

**Board of Selectmen  
Special Meeting March 24, 2015**

**Minutes**

**Present:** First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Jack Casey, WPCA Chairman Bud Butler, WPCA members Roy Litchfield, Joe Toro; Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

First Selectman Dan Jerram called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

**Minutes:**

Due to concerns with being able to complete all items on the agenda prior to adjourning to attend the Board of Finance meeting, approval of minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

**Budget:**

First Selectman Jerram reviewed the proposed 2015-2016 budget with the Selectmen and stated that it was his intent to have the proposed budget formally approved by the Board of Selectmen in order to present it formally to the Board of Finance for consideration later that same evening. He informed them that he had inquired about the Ambulance Association's request for \$100,000 worth of funding for the next fiscal year. He was told that revenues to the ambulance have decreased while at the same time, expenses have increased. New Hartford Ambulance had been providing Mutual Aid to Winsted which meant additional revenue for the association. However, Winsted has added an additional ambulance to their fleet and no longer needs to call New Hartford Ambulance for assistance as often as they once did. This has translated into lost revenue. Also, the ambulance association has had to rely more on their paid service provider during the day, due to decreased availability of volunteers during the work day hours. This has caused an increase in their expenses. Selectman Kennerson asked if there is any written data to support those claims. Jerram replied that he has not received any formal documentation but has requested it. Kennerson stated that she would support funding the line item at \$100,000 with the condition that in order to receive the entire appropriation, the Ambulance Association must provide documentation. Selectman Casey agreed with Ms. Kennerson.

Jerram noted that the State is considering changing the way the Resident Trooper program is funded. Currently, the State shares in the cost of providing Resident Troopers to participating towns. There is discussion occurring regarding removing that support; shifting 100% of the costs onto the individual towns for their officers. This would translate into a \$40,800.80 increase to New Hartford. Jerram has checked with area towns who have Resident Troopers and the consensus is to expect that the State will shift the burden to the towns. The Selectmen agreed to fully fund the Resident trooper line item. On a positive note, First Selectman Jerram notified the Board that the Town's Insurance provider, CIRMA has notified him that New Hartford will once again be getting a 'member equity distribution check' from CIRMA. A check for \$7,500 will be sent to New Hartford in July. Jerram stated that these funds will be deposited into the General Fund and will be listed as revenue for the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 to offset expenses.

Jerram spoke with the actuarial at Hooker and Holcomb to discuss the pension line item and is

comfortable funding that line item at \$128,000. The Selectmen reviewed other areas where adjustments might be able to be made and discussed reducing funding to several commission line items, stating that if there were specific needs of a commission that would require additional funds, the Selectmen would consider providing funding on a case by case basis. The following adjustments were made: Economic Development Commission was reduced from \$15,350 to \$10,000 Conservation Commission was reduced from \$3500 to \$3000; Open Space was reduced from \$3500 to \$3000 and Assessment Appeals was reduced from \$5000 to \$3000. Additionally, allocations to both libraries were reduced. The Beekley Library allocation was changed to \$232,560 and the Bakerville Library was changed to \$53,040.

A brief discussion ensued regarding other options for reducing line items. The Registrars Line Item was one area where Selectmen felt that reductions could be made, if needed. The line item has historically been under expended.

The Selectmen turned their attention to capital expenditures. They reviewed the 5 year capital plan and made some adjustments. Jerram informed the Board that he had learned earlier in the day that one of the large highway trucks has been found to be in need of major repairs and thus has been determined to be not road worthy. This event has pushed the need for a new truck to be a priority. Changes to the 2105-2016 proposed capital plan are as follows: Reduce Recreation Department general park improvements to \$15,000 from \$35,000. Reduce the EDC Pavilion from \$100,000 to \$70,000. Jerram noted that there are funds available in the community investment fund the that can be used towards the pavilion expense. The Selectmen also decided to remove the new phone system for Town Hall for the 2015-2016 fiscal year and push it off for a couple of years. In its place, Mr. Jerram suggested that the Board consider financing a large truck for a period of three years; beginning with the 2015-2016 fiscal year. The Selectmen added \$65,000 for financing the truck to the capital plan in 2015 -2016 and for the following 2 years. The Selectmen also reduced downtown improvements from \$30,000 to \$15,000; The total proposed capital expenditures for the fiscal year 2015-2016 to be presented to the Board of Finance amounts to \$405,000. Adjustments were made to the rest of the 5 year plan, with the Selectmen noting that the plan is a projection of future needs and is subject to change and modification each year dependent upon critical needs. The plan serves as a guide for future projects.

**MOTION:** by Kennerson, second Casey to adopt the proposed operations and capital budget for fiscal year 2015-2016 as discussed.

