**Selectmen’s Meeting Minutes**

**October 25, 2021**

**7:00 PM** Meeting called to order by Selectboard Chairman, John Esposito. Also in attendance were Selectmen Howard Brown and Tim Berry and minute taker, Laurie Brown.

Esposito led the meeting in the pledge of allegiance.

Jim Bird handed in a quote for the technology to have meetings broadcast; $2278. He said that, hopefully we can do it for less. This system would take us a long time to outgrow.

Berry asked if this quote was for materials only.

Bird said yes. He also explained that the screen would be to put up the applicant’s paperwork; applications, maps etc. He suggested putting it out on chatter for any help that may be out there.

Bonnie Angulas asked if there would be a need for someone to manage the system.

Bird said yes, in the beginning, but it should be good to go once we get used to it.

Berry asked if he envisions it being Zoom ready.

Bird said that step 1 will be to broadcast only.

H. Brown said that, at the schoolboard meetings, they have someone manage the camera etc. Maybe we could get some volunteer hours.

Esposito asked what the next step is.

Bird said that, if it passes the budget process, we would need to purchase the equipment.

Angulas asked if there were any Boards or Committees that have more than 3 members.

Esposito said yes; Planning Board, Heritage Commission etc.

Cemetery Trustee, Lou Springer, asked the Board to waive the Timber Tax on the cut that is to happen on the Cemetery/Library land off of Grand Hill/Weston Hill Roads. The tax would normally be $2K to $4K.

Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to waive the Timber Tax on the Timber Cut taking place on the land of the new Cemetery and proposed Library. All in favor.

A Town resident came in to discuss a letter that she had received from the Tax Collector. She explained that she had made a payment plan with the Collector, then Covid hit and she was only able to make one payment. She wishes to start on another payment plan to get the back taxes paid. She was told to speak with the Tax Collector and to pay enough each month so that her balance is coming down.

Esposito said that he would abide by any plan mapped out by the resident and the Tax Collector.

Esposito asked Lucien Soucy if he had finished the work to the bell tower yet.

Soucy said that the floors and landings are done, and he would be building the stairs in his shop this week.

Michael Jennings came before the Board to ask what progress has been made on the 54/56 Weston Hill Rd. problem. He stated that there is a trailer on site that the owners have been using to shower and use the toilet because their septic has failed.

Board will send the Health Inspector out to see if he could find evidence of a failed septic.

Jennings says that there are unregistered vehicles ringing the property and that a business is being run from the property.

Esposito asked Jennings to be patient – the Board is working on getting the proper C/O for the residences, then we will tackle the other things going on there.

Berry said that they can only cross one bridge at a time.

Library Director, Angulas said that the 6% COLA increase was already in the budget she handed in, and the only thing she had to change was to bring the Library Cleaning line up to $2600.

Fire Chief, Jay Wilson explained that, line # 419433 Fire Station Repair & Maint has been put up to $16,400 to allow for replacing the rotted rear exit door and building a 3 ½ foot roof to cover the training room and the A/C unit. It will be open framing with roofing and a replacement door.

Berry asked why the FD budget was down so much.

Wilson said that last year was higher because of the tanker repair.

Garden and Beautification Committee Chairman, Jessica Pomeroy explained that she has increased the budget by $450 because the committee has been donating out of their own pockets all along. Her goal is to keep the Town looking good, but not at the member’s expense.

H. Brown said that, instead on relying on member’s donating, she should be looking for donations on MV Chatter.

Pomeroy said that she doesn’t always have time for that; she will work on it. She said that they advertised for the bulb drive and it didn’t produce mountains of responses.

Esposito said that the PD and Hwy may need to increase their fuel budgets seeing as the price of fuel is rising so fast. He told Hwy Director Crosby to stop using Ciardelli and start using the State Shed.

Interim Chief, Mark Slavin said that at $3.09/gallon he will have the PD start using the State Shed also.

H. Brown asked about Slavin’s budget line for Cruiser Upfitting.

Slavin said that the new cruiser will need to be outfitted with everything for the inside. The amount for the cruiser lease payment is just for the car – everything must be put inside (and out). They may be able to use the cage from the 2016 and also the radio, but everything else must be purchased. He actually said that he would like to keep the 2014 for the “detail cruiser” because it has the graphics on the car already. Both the 2014 and 2016 have approximately 100K miles on them.

Esposito said that he might think of waiting a year to purchase a new cruiser, if the 2016 is in good enough shape.

Slavin said that he would think about that.

Board asked Heather Kennedy why her recreation lines were all going up.

Kennedy said that prices are going up and she hasn’t raised her budget numbers in a while. Also, she would like a raise for herself since the job is much more than it was in years past.

Esposito asked what the Town Center Improvements were.

Kennedy said that Karen Drum has donated a full-sized soccer net, and that she added money in the budget to purchase a second net. They will be set up on McCollom Field. She thought that Amherst might be able to use the field along with their fields.

H. Brown explained why this will not happen; need a regulation sized field, and we would have to level it also.

Kennedy said that the “Self-Funding Sports” line is up because of the Crotched Mountain Ski program.

H. Brown asked why the Advertising line was up $200.

Kennedy explained that it was for the Zoom and Lucid Press subscriptions.

Crosby said that he has included the 6% COLA increase in his budget.

Esposito asked about Sand and Salt.

Crosby said that Eastern Minerals went from $49.50/ton to $72.00, and Morton went from $56.01 to $72.60/ton. He also said that tires, gravel, cold patch and culvert pipes have shown considerable increases.

Crosby let the Board know that he has received 3 quotes for replacing our 19-year-old loader. Volvo was the least expensive and the one that he liked the best. The quote was $178,296 minus a $21,000 trade in on our old one. The 5-year lease payments would be $31,459.35. We can put in a conditional order pending Town approval and would get a May-June delivery.

Berry brought up the Streetlight project. We had a vendor that was supposed to install 3 new streetlights and no one managed the project. The wiring was bad on a some of the poles, and Affinity will not be responsible for installing new lights on those poles (14 of them) – Eversource will have to do it. Eversource will be giving us a retro-active rate on the 19 that were installed last March. The cost of the rate change is $1,488, and the cost to install the new lights is $189/pole.

H. Brown asked what the timetable was.

Berry doesn’t know.

Esposito asked if the fact that we belong to an electricity aggregation would have any effect on the rate.

Berry didn’t know. He motioned, seconded by H. Brown to approve $1,488 to be paid to Eversource to get our rate reduced retro-actively back to March. All in favor.

Esposito said that Eversource has asked our permission to cut 2 trees on Brook Road that there was already a public hearing on and 2 trees on Old Wilton that are in immediate danger of falling as they are already dead.

He asked L. Brown to check with the NHMA to see if the Board could make the determination on these 4 trees without having another public hearing.

Board reviewed the minutes of 10/18/21. Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to accept the minutes of October 18, 2021 as written. All in favor.

Board reviewed the non-public minutes of 10/18/21. Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to accept the non-public minutes of October 18, 2021 as written. All in favor.

Berry motioned, seconded by H. Brown to seal the non-public minutes of October 18, 2021. All in favor.

H. Brown asked how much weight the Board puts on the Department Head’s budget numbers.

Esposito said that they like to let the Budget Committee and the Town Meeting decide, but ultimately, it is the Selectmen’s Budget that goes to Town Meeting, so if there is something we feel strongly about, we can change any number we want to. He asked H. Brown if he would like to be the Selectmen’s representative to the Budget Committee this year so he can get a better feel for it.

H. Brown said that he would like to be the rep to the budget committee.

Berry agreed.

Berry wants the Board to consider increasing the Selectmen’s annual stipend amount since we are the lowest in the area.

Brown agreed, saying that being a Selectman should not be looked at as a volunteer position.

**9:10 PM** As there was no further business before the Board, Berry motioned seconded by H. Brown to adjourn.

All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Brown