

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – December 7, 2016
Whitcomb Hall
Main Street, West Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Selectman W. William Hutwelker III at 6:00 p.m. at Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH. Present were Selectmen W. William Hutwelker III, Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

OTHERS PRESENT

Conservation Commission Chair Wally Smith and member Jane Johnson, Bookkeeper Theresa Louder, and Treasurer Lynda Faulkner, CIPC Chair Steve Bittel and members Don Skiba, Bruce Bohannon, and Glenn Page, Keene State College students, Director of Planning and Community Development Sara Carbonneau, Whitcomb Hall Committee Chair Peter Johnson, and committee members Mike Gomarlo, Gail Wood and Sharon Greatbatch. Recreation Director Ian Fraunfelder and various citizens of the town were also present.

MINUTES

- The regular meeting Minutes of November 30, 2016 were considered. There was a **motion** by Colby to approve the regular Minutes of November 30, 2016. The motion was seconded by Karasinski. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**
- The Non-Public meeting Minutes #1 and #2 of November 30, 2016 were considered. There was a **motion** by Colby to approve the Non-Public meeting Minutes #1 and #2 of November 30, 2016. The motion was seconded by Karasinski. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**
- The Special meeting Minutes of November 21, 2016 were considered. There was a **motion** by Colby to approve the Special Minutes of November 21, 2016. The motion was seconded by Karasinski. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**
- The Non-Public meeting Minutes #1 of November 21, 2016 were considered. There was a **motion** by Colby to approve the Non-Public meeting Minutes #1 of November 21, 2016. The motion was seconded by Karasinski. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Colby to approve the Consent Agenda. There was a second by Karasinski. There was no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

- Payroll Manifest
- Payables Manifest
- Correction to proration of assessment due to unintended fire (Map 24 Lot 54) Pursuant to RSA 76:21 (this is a reduction of the assessed value of \$39,500, resulting in an abatement of \$1,140 in taxes.)
- Personnel Action Reports

PUBLIC INPUT

Mike Gomarlo was present to speak to the Board about a bill that came to the West Swanzey Sidewalk Committee to remove three concrete blocks on Main Street which he felt was outrageously high. He told the Selectmen that he would like to see the actual bill and talk to someone about it. \$6,100 is the approximate amount of the bill. Colby asked and it was confirmed that the total bill is \$6,100, of which one half was agreed to be paid by the Sidewalk Committee. Gomarlo noted the Committee assists with more than sidewalks and also helps the Town out with paving projects. Gomarlo said that the item should be questioned as to why the bill is significantly higher than

original amount. Hutwelker said that Engineer Rob Hitchcock had suggested that the price for making the alteration to the sidewalk might cost as much as \$10,000. Gomarlo said removal of the blocks was needed to provide access to the Stratton Library which should have been in the plan from the beginning. Colby noted that the engineer presented other options for providing access to the library that would have cost less. Gomarlo said that reviewing the details about the bill would be helpful. Branley stated Gomarlo could come to Town Hall to view the bill but noted that the bill has no further detail and Hutwelker said there would be communication with the vendor to itemize the bill in more detail than the Town currently has.

APPOINTMENTS

Recreation Director Ian Fraunfelder – Cheshire Coalition for Tobacco-Free Communities

The Board reviewed sample “No Smoking” signs as proposed to be used for recreational facilities in town. Fraunfelder said he preferred the signs with images of children on the sign. Hutwelker asked where the signs would be placed. Fraunfelder said they would go to Richardson Park, Brown Field and Lane Field. Hutwelker said images that emphasize sports would be preferred. The Board gave their individual preferences for the signs. Fraunfelder passed out the signs to the people in attendance so that they might review them as well. Hutwelker said the Board would have a conversation about the appropriate signs for other Town facilities. Hutwelker asked Pete Johnson to consider “No Smoking” signs for Whitcomb Hall. Fraunfelder noted that the signs will be paid for by Cheshire Coalition for Tobacco-Free Communities and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Bookkeeper Theresa Louder & Treasurer Lynda Faulkner – Update on Town acceptance of Credit Cards / Electronic Payments

