

**Board of Selectmen  
Special Meeting  
Monday, March 9, 2015**

**Present:** First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Member of the Press Kathryn Boughton; Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

**Absent:** Selectman Jack Casey

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**Minutes:**

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to approve the minutes dated January 29, 2015 as presented; seconded by Jerram.

*Unanimous*

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to approve the minutes dated February 24, 2015 as presented; seconded by Jerram.

*Unanimous*

**Budget:**

The Selectmen discussed the budget for the 2015-2016 fiscal year. Mr. Jerram commented that the budgets for the past few years have been very conservative, with minimal increases and he questioned rhetorically whether the needs of the town are being properly met. It has become commonplace to balance the municipal budget by making accommodations within most departments in order to fund the Board of Education's needs. Jerram stated that the town budget was fortunate this year to have had a large decrease in health care costs due to a change in plan provider. This allowed town government to function without having to endure severe cuts in other areas.

This budget year will be a difficult one due to the projected increase from the Regional School in its assessment to New Hartford. It is anticipated that New Hartford will see an 8% increase in fees and therefore it will be a struggle to stay in balance.

Jerram highlighted some of the increases within the town budget:

Salaries have been increased using the negotiated union contract increase. Union and non-union personnel receive the same increase, as has been the practice for many years. Of note is the Administrative Assistant's line item. Jerram noted that he would like to include an increase sufficient

enough to make this position a 40 hour per week position. The administrative assistant is currently a 35 hour per week position, but the position requires more than 35 hours per week. The current administrative assistant often works longer hours and is not currently adequately compensated. He asked the Selectmen for support of this request.

The Registrars Salary line item has been adjusted to also include the compensation received for work performed during registrars and elections in addition to the wages earned for office hours. Historically, the wages for elections and referenda has not been included in the elections and referenda line item, and in order to have wages accurately identified, they have now been included in the salary line items. The overtime line item in the public safety portion of the budget has been increased to reflect that there are now 4 constables. Also, this line item has been exceeded the past few years with 3 constables and the addition of a 4<sup>th</sup> Constable increases the likelihood of this being underfunded again. Town sponsored activities that need traffic control by officers are funded by this line item as well as the costs incurred for traffic control on Harrison Road for the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks in Torrington. Even though the event is in Torrington, the traffic is routed through New Hartford and there is a need to have an officer at the scene on behalf of New Hartford. Recently, New Hartford Constables have not been available to accept this overtime assignment and it has been necessary to hire State police to provide the service. The Ambulance Association has asked for a significant increase in their funding. They have yet to provide requested documentation regarding the need for the increase and Selectmen were of the mindset to hold the line at \$60,000 until additional information is received.

Jerram suggested that the highway department line items crack/chip seal; asphalt bituminous paving and road maintenance-pave,grind,resurface be combined as they are all road preservation and be funded at \$500,000.

The First Selectman informed the Selectmen that he has checked into anticipated contract prices for snow salt and has been told to expect a \$16% increase in the price. Currently, salt sells for \$62.00 per ton and it is expected that the cost will rise to \$74.00 per ton. He had originally considered funding this at \$85,000 but asked the Selectmen to consider changing this line item to \$80,000; up from its current \$70,000.

The Selectmen discussed the requests received from the libraries and they agreed that the 9.6% increase request from Bakerville Library was high and made an adjustment to decrease the overall percentage to 6% increase, resulting in an amount of \$57,000 up from \$52,000.

It was agreed to include a line item for WPCA Sewer Study on the Health, Sanitation and Welfare page in the amount of \$30,000 noting that this expense would be offset by a revenue of \$30,000 that will be returned to the Town from proceeds gained from a DEEP Planning Study Grant.

The Parks and Recreation Department budget was discussed with the Selectmen making a change in the Seasonal Help for Maintenance line item; keeping it flat at \$10,000. The Recreation contracted services and maintenance line item will be adjusted to account for expenses that have been paid out of that line item in the past; but have required line item transfers for additional appropriations. The 2014-2015 approved figure was \$34,135.00 and historically, actual expenses have been roughly \$10,000 more than that. Jerram proposed increasing that line item to \$40,000 to more accurately reflect expenses and it was agreed to do this.

Looking at Commissions and other Agencies, the Selectmen discussed breaking out the Seniors line item so that the Salary and the supplies are easily discernible. Mr. Jerram will ask the bookkeeper to make this change.

The Selectmen also agreed to increase the CCM line item to accurately reflect the cost of dues paid to be a member of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. The line item currently shows \$3,000 where the actual expense is \$4115.00.

The Selectmen agreed that the changes should be made as discussed and agreed that the figures discussed should be presented to the Board of Finance for their consideration at the Saturday, March 14, 2015 budget workshop.

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to adjourn at 7:26 PM; seconded by Jerram.

*Unanimous.*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant*