

**Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting
Monday, March 2, 2015**

MINUTES

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Jack Casey (in at 6:50), Members of the Public : Joe Toro, Maria Moore, Jim Fitzgerald (out at 6:55); Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM.

Minutes:

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Jerram to approve the minutes dated January 13, 2015 as presented.

Unanimous

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Jerram to approve the minutes dated February 3, 2015 as presented.

Unanimous.

BUDGET WORKSHOP:

The Selectmen discussed the proposed budget document DRAFT 3/2/15 (attached).

The General Administration budget shows a decrease due to savings in health care.

There is also a decrease in the Assessor's line item due to the change in personnel in that office. The Clerk has been reassigned to the Land Use office and the salary associated with that individual will be reflected in the Planning and Development Department.

Union and non-union employees have wages that reflect a 2.75% increase.

The First Selectman discussed adding additional funding to the salary line item for the Administrative Assistant; increasing funding to allow for a 40 hour work week rather than the current 35. The Selectman agreed that they would support this increase, noting that the hours actually worked often exceed that.

Kennerson asked that an adjustment be made to the Registrars Salary line items; she requested that the wage shown for their duties during election and referenda be "pulled from those areas" and placed into the actual salary line for each Registrar. This would allow for transparency of the wages earned for those positions.

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First Selectman Jerram noted that the Regional Board of Education increase is substantial and that it has been stated by Superintendent Palmer that much of the increase is attributed to Special Education costs increased with students moving up into the School. Jerram indicated that he would send a request to Dr. Palmer asking where those increases are occurring as it might help to see if the local Board of Ed should be reflecting a decrease in their special ed costs to account for turnover of students.

Jerram noted that the rolling average for Constable Overtime has exceeded the line item the past few years and he would like to see this line item increased. He noted that the town funds the overtime for town sponsored activities such as Light New Hartford, The Race Around the Lake, and there is also overtime costs for providing police to perform traffic control on Harrison Road during the City of Torrington's annual fireworks display. Overtime is not due to lack of staffing; however, there are times when police must stay beyond their shift in order to complete mandated reports that must be submitted immediately in certain situations (i.e. domestic violence and cases that involve children and family services).

The Ambulance Association has asked for an increase in their allocation, but have not provided any documentation as to why. The Selectmen agreed that they want additional information before agreeing to this increase.

The Animal Control Officer has requested that additional funds be placed into the animal control line item in order to provide for adequate training of personnel. There are new requirements for training that need to be followed.

The Highway Department currently has several line items that are over-expended or are in danger of being over expended; however the department is still within its total appropriation. Mr. Jerram noted that equipment maintenance and repair rolling average is \$112,000, therefore he would like to increase this line item to reflect those trends. Tree removal is another line item that Jerram would like to adjust to accurately reflect costs. Selectman Kennerson commented that she supported these changes. She noted that the Selectmen always try to fund the lines the way they need to be, but often they are forced to reduce the lines when asked to cut the budget by the Board of Finance. This then leads to possible overexpenditures later on.

The Bakerville Library has requested a 9.6% increase in their funding. Kennerson asked if they had supplied any back up to support this request. Jerram replied that the acquisition of the neighboring building has increased their utility costs and they have increased staffing needs. Additionally, they have implemented a new "e-book" library which has additional costs. Selectmen agreed that they would prefer not to cut the libraries.

Recreation Department shows an increase in some of the line items due to the fact that Recreation Director Christy Tellier has gone through the history to see what the actual expenditures have been in the past. Jerram noted that the Selectmen might want to make some adjustments to the line items and

request that the program fee account pick up some of these expenses. This can be discussed at a future budget meeting – just something to think about for now.

The Senior Citizens line item increase can be attributed to an increase in program funding and the 2.75% wage increase for the Senior Director. Jerram noted that this one line item is a combination of expenses.

First Selectman informed the Selectmen that he had taken their direction of adding a new line item to the budget to show funding for West Hill Lake. Kennerson remarked that the lake is a beautiful asset and agreed that there should be town funds set aside to help preserve this lake. She noted that the town has been helping to fund some initiatives in the past but they have been mixed in with other expenses; it will be good to have a line item for this specific purpose.

The Selectmen discussed another meeting date to put the finishing touches on the proposed budget.

They agreed to meet on March 9 at 6:00 PM. Selectman Casey noted that he would not be available but stated that they should meet without him to get this done.

MOTION: by Casey, second Kennerson to adjourn at 8:00 PM.

Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant