

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 7, 2016

At the Selectmen's Meeting held on Monday, November 7, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. the following people were in attendance: Peter Corey and Wendy Hersom, Selectpersons.

Ben Oleson attended the Selectmen's meeting on behalf of Kaela Gray of North Country Council to present a report about on-road OHRV safety for Coos County. He is a part-time planner with North Country Council. He is here to report on a study done on trails and OHRV safety in Coos County. There is a growth of recreational riding in Coos County. A majority of towns are opening up roads for these OHRV vehicles. With the OHRV trails, there are plenty of historical recreational activities, including hiking, snow machining, cross country skiing, horseback riding, biking with large tires. With the growth of the usage of the trails, there are conflicts being created. They were engaged with DRED, USDA and the Tillotson Fund to create and look at the trails and the larger scope for everything. What was first done over the summer was a survey of OHRV road usage. They contacted towns in Coos County to see if they open roads for OHRV's. If there is a trail system, we wanted to create a master list. They went about and did some counts, including traffic counts, on certain areas and certain towns as well as intersections. They are trying to determine where the main use was and if there were any conflicts with that. They spoke to PD's about accidents or law enforcement calls for erratic behavior. This was the first step in the whole process. This is the newest recreation for the trails. The Towns have different rules for every town, speed limit rules, time limits, etc. The rules might change in your benefit. The next step is to pool all the towns even the ones without trails like Whitefield to come up with a more universal use and rules. If OHRV usage is going to be here to stay we want to create as little conflict as possible for the usage on the roads or the trails. They would like to have one selectboard representative from each community to meet with the group from January to April just to have that discussion. First step would be to identify the rules and see where there is some middle ground. Even if you don't have trails, there might be the possibility of trails opening up. Whitefield would be a connector between Littleton and Lancaster. At least Whitefield could be part of the conversation. Regionally it would be good to get everyone to work together. The hope is a larger review and try to determine if it is possible for all the uses to get together or if you need certain trails for certain things. What is the best use for the OHRV's and how can they relate with the other users, bikers, hikers, snow machines, etc. Peter asked if it had to be a selectperson, and Ben said they are looking at the decision makers for the town. We could have a selectperson go, if it fits in their schedules. The hope is to have participation from the Town. It would be good to have someone speak on behalf of the Town. Peter said there is good value to be part of the conversation not knowing what lays in the future for Whitefield. Wendy said the scheduling will be the tricky part. Once we have an idea who is going to participate, then we can throw out some dates. Ben said we are looking for some thoughtful commitment. Wendy said we want to be involved but we can't commit a certain individual. Wendy asked where the meetings would be and Ben said probably at the North Country Council offices which are located at the old hospital in Littleton. Edie asked about the public weighing in on it, and Ben said we are trying to identify rules at this point, and that is a selectmen issue. They are looking at town government, residents, and when we get to that stage of the process, there would be the opportunity for community members to get involved at that point. Ben said we do encourage public input when the time comes.

Dennis and Linda Streeter attended the meeting to discuss their recent water bill for their mobile home located behind the restaurant. They recently replaced the pressure regulator. Wendy said it looks like their October bill hikes every year looking at their account history. Wendy asked about a pool, and they don't use the Town water to fill the pool. They are wondering if it might be the meter. They said the pressure regulator issue caused the water to blow by the hot water heater. Dennis said all of a sudden someone said they heard a noise from the water heater. The water is bypassing and going through the pressure relief valve. He hooks up the pressure meter and it was very high. The only leak they found was in the hot water tank, which was replaced last October. They were wondering if the pressure relief valve might take care of it. The Board suggested that Fred could take another reading for three months and if they still see a high usage they can go from there. Peter said their usage is high during those 6 months each year. Dick said if you are losing hot water, then your electric bill would be high too. The Board asked Judy to speak with Fred and have him read the meter for the next three months to see if anything comes up. Dennis said it is not leaking anywhere now they don't think. If they are over 5,000 gallons over the next three months they probably have a leak.

BUDGETS

Kelly Smith – Recreation Department

Kelly said she got new tables today for the after-school program, and today they are in their new space and it will work out good.

Kelly said before she can make the decision on her budget – can we not bus the ski kids or do you want to continue to put it in the budget? If we keep the ski program in, we need to add \$2,500 to the budget. Kelly said most towns around us do it as a volunteer project and it is not run through the recreation budgets. Parent volunteers handle it and there is no bus. Peter said let's try the Lancaster model and see how it works. Kelly said she is not going to leave them out to dry. Kelly said there is about 26 kids who go Cannon. There have been years when we have not been doing the bus. Kelly said the costs for the bus is not going down. It is a lot of money when we don't recoup any of it. Whitefield also pays half of the Bretton Woods ski bus as well. Kelly said we problem-solved with Twin Mountain and suggested charging an extra \$10 to help offset the bus costs but that never happened. Kelly said it was originally set up that we would contribute to the bus if we could use the gym. We are no longer using the gym in Twin Mountain. Kelly will let Twin Mountain know that we will not be contributing to the cost of the ski bus.

