

Wallingford Selectboard Meeting
Minutes
January 5, 2015

Selectboard Members Present: Nelson Tift, Gary Fredette, Tom Phillips, Rose Regula, and Mark Tessier.

Others Present: Julie Sharon, Sandi Switzer, Steve Lanfear, Phil Baker, Jerry Tift, Dave Ballou, and Stephen Benard.

Agenda Amendments. None

Minutes. M. Tessier made a motion that was seconded by R. Regula to approve the Minutes of the December 17, 2014 meeting. Motion carried (5-0).

Selectboard Orders. N. Tift made a motion that was seconded by G. Fredette to approve pay orders totaling \$19,594.45. Motion carried (5-0).

Road Commissioner's Report. There was a discussion about paving priorities for this summer. Meadow, Circular, Elm and River Streets were mentioned. There is approximately \$28,000 to be rolled over in the current budget for paving next summer.

Road Foreman Steve Lanfear said he constructed a berm in front of the sand pile at the town garage to prevent people from removing truckloads of sand.

He said the road crew had not yet installed a roof over the outdoor fuel storage tank.

Road Commissioner Phil Baker said the state would no longer be plowing the parking areas and spaces along Route 7. He said the town did not have the manpower to put flaggers out on the street for traffic control while clearing the snow.

It was noted there was \$44,000 left in the FY'15 gravel budget.

Highway '16. There was extensive discussion regarding budgeting for a new vehicle for the highway department. Green Mountain Kenworth and state vendor Underhill Garage provided estimates for single and dual axle trucks for budget purposes.

S. Lanfear favored a single axle over a dual axle truck to replace the 2006 Sterling, which he said needed a new dump body. He preferred Kenworth with its service and maintenance shop in Pittsford, while Underhill Garage is located in Jericho.

There was also discussion about road crew staffing levels and whether a new vehicle would be cost-effective with two fulltime employees and a part-time worker.

By consensus, the board agreed to create line item #5337 for a new vehicle with a budget of \$40,000. They requested Town Clerk and Treasurer Julie Sharon to look into

interest rates on a five-year loan. It was noted FY'16 gravel and paving budgets were reduced in anticipation of the vehicle purchase.

The board budgeted \$5200 for line item #5314 Hired Equipment, which includes \$2400 for Mount Holly snow removal and \$2800 to rent a roadside mower. G. Fredette noted the mower ought to have the capability of cutting brush over guardrails.

S. Lanfear and P. Baker said the road crew could make needed repairs to the loader's cab. The board agreed to budget \$500 for the loader line item #5303.

Public Comments. Lister Dave Ballou recommended the town put \$10,000 in a reappraisal fund in anticipation of a state mandated reappraisal within the next couple of years. He said best estimate for a reappraisal would be \$130,000, but he cautioned that number could go much higher.

The board reviewed J. Sharon's memo indicating the town had \$66,767 in a CD for a reappraisal and the town received approximately \$11,000 annually from the state that was deposited in that account. J. Sharon anticipated \$111,600 in the account by FY'18.

After further discussion, the board agreed to add \$10,000 to the FY'16 budget for a reappraisal. However, it was noted the board would revisit that decision at the next meeting if the budget's bottom line is higher than anticipated.

Public Safety FY'16. Rutland County Sheriff Stephen Benard informed the board the RCSD contract would remain the same at \$18,033 for FY'16. He said it would be the final year of the COPS grant and he anticipated the cost rising to \$35,000 in FY'17 for the same coverage of 20 hours a week year round.

The board revisited Constable Jerry Tift's proposal to increase the constable's budget in order to purchase and operate a vehicle to be used for local patrols. He said he received approximately \$8 an hour for patrols, which included use of his own vehicle.

There was discussion regarding costs associated with training law enforcement officers to meet current requirements as well as future demands stemming from legislation to be introduced in Montpelier this session. It was noted someone without any training could be elected to the constable post.

The board reduced Public Safety line item #5402 to \$2400 for Constable mileage costs and they increased line item #5406 to \$27,400, which included \$18,033 for the sheriff and \$9367 for special police officer patrols of 15 hours a week at \$12 per hour. Line item #5408 for the Animal Control Officer was level-funded at \$1200.

Dept. of Taxes Equalization Study. The Department of Taxes equalization study report shows the Town's equalized education property values at \$217,628,000, a coefficient of dispersion of 14.71%, and a common level of appraisal of 110.18% effective 1/1/15.

Administration FY'16. N. Tift moved to increase line item #5001 Selectboard to \$5100 with the chairman receiving \$1100 and Selectboard members getting \$1000 each; the motion was seconded by R. Regula. Motion carried 3-2 with N. Tift, R. Regula and T. Phillips voting in the affirmative and G. Fredette and M. Tessier opposing the motion.

N. Tift noted he donated his salary to the town.

G. Fredette made a motion to increase the Town Administrator's hours from 20 to 22 hours a week; R. Regula seconded the motion. Motion carried (5-0).

G. Fredette made a motion to budget \$10 an hour for transfer station attendant Art Nemeth's salary; R. Regula seconded the motion. Motion carried (5-0).

G. Fredette made a motion to budget two percent raises for Administration personnel, R. Regula seconded the motion. Motion carried (5-0).

N. Tift made a motion to level-fund the listers' budget; G. Fredette seconded the motion. Motion carried (5-0). Line items #5010 and #5026 were level-funded by unanimous consent.

Insurance FY'16. Health insurance went up 7.7% for 2015 and VLCT recommended budgeting an 8% increase in health insurance in 2016. Workers' Comp went up **80%** for 2015 and VLCT recommended budgeting an 8% increase in 2016. Unemployment insurance is up 10% for 2015 and VLCT recommended budgeting a 10% increase in 2016. VLCT recommended 3% increases for EyeMed and Dental. Disability won't change in 2016.

G. Fredette asked if there was any room to trim costs. Town Administrator Sandi Switzer said the only item that could be reduced was employee HRAs of \$1000 each. By unanimous consent, the board agreed to maintain HRAs.

N. Tift made a motion to budget \$97,200 for municipal insurance in FY'16; R. Regula seconded the motion. Motion carried (5-0).

S. Switzer asked whether any funds should be budgeted for law enforcement liability insurance for special police officers. N. Tift responded Jerry Tift would serve as special police officer and would be under the town's insurance since he was still the constable.

Revenue FY'16. Line item #4503 Ordinance Fines was set at \$15,000 by unanimous consent.

Town Report Dedication. The board reviewed and approved the annual report dedication to Bill Seward.

Cell Tower Upgrade in Clock Tower. There was discussion regarding citizens' unfavorable reactions to AT&T's plan to extend the Town Hall clock tower by four feet to accommodate six new antennas for cell tower service.

N. Tift and T. Phillips noted their concerns regarding the impact on the historic nature of the structure. G. Fredette said the fiberglass materials to be used would not match existing materials – slate and wood.

G. Fredette made a motion to inform AT&T the town was not interested in changing the configuration of the clock tower; R. Regula seconded the motion. Motion carried (5-0).

S. Switzer asked whether the board had a response to Unison's cell site lease conversion program. The board by unanimous consent declined to entertain Unison's offer.

Town Attorney. The board directed S. Switzer to obtain hourly rates from area attorneys for municipal legal services.

Change Meeting Date. The second meeting in January falls on a holiday. The Selectboard agreed to move the meeting to Tuesday, January 20 at 6:30 p.m.

Other Announcements/Business. The board approved the Select Board report for the annual Town Report.

Nelson indicated his Selectboard salary could be used as the required 50% match for the PACIF Equipment grant to purchase security lights at the ballfield and lake.

The board directed the road crew to place the speed cart at Railroad Street for a couple of weeks then move it to River Street.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Date Approved: 01/20/15

Sandi Switzer, Town Administrator