

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
NOVEMBER 19, 2019

PRESENT: David Lage, Chairman, John Veeseer, Bert Hamill
Scott Butcher – Town Administrator
Finance Advisory Committee members Marc Fortier, Jack Low, Jeff McCabe
Planning Board Chairman John Schaumlöffel
Board of Assessors Jim Coffey, Jeanne Cunningham, Danielle Sikkila
Land Use Administrator Debbie Deaton
Cemetery Trustees Ollie Niemi, Gary Johnson

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Office.

Unanticipated Funds Hearing: Chairman Lage opened the hearing to accept unanticipated funds in the amount of \$75,312 from the State of NH. He indicated there will be additional State funds next year as well. The Selectmen have decided to use the current fund to upgrade to lighting to LED units to reduce electricity consumption and that Eversource estimates a two to three year payback on the expenditure. The remaining funds will be used to complete the new salt shed for the DPW.

Chairman Lage asked the Town Administrator if he had started a Request for Proposal (RFP) designed to be used to solicit bids to upgrade the street lighting. One has not been developed yet.

Selectman Hamill made a motion to close the hearing at 6:30 p.m. Selectman Veeseer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Other Business: Chairman Lage asked if the Police Chief had provided feedback on the flyer for the new Police Station. The Town Administrator stated that the Police Chief had reviewed it and didn't have any issues with it, but he had some concerns that there hasn't been enough discussion and promotion on it and there isn't a lot of time to get it done. Chairman Lage and Selectman Veeseer felt there was plenty of time to promote the project and have a public hearing on it. Chairman Lage said he would discuss it with the Chief.

Chairman Lage asked about the status of the cell tower lease agreement with Vertex Towers for municipal space on the new cell tower. The Town Administrator stated that there have been modifications in the terms that have been agreed to and that the rest should be easily resolved. Selectman Hamill stated that the tower should be built in the May timeframe and that a budget line item or warrant article for the new communications equipment needs to be discussed if we intend to do it this year. The Town Administrator gave an overview of what has been discussed so far with respect to communications equipment. Chairman Lage asked if Vertex was waiting for us, or are we waiting for them, for final verbiage for the lease agreement and legal review. Selectman Hamill stated that Vertex still has to come before the Selectmen to get approval for

improvements to a Class VI road and that the lease agreement should be run past the insurance company for review.

Chairman Lage asked if anyone had applied for the Emergency Management Director position. He wants an ad run on the NH Municipal Association website and in the Monadnock Ledger Transcript.

The Town Administrator gave an update on the status of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the town and the Souhegan Valley Ambulance Service (SVAS) stating that a final draft should be available soon and that SVAS had made some minor changes to the last version.

Chairman Lage asked about the status of the property at 11 Temple Road. The Town Administrator stated the property owner was scheduled to come speak with the Selectmen on December 3rd to give them an update on his plans for the building.

Chairman Lage asked to review the information provided by Town Counsel regarding the Smithville Cemetery. The Selectmen decided to schedule time on December 10th for that purpose.

There was discussion about the employee health care plans for 2020. The current Tufts Health Care Plan is scheduled to increase by 16.5% for 2020.

Planning Board Budget Review: Planning Board Chairman John Schaumlöffel presented the budget for the Planning Board and started the discussion talking about the request for \$1,383 for conferences and training due to new members joining. BOS Chairman Lage asked about the NH Municipal Association courses/seminars that are available in Keene or Concord. PB Chairman Schaumlöffel explained that the amount requested also includes mileage reimbursement. BOS Chairman Lage said that mileage has never been paid to Planning Board members. PB Chairman Schaumlöffel stated that there are many benefits of training including learning more about the development and enforcement of regulations. He gave the example of driveway regulations. Selectman Hamill suggested that there has been a lot of turnover this year on the Planning Board that they should allow each member to attend at least one course. He suggested reducing then requested amount to \$600 with no mileage included. Selectman Veaser agreed.

The Planning Board Technical Assistance line item request of \$1,900 is lower than the previous year's budget of \$2,500. The Selectmen and FAC members agreed to the lower number.

The Notices line item request of \$575, up from \$200, was discussed by Selectmen and FAC members as to the volume anticipated to be required. The final number agreed to was \$300.

The General Supplies line item request of \$400 was agreed upon. The Postage line item request of \$200 was reduced to \$150. The Postage/Hearings request of \$500 that is reimbursed by applicants was agreed upon.

The request for \$2,500 for assistance from the Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC) and other resources for identifying and developing regulations for a Commercial District. In addition, PB Chairman Schaumloffel said the money would be spent on outside technical assistance, when needed, and be used to update the Master Plan to include the new Commercial District information. BOS Chairman Lage asked if the SWRPC would provide assistance as part of the annual membership fee. PB Chairman Schaumloffel stated that the level of assistance that may be required would be more in-depth and would likely incur a cost. Land Use Administrator Deaton elaborated that the SWRPC would give general advice and guidance as part of their normal services, but anything more complex and requiring a lot of research would be additional such as assistance in developing any regulations and the drafting of specific warrant articles associated with the new Commercial District. Selectman Hamill stated that most of the updates to the Master Plan had been done by the PB members in the past and suggested that there is enough talent currently on the PB to undertake the tasks themselves. PB Chairman Schaumloffel explained that the activity has been high and that finding the time to take on another large project would be difficult in addition to the other areas they plan on focusing on for 2020. BOS Chairman Lage felt that the PB members could do most of the work on drafting new regulations and that seeking outside assistance should be limited. FAC member Jack Low raised the concern that \$500 wouldn't be enough based on the tasks described, but thought \$2,500 was probably too high. After some discussion, the requested amount was reduced to \$520.