The Board reviewed the budget Kelly presented. Kelly and Judy explained that the auditor wanted the basketball, baseball, and soccer items put in the expense items in the recreation budget so the recreation budget is up. The revenue side will be increased to reflect the income from those programs as well.

Sam Chase – EDC

Sam attended the meeting to review the EDC budget. Sam said his recommendation is to fold EDC and scrub it. Sam said we are down to only a couple of people and he hasn't heard from the people who wanted to take it over. Sam said we may want to try to keep the Whitefield project going, but we lost interest along the line. If we wanted to go back and resurrect parts of that, that may be a possibility. There were some basic groups and get some leadership in different groups. A couple of the groups

followed through. Expenses for the EDC are the information booth telephone. Sam said there is an annual report fee of \$75. Sam said on the other side they have money to return to the Town. Money in the checking account back to 1983 or 1984. \$814 in the EDC checking account. They have a C.D. which was based on David Presby's down payment on the first piece of land and it has earned \$431 in interest. The balance of that account is \$2931.00. Sam said they have been there for special things like the sign and they paid the rental fee for the Whitefield project meetings at CD McInyre. Peter said they had an estimate to paint the band stand maybe we could use that money from EDC. Sam said there is a common improvement fund set up that has money in it that could pay for the painting. Peter said he makes a motion to keep the economic development line item funded in the budget. The Board felt we should keep the line item open in case there is interest in the future. The Board agreed to put \$75 in the budget for economic development. The Board also approved closing out the EDC accounts and depositing the money into the general fund. Sam said that Dick Mallion is the representative to the Scenic Byways Committee. The Town of Whitefield is included if we have a representative attend those meetings. Judy said she believed that Dick does attend those meetings, but she will follow-up with him.

Roy Birard, Barbara Pinkham, Maynard L'Heureux – Cemetery Trustees

Roy said he is not asking for any increase. They went from \$25,000 to \$30,000 a year so they could put on the sexton, which has been a good addition. As trustees, they can't do any work and submit bills. The sexton can submit bills. Roy said that is about the size of that.

The Board discussed with the cemetery trustees about raising the price for the cemetery plots. The trustees realize we are at the bottom of the prices for lot sales. Barbara said she does not want to raise the price for the plots. She doesn't want the people to have to pay a huge amount of money. If we went to \$350 we are more than doubling the cost in a fell swoop. Barbara said she is not supportive of that. She understands that if they set some of that aside it can offset the money raised by the taxpayers. She is not sure the average citizen in Whitefield maybe could afford \$350 if you add in to the required corner stones and whatever required monument or plaque a family would want it. She realizes how expensive it is. Barbara said where there is so much room up there, we are lucky. Wendy said the on-going care for the cemeteries will increase. The \$25,000 has been an amount that has not gone up for quite a few years. Wendy said as the cemetery grows, the costs are going to grow. Wendy feels there will be more mowing and more upkeep. Peter said he appreciates Barbara's perspective. Peter said people on the water system pay for the water and people with artesian wells don't pay the water user fees. Peter said in a perfect world the cemeteries should be self-sufficient. Peter said people who aren't using the cemetery shouldn't pay for the cemeteries. Barbara said the cemeteries should be something we should be proud of as a town. Barbara said we get a lot of help from certain individuals who volunteer, and if we didn't have them it would cost more, but at this point we have people who are willing to help us to keep costs down. Barbara said she doesn't think the town's economy supports a large increase in cemetery plot sales. Barbara said they voted unanimously not to increase the cost of the lot sales. Peter said we have an opportunity to turn the management of the cemeteries in the direction that other municipalities use. Peter said he is not suggesting we don't take care of the cemeteries. He feels we should bring it up in line with others so the taxpayers are not subsidizing the entire cost of the cemeteries.

Barbara asked if we could we add a non-binding question to the town meeting warrant whether the citizens would endorse an increase in the cost of the cemetery lots to whatever number they want to put

there and put it to voters at town meeting. Edie said there are people who are poor. There are people who have no money for funerals. Edie said she doesn't feel it should go up. We support tons of non-profits in this Town and the cemeteries are something for our citizens and our Town. No one ever wants to think of the poor people. Edie said if want to increase that \$200 that is outrageous. Edie said what about the elderly people on fixed incomes. Edie wants to thank the cemetery trustees for realizing there are poor people in this Town. Peter said Edie said we support the non-profits but we are subsidizing the cemetery with tax money.

The Board reviewed the various health insurance quotes and decided to keep the plan we currently have and increase the cost of the employee's contribution for the plans. The contribution will be percentage based.

A motion was made by Peter Corey and seconded by Wendy Hersom to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2016 Selectmen's meeting.

A motion was made by Wendy Hersom, seconded by Peter Corey to enter in to non-public session at 8:10 p.m. pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(b), the hiring of any person as a public employee.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.