*Unanimous.*

**Fair Housing – annual reaffirmations:**

The First Selectman suggested that this item be moved to the end of the meeting since members of the Water Pollution Control Authority were present for the agenda item related to the interest in the water company assets. This would allow them to be able to leave the meeting once that item was discussed. The Selectmen agreed.

**Discussion of potential interest in water company assets:**

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board that he had been approached by a company interested in possibly purchasing the water company assets. Jerram noted that there is a lot to consider regarding a potential acquisition. He stated that the task force that been formed a while back to review the water and wastewater operations had recommended that the sale of assets be considered and pursued to its logical conclusion. Prior to taking any action, there needs to be an evaluation of the assets – there needs to be an understanding of what each entity (water, sewer) is worth and what would happen if the sewer became a stand alone operation. Ms. Kennerson stated that at this point, her initial opinion is that if the water assets are sold, then the sewer assets should also be sold. Jerram replied that there may only be interest in the water only at this time. Mr. Butler, Chairman of the Water Pollution Control Authority stated that it might be beneficial to reconvene the task force. Mr. Jerram replied that he would prefer to reach out to counsel with experience in water and sewer operations before taking any actions. He suggested to the Board of Selectmen that they seek the guidance of the land use attorneys Branse and Willis regarding this matter; noting that Attorney Roraback has limited expertise in water and sewer operations. Jerram stated that this is a complex issue and noted that action should not be done in haste.

Mr. Butler informed the Selectmen that the Water Pollution Control Authority is currently seeking an attorney to act as counsel for the WPCA and suggested that the Selectmen hold off having a discussion with Branse and Willis until the WPCA has chosen a law firm and then the Selectmen could reach out to the chosen firm. Butler noted that the firm of Branse and Willis is one of the law firms under consideration.

**Appointments to Boards and Commissions:**

The First Selectmen noted that due to an oversight, Shelly Lloyd of the Economic Development Commission was not reappointed to her position on the Commission and asked the Selectmen for a motion to reappoint her.

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to reappoint Shelley Lloyd to serve as a member on the Economic Development Commission, term to expire 12/31/2019; seconded by Casey.

*Unanimous*

First Selectman Jerram announced that Open Space Preservation Commission alternate member Karen Griswold Nelson had submitted a letter of resignation for her alternate position on the Open Space Commission. She is interested in filling a vacancy as a regular member. This change is supported by the Chairman of the Open Space Commission.

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to appoint Karen Griswold-Nelson to fill a vacancy as a regular member on the Open Space Preservation Commission, term to expire 12/31/2016; seconded by Casey.

*Unanimous.*

First Selectman Jerram asked the Selectman if they would consider returning to the budget agenda item before moving on to the next agenda item as he had forgotten to update the Board on the status of the current budget with respect to expenditures. They agreed to re-visit that agenda item.

Mr. Jerram informed the Selectmen that there are line items within the highway department that are severely over-expended and he was concerned that having to transfer funds within the department to cover those expenses would leave the department with no limited funds to carry on for the remainder of the year. Due to the weather conditions during the winter and especially during the month of February, the road crew was forced to work frequent overtime; which leaves that line item over-expended by \$27,000 to date. The sand and salt items are also over-expended as is the maintenance budget. The First Selectman stated that it was his recommendation that the Selectmen consider asking the Board of Finance for an additional appropriation back into the highway department so that funds would be available to continue the work that they need to do. Selectman Casey agreed that this was a valid request and felt that this would be in the best interest of all. He noted that the general fund is “there to be used in cases like this.”

**MOTION:** by Casey to request to the Board of Finance that they consider an additional appropriation to restore the sand, salt, maintenance and overtime line items in the highway department in the amount of \$58,500; seconded by Kennerson.

*Unanimous.*

**Request for Tax Refund:**

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to approve a request for refund of motor vehicle property taxes in the amount of \$141.03 to Chase Auto Finance Corporation as presented by the Tax Collector; seconded by Casey.

*Unanimous.*

**Fair Housing:**

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board of Selectmen that April is “Fair Housing Month.” Each year, there are several documents that need to be updated and reaffirmed by the Board. He presented those items for consideration.

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to re-adopt the Affirmative Action Policy Statement for the Town of New Hartford as presented; seconded by Casey.

*Unanimous.*

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to re-adopt the Fair Housing Policy Statement for the Town of New Hartford as presented; seconded by Casey.

*Unanimous.*

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to re-adopt the Fair Housing Resolution as presented; seconded by Casey.

*Unanimous.*

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to reaffirm the Town of New Hartford's Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; seconded by Casey.

*Unanimous.*

**MOTION:** by Casey to adjourn at 7:15 pm; seconded by Kennerson.

*Unanimous.*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant*