

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 14, 2016

At the Selectmen's Meeting held on Monday, November 14, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. the following people were in attendance: Peter Corey & Mark Lufkin. Wendy Hersom is at a Selectmen's meeting in Littleton. She will be here when she is finished. Wendy arrived at 7:10 p.m.

Jon Warzocha of Horizons Engineering attended the meeting to give a brief update of what they have been up to, and talk a bit about the meeting that is scheduled with NHDES coming up on Wednesday. Jon said they are plowing through the study of the plant. One of the things they are going to have to discuss is the population projection for the plant flows. The plant is well within its design flow. The demographic projection is for a population decrease. We should discuss at some point the projection for the design flow. The federal projections are down. Jon said we need to reach an agreement on what we should project for a growth rate. Jon doesn't know if the town has anything on population projections. North Country Council may have something on population projections. Tom Ladd asked if it was something other than town-wide projections and Jon said it would be water/sewer users. Dexter has spent time at the plant and there is some obvious stuff going on. The geo-tech concerns with slumping under the liners suggesting there is something not right going on in those lagoons. There is a lot of work that needs to be done—it is an old plant. He is focusing on five different technologies for the plant to determine which one would work best for our plant.

There is a meeting Wednesday morning at DES at 9:00 a.m. in Concord. We believe Wendy can attend. Jon said it will be good to see what they are thinking. It would be good if someone from Welch's could go as well. We want to be sure we are all on the same page.

Jon said on the water side they are starting to think of the priority list. Bray Hill has had a lot of focus, and that will be bumped up for priority along with pump station replacements for Bray Hill and the Dodge site. We have got time on that. We need to figure out what we want to do and figure out the costs. We will need to have a public hearing in January. Peter asked about the water for the high school. Dexter met with Rick Vashaw at the high school and talked about hooking the high school up to the municipal system. The high school hired Horizons to look at their system. Jon said in talking it through, the study likely will show the most economic approach is to fix what they have now, but from the long haul it makes more sense for them to connect to the municipal system. Pursuing some CDBG money for that will make sense. Jon said we will need to see if they are willing to go forward. Peter said it would make sense to do it concurrently with what the Town is doing especially with the Bray Hill system. Jon said do we do it as part of this project or do it as a separate project. There are different strings attached from CDBG and USDA requirements. CDBG cannot typically be used for property purchases. CDBG can often be used for water/sewer connections for low income individuals. There are different things that go with different pots of money. We need to think it out whether to do it as a separate project or combined with our project. Jon said to line up with our project we would need to get an application submitted in January.

BUDGETS

Library

Kathy Dunlap and Sandy Holz attended the meeting with the proposed library budget, which is \$41,650, a \$300 increase from 2016 of \$41,350. It is a .726% increase. There is a \$250 increase in payroll, \$150 increase in videos and a \$100 decrease in magazines.

Sandy mentioned the roof again. Peter said the CIP committee meet last week and brought up the roof and Peter reminded Shawn he was going to get estimates. The committee thought we would put a \$20,000 placeholder in the CIP for next year. Sandy said the person who painted the trim noticed it.

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission has no members. The Board agreed to keep the budget at the same \$2,500 and try to get some new members.

Police Department

Chief Ed Samson attended the meeting. Ed said the Lancaster Fire Department did the new radio project. There will be an annual service fee of \$4750. Chief Ross had a plan in mind with a portion split between the fire/police budget. It will probably be \$2,000 to be added to the police budget to add to the radio maintenance line. Ed said we knew there was going to be an annual cost - \$4750 is not really a lot considering what we got out of it. Ed said he will know more when he can meet up with Chief Ross. Ed said he wanted to discuss the tasers and body cameras. The tasers we have are over ten years old and need to be replaced. For us to outfit the department we are talking about over \$6,000. Taser has a new plan called a Taser 60 plan. It is a lease plan. \$26 a month per unit and includes all necessary equipment including training cartridges annually and full warranty. We would need five units that would outfit all our officers. That works out for \$1560 annually for the next five years. We are essentially leasing these tasers and they will be replaced with the current model after five years if we continue with the program. Ed said his proposal is to add this to his budget. Ed said we spend out of the firearms/ammunition line item \$560 and he was planning to add 1000 to cover these tasers. It is cheaper than purchasing them outright. Ed said he is now working with a new salesperson at Taser who said there is generally a 10 unit cost for this and he will see if we can still get the plan if we only need 5. If that is not going to work, we would need to look at something else.

The body camera – Ed said after much research he feels the best one to pursue is the Taser's Axon 2 Body camera. This is Taser's new camera and it offers equal or better options than its competitors. The cost is about half of the current industry leading cameras (Watchguard, Wolfe, Digital Ally) at \$399 per unit. Taser does offer a lease program with the body cameras as well and can be combined with tasers and their storage management software. The cost of this program would be just under \$6000 and would add too much to the annual budget and the cost of the program does not really benefit us. Ed said he would like to propose to purchase 3 cameras out of this year's budget and then purchase the additional three next year using donation funds. They come with a three-month warranty that if we don't like them we can return them. Ed has talked to other departments who have been using them and really like them. These have a 12-hour battery life. The Board was o.k. with this proposal.

Ed said he doesn't see any other areas in the budget that need to be increased. Ed said that for the salaries he wanted to talk to the Board and get a feel on what they are looking at for pay increases for 2017. He said in the past we have spent a lot of time on figuring different scenarios and then the Board will go with something different so to save some time he wanted to get the Board's input.

Ed said in reference to the salary portion, since Ed took over 2012 the department has gotten a 2% raise and a .50 cents raise across the Board. Ed said for his salary this has equated to under a 3.7% increase in over four years. Ed said we want to remain at a competitive rate. Ed said the approach the Town has taken is a town-wide raise. Ed did a survey of area police chief salaries, and he is the lowest with the exception of Carroll. He spoke with the Carroll chief, and he said his Board has asked him to get salaries in the area as well so they can increase his level.

Ed said he would like to stay more competitive and additionally for the officers he is thinking of a 3% increase across the board and Ed said if he can get over the \$65,000 mark, which would equate to a 4% increase. Ed said he wanted to get a direction in what area we are looking at for increases. The police retirement rate is currently 26.38% and will increase to 29.43% starting July 1st. Ed said he personally does not take the health insurance, which saves the Town money. Ed said most if not all the towns have some sort of contracts with step increases. He said a lot of unions have step increases in their contracts so they may say they are not getting merit increases but they get their step increases. Peter said for him it would be helpful to him to see what the proposal will be. He would also like to see what other departments have for staffing, full-time and part-time officers. Peter thought it would be good if Ed can put in his proposal what he is recommending and then we can adjust up or down. Ed said the last several years there has been a lot of work put into it and we go in a completely different direction. Peter said it is important to remain competitive with like-wise communities. Wendy said Bethlehem and Lisbon would be most similar to Whitefield. Ed said he is approaching the later side of his career, 17 years in with a 20-year retirement and that is one of the prompts for this discussion. It is tough to stay competitive. Ed just wanted to get where the Board is at.

In reference to the cruiser replacement, we want to purchase a cruiser next year, and Ed wants to increase the amount to \$20,000 from \$18,500. Ed had a proposal from North Country Ford. We are scheduled to get a new cruiser in 2017. Ed said we will replace the 2011 Expedition. We are at the stage to replace those radios, a significant cost of several thousand dollars. Ed suggests we keep the third cruiser for the SRO and for details. We haven't had a major mechanical repair issue with the current vehicle. Ed proposes we do what we have been doing vehicle wise. It has been helpful and useful to have that third vehicle.

Ed will work on the salary proposal and get it to the Board in the next week or so.

Ryan Presby said he has done some webinars and training classes for tasers, and for litigation issues the taser companies don't want units more than five years old. They pride themselves on having a good quality unit.

A motion was made by Peter Corey and seconded by Wendy Hersom to approve the minutes of the November 7, 2016 Selectmen's Meeting Minutes. Mark abstained because he was not at the meeting.

The Board reviewed the information for the 2016 tax rate. It is estimated that our tax rate will decrease to \$24.77 from \$25.45. The Board agreed to use \$75,000 for overlay and to use \$200,000 from Fund Balance to offset the tax rate.

The Board reviewed the proposed Personnel Policy revisions and had suggestions for changes to the revisions.

A motion was made by Peter Corey, seconded by Mark Lufkin, and unanimously approved to enter in to non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(b) – the hiring of any person as a public employee at 7:45 p.m.

Sondra Brekke asked Wendy about the Airport budget meeting with the Littleton Board of Selectmen and if she had a chance to talk with the National Guard yet. Wendy said that she spoke with Col. Mikolaities and he is going to attend the next Airport Commission meeting on November 29th. Wendy said the Town of Littleton is looking for definitive numbers on how Littleton benefits from the airport, which are not available. Wendy said there were people in attendance at the meeting, who were very supportive of the airport.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

