

**Minutes of the
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Thursday, February 13, 2020 @6:00 p.m.
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING**

First Selectwoman Catherine Iino called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 6:03 pm. In attendance were Selectman Lou Annino, Jr., Selectman Eileen Blewett. Visitors: Finance Director Regina Regolo, Robert & Marcella Sassi.

Iino moved the following appointments for individuals who had failed to qualify within 30 days of appointment: Nancy Gorski, Charter Revision Commission; Tim Withington, Emergency Management; and Heather Greenaway, Open Space. The motion was seconded by Annino and approved unanimously.

The board resumed the discussion of the operating and capital budgets for 20/21. Regolo distributed the latest drafts, which included possible adjustments to Highway Other, Highway Wages, and Snow, and a summary of the costs of employ benefits & fringes, as discussed at the previous meeting.

Blewett inquired about the current assigned fund balance in the capital reserves. Regolo pointed out that this figure changes as we move through the fiscal year and capital projects are completed. Blewett asked why the town hasn't transferred the maximum amount permitted by charter (1.5 mills) annually. Iino and Annino stated that this board had recommended this for 19/20 but that the Board of Finance had reduced the transfer prior to going before the town for a vote. Historically, there has been little tolerance for increasing this transfer. Additionally, Annino explained that the town has tended to push off projects rather than take on debt. The board discussed the impact of taking on additional debt, the impact of pushing projects or perhaps bringing them forward. Iino said that while it's the Board of Finance's decision as to whether or not bond, the Board of Selectmen needs to consider how capital projects are to be financed in constructing a budget. With regard to the proposed projects for next year, Iino felt strongly that the paving is a high priority but there may be a portion of the recommended chip sealing (about \$250,000) that might be pushed off.

Blewett asked about the \$80,000 that is earmarked in the current capital budget for repairs to the modular. Annino reminded the board that town had approved \$400,000 for repairs to the modular. Recognizing what a poor use of funds that would be, the selectmen recommended and the town approved reducing that number to \$100,000, releasing \$300,000 of those funds to offset capital road projects.

The thinking was that up to \$100,000 would be adequate to keep the modules functioning until the dip in the road paving needs in FY 22/23.

The board discussed alternatives for town hall renovation. Iino expressed her concern that town needs additional mid-sized meeting space. Many organizations use the fire station but the restrooms are not ADA accessible. Annino raised the possibility of removing the modulares immediately and temporarily relocating the offices currently housed in them. The board discussed possibility of using available space in the schools for municipal functions that would be displaced temporarily. Iino stated that in the past, the Board of Education had security concerns and was opposed the additional public traffic. Blewett said we might consider replacing the modulares with new units. The board agreed that it may be time to reconstitute the town office building committee to consider the new needs and possible solutions. Blewett asked about the Station 1 renovation plans. She suggested that perhaps there might be economies in combining the two project in terms of timing, funding, and needs.

Blewett expressed her concern about spending the \$90,000 currently earmarked for renovations to the modulares. Annino agreed. Regolo warned the board that the remaining bonded funds must be used for either the modular renovations or roads but that it must be spent soon. The board agreed that it made more sense to use the funds to offset road projects. Iino explained that about \$25,000 in work is scheduled for April but she would contact the vendor to see if it can be cancelled.

The Board asked Regolo to contact Fire Commissioners to attend a future meeting to discuss their operating & capital requests.

Blewett asked about the Parmelee funding. Regolo explained that there were three categories: annual operating appropriation; proposed capital projects; and special activities funding, which contains approximately \$40,000 from the proceeds of events held at the farm. The Parmelee Farm master plan called for rebuilding the red barn. At the moment, the committee has agreed to put that plan on hold and to focus on maintaining the facilities as they are currently configured. The board asked Regolo to invite members of the Parmelee Farm Committee to attend a future meeting to discuss their operating & capital requests.

The board reviewed the request for the Killingworth Library Association. Regolo pointed out that their request is 3.6% (\$9,000) over the FY19/20.

Youth & Family Services has asked for 1.6% more than last year. Regolo suggested that the board review the discussions that took place during the budgeting process last year to see if

there were any issues that they should revisit. The board asked Regolo to invite Youth & Family Services to attend a future meeting to discuss their operating request.

The board resumed the discussion of the library's request. According to the information provided, the proposed operating budget is virtually identical. There is a proposed increase in salaries and a reduction in employee benefits. However, they project lower income and have therefore increased their request by \$9,500. The board discussed the possibility of limiting the salary line increase to 2% rather than 2.5%, reducing the overall request by \$1,000. lino will reach out to Lucinda Hogarty, chair of the Library Association, to see if they would prefer to address the board prior to finalizing this adjustment.

The board discussed the operating budget for the Resident State Trooper. Trooper Mulhall opted to keep his total operating budget the same, using the anticipated reduction in the assessment from the state to offset the proposed additional overtime. Regolo will correct the initial request to reflect the elimination of the DUI Grant program by combining the overtime lines and zeroing out the DUI Grant line.

Parmelee has asked for \$15,000 in operating funds, up from \$12,000 this year, in addition to \$58,000 in capital funding. Regolo remarked that these requests were similar to last year's and that they can be reduced if they can count on some services from the highway department. Annino suggested that that Parmelee provide some specifics with regard to the additional services, putting the Board of Selectmen in a better position to schedule them.

Board is still waiting for more information from the Fire Commissioners with regard to the Fire Marshal's position and the need for additional funding.

Blewett remains concerned about the capital requests in the budget. The board discussed both the school district's recent bond issue and the town's general obligation debt. While the board is not anxious to increase deb or incur the issuance costs, interest rates remain at historic lows and perhaps if the capitals are truly needs, this may be the time to push projects up.

lino moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Blewett and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Regina Regolo
Acting Recording Secretary