

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – Special Meeting – March 29, 2017

MINUTES:

Meeting called to order at 3:32 PM. Present were First Selectman Don Stein, Selectmen Ray Pech and Mark Hemenway. Also present were Jim Hart and Francine Beland.

DELEGATIONS: Jim Hart requested that the BOS consider increasing the Veterans Exemption for taxes based on credits against their property assessment. Francine Beland, the Assessor, explained that the basic exemption is \$4500 based on the Town portion, a portion which is reimbursed by the State and a factor of 3 based on our property revaluations. To qualify, a veteran files a DD-214 form detailing their service and they can only get 1 exemption in total, which then passes on to a surviving spouse. Their disability rating causes the exemption to increase based on State formulas and can go to \$13,500 for 100% disability. All disabled vet ratings go to 100% at age 65, but their value of the exemption is reduced as compared to someone who was previously 100% disabled. There are also additional exemptions for those below specified adjusted gross income levels dictated by the State, and this applies to those who are either 65 or totally disabled. This exemption can be a value between \$3,000 and \$12,000 depending on income and disability level and does impact the disability exemption. The AGI threshold is \$17,600 for a single individual and \$42,900 for a family. The exemption for a veteran with 100% disability at age 65 is \$21,000.

The recommendation was that the Town look at increasing the exemption, not the income levels and to determine what the fiscal impact would be. This will be considered at a later meeting after the Assessor can look at different scenarios.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No representatives from the public provided comments.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mark Hemenway, seconded by Ray Pech, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2017 meeting.

No tax refunds were received from the Tax Collector.

DISCUSSION: Don Stein provided spreadsheets with the information approved by the Board of Finance for FY '17/'18.

- Capital – Town projects: \$35,000 for the 10-year full revaluation and \$150,000 for a new highway department truck. \$45,000 of this total will be the result of canceling a previously-approved truck refurbishment and returning that money to the undesignated capital projects fund. Don

Stein agreed that any additional funds for this truck would come from State grants or operating budgets.

- School budget- The Board of Education budget request was reduced by \$42,200 for a bottom line total of \$4,242,886 which is a 0.8% decrease over the prior year. This is primarily due to a Special Education student moving out of Barkhamsted, saving over \$100,000 per year.
- Town Budget – approved at a 1.25% increase for a total of \$2,101,752. Reductions requested from the budget presented were:
 - Reduction of \$36,235 from line 6201200 (State Trooper) – this leaves this line at an 85% cost share. Don Stein agreed that any additional funds for the Resident State Trooper would come from State grants or operating budgets.
 - Reduction of \$1,500 from line 6101900 (Computers)
 - Reduction of \$5,000 from line 6150xxx (Tree Maintenance)
- With these approved lines, as well as Regional 7, RRDD #1 and other smaller line items, and assumptions made that the State would not be requesting that the Town pay 1/3 of the Teachers' pension costs, the tax increase for the Budget Hearing on April 18 is 4.03%. This includes the use of \$200,000 of the General Fund, which would be reimbursed by the results of the Tax Collector's plan to hold a tax sale on delinquent properties in Town. The assumption for the State municipal aid was a cut of \$170,000 based on the Governor's budget issued in February.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen, by consensus, agreed that they would request Planning and Zoning to consider an easement for the strip of land on the school playground abutting property belonging to Peter Ferraresso. Previously, the Selectmen planned to sell this piece, but based on PZC's objection to a sale, and PZC's apparent willingness to provide an easement for building a fence, it was felt that this transaction would be put on the agenda at the Annual Town Meeting for approval of the easement.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen agreed that they would place an ordinance on the Annual Town Meeting Agenda that would prohibit unsolicited delivery of advertising media by throwing into a driveway. This would be part of the overall agenda for that meeting, and would be modeled after the Winsted ordinance, that was reviewed by the Town Attorney. Ray Pech will review the littering ordinance previously passed to see if this could become a section of the same ordinance.

Don Stein informed the Selectmen that the Senior Center lease will be ready for signature as soon as the Town receives a letter from the State approving the

Town's ability to rent the apartment on the second floor as it has in the past. That rental includes the requirement to perform part time janitorial activities in support of the Seniors in return for a relatively low rent.

The Selectman agreed that the Town would resubmit the 2016 STEAP grant for improvements to the school sidewalks, the town hall ramps to the front door and repaving of the parking lots and driveway between the school and town hall. That grant will require a special meeting to approve the application.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03PM on a motion by Ray Pech, and seconded by Mark Hemenway.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald S. Stein
First Selectman

The next meeting will be a brief Special Meeting on April 5 at 11:00 AM to consider and act on a resolution approving the Town's 2017 STEAP grant application, and a Special Meeting on April 13 at 7:00 PM to replace the regular meeting on April 11.