Assessors Budget Review: Assessing Chairman Coffey focused on the line items that had significant change from the previous year. BOS Chairman Lage asked about the Tax Maps line item and why the request was for \$3,400 up from \$2,500 in 2019. Assessing Chairman Coffey explained that additional effort was required by SWRPC to modify the maps because they didn't receive all the necessary data from the town to assure accuracy. Selectman Hamill asked if it was a lump sum annual fee the town pays SWRPC for the tax map updates. Assessing Chairman Coffey said that was not the case. This work would be in addition to the regular updates. Land Use Administrator Deaton explained what unexpected corrections had to be made and provided a quote from SWRPC for an additional \$1,200. FAC member Jeff McCabe asked if the \$600 remaining in the 2019 budget could be applied to that effort. Selectman Veaser suggested entering into an agreement with SWRPC this year allowing 2019 funds to be encumbered if the project drags into 2020. BOS Chairman Lage requested that the Town Administrator be given the contract so the 2019 funds can be encumbered if necessary. As a result, the requested \$3,400 was reduced to \$2,500.

Assessing Chairman Coffey discussed the Computer Services line item next and said the increase being requested was the Avitar software upgrade required to make the property tax cards available online to the public. There was discussion about how much time the Land Use staff has to spend fulfilling requests to provide copies of tax cards. FAC member Jack Low asked about the ongoing annual cost for the software and support would be. Assessing Chairman Coffey discussed the benefits of the software upgrade. There was discussion about the proposal received from Avitar and a review of the upfront and ongoing costs. Selectman Veaser was

concerned that the entire town was being asked to fund a service that will only benefit a few. There was discussion about how to charge the recipients of the service a fee to offset the cost of the software. Selectman Hamill stated that if the Land Use Administrator has to spend 1 hour or more a day to manually provide the information to the requestors, the software will pay for itself. Assessing Chairman Coffey asked if providing good service is worthwhile to the audience that would benefit from this. FAC member Jeff McCabe stated that the town is effectively already paying for this service in the form of labor for the staff. Selectman Hamill felt the software purchase would be a “no brainer” because of the labor savings and gets the town out of the Stone Age. BOS Chairman Lage raised concerns about making the information on the tax cards readily available to the public. Assessor Cunningham asked the Selectmen to make a decision and didn’t want to discuss it for another 2 hours. Selectman Hamill said most other towns are already providing tax cards online. The Selectmen approved the \$5,147 requested for Computer Services which includes the software upgrade.

FAC member Jeff McCabe asked about the \$6,000 request for Contract Legal Services. BOS Chairman Lage said that should be in the Legal budget, not the Assessors budget. There was also discussion about the Contract Services line item for \$9,240 for M&N Assessing Services annual cost and the \$19,000 included for M&N in a warrant article for the cyclical revaluation along with \$6,400 for Sansoucy for the utilities revaluation, both spanning 2020-2025. The \$9,240 was approved for 2020.

Cemetery Dept. Budget Review: Cemetery Trustee Ollie Niemi presented the budget and reviewed year-to-date expenditures for 2019. He explained that the anticipated expenditures will deplete the funds remaining for 2019. Multiple conversations occurred about the requested 2020 budget numbers and the anticipated remaining 2019 expenditures. FAC member Jack Low asked if anything should be included in the Cemetery budget regarding the dispute with the State of NH at the Smithville Cemetery. Trustee Gary Johnson discussed the requested amounts for tree removal. BOS Chairman Lage suggested that the tree removal should be done this year with the money available and defer the purchase of materials until 2020. The Selectmen approved the requested budget as presented for a total of \$37,210.

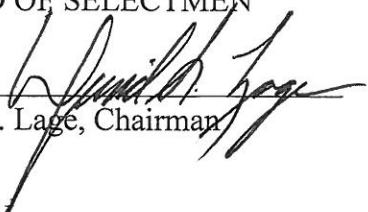
The discussion turned to the State of NH dispute regarding the Smithville Cemetery. BOS Chairman Lage asked the Cemetery Trustees to come to the December 10th Selectmen’s meeting to review the latest plan that NH DES has provided.

Patriotic Purposes Budget: Ollie Niemi reviewed the Patriotic Purposes budget and the Selectman approved the amount of \$2,460 for 2020. The discussion included purchasing a flag pole with 2019 available funds. There was discussion of how funds from the Stearns Burton Trust Fund can be spent.

At 8:33 p.m. Selectman Veeseer made a motion adjourn the meeting. Selectman Hamill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Scott Butcher, Town Administrator

Minutes approved by:
BOARD OF SELECTMEN



David S. Lage, Chairman

John Veaser



Bert Hamill