
Selectboard Minutes 12/17/2014

Minutes

Town of Greenfield

Greenfield Town Offices, 7 Sawmill Road Greenfield, NH

Selectboard's Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 17, 2014 – 4:30 PM

Selectboard: Chairwoman Debra Davidson, Selectwoman Karen Day, Selectwoman Margaret Charig Bliss

Staff: Administrator Patt, David Hall Fire Chief, Katherine Heck Treasurer

Public: Diane Boilard, Norman Nickerson, Ken Paulsen

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM by Chairwoman Davidson.

Documents for Approval/Review/Signature

The Selectboard reviewed and/or signed the following items:

- A/P Invoices
- A/P Checks
- Payroll
- Minutes of 11/19 corrected
- Trustee of Trust Funds – Appt. L. Nickerson
- Recycling Employee Evaluation letter
- PSNH – Utility Rate Increase notification
- Avitar Associates – One Year Assessing Agmt.

Chairwoman Davidson opened the meeting at 4:33pm.

4:30 PM: David Hall, Greenfield Fire Chief

At 4:30 PM the Board met with the Town of Greenfield's Fire Chief, David Hall. The Chair opened the meeting with introductions to members of the Budget Advisory Committee that were present. The Chair outlined the interest of the Fire Department in the purchase of gap insurance from Provident Insurance Company to address shortcomings in the Town's insurance with its municipal risk pool provider, Primex. The Chair asked Chief Hall to outline some of the issues that firefighters face and how the gap insurance will provide better coverage to firefighters. Chief Hall delivered a synopsis of the gap insurance. He explained that he had been on a conference call with Primex and discovered that the insurance does not match well with fire department policies. If a fire fighter were to drive directly to a fire or accident scene, they would be covered by Primex while they are enroute. If they drive to the fire department they are considered to be commuting to the workplace. In the first instance the workers compensation will cover the person in the case of an accident, in the second instance the Town's insurance would not cover the person driving to the fire department. The gap insurance begins the moment a firefighter is toned out, which could cover an accident in the home while trying to respond to a call. The Town's insurance provides Worker's Compensation, but will only pay up to 60% of the firefighter's salary. The gap insurance will pick up the rest of the insurance in order to ensure that firefighters do not suffer financial loss because of time away from work. The gap insurance also provides additional compensations in case of death, disfiguring accidents, loss of limb, loss of mobility, etc. Chief Hall summed up his research and said that on review of other towns that carry the insurance, the policy is highly recommended. The insurance is critically important in attracting and retaining members. This is especially true for firefighters who have families that rely on their income. At some point a firefighter has to assess the risk of responding to a fire vs. staying healthy and not missing work. Norm Nickerson said that when he weighed the opportunity of joining the fire department

vs. the risk associated with the decision, he had to take into consideration that as a small businessman there isn't anyone else that can run his business if he gets hurt. He said "If I get hurt, I don't eat". After discussion the Board agreed to move the insurance and place it in the 2015 budget.

The Board and Chief Hall discussed the 2015 budget from the standpoint of purchasing necessary equipment. The Chair outlined that prior to March Town Meeting expenditures are held to just those that support the normal course of business. The Chair indicated that some of the spending that the Fire Department wants to do in January will have to wait until after Town Meeting. Chief Hall said that the Fire Department budget has been inadequate for some time and it was conceivable that truck repairs and turn-out gear would be needed earlier than March. He said that the turn out gear is out of date and has to be replaced. He explained that this is a very pressing issue. After some discussion on this point Chief Hall indicated he had another appointment to attend and left the meeting.

5:30 PM: Katherine Heck, Greenfield Treasurer

At 5:30 PM the Board welcomed Katherine Heck, Treasurer. The Chair asked Katherine to give the Board an overview of the budget from her perspective. Treasurer Heck said that during the course of the year her primary concern is cash flow. The Town doesn't receive the funds that are voted in March until after the 2nd billing due on December 1. As such the Town has to run its new budget on the previous year's cash flow, which can be challenging. Heck said that she runs cash flow projections twice a year to confirm that the Town will be on track to cover its bills. She went on to say that she ran a projection to see how much money could be added to the budget without having to borrow a TAN (Tax Anticipation Note). She had concluded that Greenfield could add approximately 5% of the net taxes to be raised amount of one million and sixty thousand dollars. She said that the most the budget could handle would be around \$64,280 in approximate dollars. A discussion about borrowing a TAN was held and Heck explained that the cost of the TAN is high. "It's \$3500 just for legal counsel". Then, the application is intensive and the bank may not allow us to borrow if we don't really need the money. The Town would need around \$13,000 to apply for a TAN. While the Town only wants to borrow \$50,000 to 100,000 for cash flow purposes, the banks won't make any money on that amount so they require we borrow seven hundred thousand dollars. For as small an amount that we want to borrow, the fees end up acting as a significant tax on that amount.

There followed a conversation about cash flow as it relates to the timing of purchases and completion of projects around the year. The Chair brought up the conversation with Chief Hall indicating that the Fire Department has a lot of needs and they have requested \$33,000 to their budget for 2015. With the additional money in their line items, if they choose to spend this early in the year it will have a negative impact on cash flow and it will be very difficult in late May and June to pay bills. The Board discussed the potential for encumbering funds in 2014 to offset some of the Fire Department's spending early in 2015. It was felt that purchasing turn-out gear in 2014 would alleviate a significant amount of spending when the general fund is lower in funds after Town Meeting. After some deliberation the Board agreed to make available end of year funds to the Fire Department to help the 2015 budget.

5:30 PM: Marlene Paulsen, Greenfield Trails Association

The Board welcomed Marlene Paulsen of the Greenfield Trails Association. Mrs. Paulsen said the Greenfield Trails Association wants to build a pedestrian, non-motorized bridge over Rand Brook at the end of Dodge Road where the old bridge use to be. There was some discussion about the old bridge with the Selectboard. It was noted that in 2006 the Board voted not to fund a new bridge but did not vote to discontinue the road or make it subject to gates and bars. As such the Board would need to put in a warrant article to discontinue the road. If the town votes to approve the article the land would go back to the abutters. The abutters could then get together to have a bridge erected. Ms. Paulsen provided some documentation to the Board along with a warrant article as an example of what the Trails Association wants to do.

7:00 PM: Review and Approval of Documents

The Selectboard signed A/P invoices, A/P checks, and Payroll. The Board reviewed the minutes of 11/19 that had been corrected. The Board approved the 11/19 minutes. Lastly, the Selectboard signed a one year contract extension with Avitar Associates for assessing services. The Board scheduled a meeting for 12/22/2014 to discuss wages. The Board reviewed the goals for the 12/22 meeting and provided a list of materials that were needed from the Administrator. The Board discussed briefly an update from DPW that one of the full time workers would be out of work for a while due to an injury. The Board voted 3-0 to move forward with a PT seasonal snow plow position. Finally the Board asked the Administrator to draft a letter to the Monadnock Ledger Transcript in response to the tax rate article that ran in the paper recently. The Selectboard expressed that the article did not accurately reflect the tax rate situation in Greenfield and instead of noting that the 2014 was effectively a lower number for taxation than in 2013, due to the net taxes to be raised figure being lower, the paper focused on the increase from \$6.67 to \$7.73 in numeric terms as a percent. Based on the revaluation figure, \$7.73 is actually about five cents lower in taxation than the previous year's local tax rate. The Board voted 3-0 on a motion by the Chair and a second by Selectwoman Day to use 2014 end of year monies to purchase turn-out gear (four sets of structural gear at approx. \$1500 each, and EMS turn out gear at approximately \$1,000) for the fire department and to move these funds out of the line items in the 2015 budget into to a new capital reserve fund, to be formed at Town Meeting, which could be transferred at the end of that year rather than spent at the beginning of the year.

Adjournment

On a motion by the Chair, and a second by Selectwoman Charig Bliss, the Board voted to adjourn. The motion carried 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM. The minutes are final when approved and signed by the Selectboard. A signed copy is on file in the Selectboard's office.

**Chair, Debra Davidson
Bliss, Selectwoman**

Karen Day, Selectwoman

Margaret Charig