

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – February 9, 2016

MINUTES:

Meeting called to order at 7:02PM. Present were First Selectman Don Stein and Selectman Ray Pech and Selectman Mark Hemenway. Also present were Holly and Dan Krouse, and Terri Collins.

DELEGATIONS: No delegations were present.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mark Hemenway, seconded by Ray Pech, and passed unanimously to add to the agenda: Discussion of Town Clerk appointment.

DISCUSSION: Don Stein presented the rationale for appointing Holly Krouse as the Town Clerk to replace Maria Mullady, who retired effective February 1. Maria was appointed as Assistant Town Clerk in 1985 and as the Town Clerk in 1996. Maria is well-known to everyone in Town and to those who have come to the Town Hall for help. She always showed a willingness to help, a strong knowledge of the Town and of the State regulations, and was always extremely dependable and well-respected in performing her duties and working with the public. During her tenure, she served the Town and its residents in an exemplary manner – the Town Hall staff and the residents will miss her efficiency and dedication. She was also very active in State-wide activities with her fellow Town Clerks and was well-respected by her peers for her knowledge and expertise.

Holly Krouse has been the Assistant Town Clerk working with Maria for the past 14 years. Holly is a certified Town Clerk and has lived in Barkhamsted for 32 years. She has also been the assistant to the Tax Collector for the past 8 years, and is very well-versed in all of the requirements of her new position. She has filled in for Maria for extended periods, when required, and is expected to easily step into her new role.

The consensus of the Selectmen was that Holly was very well-qualified and that she should be appointed and at the salary that was approved for the position, effective February 1.

Don Stein appointed Holly at the meeting for the remainder of the term (through December 31, 2017) and swore her in to her new position.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ray Pech, seconded by Mark Hemenway, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2016 meeting.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen reviewed the budget expenditures and revenues through January 31, 2016 and did not see any items that were of major concern. The total expenditures are on track for 7 months of the fiscal year and are benefitting from the unusually mild winter, which has produced a lower than normal use of salt and low overtime requirements. The Selectmen will monitor legal expenses, which have been above average during the current year.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ray Pech, seconded by Mark Hemenway, and passed unanimously to approve the as-presented FY 2016/2017 budget for review by the Board of Finance.

This budget included a 2.5% salary increase for employees, a 6% increase in health insurance, an 11% increase in dental costs, and a 3% increase in property-casualty insurance. The budget assumes that the new assistants to the Town Clerk and Tax Collector would be hired at a lower salary than Holly Krouse, the current assistant. However, Holly will be taking medical insurance (Maria Mullady did not) and that produces an increase in the Town's insurance costs. Town departments have been held mostly flat with the exceptions primarily being for increased costs for purchased services, such as the software used in the various offices. Costs for heating reflect the decrease in heating oil prices, but the Registrars have additional requirements imposed by the State, which will increase their costs.

The Resident State Trooper has been included at the 85% level imposed by the State, and the contingency line that had been established last year was eliminated. The projected cost for next year is \$164,000, which has caused concern, since these costs have been going up steadily over the last several years. Don Stein also presented a brief summary of the costs associated with various options for police services, including sharing a trooper with another town(s). This summary will be finalized and presented to the Board of Finance for their consideration.

As a result of these plusses and minuses, the bottom line increase for the General Government budget is 1.4 % or ~\$29,000. On the positive side, the Governor's budget presented last week included an increase in grants to the Town in excess of \$100,000, but that may be offset by decreases in tax that can be collected on automobiles, both due to the cap on the mill rate for cars and a proposed change which would allow cars with overdue taxes to be registered.

DISCUSSION: Don Stein reported that the survey of residents that will be used as part of developing the Plan of Conservation and Development has been sent out. The PZC plans to have a complete draft of the POCD completed by this Spring, so that the formal review process by the Town Boards and residents can be initiated.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen signed the motion that had been approved at the Special Town Meeting, which allowed the Town to discontinue a portion of the Old North Road. This motion will be used as part of a court motion to allow the Town to abandon/discontinue a portion of this unused right-of-way that goes north from Eddy Road near Hearthstone.

MOTION: The meeting was adjourned at 8:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald S. Stein
First Selectman

Note: the next meeting (February 23, 2016) will be cancelled. The next regular meeting will be March 8)