

**Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting
February 19, 2013**

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Member of the Public New Hartford Independent Reporter Bob Moore, Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

Absent: Selectman Jack Casey

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Mr. Jerram began the meeting by announcing that Selectman Casey's absence this evening was due to the fact that he had a family emergency. Mr. Casey's brother-in-law passed away and therefore, Mr. Casey is unable to attend the meeting this evening. Mr. Jerram expressed condolences to the family for their loss. Mr. Jerram noted that the meeting this evening would be the first of several meetings devoted to budget discussion.

ROV Emergency Plan:

First Selectman Jerram stated that the Registrars of Voters had completed the Emergency Plan required by the Secretary of State's Office. Each town must have an Emergency Plan in place. If towns do not develop and adopt their own version of such a plan, they will be required to adopt the State Emergency Plan as their own. It is the opinion of the Registrars that a local plan developed by them and then adopted by the governing body (the Board of Selectmen) would be in the best interests of the Town. Their concern is that a State Plan may be onerous for smaller towns such as New Hartford. The Registrars worked diligently and in consultation with Town Clerk Donna LaPlante to develop a plan that would be specific to New Hartford; yet meets all of the basic requirements of the Secretary of State's Office.

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Jerram to accept the Emergency Plan as submitted for approval, dated February 7, 2013.

Jerram noted that it had originally been mentioned that this plan needed to be approved at a Town Meeting; however , upon further investigation of the approval process, it was determined that approval by the Governing Body (Board of Selectmen in a Statutory town) would be sufficient.

Capital Expenditures:

First Selectman Jerram stated that Highway Foreman Doug Spencer has notified him that the 2008 Ford 550 has had over \$15,000 of repairs and maintenance invested into it during the past year. He identified this particular truck as "a lemon." Jerram commented that the smaller trucks (the F-550's and the F-350) were basically 'useless' during the recent storm (Charlotte/Nemo). The snow fell too fast and furiously for the small trucks to keep up with the amount of snow on the ground. The volume was too much for them to handle and they were

rendered useless in this particular storm. Selectman Alesia Kennerson stated that this could be a safety issue if it impedes the ability to keep the roads clear and open, especially for emergency vehicles. Kennerson praised the members of the highway department for the job they did noting that all roads were open and passable within 24 hours of the storm. As a final note to the discussion, Jerram stated that the highway foreman has recommended that planning be done for the acquisition of an additional large truck. The fleet currently consists of 7 big trucks (1 new, 3 small trucks and 1 maintenance/utility truck.

Jerram briefly touched upon several capital line items, noting that funds earmarked as the 'town garage' might actually be needed for bridge improvements, depending on what repairs the Maple Hollow Bridge might need. Kennerson remarked that she would like to get a plan going for moving forward with relocation of the town garage in order to show residents that the Board is invested in making that space available for uses that would benefit economic development.

The present General Government budget was reviewed and line items were discussed in order to get an idea of where changes, if any, should occur. Jerram noted that the budget has not increased significantly over the past few years. Union negotiated salary increases are the lowest they have been in many years. During past administrations, salary increases ranged from 3.5% to 4.0%; whereas the raises negotiated during the present administration average 2.25%. The Health Insurance line item is always a challenge. It is estimated that increases could be at 14% this year. The Town Attorney line item should remain stable – there may be legal fees incurred due to some potential litigation.

The Selectmen agreed that if any changes were to be made, there may be opportunity to reduce the town hall custodial line item, town hall electricity, the tax collector assistant (due to limitations on number of hours worked in order to avoid 'crossing the line' and becoming eligible for retirement benefits) and possibly consider increasing the pension line item to more accurately reflect costs that are associated with the management of the plan. The good news for the budget is that Regional Refuse Disposal District is anticipating a reduction in their assessment to member towns. This is due to their intent to increase sticker fees and reduce the subsidy that offset tipping fees for commercial haulers. This reduction in assessment will assist in the quest for keeping the overall increase minimal without having to reduce line items drastically. A request for an additional year of a deferral in payment on principal for the wastewater treatment plant upgrade remains unanswered at the USDA. The request is pending.

The Selectmen discussed the issue of Public Safety. Mr. Jerram stated that the police have asked for consideration of an additional constable to the force. A summary sheet showing that "patrol checks" have increased significantly in the past few years was discussed. Selectman Kennerson asked for clarification of what a patrol check is. She noted that there appeared to be a significant drop in the number of traffic stops; yet complaints regarding the lack of enforcement are on the increase. She questioned whether the numbers referred to all stops or

only those that resulted in formal action. Mr. Jerram replied that it would be best if these types of questions were posed directly to the police and answered by them. He suggested that the Resident Trooper be invited to the next meeting in order to discuss the issue further, especially since Selectman Casey was not able to be present at this meeting. It was suggested that a special meeting be called within the next few weeks. The agenda for the meeting would be limited to the topics of budget and public safety.

MOTION: by Kennerson, second, Jerram to adjourn at 8:42 PM.

Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant