



Selectmen's Meeting

Town Office

Wednesday, January 16, 2013

Present: Jed Brummer, Chair; Roberta Oeser, Selectman; Carlotta Lilback Pini, Town Administrator;  
Linda Stonehill, Administrative Assistant

Absent: Samuel Seppala, Selectman

### APPROVED MINUTES

6:00pm Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

#### CITIZEN'S FORUM

Mike Cloutier, Public Works Director, said that the Conservation Commission plans to replace three damaged elms (one being in front of the Town Office) with three new maples, and Bob Cleland has generously offered to donate a beautiful 25-foot evergreen on his land to replace the damaged Christmas Tree on the Common. The Conservation Commission will absorb the expense of relocating the tree and Richard Mellor said there would be no expense to the Town. Jed wanted to recognize Bob for his donation of this large tree.

MOTION: Jed motioned to approve the Conservation Commission's request to replace three trees for \$750 at the expense of the Conservation Commission's treasury and to replace the Christmas Tree on the Common with the gracious donation of Bob Cleland's tree. Roberta seconded, and all were in favor.

Jed said that last night's planning meeting at West Rindge Church was very well attended and there was spirited conversation about the intersection of Route 202/119 and the West Rindge Village District.

MOTION: Roberta motioned to approve the accounts payable and payroll manifests, Jed seconded, and all were in favor.

#### GENERAL BUSINESS

The public hearing for the proposed 18-month budget for 2013-2014 was continued from the January 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, and the Selectmen resumed review of the proposed warrant articles.

Article 14: The plan Mike had for a machine to distribute punch cards at the transfer station was to install it near an exterior wall of the Swap Shop, but he said that the only place it really can go is inside the Swap Shop on the further end. Richard Mellor: Isn't the dump a public service, and why can't we let people use the dump and drop off their stuff at no charge? Why do we have to pay extra for these services? Why not figure out what the cost is and add it to the taxes? What is the plus side we get out of this expenditure? Roberta: the transfer station is close to \$200,000. Mike: the revenue of this instead of going to the taxpayer, I can replace the equipment with the sale. Sale of punch cards and dump stickers netted \$26,000. There is a labor cost of distributing the punch cards and dump stickers. The Selectmen's office taking the time of selling all those dump stickers and punch cards. It's not going to have a direct payback

per se but it will allow the personnel to focus on the activities supposed to taking place in an uninterrupted manner and hopefully defer costs down the road. We've been trying to move towards this. The Town Clerk has started to accept credit cards. They can purchase transfer station stickers on the website and then I mail them to the resident.

Tom: The revenue doesn't go into the general fund; it will go into a reserve account for equipment; into a savings account; it sits there until we want to buy a compactor that we need to replace. So we get \$10,000 of revenue.

Al: It seems to me it would be worth the money to have this machine that would be more customer-friendly and save on labor for the Administrative Assistant. Roberta: We've had trouble getting revenue for equipment; we are getting user fees for the dump so that when that truck needs to be replaced, we can put that money towards it. The people who choose to use Monadnock Disposal pay twice –\$180,000 for the transfer station plus \$50/month to have their trash picked up. I think that having a fee for service is reasonable. Mike will settle the money in the machine. Kim: I understand that the selectmen's office has had to sell a lot more stickers since we went from a three-year or five-year sticker to an annual sticker, and the other part is the punch cards and people don't like not able to get them on Saturdays and evenings. Has anyone explored other ways to get this done aside from coughing up money for the machine? Carlotta: The idea was to take the money out of the fund created last year. But that article was written in a way that was ~~written~~ too restrictive; it only allows for maintenance and replacement of equipment and it isn't for purchases. This machine is working in other municipalities, and I think for \$5,000 if we can improve customer service, and make it easier for folks get their transactions done and reduce the impact on the front office, it's a good thing. Kim: But if it doesn't pass, then what? Have you asked about volunteering for this? Carlotta: Yes; and we'd have to have an infrastructure in place to manage that process, and the volunteers would need to be there consistently. Roberta: I don't think that is the taxpayers responsibility to take care of demolition. If you get a contractor they should include it in their price., you get dump stickers. ~~Once we made the transition.~~

Article 15: Raise \$18,000 for the Wellington Road capital reserve fund? Mike: as you know, we're on the bridge replacement plan, this is only a step towards having the money we need when it is our turn – several towns have closed off roads because they've made no effort to save the money. Carlotta: we approached DOT and we're on their bridge aid for 2020.

Article 16: \$35,000 to be added to the recreation fund. Roberta: Everyone was generous in donating to the rec building. It's excess donations that have to be spent for that building. This language covers everything that building will need so it won't be a burden on the taxpayers. No tax impact. We haven't been able to spend it on the building. Carlotta: I ran all of these articles by the DRA municipal auditor and this is the one article we need to pass or ~~and we had~~ we will have to put this the general fund. Tom: It's an expense fund that doesn't need a vote of the town to use. Roberta: Correct, because if the furnace breaks, we won't be able to wait for a vote at town meeting ~~take the time~~ to fix it.

Article 17: Raise \$100,000 to the Library Facilities Reserve Fund. For an addition and to complete the original plans from 1996.

Audience: In the mid-90's, there was an expansion plan, and it was 2/3 completed in 2001. The major things left to be done are to increase the footprint of the first floor (children's floor) and the floor above it (30% more space). On the children's level, that would provide meeting space for the library, There are a lot of programs in the library and we could do more if we had more meeting space, which is in short supply in this town. Second, we'd like to finish the third floor of the library. The walls need finishing, moving away from Main St. was prepared with joists for a floor. In 2001 an elevator was put in from first to second floor but its piston can reach the third floor. The third floor could be used for computer usage space for people, quiet reading room space. You can get up there now by one narrow stairway. Jed: It is an excellent example of stuffed animals and birds known to be native to Rindge. The space needs to be

finished off with flooring laid, elevator access to third floor, and another stairway is required (two are required for code). Circulation statistics at the Library: shows a consistent strong increase in use. From 2000 it's around 70-90% increase, almost a doubling of the use of the library by circulation statistics. Back to 1993, it's not so dramatic an increase. Jed: what would be the total expenditure? Bob Carney: several meetings ago, in 2001 the estimated cost of this renovation done in 12-14 months was \$250,000 to \$300,000. But at this latest meeting, our meeting said it was approx. \$649,000. Bob Carney: The library trust fund, handled by CIP is \$150,000 coupled with the rest of the town's trust funds. Carlotta: The capital reserve fund has only \$100 to keep it open. Audience (alternate trustee) – donations for library have to be used for library purposes. \$233,000 – the details of how we'd pay for this would be to use a substantial portion of that. We might want to have a fundraising effort, but a good fraction is going to have to come from the general taxes and we feel it's not too soon to start putting it into the CIP.

Article 18: \$28,000 for three new video cameras for the police cruisers. Frank: in 2005, the Police Department and the Town of Rindge benefitted by receiving grant money from Highway Safety for paying for three audiovisual cameras in three cruisers. We had money in drug asset forfeiture to pay for the other half. It was at no expense to the taxpayer. These are old; two no longer work and the mfr. Says they won't service them any longer; there are plenty of new technology out there. These camera systems on the cruisers are a tool; when a citizen comes in and complains, it's handy to pull the video and review it. Secondly, it's a valuable collection of evidence and captures license plates and things the officers don't see. It's cheap insurance against lawsuits (having video evidence). Eight years these cameras have lasted. Frank: Two-party consent is required for audio recording, but not video. So they could shut off the audio on request. Rick Sirvint: I support this 100%. This is designed to help the town protect against an officer getting shot, or the possibility of expensive litigation

Article 19: Shall the town vote to make Ingalls Road (a dirt road by FPU to Jaffrey) a highway to summer cottages? Now, we've been maintaining it. Mike: the intent of this – I do not maintain that section; it's seasonal. Potentially, that's Class V so we'd have to maintain that year-round, so my intent was to put this forward and not change the status. Roberta: I think his problem is the archaic language "summer cottages." It doesn't mean that it's not used year-round. Consensus was to follow up with our town counsel on this warrant article, and we told Mr. Goundry's attorney about this meeting and the Deliberative Session and his attorney is sort of mediating.

Tom Coneys: that road used to not be plowed at all. Mike: I have to maintain to that point. Tom: This article is to protect the town, to keep that road from being upgraded. Mike: I'm trying to protect Mr. Goundry's assets but also protect the town.

Article 20:

Article 21: both these articles resulted from the Women's club request that the Town take over the funds from the Andersen estate for scholarships. They have worked with Terry Knowles and the probate court to do this. The women's club hasn't been earning much interest on this to give many scholarships, so they wanted to lump these funds in with the trustees monies so more can be given for scholarships. But the selectmen didn't have the authority to accept this money, so these articles are to: 1) accept this money, and 2) give the selectmen the ability to accept this kind of money going forward.

Article 22: SWRPC dues. Roberta: I think it needs to be put back in a line item even if there's no amount for it. Carlotta: if it's a warrant article, we can't do it. Roberta: I think it should be in the budget as a line item even if it's \$1 in case we can find the money. Carlotta: there are a lot of unknowns, one being when the planning director position is filled. There could be some money realized if it's not filled immediately. Another is the premium holiday we may be getting from Primex. It's likely that in the next 6 months we may be in a position to revisit this but if the voters vote against it, it will be off the table for 18 months.

Carlotta: we were trying to get it down 100,000 according to Selectman Seppala to flat the budget. The question is how did we do this, and there were some minor cuts made but much of it was in the timing.

We're looking at an 18-month budget with two periods of January to June and one period of July to December. There were a number of expenses paid at the beginning of the year. Vendors paid in 2013 and half in 2014 and then we'll pay half in the rest of 2014. In the July to June fiscal year we'll pay the 2014 12-months. Vision appraisal is \$7,000 per year for support and licensing for 12 months. In the budget before we had \$7,000 in the first six months and the second \$12,000. They split it into \$7,000, \$3,500 and \$3,500. So it would be in the next fiscal year's budget. Ellen: we paid 100% of our dues, insurance premiums for 12 months. All we're doing now is changing our payment terms to pay once every six months—January to July. It's \$10,500 for 18 months but then it goes back to \$7,000.

Dan: The default budget is higher because the block grant and highway projects are higher. Why would the default budget have the extra \$178,000. Carlotta: The method used to develop the 18-month default (last year's budget + contractual increases-one-time expenditures). Multiplied last year's budget by 1.5 and added contractual increases. To develop the proposed budget, we used the actual timing of revenues and expenses. The highway block grant comes from the state and it's paid quarterly. We get their payments July, Sept, Jan, March but we don't do our highway project until August. During the 18-month period, we'll get installment from NH but we'll only do paving once. The block grant money and projects money once in August. Carlotta: We'll spend the same amount as we would in a calendar year. Dan: We're picking up \$178,000 on the budget due to timing of payments. Carlotta: this fiscal year conversion could be painful but we're able to take advantage of the timing of payments and make it palatable. Dan: Our numbers are still up almost \$200,000. Carlotta: I look at it as the timing of that highway project is allowing us to absorb the cost of that paving project. Dan: But when we do the next budget, you're going to be up almost \$200,000. Jed: are you going to have a hearing for the public? Tom: We had two scheduled. Jed: are you in favor of the fiscal change? Tom: In the long run of the town, we'll probably be happy with it but there are some negative effects like the voting date is off but we'll be starting the year off with money in the bank. Our job will be the same to control the expenditures side. Roberta: If you take the highway projects out of the default, we're \$24,000 higher, not \$200,000. If you take \$187,000 out... John: The rest of the highway isn't a block. If we vote the budget down, does this mean we get two more miles of road paved? Yes. Ellen: I think when one number's bigger and one number's smaller, they'll vote for the smaller one. Carlotta: Throughout this budget process, I've heard from Sam and others that they want to see a budget that is 1.5 times last year's budget and that's what we've tried to do that. We haven't really paid attention to the default budget because we've been trying to keep it level. John: With the rest of the default, we've got mutual aid. In 2012, we paid 51,920 and the default is 1.5 times that and the request is the result of our negotiating with them to pay instead of two lump sums 1.5. We're using 18 months of the contract not 24 months of the budget. Roberta: it should be twice the contracted.

