staff meets the demands of the town.” First Selectman Jerram commented, “We have good people and we hope for retention of those who serve us well. I hope that by increasing the longevity stipend; it accomplishes that.” We have “good people working hard.”

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Garay to approve the AFSCME contract as proposed and summarized by Mr. Jerram; seconded by Kennerson.

The Selectmen stated that the sentiments expressed regarding having good employees refers to the Department of Public Works, as well. All the employees work hard.

Unanimous.

The Board acknowledged that there is only one more union contract to negotiate which happens to be the Police contract. This will be tended to before the end of the fiscal year.

MOTION: by Kennerson to adjourn at 8:27 PM, seconded by Garay.

Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant

No attachments attached with these minutes