Minutes -Meeting, December 13th, 2023

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

8:26 AM

Attendees: Sean Mamone, Lorri Hayes, Frank Weber, Tim Berry, Sheila Sturm, Howard Brown, Bill McKinney, John Arico, Kim Roberge, Joan Cleary, Andrew Stockinger (School Board Representative), Leslie Formby

Eileen Naber – public attendee

Meeting called to order at:6:36 pm

Agenda: (items may be moved ahead if a previous item finishes early)

6:30 - 6:40: Opening public comments- no public comment

6:40 – 6:45: Introduction of School Board Representative- Andrew Stockinger is here, George Torres will be the representative for the other meetings- gtorres@sau39.org. HB asked what the percentage increase is on the school budget. AS says at this writing it is 6% for last year and 5% is discretionary. There is no intention to do a warrant article. HB says each budget should be reviewed. Souhegan is at 1.2% and the SAU is about 1%

6:45 – 7:15: Interview Ben Crosby (Public Works Department) Buildings to start 419440 to start. It goes to 419450. No major changes. HB Biggest drivers are repairs and maintenance. BC says it is the trailer purchase. We may or may not want to adjust up. We will need to update the security camera and may be making a request to use left over funds to update the cameras. KR says that 2 years ago was $6,000, it jumped up to $10,000, now $15,000, why? BC says due to concrete pads that need to be purchased. TB also says electrical issues are in the budget amount. 8431210 any questions, TB asks if you are going to get to the amount to be budgeted for sand and salt. BC says yes. Slight decrease in salt but increase in sand. BC says tonnager for one run around town, roughly 190-210 tons average $14,000-15,000 each time we go out. That is the beginning of the storm. SM says to put another $15,000 on the back side. TB asks if we are set up infrastructure wise to pre-treat roads. BC says no. TB asks if you have any information on the cost effectiveness of calcium. BC says it depends on temperature and other variables. TB asks is it worth it. BC says if you are on a tight budget, do not consider it. SM says an average storm 6-8 inches is $40,000. BC says around there. TB asks how many years have you been DPW director. BC says about 6 years. TB asks if he has kept track of the budget for storms. Has he seen any trends. BC says more ice is costly. KR says 3 things, do we have to do a dump truck lease and pick up truck lease all in the same year, why not phase in each. KR asks are block grants factored in on tar and sealant. BC says 6 wheel dump truck was purchased in 2007, almost 17 years with the truck, far exceeded its life expectancy as a plow vehicle, cost the town money to fix it to continue its work as a plow truck. If it is not replaced, the town will need to pay $20-$30,000 to make it snow worthy. BC says they put in for grant, but they did not win the grant. BC says they are looking at grants for trucks to help offset the cost. BC says other trucks have 105,000 miles, 2012, is used daily. We could use another vehicle to plow. KR asks would the number go away if the lease stays in there. There would be a lower maintenance line for new truck. On the dump truck the line item is at $7500 and pick up truck is $10,000. Question by KR is whether we could do one this year and one next year. Is there value in any truck. The 6 wheeler maybe. BC says the pickup will be kept as a spare possibly with part time use. Part time seasonal groundkeeper uses his own vehicle to run around town maybe we could use this vehicle for him. TB asks about annual cost of lease, how much is the full value, $90,000 was answer. TB wants to know how much was the other truck, new truck is north of $220,000 all new equipment. TB says did we spend a lot of money on dump trucks this past year. BC says yes. KR asks if you had to choose, which would you choose to buy this year. KR asks about taring and sealing and block grant funds. BC says he views the block grants as a possibility not final. BC says the block grants are a supplement. We need regular maintance preservation in our budget. Block grants should be used for larger projects or reconstructing projects. JA says that the state has already found a way to tax electric cars will we see that money. BC says that may be the case. BC says he is seeking to extend life of roads over years. This town has been in a habit of doing a base pave and 2 or 3 years later come back as an overlay. Amherst bonded their roads and got a lot of work done. BC says he mentioned that to the strategic advisory committee. BC says 5 million may be a good bond. BC says with just 3% road life addressed; we will always fall behind. TB says Amherst bonded 20 million and ran out of money. BC says Mont Vernon is in the queue with National Regional Planning Commission and Road Surface Management Systems to have a road review will start in spring. Ran numbers to effectively keep the roads at the existing condition without getting any worse. Number is 3 times his proposal. National regional planning commission and the road surface management system. Decrease for the solid waste 432301, 431472 repairs and maintenance on. JC will get it tomorrow and will let us know. KR asked about line item 431463, is there no receipts for radio, BC says will be end of year purchase. HB asks about telephone and internet, 431490, Becky worked with Comcast to get it down, anticipating a small increase. HB wonders why he has email address with Microsoft but why does Mark have one. BC says because he is able to participate in Joint Loss Management Committee and to back BC up when he is off.