Faulkner and Louder met with the Board to update them on work that has been done to acquire the capability to offer credit card payments for Town residents. Hutwelker explained the project to those present in general terms and asked Louder to explain in more detail. Louder spoke about the contracts required in order to accept payments via credit cards. Colby asked about timeframe and the answer from Louder was 6-8 weeks to get request for One Check processed by the State of New Hampshire. Louder suggested that the Town start off with payments for motor vehicle registrations and then add dog licenses and property taxes sequentially rather than a full offering from the start. She asked the Board to confirm that is what they prefer as well. Louder said that she thought it would take 30-60 days to work out the kinks. There was a discussion about having a machine at Town Hall to be used by residents who come into Town Hall to pay a bill from the Town. Branley indicated accepting credit cards at the windows can create a higher incidence of fraud and suggested credit card payments be only an online option. Louder said that the vendor Value Payment Systems carries the liability for fraud. It was determined that debit cards may also be used by the system. Louder said she would prefer to keep the Assessing computer separate. The following timeline was determined: start beginning of February for motor vehicle registrations with payments for dog licenses to be available by April and tax payments by June 2017. Karasinski asked if there were any fees to the Town. Louder said the fees are paid by the person making the payment and not assessed to the Town.

Bookkeeper Theresa Louder – Various Financial Matters

- Carpenter Home Financials were discussed. Louder spoke about Carpenter Home residents on Medicaid and not being reimbursed by Medicaid for services provided to those residents. She said the amount owed for one individual is \$13,000 for 2015. She indicated that with Medicaid residents, there is the possibility of accumulating unpaid debt and asked the Board for an allowance for bad debt. She asked the Board to authorize up to \$20,000. Louder said the funds will be reimbursed through the Carpenter Home Trust and that Trustee Steve Bittel agreed to this process.

Colby **moved** to establish an Allowance for Bad Debts with a minimum provision of \$20,000; write off the 2015 receivable for SR and the portion of the 2016 receivable for SP not eligible for

Medicaid reimbursement as bad debt; and authorize the withdrawal of up to \$20,000 from the 2016 Carpenter Home Expendable Trust account to recoup these costs. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

- **2011 Energy Efficiency Bond** – Louder spoke about \$95,000 in bonding projects approved in the past and which are carried on the books year to year without use. She asked the Board how they want to proceed into the future. She said the recommendation is to spend the money and do a taxable bond. Bittel noted that if the Board wanted to get money for the energy-efficient windows at Whitcomb Hall which replaced poorly insulated windows, proceeds from the Bond could be used and therefore money could be put back into the Whitcomb Hall Expendable Trust. The Board said they would consider the idea.

Capital Improvement Program Committee (CIPC) – Draft Report and 2017-2022 Plan

The Board met with the members of the CIPC to discuss their recommendations. Chair Bittel spoke to the Board about the conclusions of the Committee. He referred the Board to a chart showing the true capital costs to the Town for bond and annual debt service and prior year leases. Bittel spoke about separating out large capital items such as large fire engines from smaller items. He spoke about adding a capital reserve fund for the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBAs) costs. He spoke about level funding for capital improvements. He spoke about future bonding for the Police addition and heavy fire engines like tankers and ladder trucks which would reduce the capital reserves for those items. He said if the Town goes with pay-as-you-go basis than the cost is about \$250,000 per year. By using bonds, it comes out at a much lower cost each year. Bittel noted that the numbers did not assume inflation for future years but now there is a framework that can be used in six year increments.

Smith asked about the recommendation to terminate the Insurance Deductibles account reserve. Bittel said that it has nothing to do with changing deductibles for the Town's insurance plans. Bittel pointed out that there is another account for Document Preservation which was kept, even though it had not been accessed for many years.

Skiba spoke about bonding for expensive items being a smart choice as long as you have an item that will last for 20 years. Bittel said that if you pay-as-you-go, the current taxpayers are paying for use by future residents, while bonding spreads out the costs to future taxpayers as well as current taxpayers. Bittel spoke about interest earned less inflation, and that capital reserves are limited and earn ½ a point in interest. He said anything under \$250,000 should not be bonded, but larger than \$500,000 should be bonded. Branley said a fire engine could be a lease purchase and Bittel said that leases generally don't go more than ten years and the asset would last the Town for twenty years which therefore makes more sense to bond for acquisition.

Karasinski spoke about acquiring police cruisers and Bittel said there is no impact on the tax rate for the cruisers. There was a discussion about which items belong in the operating budget versus belonging under capital improvements budget.

