

**Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting - VIRTUAL
April 13, 2021
MINUTES**

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Laura Garay, Board of Finance Chairman Regina Wexler; Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward. (all virtual)

First Selectman Dan Jerram called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

Set Time, Date, Manner of Annual Budget Meeting:

MOTION: by Garay to hold the Annual Budget Meeting on April 20, 2021 at 7:00 PM virtually via ZOOM, seconded by Kennerson.

Unanimous.

Set Time, Date, Manner of Referendum for Budget Approval:

MOTION: by Kennerson to move the budget directly to referendum to be held on Tuesday, May 4, 2021 between the hours of 6:00 AM and 8:00 PM with voting to be held at the usual polling places; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous.

First Selectman stated that Region 7 School District had corresponded with the town and stated that if New Hartford was proceeding with holding the Referendum on May 4, they would proceed with the usual timeframe with their budget approval process.

Mr. Jerram also stated that with regard to the proposed budget, all is well. There are a couple of small minor adjustments that need to be made and he would like to have a quick meeting to formally implement those changes to the budget prior to the actual vote. He will inform the Board of Finance of those adjustments. The Probate Court assessment has been finalized and the Board of Education capital budget request is listed incorrectly in the budget document. Currently, the proposed tax increase is at 2.03%.

First Selectman Jerram stated that he would also like to recommend that the Board of Finance consider increasing the tax collection rate from its current 96.5% to 97%. He noted that the tax payments have not been adversely impacted by COVID as some had anticipated. Collections remain historically strong. The fund balance has grown significantly in the past few years.

Mr. Jerram also suggested that this Board of Selectmen consider removing funding for Rails to Trails from the Capital budget and use funding that had previously been set aside for construction of a wash bay study. It is his opinion that the wash bay study funds will not be used as there is no consensus as to what the study should include and without a clear understanding of the direction or need for the study, it doesn't make sense to have funding available. A better use of the funds would be to apply them to the current rails to trails project and remove the proposed capital funding.

Selectman Garay stated that she felt that this is a year to give the taxpayers a break and she supports anything that would lead to some relief.

Minutes – Board of Selectmen – April 13, 2021

Selectman Kennerson agreed that increasing the tax collection rate is a good suggestion and felt that redirecting the use of the wash bay study funding is also a good plan.

It was noted that the actual tax collection rate has been above 98% for the past 10 years, according to the Audit.

Selectman Garay asked if the Rails to Trails funding would then be at \$25,000 rather than the proposed \$30,000. Jerram confirmed that.

MOTION: by Garay to recommend to the Board of Finance that the tax collection rate be increased to 97% and to remove \$30,000 of proposed capital funding for Rails to Trails in favor of using the existing \$25,000 in wash bay study funding; seconded by Kennerson.

Unanimous.

Request for Tax Refunds:

Tax Collector Karen Wiedewult recommended the following tax refunds for approval:

CAB EAST LLC	\$420.85	Motor Vehicle overpayment
CAB EAST LLC	\$208.28	Motor Vehicle overpayment
CAB EAST LLC	\$144.57	Motor Vehicle overpayment
CAB EAST LLC	\$324.06	Motor Vehicle overpayment
Toyota Lease Trust	\$193.18	Motor Vehicle overpayment
Toyota Lease Trust	\$323.00	Motor Vehicle overpayment
Torrington Savings Bank	\$553.16	Real Estate overpayment (Carlson)
Torrington Savings Bank	\$4,624.83	Real Estate overpayment (Combes)

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the 8 requests for tax refunds (6 motor vehicle and 2 Real Estate) as presented by the Tax Collector, seconded by Garay.

Unanimous.

First Selectman Jerram suggested a special Board of Selectmen meeting on April 20, 2021 at 6:00 PM to approve the final proposed budget and follow that with the regular Board of Selectmen meeting on April 27, 2021 at 7:00 PM. All were in agreement.

MOTION: by Kennerson to adjourn at 6:20 PM, seconded by Garay.

Unanimous.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant*

ATTACHMENTS:
Notice of Annual Budget Meeting/Notice of Referendum