At the library, they would like to come forward to the board and talk about the wages for their part-timers. A lot of the part-timers did not get addressed in the pay adjustments that were made last year. And we have a lot of loyal part-timers that were with us for years and we think that's something we could do using the \$16,800 pool

Tom: I concur with Dan; the BAC sentiment has been a level budget and we also expressed the concern that the operating budget was in good shape but they're the things the taxpayers benefit from. But we were very strong about the fact that wages and salaries were up significantly in this level budget you've proposed. The wage and benefit line of this level budget is up by \$240,000. It isn't level. You've taken it from the operating side and you haven't made any adjustment in the wage and benefits side. And I understand there are expenses in the retirement. Jed: All those points are well taken. We've had significant expenses on healthcare and state retirement. I think we can address those things and before we start a hornet's nest with the employees. Have you met with all the employees? Tom: No we have not. Jed: I know from meeting with them we have to address several issues and before we open that can of worms, we'll need an independent study to take a look at Rindge, our steps, our compensation before we start fooling with their benefits, dental, so we can maintain fairly consistent staffing in the town. Tom: We still have \$20,000 in there for increases. But the increase will continue to stay with us, and the operating

side will need to go up. Roberta: you keep saying the operating side is where people get the benefit. How are the roads going to be plowed with only trucks? Tom: the only thing we've changed in Mike's crew is moving one employee from solid waste to Highway. But the highway dept. budget is up by \$90,000 and a big piece of that is the move of one employee from one budget to another. In Solid Waste, since they only moved one employee, it's only down \$71,000 so it's been increased by \$20,000. Ellen: They've got their health insurance and their NH Retirement. You're only taking one guy – his wage, insurance and flipping it to highway but you've got 5 other guys in highway who are making their wage with adjustments, with healthcare and retirement. Roberta: that \$71,000 came out of solid waste. Dan: On the first page of the budget summary, I took differences from 2012 budget and it's a \$100,000 increase. Executive side up \$18,000 Town Office up \$47,000. Carlotta: We're making the accountant full-time from part-time. We have added a deputy for the town clerk months ago. They've been training and they're budgeted for 15 hours a week (\$15,000). We've seen the downshifting of retirement from the state (\$71,000) and you have the wage adjustments and 15% increase on the health insurance. Tom: We're going to pave fewer roads. Roberta: No, we're not. Dan: But the next budget will be \$200,000 higher. Jed: what do you suggest? Dan: It's come down a ways but the paving thing has been thrown completely off. It's up \$200,000. Ellen: I think it's unrealistic to think that things are going to stay flat.

Bond: Discussion on the 18-month budget. The board seemed to agree that the best way to fund the extra six months of revenues was to pursue a bond. Since that time, we had conversations with David Barnes, attorney at Devine Millimet, bond counsel. There are laws that prescribe how this can work. We are trying to understand how much we'll need to bond and how much we can bond, and we've got a number ball parked that needs to be fine-tuned a bit. At our meeting last week, we were talking \$1M. Atty. Barnes wants us to make sure we have a number high enough to accommodate fluctuating interest rates and shortfalls in revenues. So I got an estimate for \$1.5M – 40 cents off the tax rate with \$1M and \$1.5M would be 60 cents. So we're looking at \$1M-\$1.5M. Ultimately, the Selectmen will negotiate the bond. Five years seems like a reasonable time frame. That would be \$80 - \$120 on a \$200,000 house each year for five years. Roberta: this won't hurt as much as one payment in December, or affecting your escrow payments. John: someone was going to look at why payments times ten was less. Carlotta: there would be one interest payment due in that 18-month period. Tom: how do you pay your principal – will it add \$450,000 to the operating budget? First interest payment would be Feb. 2014 and the first principal payment would be august 2014. That increase on the tax rate includes principal and interest.

Dan: on solid waste, you didn't budget 1.5? Ellen: solid waste decreased because we moved one guy over.

