

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes December 16, 2019

7:00 PM Meeting called to order by Selectboard Chairman, John Esposito. Also in attendance were Selectmen Kim Roberge and Tim Berry. Esposito led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Police Chief Furlong came to the Board because he read in the Selectmen's minutes that the Board was not going to support a 4th full-time officer. He was concerned because some figures were used to make their decision that are very misleading.

Berry gave Furlong a copy of the figures developed by Charlie Baker for the Master Plan.

Furlong said that using those numbers without any input from the Police Department is just poor business.

Berry explained that Baker said he got his numbers strictly from the Town Reports.

Furlong said that he hoped that a decision was not being made by Mr. Baker, the Planning Board or a Master Plan that is not complete, and had no input from the PD. The Master Plan of 2000 recommended a 4th full-time officer for the year 2010 and a 5th for 2020. The PD has not added any full-time officers since 2004 while the DPW has added 3. The Crime Report from the NRPC recommends 1.5 officers for every 1000 in population. The 2016 population estimate was 2,602. Furlong went on to list many smaller towns with more officers than we have. He provided statistics on increases in activity and said that he is not able to be out in neighborhoods due to the current need to be in the office handling the cases that come up doing search warrants etc... We are stopping 34% less cars since 2004. We want to be more visible but have to spend too much time in the office. Why do this change now? Because between last year and this year there was a 57% increase in after hour calls. Having another officer will decrease the time that no-one is on by 20 hours per week.

Berry asked if the part-time line would decrease.

Furlong said that it would be possible he does believe.

The cost of hiring the new officer is \$41,359 for the last 6 months of this year. There is the added bonus that he will not need health insurance for at least the next 5 years. This will reduce the current budget by \$14,000.

Esposito says that you never appreciate the police coverage until you need it, but how much can we afford?

Furlong reminded them that he never comes to them with wants – it is always needs. I am looking for a full buy in from the Board.

Berry said that the part-time line will be reduced.

Furlong said that he could do that. A lot of the overlap is in the daytime because that is when school is in session. I would like to keep it the same, but could reduce it by 6hrs per week. I do believe it should stay in.

Esposito said that as scarce as employees are, I would hate to lose him or any of our part-timers due to lack of hours. We will talk it over.

Berry asked Furlong about the girdling of the tree on Brook Road.

Furlong said that the person has been identified, there have been 3 interviews conducted. This is a case of criminal mischief, and he has obtained an attorney.

Berry asked if the tree is on Town property.

Furlong said that it is within the Town right-of-way, but that ownership stays with the land owner. He also said that he has a company coming in to give us an estimate of how much it will cost to have the tree taken down.

Board reviewed and signed checks and manifest.

Board reviewed the minutes of December 9, 2019. Berry motioned, seconded by Roberge to accept the minutes of December 9, 2019 as amended. All in favor.

Board reviewed a note from Joanne Draghetti, Chair of the Conservation Commission. In it she tells the Board that they are going to hire someone to finish the drainage at Carleton Pond and that they are going to pay for it by using unspent portions of several line items in their 2019 operating budget. The Board would like to talk to her or Jay Wilson about this.

Board reviewed a memo from Bill McKinney saying that he was resigning from the Building Renovation Committee.

Roberge said that she was very surprised at this, as he has worked very amicably with all of the Committee members from the start. No-one saw this coming.

Esposito said that the Board voted on May 20th to do the Town Hall first and established the Committee in June.

Roberge explained that 10 years ago the Selectmen put together a Building Committee that eventually became the Future Use of Town Buildings Committee in 2015. That committee worked for 2 years, and in 2017 we received their report. In 2018 we moved to purchase the Library and this June we established the Building Renovation Committee to write the proposal. Roberge said that doing the Town Hall first has been the focus of the Committee since the beginning at the direction of the Selectmen. The Committee was established to write a request for proposal and get a design/build proposed. I don't think that we ever said we weren't looking to the committee to get LCHIP or any other grants.

Esposito said that the Board has been talking about this for 6 months – it's all in the minutes – nothing has been hidden. We will accept his resignation if that is what he really wants.

Berry asked what the Board was going to do about the Chair of the Heritage Commission appointing members when it is only legal for the Board of Selectmen to appoint members to the Heritage Commission.

Esposito asked Brown to send the Chairman of the HC, John Quinlan, a letter explaining that to him and that the members he appointed are not really on the HC until the Selectmen appoint them.

Berry explained that he went to the Heritage Commission meeting and they are hung up on the speed of this project. They did understand that we got two proposals from the four firms that were interviewed.

Esposito said that he would have trouble trying to push for this with only one bid.

Roberge reminded everyone that this is a different kind of project. It is not a built from scratch building – it is just a remodel of the inside of the building. DEW will put each part of the project out to bid. We are hiring a construction management firm.

Berry wants to hire DEW and have a warrant article in March to select an architect.

Roberge said that if she felt we were moving too quickly on this; she wouldn't hesitate putting a stop to it. The Town Hall deserves to be center stage.

Berry said that he wants to make sure we are not spending good money after bad if the warrant article doesn't pass in March.

Esposito offered that they could use \$12,000 from the building maintenance fund this year and get them the \$3,000 balance after the first of the year.

Roberge wants them to all be on board to move forward. We will be getting a "Not to Exceed" number.

Esposito wants to make sure the warrant article is a number that won't leave us short.

Roberge will advise the Library Trustees what the Selectboard decided to back on their proposed 2020 budget.

Board discussed their going to Milford's Board meeting that night. Nothing has really changed with the plan for MACC and they need to coordinate with the Wilton Board to get a 2-year extension on the MACC contract.

9:00 PM As there was no further business before the Board, Berry motioned, seconded by Roberge to adjourn.

All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laurie Brown