

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
DECEMBER 10, 2019

PRESENT: David Lage, Chairman, Bert Hamill, John Veaser
Scott Butcher – Town Administrator
Finance Advisory Committee Members Marc Fortier & Jack Low
Heritage Commission members Fran Atchinson, Jason Somero

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Office. Chairman Lage reviewed the agenda. The Selectmen decided that there would be no meetings on Dec. 24th or 31st and that the next meeting would be on January 7, 2020.

At 6:09 p.m. Selectman Veaser made a motion to enter into a nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3, II (d). Selectman Hamill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

At 6:29 p.m. Selectman Veaser made a motion to return to public session. Selectman Hamill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Heritage Commission Budget Review & Appointments: There was some discussion about the request to appoint/re-appoint Heritage Commission members and what length of the terms would be for each member. Fran Atchinson stated that finding and keeping new members can be difficult and that there is still one position that will remain open after this round of appointments. At the conclusion of the discussion, Selectman Veaser made a motion to appoint/re-appoint members as follows:

Mark Hopkins 1-year term
Fran Atchinson 2-year term
Jason Somero 3-year term
Joanne Meshna 1-year term

The motion was seconded by Selectman Hamill and the vote was unanimous.

The discussion then turned to the Heritage Commission budget for FY2020. Fran Atchinson discussed the quotations from Scully Architects for updated assessments of the Old Town Hall and the District 13 Schoolhouse for \$11,000 and \$12,000 respectively. Chairman Lage asked why it would be necessary for another assessment to be done and why the original assessments aren't still valid. Fran Atchinson explained that in order to qualify for certain grant money opportunities more up to date assessments are required. Assessments of the two buildings that are over a decade old don't reflect the current conditions of the properties. Jason Somero pointed out that the Commission isn't asking for those monies now, but the discussion now is beneficial. After further discussion, the Selectmen approved the overall Heritage Commission budget request of \$500 for FY2020.

Smithville Cemetery Discussion: The Selectmen reviewed the most recent correspondence from Town Counsel and NH DES regarding the Smithville Cemetery issue and examined the most recent site drawing provided by NH DES in comparison to the previous drawing. The Selectmen reviewed the dimensional data provided and noted the differences between the new and previous drawings. The Cemetery Trustees were present for the discussion which included possible solutions to offer to NH DES to give them adequate maintenance access to the dam that abuts the cemetery. The original easement issued to NH DES was discussed and what access they were entitled to under that agreement. Chairman Lage asked Cemetery Trustee Niemi to review the list of impacted gravesites according to the State of NH and reconcile them with the Town's records to make sure they are represented accurately. The Town Administrator provided Trustee Niemi with the appropriate documentation.

New Police Station Information Flyer: Chairman Lage asked the Town Administrator about the meeting with Congresswoman Kuster's office about potential grant opportunities to help fund a new police station. The Town Administrator stated that a specific request for funding would have to be developed and then try to match the project with the various grant programs at the state and federal level to see if the project would qualify. The Selectmen then discussed getting the informational flyer mailed out to the townspeople to inform them about the current police station project and funding required. Selectman Hamill stated that he is concerned about the effectiveness of the flyer mailing and feels it may be a waste of money. The Selectmen also discussed whether they were prepared to announce dates for the bond hearing associated with the project and an informational session. Selectman Hamill is also pessimistic that the townspeople will approve borrowing money via a bond. Chairman Lage stated that the growth of the town makes it impossible for the Police Dept. to continue operating out of the current facility. Selectman Veaser raised the concern that the current facility doesn't have adequate emergency egress and is a safety hazard. The Selectmen asked the Town Administrator to get the flyer printed and mailed out in 11" x 17" format and edit it to include the statement that the bond hearing and informational session date(s) will be announced later.

Employee Health Care Insurance: The Selectmen reviewed the options available for employee health care insurance for 2020. The focus of the discussion was comparing the new plan offered by the current vendor, Tufts Health Plan, and the alternative plan from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care. The coverage, deductibles and co-pays were compared along with the overall cost of each plan to the town and the employees. The Selectmen also discussed the prescription coverage and co-pays and felt the two plans were similar, but the Harvard Pilgrim plan was more cost effective. Selectman Veaser made a motion to select the Harvard Pilgrim HMO Gold 2000 plan. Selectman Hamill seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. The Town Administrator stated that for next year there are other innovative plans out there that are worth exploring that may save money without reducing coverage.

Ambulance Memorandum of Understanding: The Town Administrator discussed the recent edits to the SVAS-Town of New Ipswich Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU would

become effective April 1, 2020 and automatically renew annually. The Selectmen also want SVAS to come in on January 7th to review the warrant article they will be proposing for the Town's portion of funding. The Selectmen approved the MOU as written with two minor changes recommended by Chairman Lage.

Other Business: Chairman Lage discussed the e-mail the Selectmen received about an employee complaining about another employee bringing their dog to work. After some discussion, Selectman Veaser made a motion to adopt a "No Dog" policy for employees at the Town Offices. The motion was seconded by Selectman Hamill. The vote was unanimous to adopt the policy.

The discussion then turned to the various building permit software packages being considered from Avitar, BMSI and iWork. The Town Administrator gave a brief overview and will put together a package of information and pricing matrix for the Selectmen.

Chairman Lage asked the Town Administrator if the accountant had provided the reports on the revolving funds for Parks & Recreation. He requested that they be provided soon to the Town Administrator and the Parks & Rec Director. Selectman Hamill raised the issue that the Parks & Rec Director has asked for an increase in her stipend but has not been forthcoming with the financial analysis of the revolving fund and cost effectiveness of programs. Chairman Lage stated that would be addressed when the Director comes back for her final 2020 budget approval.

At 9:02 p.m. Selectman Veaser 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