

## Selectmen's Meeting Minutes January 28, 2019

**7:00 pm** Meeting called to order by Board Chair, John Quinlan. Also in attendance were Selectmen Jack Esposito and Kim Roberge.

Chief Furlong came in to see the Board to make his case for hiring a 4<sup>th</sup> full-time officer at this time. One of the main reasons was to cover scheduling and increase coverage. He understands the budgetary constraints. Mont Vernon hasn't added a full-time position since 2004. Since then there has been an increase of: 12% in population, 127% in arrests, 533% in drug activity, 591% in requests for police information, 1,100% in DWI, 400% in identity theft, 118% in burglar alarms and 88% in calls for service. We are the first town coming north that doesn't have 24-hour coverage, and that is known out there. We have had 5 after hour calls so far this year where the response time has been 50 – 55 minutes. We are having less MV stops; less proactive policing because the steep increase in other areas is taking up time that we are out on the roads. It costs \$32,000 to hire and train an officer, and other towns cannot find anyone to fill spots. Furlong said he wanted to come before the Board to make sure he is heard and everything was fully communicated to the Board. The candidate is already trained and would not need to be on our health insurance.

Roberge: The Board had never discussed adding more coverage. If I had been given the statistics before the budget was presented, I might think differently. Working in Mont Vernon is different than working in Milford or Wilton and maybe there would be another applicant that would be better suited. If we had decided we needed more coverage we would post it and maybe get another applicant that would be better for us. What do other towns our size do?

Furlong: I don't know that, but if I were a resident, I would want a police response of less than 15 minutes, not 55. We should not compare ourselves with other towns, we should figure out what is right for us.

Board reviewed minutes from 1/21. Esposito motioned, seconded by Roberge to accept the minutes as amended. Brown to email the corrected minutes to the Board.

Board reviewed and signed checks and manifest.

The Town Clerk was in at the Selectmen's request to discuss her requested stipend. She was given the choice to go into non-public but declined.

Quinlan: we still have a disagreement between the stipend you asked for and what the Selectboard came up with.

Yeaton handed out a log that she has kept to show what she does during her shift.

Roberge: All I had one page before, I will go over this closely, but;

In 2016 there were 4 elections and 1237 hours were paid to the Clerk and Deputy.

In 2017 there was 1 election and 1387 hours were paid to the Clerk and Deputy. The Town Clerk was paid 177 hours more than the previous year. If you go back to 2015 the combination of both Town Clerks only used 630 hours. I appreciate the hand out and I will go through it, but how can the work not be done in the time we have allotted? The 32 hours sick/vacation coverage-isn't that a wash? Don't you get sick and take vacation? With all the automation of the office, we thought we were making things easier and it is taking you 177 more hours to do it.

Yeaton: I do not take sick days – there is no one to work for me, and yes, I did take a vacation during April break.

Esposito: The times that are different are the regional meeting and the total hours per week – 156 hours total.

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Roberge: I cannot stomach the increase in hours. You were billing for hours in 2016 and 2017 and part of 2018 before we knew it was supposed to be a stipend. I may have no problem adding 8 hours for the regional meeting. Your combination of 30 – 35 hours for election and Town meeting seems off too.

Yeaton: Well there is 8 hours for Town meeting; 3 or 4 for the meeting and another 4 for typing the minutes.

Roberge: What about the other 27 hours?

Esposito: Elections are open 7 – 7, then there is counting, so 7 – 11 plus time for minutes. 20 hours is realistic.

Yeaton: What about absentee ballots?

Roberge: You do that during your shift – you are already counting those hours, now I'm wondering about overlap.

Quinlan: Thank you for coming in – we will go over your handout.

Chairman of the Supervisors of the Checklist, Peter Ecklund and William Sanford, another Supervisor were next on the agenda.

Quinlan: Peter, you are having an issue with keys that involves Belinda? Key access to the Town Clerks office?

Yeaton: I have files that the Supervisors need access to.

Ecklund: I have 3 keys now and that is my fault. We come in at odd times when no one is there.

Esposito: Belinda, what do you envision happening?

Yeaton: They have 2 meetings per year for ½ hour each. He was given a key because it was easier for Jeanette. I will change the locks because I don't know how many keys are out there and who has access to my office.

Esposito: Do you need access other than those 2 meetings?

Ecklund: Yes.

Yeaton: I have a security issue with someone being in the office. I would rather come and let them in, or they can work while we are open.

Quinlan: You would be ok with them in the office without you being there?

Yeaton: Yes, I would lock them in. You won't pay me to sit there while they are in there.

Quinlan: That doesn't make sense, if you are ok with them being there when you are not, what difference does it make if they have a key.

Yeaton: I want to know who is in there and when.

Esposito: Peter, can you let Belinda know when you are in there?

Sanford: The other thing is that we discuss confidential things like party affiliation, birthdates and addresses, so that being there when the Clerk is open is not always best. We are a distraction to each other.

Ecklund: She needs to know who is in there and when?

Quinlan: Yes, it is her office and her purview. Can you do that by phone or email?

Ecklund: Yes.

There was a short discussion between Roberge, Yeaton and Ecklund regarding who checks people in at the School District meeting. It will be the Supervisors of the Checklist.

Ecklund: The Supervisors have 2 laptops that they do not use as we have been using our own to get onto the electionette program. Bill Sanford's laptop has failed, and he would like to purchase one of the unused laptops for himself and using the electionette program. Sanford offered \$100. The board agreed to sell him the older of the two laptops and to give the Highway Director the newer one for keeping inventory and truck maintenance logs on.

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Ecklund: Belinda wants us to submit our time as we work it, we always waited till the end and submitted it all together. This prevents us getting a check for \$7.25 every time we work an hour. We want to be paid like the Fire Department.

Brown said that the office doesn't care, but will speak to Yeaton to see if there is a legitimate reason for the pay-as-you-go stipulation.

Ecklund: I don't know what caused this rift, but I hope we can work together in the future.

Esposito: It's her office, and she feels that security is an issue.

**8:15 PM** Bill McKinney from the FUTB Committee came before the Board to discuss the renovations ahead of us.

Quinlan: A few weeks ago, we started trying to decide where we go next. We all have different viewpoints but we need to come up with a concept of where we go next.

McKinney: There are two recommendations that the architect had:

1. The formation of a Heritage Commission
2. The formation of a building renovations committee to put out RFP's and to find a Construction Management firm. Rolling the project into one we can hire a firm that deals with this type of project and they will manage all of the scheduling for us.

Roberge: Why not look at one project at a time from a taxpayer's point of view, as apposed to disrupting everyone in Town at the same time?

McKinney: How long do you want to drag out the project? Also, if you piecemeal it you get small bits of grants. I would call it one project, phased. That way the contractor knows he is getting both jobs and will bid accordingly.

Roberge: If we could do the two buildings separately it would be better for the taxpayer.

McKinney: Our best guess is that we could fund 2/3 of this project through grants; of the \$3.5 million project the Town may be asked to foot matching grants in the \$1.25 million-dollar range.

Esposito: How long is grant money available to you?

Quinlan: They match the term to the project.

McKinney: Our building official should be a part of the building renovation committee.

Roberge: The Heritage Commission has not met yet; we had discussed meeting when there is a directive from the Selectmen.

McKinney: We have missed the first grant filing period, and will probably miss the second half filing period too. The Heritage Commission should be starting to look for grants, and remember, their purview is more than just this project – we have a farm on the edge of Town that has been on the market for a couple of years. The H.C. needs to come up with a plan as to where their work needs to be directed first.

Roberge: I don't think the H.C. is under the impression that they are the financial arm of this project. I am not sure I am the right Selectman for this commission.

Esposito: In 2020-2021 the library might be looking for \$1 million, how much can we afford? All of a sudden, we will have \$2-\$3 million dollars in bonds.

McKinney: You are probably looking 5 years out for these buildings – we have to have the plan put together.

Quinlan: So, our first big step is to organize a Building Renovation Committee?

McKinney: I would be willing to volunteer for that committee, and it should be small – no more than 5. They would be charged with finding a Construction Management firm.

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- Board reviewed and signed checks and manifest
- Board reviewed and signed a 2-year extension to the MACC Base contract. Wilton and Milford had already signed it.
- Board reviewed and signed an elderly tax deferral.
- Board reviewed a spreadsheet of surrounding towns and what they charge for disposing of certain items at their transfer stations. Board will come back with recommendations for the Town of Mont Vernon for next weeks' meeting.

Brown let the Board know that Highway Director Crosby has been working with Comcast to get another phone line at the Highway garage in order to separate the fire and burglar alarms. Crosby is also getting a quote for adding a line for the transfer station as their Verizon cell phone does not work there.

Quinlan said that his AT&T cell phone works there just fine and that they should pick up a prepaid AT&T phone at Wal\*Mart for emergency use at the transfer station.

Brown asked him to check his service the next time he goes to the transfer station just to be sure before we go out and buy a phone. He agreed.

Roberge: Did legal ever tell us what the next step is for the junk yard people who haven't responded or haven't done any cleanup?

Brown said yes, we have to serve an administrative search order to get the proof of junk, then serve them with a court order to comply.

Roberge: What about the Police Chief's contract and evaluation?

Quinlan: We will have to draw up a new contract. Since we don't see him doing his job every day, the review should be done like they do in the Military: draw up a set of goals for a specific time period like 6 months. After the 6 months passes you evaluate how far he has come against each of the goals.

Roberge: I should convene the Heritage Commission.

Quinlan: Identify things in Town that need preserving. Maintaining the rural character of the Town has always been important to the people of Mont Vernon. I have no problem developing wooded areas; out of sight, but I don't like the development of old farms/farmlands.

**9:10 pm** As there was no further business before the Board, Esposito motioned, seconded by Roberge to adjourn. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laurie Brown