Johnson said the Whitcomb Hall Committee should talk about a potential bond issue for the completion of Whitcomb Hall to make it fully operational. He also thanked the CIPC for including \$15,000 into the their recommendation for Whitcomb Hall Expendable Trust Fund. Johnson said by including funds in the budget the Town demonstrates a commitment to support the building, which is something grant institutions consider when reviewing applications. Greatbatch spoke about the community enthusiasm for Whitcomb Hall, which means it would be a good time to proceed with continuation of the project.

Bohannon said that a bond for this building is premature while Town Hall needs major repairs. He said he did not think it would fly with residents. Gomarlo spoke about the current limitations at Whitcomb Hall which won't be expanded until there is a commitment to support it. Greatbatch also spoke about expanding the capacity of

Whitcomb Hall. Bittel said it would be helpful to see a capital budget to get the work done to complete Whitcomb Hall. Johnson agreed with Bittel and said final figures are being asked of Cheshire Builders for doing all that needs to be done. Greatbatch said there is a preliminary capital budget. Skiba said there needs to be an architectural engineer to flesh out the requirements and costs.

Presentation by Keene State College Geography Seminar Students - "Not your village, nor my village, but our town: A Community Resource Inventory of Swanzey, New Hampshire." The students made their presentation. Recommendations included shuttle program initiative through volunteer services, and enhancing community centers including possibly retrofitting the Swanzey Community House.

OLD BUSINESS

Carpenter Home Analysis from Jack Wozmak – The Board discussed some of the ideas in the report such as cooperation with Southwest Region Planning Commission services. Hutwelker said he appreciated the reference made about the advantage of the Carpenter Home as a "greenhouse" living facility because of its homelike environment, and the need to market these qualities to the public. Carbonneau spoke about the need to redecorate and make safety improvements, which would allow for increasing room rates. McConnell offered to discuss communication with Maplewood administrators.

Administrative Update

- Branley asked whether the Board wanted him to draft the warrant including the recommendations from the CIPC. The Board decided to hold up on a decision for now until they discuss the report.
- Branley said that Dubois & King was consulted regarding the Wilson Pond dams and that there would be a meeting on Friday. Karasinski agreed to attend.

Recognition Dinner

Colby said he spoke with the owners of Pappagallo restaurant and was told they are willing to charge \$20.00 per person for the Town to sponsor a recognition type dinner in January for staff. The charge would include two meal items, plus appetizers and dessert. Colby suggested Branley set a date and expected for 30 to 50 people.

Honey Hill Safe Access

Smith informed the Board that the Conservation Commission approved an expenditure of up to \$6,000 for creating safe access to the Honey Hill trails off State Route 32. A paved entrance would be involved, removal of one large tree, and a small gravel parking space would be created. He said that the total cost could come well under the \$6,000 figure. Bernard volunteered to draft a letter about the project for abutting property owners and deliver the draft to Branley by Monday December 12th. Both Branley and the Board will review the letter and the Board will eventually sign the agreed upon version that will be sent to abutting property owners.

NON-PUBLIC SESSIONS

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3II(b) Hiring of Public Employee(s)

Motion was made by Karasinski to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (b) Hiring of Public Employee(s), seconded by Colby. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. The Board entered nonpublic session at 8:24 p.m. Present was Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

Motion was made by Karasinski to come out of non-public session, seconded by Colby. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. Non-public session ended at 8:26 pm.

Motion was made by Colby to seal the minutes because divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of a person other than a member of this board, seconded by Karasinski. All were in favor and the ***motion passed***.

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3II(a) Personnel Matter(s)

Motion was made by Colby to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Personnel Matter(s), seconded by Karasinski. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. The Board entered nonpublic session at 8:26 p.m. Present was Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

Motion was made by Colby to come out of non-public session, seconded by Karasinski. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. Non-public session ended at 8:28 pm.

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3II(b) Hiring of Public Employee(s)

Motion was made by Karasinski to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (b) Hiring of Public Employee(s), seconded by Colby. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. The Board entered nonpublic session at 8:29 p.m. Present was Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

Motion was made by Karasinski to come out of non-public session, seconded by Colby. All in favor by Roll Call and the ***motion passed***. Non-public session ended at 8:35 pm.

Motion was made by Colby to seal the minutes because divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of a person other than a member of this board, seconded by Karasinski. All were in favor and the ***motion passed***.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Colby. The motion was seconded by Karasinski without further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed***. Adjournment occurred at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary
Approved on December 14, 2016