7:20 - Approval of minutes from November 29th, TB motions to accept, SS moved and seconds, KR is the Zoom link available for anyone to access. JA says zoom link not publicly available says the link is available to JC or from JA. SM is opposed. Voice vote- KR abstains, LF votes yes.

7:30 – 7:35: Discussion of questions for Library Trustees

1. TB Why is the library salary budget higher than others? Due to change in fiscal year. KR asks if JC supplied the answer. JC says yes. KR says in 3 years it has had a 60% increase in salary line items in 3 years. JC says due to increase in hours and increase in salary. TB says also spoke to Jack about it.
2. TB Can the library trustees prepare a budget in accordance with the library trustee manual? There is no demand to see it.
3. SM asks how many hours more did the library open? How many hours is it open and how many hours did they work without opening the library.

7:35 - 7:45: New business

* Discussion of next meeting date – should we meet between Christmas and New Years? General consensus to move to January 3, 2024. We will discuss meeting on January 10th at the meeting on the 3rd.
* Reconsideration of School Board Representative voting status-JA asks if we want to reconsider. Consensus is no.
* Town Clerk’s response to our questions. JA went through answers:

Here are the responses I received from Belinda regarding her budget:

* I spoke with David Sturm and he would like to have the police there the entire day for all 4 elections. The $2640 will cover all four.
* Supply line includes $7000 for a new voting machine, roughly $900 to print the ballots for town election (that was the cost last year), $400 per election to reprogram the memory cards And $350 for yearly maintenance. I added $150 in case the printing went up.
* School budget: AS the total 3rd draft FY25 3 million 88000 285. Increase is not known. The presentation at public session. Roughly 6%. Warrant articles non-monetary to change the name of the fund and money would stay the same. SHS 240000 1.2%, warrant unassigned fund balance, PPC redo contract, no final negotiated number, health and dental is going up 21.8% increase. SAU 39 will be realigning.
* Do we still need to see the library trustees? When we get the answer to the question, we will decide if we need to see them. Will need to see them when they submit warrant articles.

7:45 – 7:50: Closing public comments- Eileen Naber says that when the school budget placing money in a fund instead of returning it to the taxpayers thereby reducing the money that you would normally “get back” it does affect your tax rate.

SM makes a request to go into non-public session. SS says 91-A (3) paragraph 2 requires the motion to be made to go to non-public must state the specific exemption under paragraph 2, there is nothing that this public body does that falls under the exemption. KR says she disagrees, if it effects reputation of person, it should be made in non-public. SS says not if it effects the reputation of the person that is a part of the public body. SS says there is an exception to the exception.

7:50 – 8:00: There is no vote to go into non-public session. SM would like SS removed from the committee. SM asks her to voluntarily step down. SS says no. BM say if you are having an issue with a person from the committee you must go to the moderator. JA says we all understand that people have strong feelings when it comes to things that effect their taxes.SM says she belittled him. SS says it is necessary to point out that she is an attorney. KR believes that the committee is a created for a purpose. Needs to be some common courtesy. Based on behavior of committee. LF wants to know if there is a code of conduct in Roberts rules of order JA says the discussion doesn’t apply due to the fact that we are not following the rules because we want a free flowing discussion.

8:00: Meeting adjournment