

BOARD OF SELECTMEN WORKSHOP
Minutes of 05-03-10
4:15 p.m.

Selectmen:

Charles G. Palm, Chairman
Colette Worsman, Vice Chairman
(Absent with Notice) Peter F. Brothers
Miller C. Lovett
Nathan J. Torr

Town Manager:

Phillip L. Warren

Recording Clerk:

Karin Landry

Call to Order: Chairman Chuck Palm called the meeting to order 4:15 p.m. He introduced the Board, Town Manager, and the Recording Clerk.

W 10-20 Application for Abatements

Assessor Jim Commerford updated the Board on 18 abatements for the tax year 2009. Of those, he recommends 14 in the total amount of \$9,225.68:

Hidden Green Properties, Annalee campus (three properties): Reduction in total value of properties from \$1,388,900 to \$1,092,300 to bring in line with purchase price. Recommended.

Netishen - 4 Stonedam Circle: Adjustment for view, acreage and listing. Reduction in value from \$240,500 to \$222,800. Recommended.

Konchak - 6 Stonedam Circle: Adjustment for view, steep driveway, and interior. Reduction in value from \$277,300 to \$244,700. Recommended.

Russett - .30 acre parcel on Pinnacle Park Road: Parcel unbuildable because of ledge. Reduction in value from \$77,100 to \$19,300. Recommended.

Barnz's LLC - Meredith Cinema, Crosspoint Shopping Plaza: Adjustment for current market value. Appraisal supplied. Reduction in value from \$573,800 to \$453,900. Recommended.

Purdy - 93 Upper Mile Point Drive: Adjustment for diminished value based on tree removal. No market evidence provided. Not Recommended.

Calef - 75 Pleasant Street: Adjustment based on interior inspection. Reduction in value from \$658,100 to \$629,500. Recommended.

Walker - 13 Oak Knoll Road: Adjustment based on current market value. Appraisal supplied. Reduction in value from \$362,500 to \$308,500. Recommended.

Sinclair - 312 Meredith Neck Rd.: Listed as arms-length transaction. Adjustment based on current market value. Appraisal supplied. Reduction in value from \$411,400 to \$373,000. Recommended.

Perry - 33 Old Hubbard Road: Adjustment based on topography of lot and comparison with neighboring properties. Land value is lowest in Association, topography adjustment applied. Not Recommended.

McColgan - 74 Wagon Wheel Trail, Unit #4: Adjustment for view obstruction. Reduction in value from \$237,000 to \$217,500. Recommended.

Gamache - 105 Pleasant: Adjustment for seasonal property. Similar unit comparably assessed. Not Recommended.

Clapp-Humphrey - Little Road: Adjustment for valuation based on neighboring property, lake frontage, and shape. Private estate type property with highly desirable resale value. Not recommended.

Valpey - Bonney Shores Road (three properties): Adjustment based on current market value. Appraisal supplied. Reduction in total value to \$536,200.

The Town Manager agrees with the recommendations. A total of 39 abatements were received for the tax year 2009. There are no cases pending in the Superior Court or before the Board of Tax and Land Appeals. The 2009 abatements will fall well below the \$50,000 overlay.

W10-21 Budget/Expenditure Update

The Town Manager highlighted expenditures as of March 31, 2010:

- Total expenditures - down by \$105,243.48 compared to the first quarter of 2009.
- Town Manager - up by \$39,591.75 - full time Town Manager in place.
- Administrative Services - (\$26,812.26) - transfer of employee from Community Development.
- General Assistance - on target.
- Police Department - (\$20,059.81) - partly due to reduced gas prices.
- DPW - Solid Waste - up by \$18,960.60 - additional trash disposal costs.
- DPW - Highway - (\$22,300.73) - reduction in overtime as a result of mild winter.
- General Fund - (\$72,788)
- Water/Sewer - (\$13,000/\$19,000) - no full time superintendent, chemical costs.

EXPENDITURES:

Town Manager:

Town Manager: Up by \$39,591.75. Full time position not covered last year. The Town Manager's budget is on target percentage wise for the first quarter.

Executive Administration:

At the direction of the Board, a column will be added to the budget summary setting forth the percentage of the budget expended to date.

Dialogue ensued regarding methods of accounting for diesel, gas, heating, and propane use. Ideally, a method should be implemented that allows each department head to be aware of the gallons being used, so that adjustments can be made to stay within the budgeted amount. The

Town Manager suggested using a process independent from the budget to monitor fuel usage by the gallon. The Board supports implementing the process.

