

**Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting
Tuesday, October 16, 2018**

Minutes

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Eric Claman, Selectman Alesia Kennerson; Winchester Youth Services Bureau Director Jennifer Favorite, Winchester Youth Services Bureau representative Robbin Goodskey; Members of the Public Bill Baxter(out at 6:55) Mark Russo (out at 6:55), Mary Ann Gunning(out at 6:55), Shelly Lloyd (out at 6:55), Tom Buzzi, Dan LaPlante, Donna LaPlante, Jack Casey (in at 6:15 PM, out at 6:55), Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Minutes:

MOTION: by Kennerson to accept the minutes dated September 10, 2018, as presented; seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

Operations Updates:

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board that the highway department has had good success with selling some items that no longer have any use by the department. There have been several items sold on GovDeals, an auction site that the Town has used in the past to unload unwanted items. Recent sales have resulted in an excess of \$15,000 in revenues being deposited into the General Fund. Jerram stated posting items on the internet on GovDeals allows for fairness and transparency when selling items. It is a third party vendor that manages the bids and receives payment from the buyer and then issues payment to the Town.

Jerram updated the Board on various tasks that are in varied states of completion. The auditors continue to work on the audit; most requests for information have been fulfilled; there are a few open items that are being worked on. Interviews for Senior Director continue while applications for Land Use Administrator continue to be accepted. The MS4 Stormwater permit requirements are being completed. Cindy Bauman from CDM Smith is the engineering consultant assigned to assist with the requirements of this permit. First Selectman Jerram notified the Board that there will be a budget impact associated with this new mandated permit. For example, there is a requirement to map all of the catch basins throughout the town. This is just one of the onerous tasks required.

Mr. Jerram commented that there had been some discussion on "Social Media" regarding a property owner questioning an increase in his taxes. Mr. Jerram stated that the discussion included several false assumptions and he clarified that there had not been a major increase in the mill rate; however the homeowner had made several improvements to his property that resulted in an increase in value to the home, which did lead to an increase in tax assessment. Jerram cautioned against drawing conclusions based on social media and encouraged residents to contact the proper department for answers to questions.

The First Selectman reviewed the Capital Plan; updating the Board on progress to date. He noted that revaluation is nearing the end and increase notices will be distributed to those whose property assessment increased in value. Hearings will be scheduled in early November; residents who question an increase are

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encouraged to call the Assessor to discuss their concerns.

Mr. Jerram stated that the “foreman’s” truck item is complete; the utility pick up has been purchased; noting it was under budget due to purchasing a gas model rather than diesel. The police vehicle has been purchased and is received. Technology funding will be used to upgrade the server and to implement Windows 10 on all computers. Town Hall equipment will be used as planned to upgrade heat pumps. Downtown Improvement funding is earmarked for the installation of fencing on the Butler property. Bruning Road Drainage improvements will be done as planned; bids for services will be developed by the town engineer.

Rails to Trails funding will be used as the match for any grant funding that may be received as a result of a grant application that will be submitted at the end of October.

Carpenter Road Bridge work is continuing. The temporary poles that needed to be put in are in place. Utilities that are on the pole need to be moved from the old pole to the temporary pole. Rain has caused a delay in the completion of this relocation.

Christopher Ferrarroti received the rank of Eagle Scout this past weekend. He is the third son in the family to achieve the rank of Eagle.

A new signboard for the front of Town Hall has been constructed by the highway department. They will install this sign as soon as they are able.

The new Dunkin Donuts building may soon be under construction; owners have secured an easement to use an existing sewer line across Route 219. This easement is under review by the Town attorney and then will need endorsement by the Selectmen, 8-24 referral to the Planning and Zoning Commission and ultimately approval by townspeople at a Town Meeting.

CERC has reached out to towns that had capacity at their Wastewater treatment Plants for a new 60,000 square foot building. Mr. Jerram has replied to their questions; informing them that there is adequate capacity in New Hartford.

First Selectman Jerram noted that Jennifer Favorite from the Winchester Youth Services Bureau was present to discuss funding with the Board of Selectmen and offered her the opportunity to address the Board during Operations Updates.

Ms. Favorite, Director of the Winchester Youth Services Bureau, presented information to the Board regarding services provided by the Bureau to the youth of New Hartford. She informed them of the good work done by the Juvenile Review Board that has helped several New Hartford Youth who have been in trouble with the police. She stated that the WYSB sponsors program to educate families and youth about opioid abuse. She notified them of an upcoming program that will address anxiety and stated that additional info would be available soon.

Ms. Favorite expressed her disappointment to the Board regarding the level of funding that has been given to the Winchester Youth Services Bureau for the past few years. She stated that she was unaware that the funding request had been denied and a lower allocation was implemented for fiscal year 2017-2018. She only learned of the reduction when she requested the allocation and was surprised to learn it was only \$1000. She pleaded with the Board to consider increasing the funding.

Mr. Jerram and Mrs. Kennerson both stated that it had been a difficult budget year and noted that many difficult decisions regarding funding had been made. Mrs. Kennerson stated that the youth services bureau was not the only agency that had suffered cuts in funding levels. Ms. Favorite replied that in order for WSYB to continue to serve the youth and to be proactive with programming, additional funding is needed. The Selectmen replied that they would be willing to seek additional funding from the Board of Finance as an additional appropriation to the budget.

