

Selectmen's Meeting – January 9, 2008

Present were Selectmen Bruce L. Tatro, Nancy L. Carlson and Deborah J. Davis. Also present was Town Administrator Elizabeth Fox.

Chairman Tatro called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Financial Matters. Selectmen reviewed and approved accounts payable and payroll manifests.

Cheshire TV – Agreement to amend the Agreement between the Municipalities of Keene, Marlborough and Swanzey New Hampshire and Cheshire TV. Selectmen reviewed the revised amendment and discussed how it varied from the amendment approved by the board last week. A cap is included on the amount of franchise fee the municipality is entitled to withhold and the requirement that the town be entitled to 2 representatives on the Cheshire TV board has been removed. These changes were requested by Cheshire TV. After discussion, the board voted to rescind its approval granted on 1/2/2008. The board then voted to approve the revised amendment authorizing Chairman Tatro to execute the amendment on behalf of the Town – Attachment #1.

Budget 2008 - Sidewalk Tractor. Selectmen met with DPW Director Lee Dunham discussing his research and visit to RN Johnson with Selectman Tatro. Both agreed that the tractor was a nice piece of equipment but not best suited for maintenance of sidewalks, particularly the style constructed in the West Village. Whether it would be durable in the long term was also a concern. Dunham reported on his discussions with the Walpole Road Agent who utilizes an Aebi sidewalk tractor. Walpole purchased an Aebi sidewalk tractor to replace a John Deere tractor (similar to the one in the RN Johnson quote received by Selectman Carlson from Michael Gomarlo) which they had used to maintain sidewalks for some period of time. Whether the tractor could plow the sidewalks as effectively in a variety of storm conditions was discussed with Dunham expressing concern that it might not under certain conditions be as likely to a job that would satisfy the committee membership. Concern that it would take more time to complete the job was also expressed. Selectmen discussed the options available for Town Meeting and the requirement of disclosing any funding proposals at this evening's hearing. After discussion, Selectmen decided to not include funding as a separate warrant article for replacement of the sidewalk tractor as it appeared more work was necessary to bring the matter to a conclusion that the Selectmen, DPW Director and Sidewalk Committee could support.

Miles of Sidewalks. Selectmen were provided with an inventory of sidewalk miles compiled by DPW Director Lee Dunham. He estimates (using Granite) that the town is responsible for maintaining approximately 4.59 miles of sidewalk in the West Village, 1.97 in the Center area and .4 miles on Monadnock Highway.

Town Meeting 2008 – Petition Warrant Articles. Selectmen were advised that one petition warrant article has been received and it has sufficient signatures for inclusion in the Town Meeting Warrant. It addresses climate change.

Fire Department. Selectmen discussed the proposal to move the fire chief's position to part time and Chief Symond's request to distribute additional stipends from funding remaining available in the 2007 budget. As payroll accounts are closed as of 12/31 to do so from 2007 funds is no longer possible. Status of milestones set out in Symonds MOU was reviewed with board members.

Town of Swanzey Proposed 2008 Budget Hearing. Town Moderator Gus Lerandeanu called to order the public hearing at 7:32 p.m. reading the notice provided. A copy of the budget proposed and default budget distributed to the public present is included as part of these minutes as Attachment #2. Expenditures by category were reviewed. Many of the department budgets are impacted by similar factors including a 53 pay period in 2008 and rising heating and fuel costs. Increases in property and liability insurance premiums (after many years of stable or declining premiums) are also anticipated in July of 2008 and impact several department budgets. Changes in health insurance cost sharing with town employees and premium increases experienced in 2008 were reviewed. Questions from the public were addressed. Ideas to improve compliance by the traveling public with weight limits placed on the town's bridges – particularly the covered ones – were discussed. A query about whether the town should be considering pay per bag to fund costs associated with MSW disposal was addressed by Krisch who outlined the town's history with such proposals. Plans for maintenance of brush and poison ivy near the sidewalks in the West Village were discussed with that work being scheduled for spring. Whether more funds should be put into road reconstruction was discussed. Capital reserve and expendable trust funding proposals were also reviewed. Victoria Barlow addressed queries about the activities of the open space committee and their funding goals. Concerns were expressed by Pat Bauries about the total impact of town, school and county expenditure plans. Revenue projection and sources funding the town's expenditures were reviewed. Whether funding for a sidewalk tractor would be included in the budget as a special warrant article was discussed and after discussion about equipment options, research and investigation of options and costs, Selectmen advised they had deferred inclusion in 2008. The default budget of \$ 5,067,427, and its calculation method, was reviewed. Moderator Lerandeanu closed the public hearing at 9:30 p.m.

Fire Department. Selectmen met with Fire Chief Bob Symonds and Deputy Chief Mick Sanchez discussing status of department personnel relative to obtaining Firefighter I and development of a guideline which provides for a portion of the department's EMTs to be exempt from obtaining firefighter I and allowed to operate at the fire scenes under strict guidelines. Compiling of the certifications and training history of department members has been initiated and records requested from the state.

Non-public session, RSA 91-A:3IIa – Fire Department. Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3IIa at 9:45 p.m. Selectmen came out of non-public session at 9:56 p.m. Selectmen reviewed with Chief

Symonds and Deputy Chief Sanchez a list reporting status of new department hires attaining Firefighter I certification. Selectmen also granted a waiver from the 10 point rule allowing H. Packard an additional year (until October 31, 2008) to comply with the town's minimum point requirement.

Fire Department Station Captain and Fire Prevention Captain Position Descriptions.

Selectmen, Chief Symonds and Chief Sanchez discussed minimum position requirements and how to best move the department to higher levels of training. How to provide for the value of experience and still improve training levels was discussed at length. Development of a "grandfather" clause that would allow for consideration of experience initially but set move candidates toward seeking higher levels of training was discussed and it was agreed that language to provide for some time period to reach higher levels of training should be developed for inclusion in the position descriptions. Staff will work to develop language for the board's consideration at its next meeting.

Correspondence, Permits and Other Matters. Selectmen reviewed and executed the following:

- Intent to Cut, Tax Map 9 Lot 11-3.
- Raffle Permit #2008-1.
- Letter of Appreciation Christian Life Fellowship Church and Election workers.

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Submitted by,

Elizabeth A. Fox
Town Administrator