

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
JANUARY 28, 2020
MINUTES

PRESENT: David Lage, Chairman; John Veaser; Bert Hamill
Town Administrator Scott Butcher
Assessor Chairman Jim Coffey, Welfare Director Carrie Traffic, Mary Drew – CEO
Reality Check, Resident Brian Somero

Chairman Lage called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm at the Town Hall and led the Pledge of Alliance and reviewed the agenda.

Welfare Director Carrie Traffic introduced Mary Drew, CEO of Reality Check, a human services organization that provides programs to adults and school-age children in the community. Ms. Drew explained the various programs and her request for support from New Ipswich in the amount of \$1 per capita, or approximately \$5,300. Selectman Hamill stated that the budget is already in place for 2020. Selectman Veaser felt that since most of the programs are school-based, that she should direct her funding request to the School Committee, not the town. Chairman Lage wanted to know how many New Ipswich residents and students benefitted from Reality Check's programs. Ms. Drew did not have exact figures. Chairman Lage said that the overall amount in the budget for all human services organizations was only \$9,550 and that a single request of over \$5,000 was unlikely to be supported. Chairman Lage suggested trying again next year and to bring data specific to New Ipswich so an appropriate amount of contribution can be determined. Selectman Veaser suggested making a similar request to the School Committee. Selectman Hamill suggested providing more information about the programs to the residents as well.

The Selectmen then met with Jim Coffey to discuss RSA 91-A issues and road maintenance on Wilson Hill Road. Mr. Coffey also had an issue with the budget and the discrepancy between the total amount discussed at the Budget Hearing and the budget that was actually posted. Selectman Veaser explained that the error in the spreadsheet used at the Budget Hearing was identified and discussed at that time to ensure the audience knew of the changes. Mr. Coffey feels it should have been corrected during the Budget Hearing. The Selectmen stated they would address during Deliberative Session the fact that the amount for Patriotic Purposes budget was omitted from the spreadsheet used at the Budget Hearing.

Mr. Coffey then wanted an explanation of why the Selectmen went into a nonpublic session to discuss employee compensation during the budget process. Selectman Veaser stated that while some of the compensation discussion was held in open session, that when talking about specific employees and their performance it was necessary to go into a nonpublic session. Mr. Coffey and Chairman Lage had a difference of opinion on what the term "compensation" meant in the context of RSA 91-A. Selectman Hamill stated that discussing specific employees and their roles was not appropriate for public consumption. Mr. Coffey said he disagreed with their assessment.

The discussion then turned to Mr. Coffey's dissatisfaction with how the DPW is maintaining his road, Wilson Hill Road. He complained the amount of stone that was put down to firm up the dirt road and that the stone ended up on the shoulder and in his yard. He felt it was a waste of material. He also complained of the drainage and suspected that the culvert needed to be cleaned and suggested that the road be paved at some point in time to avoid these issues.

Selectman Hamill discussed his desire to have all nonpublic sessions toward the end of agendas and to have a better description listed in the agenda as to the purpose of the nonpublic. He suggested that there were complaints of the lack of transparency with the Board of Selectmen. Chairman Lage disagreed with Selectman Hamill's assessment and asked him to bring specific information before the Board for discussion.

Resident Brian Somero began a discussion on using the Fund Balance to pay down the tax rate. He asked how much money was currently in the fund Balance. Chairman Lage estimated that it was about \$1.2 million. Selectman Veaser once again explained to Mr. Somero that the bulk of his tax rate was made up of the school assessment, not the town, and asked why the town should use its Fund Balance to offset expenditures made by the school district. Chairman Lage stated that it the responsibility of the Selectmen to manage those funds in the best interest of the tax payers. While Mr. Somero may disagree with that approach, most of the taxpayers understand the wisdom behind what the Selectmen are doing. Selectman Veaser reiterated that it is unwise to spend down the Fund Balance to reduce the tax rate. If that was done every year, there would be nothing left in the Fund Balance eventually.

The Selectmen discussed meeting prior to Deliberative Session to review the budget and finalize the PowerPoint presentation. The decided to meet on Monday, February 3rd at 5:15 to do so and asked the Town Administrator to make sure the facilities people at the High School were prepared to everything setup for Deliberative Session on February 4th.

Also discussed was the progress being made by Mr. Lowe regarding the 11 Temple Road property. Chairman Lage asked the Town Administrator to get a new projected timeline from Mr. Lowe on when he thinks the project will be complete.

The Selectmen also discussed possible dates for meeting with NH DES regarding the Smithville Cemetery. The dates offered were sometime during the weeks of 2/17, 2/24 or 3/2.

At 7:25 pm Selectman Veaser made a motion to enter into a nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II (c). Selectman Hamill seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

At 8:04 pm Selectman Veaser made a motion to leave the nonpublic session. Selectman Hamill seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous. Selectmen Veaser made a motion to seal the minutes of the nonpublic. Selectman Hamill seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

At 8:05 pm Selectman Veeseer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Hamill seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

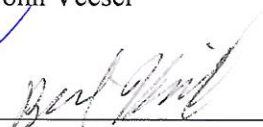
Respectfully submitted,
Scott Butcher, Town Administrator

Minutes approved by:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN



David S. Lage, Chairman

John Veeseer

Bert Hamill