MOTION: by Kennerson to present to the Board of Finance a request to restore funding to the Winchester Youth Services Bureau in an amount not to exceed \$5305.00 as an additional appropriation to the budget; seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

Rails to Trails:

First Selectman Jerram stated that he was currently working to secure permission from property owners along the proposed trail route for access to their property. He stated that the grant request for funding would be for the planning stage of the project.

Several members of the public attending the meeting expressed their support of the rails to trails initiative.

Selectman Claman asked if the application for the trail grant would be completed on time. He requested that communication between the First Selectman and the members of the trail committee be kept open.

Bill Baxter stated that this trail will be a big investment for the town and he believes it to be a worthy one.

Shelly Lloyd, member on the Economic Development Committee thanked the Board of Selectmen for their willingness to endorse the concept of a multi-use trail and for taking measures to see that this initiative keeps moving forward.

In other trails business, Jerram announced to the Selectmen that the fence proposal for the Butler Farm fencing came in at \$17,000. He will begin making arrangements to have the fence installed.

Discussion regarding Tax Refund Policy:

First Selectman Jerram informed the Selectmen that new procedures for processing tax refunds will be implemented as recommended by the auditors. He stated that the manner in which refunds have been processed in the past is not consistent with State Statutes and therefore, a change will occur. Mr. Jerram explained that refund checks are currently issued from the Tax Collector tax account which is not what the Statute dictates. The refunds should be issued “on orders for payment drawn by the Treasurer.” In short, this means that refund requests should be presented on purchase orders with payment issued from the General Fund. Jerram clarified that the process for approval will remain the same; Tax Collector will recommend refunds to the Board who will then take action on the recommendation and then forward requests for payment to the bookkeeping department using a purchase order. The Treasurer will review the purchase orders as per usual and authorize the expenditure. Mr. Jerram stated that he will confer with the auditors to insure that this new procedure will be in compliance with State Statutes.

It is noted that several tax refunds will remain “on hold” until the auditors have confirmed the process for approval/issuance of a refund.

Communication:

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board members that the website design is still being developed. There have been several “mock ups” considered – still deciding on color scheme and home page design. Jerram noted that there is a lot of information on the website and he hopes that residents will take advantage of using the new site once it is completed.

Mr. Jerram informed the Selectmen that the highway department has constructed a new sign board to replace the existing sign in front of Town Hall. The old sign will be removed as soon as the crew has some time to take it

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out and install the new one.

A staff meeting will be held on Thursday at noon. Town Hall will be closed for one hour to allow all employees to attend the meeting.

Selectman Claman informed the Board that he had recently attended a seminar conducted by a communications expert. He noted that there are many similarities between how businesses are run and how government should conduct business. He stated that it is important for elected officials to be accountable to residents and return communications. He said that good leadership is dependent upon good communication. Mr. Claman believes that good communication is lacking when it comes to responding to resident concerns. Mr. Jerram disputed that, saying that it is his belief that there is good communication with residents; reiterating his earlier statement that the town website provides a lot of information on various topics and is a good source of communication to residents who utilize it. Mr. Claman asked about the process for responding to written communications that are sent to Town Hall, specifically referring to a lack of response to a letter sent by a resident requesting consideration of a dog park. To date, that resident has not received any response or acknowledgement of his letter.

Mr. Claman referred back to the evening's earlier discussion regarding the Winchester Youth Services Bureau and the misunderstanding that occurred regarding a reduction to their funding. He commented that he believed that there should have been notification to the bureau regarding the difference between their budget request and the actual funding level included in the budget.

Claman acknowledged that the town website has good information that is useful to residents. He supported the idea of a post card/mailer to all residents announcing the launch of the new website once completed. Mr. Jerram agreed that this would be a useful communication to all residents.

Resignation to Boards and Commissions:

Commission on Aging member Fran LaCroix submitted a letter of resignation effective November 1, 2018.

MOTION: by Kennerson to accept with regret the resignation of Fran LaCroix from her position as a member of the Commission on Aging seconded by Claman.

Mrs. Kennerson thanked Mrs. LaCroix for her service. Mr. Claman echoed that sentiment. Mr. Jerram added, "we will miss her and we wish her well."

Unanimous.

Meeting Schedule for 2019:

The Selectmen discussed the regular meeting schedule for 2019; agreeing that the 4th Tuesday of every month would remain the regularly scheduled meeting night.

Executive Session to discuss potential settlement for Carver Properties:

MOTION: by Kennerson to enter Executive Session at 7:35 PM, seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

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Jerram, Kennerson, Claman and Hayward entered into Executive Session.

Executive Session ended at 7:42 PM.

First Selectman Jerram stated that the Board members had discussed a resolution to a claim related to the elevated sidewalk located at 8 Bridge Street.

MOTION: By Kennerson to approve an amount not to exceed \$15,000 to participate in the construction cost of building a conforming sidewalk and stairs on town owned land in front of 8 Bridge Street to be paid upon completion of the project. This project shall be supervised by the Town Engineer utilizing the recommendations provided in correspondence dated September 5, 2018. This will become a public access way upon completion; seconded by Claman.

First Selectman Jerram commented that it is important to recognize that the owners of the building will not have to repair the structure but will be responsible for routine maintenance (such as snow removal) as this will be a town owned accessway.

The engineering oversight costs will be paid separately by the Town and will not be deducted from the \$15,000 appropriation.

It was noted by Mr. Jerram that there has been discussion between the property owner and the Town since approximately 2005. This seems to be a good resolution and will remove an encroachment that has existed on town property for many years, possibly back to the 1970's.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Kennerson to adjourn at 7:55 PM; seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant