

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – November 24, 2015

MINUTES:

Meeting called to order at 7:05PM. Present were First Selectman Don Stein and Selectmen Ray Pech and Mark Hemenway.

DELEGATIONS: No delegations were present.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ray Pech, seconded by Mark Hemenway, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2015 Meeting, with the following changes and corrections:

- In the first line above the bullet points under Delegations, change the word “concerns” to “questions”.
- In the paragraph following the bullet points under Delegations, change the first sentence to read “There was a request that the Selectmen take action, but that was deferred to a future meeting when sufficient data was available to make an educated decision.”

MOTION: There were no tax refunds requiring action

DISCUSSION: Don Stein presented the other Selectmen with a spreadsheet that shows the potential impact to the Town’s assessment for Regional 7 during the 2016/2017, based on the projected shift in population among the Regional 7 Towns. Barkhamsted is expected to have an increase in 21 students at the school, which would result in about 1.3% increase in our share of the budget. This could result in an increase to the town of between \$200,000 and \$250,000, not including any budget increases at the school. In addition, the first annual payment of the bond for the school roof project will be due and that will result in an additional payment in excess of \$100,000. Based on these increases, beyond any normal budgetary increases, the Selectmen agreed that they, the Board of Education, and Regional 7 would face a challenging budget year to minimize tax increases for the residents.

DISCUSSION: Don Stein informed the Selectmen that there is a Stanclift Cove Authority meeting on December 8, and that he was hopeful that they would authorize an arborist study of the trees in the Cove. This study is necessary to formulate a plan for tree management in the Spring and if there is a need to request more funds for the Cove from the Towns. Once the plan is in place, the work could be done in the Spring and prevent delays in the opening of the Cove.

He also informed the Selectmen that Dr. Michael Klemens has recommended that we do a wildlife survey of the entire path from New Harford to Pleasant Valley. This study would provide real data beyond today’s emotional discussions and hearsay as to what is feasible or not regarding the Greenwoods property. He expressed his understanding that none of the residents have the expertise possessed by Dr. Klemens.

He also said that he would explore the possibility that the FRCC would provide grant money to help defer the cost of this very valuable exercise, which is useful regardless of the outcome of the path discussions. Dr. Klemens had stated that the cost would be somewhere in excess of \$20,000 and sharing the cost between the FRCC, New Hartford and Barkhamsted would thus make a lot of sense.

DISCUSSION: Don Stein informed the Selectmen that the Plan of Conservation and Development was proceeding well and that the next steps would be the public forums on the Town's Environment, Economic Development and Housing Needs. Phil Prelli, a former CT Commissioner of Agriculture and State Legislator, will chair the first meeting, covering the Environment which will be held on December 9. The other meetings, to be chaired by Mark Waterhouse and Greg Cantwell, respectively, will be held in January.

DISCUSSION: Don Stein informed the Selectmen that he is still exploring options for modifications to the Resident Trooper program both at the State level and with Dan Jerram. There is nothing definitive to report as yet, but hopefully there will be some cost savings approaches available to consider during the budget preparation.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen reviewed a potential Town Meeting call for a meeting that will be held on December 17. The final agenda will be approved at the December 8th BOS meeting and will likely include action on the easement for the RRDD#1 solar project, granting property in an existing right-of-way and receiving an easement from abutting property owners on Miner Lane, acting upon a littering ordinance and voting on an appointment to replace Dan Pinton, who is stepping down from the Stanclift Cove Authority.

DISCUSSION: Don Stein informed the Selectmen that the 2016 STEAP program had been announced, with applications due on January 15, 2016. Suggestions so far include improvements to the town hall and school sidewalks, drainage and pavement, consideration of purchasing the Pleasant Valley General store and the house next door for housing, bringing the Winsted sewers across the town line to initially help Mallory Brook Plaza and Lombard Ford and ultimately to promote economic development on the west end of Route 44. He also asked that the Selectmen and others provide ideas that can then be used for this important State grant program.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50PM on a motion by Ray Pech, seconded by Mark Hemenway and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald S. Stein
First Selectman