

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – January 12, 2016

MINUTES:

Meeting called to order at 7:05PM. Present were First Selectman Don Stein and Selectman Ray Pech. Selectman Mark Hemenway arrived at 7:15PM. Also present was Deb Simon, a resident who wished to address the Board regarding the MDC's Greenwoods property.

DELEGATIONS: No delegations were present.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ray Pech, seconded by Don Stein, and passed unanimously (Mark Hemenway was not present) to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2015 meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ray Pech, seconded by Don Stein, and passed unanimously (Mark Hemenway was not present) to approve the following tax refund:

\$ 368.59	Nissan Infiniti LT	refund
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DISCUSSION: Deb Simon presented information to the Selectmen regarding data she has gathered and the wildlife that she has catalogued (primarily turtles and birds) on the MDC property, focused on the trail that runs from Pleasant Valley (near the fishermen's parking lot) to the Hurley Business Park near the center of New Hartford. She is adamantly opposed to the potential improvements to this trail and increased traffic that could result, due to her concerns for the resulting impact to this area and the wildlife. After an extensive discussion, the Selectmen stated that they would not make a decision at this time as there is no firm proposal to consider, the MDC has not given their permission to do anything with the property, and the fact that Don Stein and Dan Jerram (New Hartford First Selectman) intend to hire a consultant to do a wildlife survey of the full length of the trail. This study would be to determine if it is feasible to make improvements to the path, what the impact might be, and what the costs for the improvements would be. Don Stein informed the other Selectmen that there was a possibility that the two Towns could apply for a State grant (Responsible Growth Grant Program) that could fund the wildlife survey and the feasibility assessment for how to create an improved path. That application will be dependent on receiving permission from the MDC to conduct the survey, and will be considered at the next meeting of the Selectmen, as it would not be due until February 4, 2016.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen reviewed the expenditures and revenues for the current fiscal year, which are on-track. The tax collection percentage is very close to last year's, when a healthy surplus was accrued and the expenditures are also tracking well to the budget. The Legal expenses are currently above the budget, but it is difficult to predict the final figures based on current activities requiring legal assistance.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen reviewed a very preliminary budget for 2016/2017. The budget presented included the negotiated 2.5% salary increases, a 6.57% health insurance increase, and the Resident Trooper at a value of 85% of full cost, which had not been determined when

the current fiscal year budget was accepted. Don Stein indicated that the on-going discussions regarding the sharing of Troopers and the establishment of a constabulary were still in a preliminary stage and that there was no news to report. The Town has only received a few budget requests from outside agencies and the preliminary totals were based on leaving all Town budgets flat from the previous year. With those assumptions, the increase is approximately \$10,000 or 0.5%. This budget will be refined for the next BOS meeting. Of concern regarding the potential budget increase is a significant increase in the Regional 7 assessment due to shifting student population. However, the exact figure is unknown at this time. There appears to be sufficient funds in the bond proceeds account for the school roof/solar project, that tax revenues will not be required for the '16/'17 loan payment and the capital budget is likely to be reduced both of which will help counteract the Regional 7 increase. These preliminary figures will continue to be worked to minimize any budget increases.

DISCUSSION: Don Stein informed the Selectmen that Allan Fenner, consulting arborist for SAVATREE, will be delivering a report regarding the trees that need to be removed at Stanclift Cove. Once that is done, the Cove Authority will need to develop a plan for making the beach and picnic area safe for the upcoming season. They also will need a longer term plan for tree removal and restoration and will need to account for the needed funds to accomplish these tasks.

DISCUSSION: Don Stein informed the Selectmen that the plan to abandon the old road/right-of-way off of Eddy Road is dependent on completion of a title search and letters from the abutting neighbors that indicate their willingness to conduct the transaction. Once that data is available, there will be a Town Meeting to abandon/discontinue the road. Tentatively, that meeting will take place on January 28, 2016.

DISCUSSION: Don Stein reminded the Selectmen that the second public forum for development of the Plan of Conservation and Development is scheduled for January 13 and will focus on residents' visions for the Town's future economic development. The third forum will take place on January 27 and will cover housing needs. There will also be a town-wide survey sent out by the end of January and the expectation is that Natalia Zagula, the UCONN intern working on this project, will have a first draft available by the end of her tenure in early May.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ray Pech, seconded by Mark Hemenway, and passed unanimously to authorize Donald S. Stein, First Selectman, to apply for and enter into agreements with the State of Connecticut for the Fiscal Year 2016 STEAP grant program.

The project that is the subject of this year's STEAP grant application is for the restoration and refurbishment of the sidewalks, ramps, driveways and parking areas around the Elementary School and the Town Hall. This work is necessary both for esthetics and public safety due to erosion of these areas which are both over 30 years old and badly in need of repair. The tasks will include heating elements by the Town Hall entrances, granite curbing near the Town Hall and replacement of all the concrete sidewalks by the school, drainage repairs outside the lower floor of Town Hall, which was flooded 3 years ago, as well as the repaving of driveways and parking lot areas. This grant application will be for \$371,000 from the State with a contribution of in-kind effort by the

Town valued at \$53,600 for a total project cost of \$424,600. The Town will probably not hear whether they are selected or not until the early Spring.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mark Hemenway, seconded by Ray Pech, and passed unanimously to make the following appointments to the Conservation Commission and to endorse the candidate below for the Stanclift Cove Authority:

Conservation Commission (appointed to term of 1/12/16 to 12/31/17)

Michael Beauchene

Cheryl Harrington

Stanclift Cove Authority (endorsed for term of 1/12/16 to 12/31/16 and 1/1/17 to 12/31/19)

Doug Simpson

DISCUSSION: Don Stein stated that the Northwest Regional Mental Health Board was looking for an appointee from Barkhamsted to serve on their Board of Directors. The Selectmen indicated that they would look for volunteers to participate in this board that assists individuals who need help dealing with mental illness or addiction.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen agreed that the chain of command in Town for emergency situations would remain somewhat informal and will be handled as follows. In an emergency situation in which the First Selectman is present, he, as the CEO, will direct the Town's emergency response. In the event he is out of town, he will appoint one of the other Selectmen to act as the emergency CEO and will make that appointment via email to the Selectmen, the Emergency Management Director, the Fire Departments and ambulance services, LCD and the Highway Department. In the unlikely event, all 3 Selectmen are absent, the appointment can be made to the EMD or other official.

All other items on the agenda were tabled to the next meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ray Pech, seconded by Mark Hemenway, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald S. Stein
First Selectman