Janitorial Services: The cost of janitorial services is down by \$4,317.00. Utilizing in-house staff has been very successful, particularly with respect to performing services not provided by a contracted cleaning service such as replacing a light bulb or moving boxes.

Economic Development: The Town Manager will investigate how much of the budgeted amount for 2009 was expended. Expenditures did not take place until after year end.

Outside Agencies: There will be no re-categorizing of the services provided by the Humane Society because the outside agency and police department budgets were approved at Town Meeting. The matter will be addressed during the vetting process for outside agencies.

Town Clerk: No Comments.

Administrative Services: Transfer of employee to Community Development.

General Assistance: On target. Although there is no data to support any changes to the demand for general assistance, it appears that demand has leveled off.

Assessing: No Comments.

Tax Collector: No Comments

Community Development:

Full-Time Employees: Increase from part to full time in position

GIS Specialist: Michelle Therrien tendered her resignation as of May 13 to pursue other opportunities. Recruiting for the position will begin in the near future. The Town Manager is analyzing how the position is structured to determine how to proceed. Dialogue ensued regarding the parameters of the position. Community Development Director John Edgar is comfortable with filling in as needed during the transition period.

Police Department:

Overtime: Up \$1,856.41 as a result of a full time vacancy and family and medical leave. It is anticipated that the part-time person will move to full time status as of May 13, which will reduce overtime expenditures moving forward.

Vehicle Maintenance: The Town Manager will investigate why approximately 30% of the amount budgeted for vehicle maintenance in 2009 was expended.

Detail: Expenses are down by \$4,875, and the revenues are down in a comparable amount.

Retirement: The Town Manager will investigate why the year-to-date amount for retirement is less than last year.

The Chair commented on the decision not to have vehicle maintenance outsourced. He pointed out that there are many problems with emergency response apparatus, and that maintenance

should be performed by an outside specialist. The Town Manager explained that he has conferred with the Fire Chief and Public Works Superintendent, and that the work that is being performed is quality work by heavy equipment mechanics. The mechanics are required by state law to perform the same inspection as on heavy vehicles. Shortcomings that are identified in the inspection process are addressed. The Town Manager acknowledged that there can be some transference of liability if an outside company is used.

Command Vehicle Replacement: Chair Palm recommends transferring the Tahoe (approximately 46,000 miles) from the Fire Department to the Police Department when the command vehicle is replaced.

Solid Waste:

Disposal costs: An increase in disposal costs are directly related to the tonnage of trash being dropped off.

Salaries and Wages: The Town Manager will investigate why there is an additional line for salaries and wages in the amount of \$16,949.

Construction Debris: The budgeted amount is high. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in revenues from contractors disposing of shingles in a comparable amount.

Buildings & Grounds:

Flower Contract (Deviation from Agenda): An RFP was issued for the Town's Community Flowers for 2010. Four bids were received. The lowest bidder did not understand the scope and expectations of the RFP, so it was discounted. The Town Manager made a recommendation to award the bid to the second lowest bidder, Dion's Plant Place and Landscapes, in the amount of \$5,995.00. In view of the close watch on expenditures, the Town Manager asked for direction from the Board on how to proceed. There was general agreement among the Board that beautification of the Town sells the community and is a wise economic move. There have been increased efforts by local groups such as the Garden Club and Greater Meredith Program to beautify the Town at no charge. The amount budgeted in 2009 for flowers and Christmas wreaths was \$11,807. The Board authorized the Town Manager to award the bid.

Turf Management Bids: There was a misunderstanding with one of the contractors that submitted a turf management bid regarding their ability to get 100% organic products, so the proposal will be rebid. Dialogue ensued regarding the best practices being followed by the Town, and the availability of 100% organic products from suppliers.

The Chair announced that the Workshop will be reconvened at the conclusion of the Board meeting.

Selectman Torr motioned at 5:25 p.m. to resume the Workshop at the conclusion of the regular meeting. Seconded by Selectman Worsman. 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

The Workshop was resumed at 6 p.m.

Cemeteries: No Comments

Highway:

Overtime: Down by \$21,135.07 as a result of a reasonably mild winter. In addition, less sand, salt, and other resources were used to maintain the roads.

Fuel: The Town Manager will investigate why there are separate line items for gas/diesel and gas/diesel - bulk.