Carlotta; this warrant has to be posted by the 28<sup>th</sup>. Sam is gone and won't be back: Jed is back on the 26<sup>th</sup>. What we need to do is close the budget and bond hearings then the board can discuss additional warrant articles that don't involve money. If you close the public hearing portion, then the board can deliberate on the warrant.

Jed: motioned to close public hearings on the budget and the bond and discuss finalization of the warrant and postpone it till the 28<sup>th</sup>. Mike: I have other warrant articles that are more important to me—that truck is an essential need. That's where I stand with that. Dan: article 11: Rick was going to have more info on the grant. We haven't heard yet.

Are these the numbers the board wants you to vote on? We're supposed to have the tally votes on the warrant by deliberative. Dan: the road things we don't vote on anyways.

Tom: I researched SCBAs and saw what we have; \$140,000 is big. We have 15 packs. The Scott guy said we could upgrade them to 2007 so we'd be two years behind. If we upgrade to 50% of the cost to the 2007 standard, they're good for another 10 years. We could upgrade ours and still buy 5 new ones. Rick's planning to buy 22. Jed: you can recertify for \$3,500/unit. To upgrade from 97 edition, it's \$2,900 apiece. Tom: I also learned that Rick gave me info on cylinders – 4500 psi . Deb: The \$3,500-\$4,000 refurbished doesn't include the face mask. Tom: the face mask is about \$200.

Carlotta: article 12: would the board like to take action on removing or changing this article/ Roberta: I think it should be left in there and change that amount if they don't want it that high. Jed: I think it's wise to put money aside for future purchases of equipment. Ellen: If they passed the \$90,000 capital reserve fund and didn't vote for your truck, would you be without a truck? Mike: Yes, and I'd rather say take the truck, not the \$90,000 CIP. Holly: is there a way that it has to be a new vehicle. It has to meet certain standards.

Kim: we might have 200 people at Deliberative and the rest will only read the ballot. Ellen: it will do him no good if \$90,000 is going into the Capital reserve because he'd have to rely on a vote in 18 months to get a truck. Tom: you have \$300,000 of warrant articles on there. We did \$224,000 with the warrant articles this past year. Kim: and these are articles he's asked for before. He needs these things to do what needs to be done in the town. These are all necessities here. Ellen: and the \$90,000 is from the CIP.

We're taking off the \$90,000 CIP request for Mike.

We will plan to meet on the 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am to finalize the Board's position on these. Carlotta: We may add Sam's vote for the Voter's Guide. I would suggest that the next meeting be held the 6<sup>th</sup> of Jan. after Deliberative to recap and pull together the Voter's Guide and get those vote tallies.

I'd say go with the \$1.5M bond and if we can narrow that down between now and Deliberative, go for that.

Roberta: I'm just wondering whether the library money should be less. Flo: if we wanted to be on track, it would probably be the \$100,000. Audience: it will probably take \$300-\$400,000 from the taxpayers to finish off that library, so if we're serious about doing it, we'll need to start accumulating funds now to start the planning process. Dan: my concern is if you go in with \$100,000 and if they say no and you get voted down to nothing, whereas they might approve a smaller number. Flo: We have a meeting tomorrow night. Audience: You have to start at some point. Richard: I don't have a problem starting at \$100,000 and you're going to have a lot of feedback at Deliberative.

Charlie: is sequence of the warrant articles important? Should we put the most important ones first?

Carlotta: The bond has to go first, the budget second and from there there's no guidance.

MOTION: Roberta motioned to vote "yes" on the bond, "yes" on the budget, and "yes" on all the money articles as presented. Jed seconded and all were in favor.

Consensus was that, on the 28<sup>th</sup>, we'll just deal with possible reordering of the warrant articles and any non-money articles.

The Board needs to take formal action on acceptance of the LCHIP grant.

The town was awarded \$12,000 by the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) for the purpose of restoring the windows of the Meeting House and the matching funds will come from the Ward Fund. The Meeting House oversight committee is working with Rick Monahan, an architect who's putting together an invitation to bid.

MOTION: Jed motioned to accept the LCHIP grant for \$12,000 with gratitude, Roberta seconded and all were in favor.

Jed motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:40pm, Roberta seconded and all were in favor.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Stonehill, Administrative Assistant*