Parks & Recreation:

The Department is on budget. Selectman Worsman commended staff for their efforts in holding down expenses. Selectman Lovett expressed concerns with the absence of life guards at the beaches, including liability and safety issues. If there is any where funds can be found to cover the beaches, he would like to provide the public with the service. The Town Manager explained that there are no additional funds in the budget to staff the beaches with lifeguards. The maintenance department will monitor the beaches on a drive-by basis. At the instruction of the insurance company, it will be clearly posted that there is no lifeguard on duty. Selectman Worsman reminded the Board that when they went through the budget process, it was clear that the same services cannot be delivered with the current reduction in revenues, and that families will have to take responsibility for the safety of their youths.

Library: The library is holding steady with last year's budget.

Capital Projects: The Recreation Department facility improvements in Meredith Center and the waterfront infrastructure improvements to the Cattle Landing docks have been approved. The Friends of Meredith Parks & Recreation are conducting a fundraising drive for the improvements to Meredith Center, and it is anticipated that the work on the Cattle Landing docks will commence in the fall.

Principal & Interest on Town Debt: A permanent debt schedule will be presented to the Board in the next couple weeks for the fire and Page Pond Forest. The interest rates are favorable at this time.

Water:

Full-Time Employees: Down \$6,241.65 - no full time Superintendent at this time.

Electricity: Significant savings as a result of improvements to the plant.

The Town Manager reported that a portion of the first phase of the groundwater study is complete and the consultants will present those findings to the Board in an upcoming workshop.

Sewer: Down \$10,956.08 - no full time Superintendent at this time.

REVENUE:

Property Tax Abatement & Refunds: Up \$2,643.41 from 2009.

Taxes Lien Interest, Current Better Assessments, Boat Taxes: More data will be available in the second and third quarters.

Highways & Bridges Block Grant: No reasons for concern at this point.

Miscellaneous Fees: Smaller fees accumulate around the collection of taxes.

Sale of Town Property/Sign Lease Revenues: None at this time.

Motor Vehicle Permits: Down \$25,077 due to economic conditions (approximately 10%). Monitoring closely. Historical data was not available, but it is believed the budget was reduced 10% from last year, which indicates that revenues are on target. The Town Manager is more concerned with trends than with what was budgeted. He will provide the Board with the budgeted amount for 2009.

Dog Fees: Down. The Town Manager will continue to monitor the trend.

Building Permits & Fees: Approximately 25% collected - on target.

Police Department Revenues: Down approximately \$3,800. Decrease in detail revenue corresponds to decrease in detail expenditures

Highway Revenues: Some woodchip revenues.

Recycling: Increased revenues from demolition, refuse permits, aluminum cans, steel, clothing recycling, permits for plastics. There are increased expenses for disposing of demolition supplies that offset a portion of the increased recycling revenues. The Town Manager is optimistic about the trends in the steel market, and will continue to monitor the situation.

Cemetery Lot Openings and Revenue: Lack of data - will continue to monitor in second and third quarters.

Parks & Recreation: Up \$8,800 from last year. Restructuring of rates is the clear reason the revenues are up. The community center revenues are down. The Town Manager will investigate whether this is a mis-posting.

Welfare & Insurance Revenues: Not much collected at this time.

Interest on Deposits: Small loss at this time.

Sewer Rents: Up because warrant not posted when revenues were anticipated. The Town Manager will amend accordingly.

For comparison purposes, the Board requested that an additional column be included in the revenues summary for the amount budgeted in 2009. The Town Manager commended the department heads for a job well done in monitoring expenses.

Dialogue ensued regarding hold items. The hold on the purchase of a police cruiser must be released because the transmission failed in the vehicle that is scheduled for replacement. The Ford Motor Co. will no longer manufacture the Crown Victoria model as of 2011. New cruisers purchased subsequent to 2011 will not accommodate the equipment used in the Crown Victoria, so they will have to be purchased fully outfitted. Road projects will be held until the second quarter when more information will be available on revenue trends.

The motor has been replaced in the forestry truck and it is in service. The Town Manager is searching for a water pump for the State of NH Forestry truck. He will investigate the revenue item that is listed under State Forestry.

Resident Jim Hughes expressed concerns with the absence of lifeguards at the beach this summer. He wonders what the implications are for youth participating in Parks & Recreation Department programs where a lifeguard is expected. There are many unorganized adults and children using the beach in the summer, and this is a budget cut that will really affect the common person and all residents of Meredith. He suggested pursuing voluntary contributions and volunteer efforts to reinstall the lifeguards. The Town Manager will investigate the matter.

Selectman Lovett motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Worsman. 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Phillip L. Warren, Town Manager

Charles G. Palm , Chairman

Karin Landry, Recording Clerk

Colette Worsman, Vice Chairman

Miller C. Lovett

Nathan J. Torr