

## **Selectmen's Meeting – January 11, 2006**

Present were Selectmen Robert A. Beauregard, Deborah J. Davis and Francis W. Faulkner, Jr. Also present was Town Administrator Elizabeth A. Fox.

Chairman Beauregard called to order the board's meeting at 6:10 p.m.

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

**Proposed Budget 2006.** Selectmen reviewed handouts of the proposed budget and default budget.

**Draft Town Meeting 2006 Warrant.** Selectmen reviewed and commented on draft warrant articles prepared to date. Selectmen discussed the fact that a repair number was still pending deciding for the purposes of tonight's budget hearing to move forward with the reconstruction cost included in the VHB report for a timber crib dam.

**Zoning Board of Adjustment.** Selectmen discussed the board's recent decision granting a special exception to allow for a 74 unit condo project and the sewer infrastructure associated with this project and California Brook Estates.

**Public Hearing – Proposed 2006 Budget Hearing.** Town Moderator Gus Lerandeanu called to order the public hearing on the proposed budget reading the notice provided. Everyone around the room introduced themselves. Chairman Beauregard started off the hearing with a review of the budget development process utilized by Selectmen who working with departments put together the budget presented tonight. This year's budget discussions need to begin on the last page of the handout with review of the revenues anticipated. The anticipated revenues, as well as the budget, are up. The tax impact resulting is estimated at 6% or a rate of \$ 3.60. Community growth pressures as well as its impact on town operations were discussed.

The proposed budget – Attachment #1 - was reviewed department by department with Selectmen and staff fielding questions from attendees. Changes to the operating budget due to new programs approved last year as well as leases approved or expiring were reviewed. Health insurance increases were discussed. Fuel and heating costs, which have climbed sharply, were also discussed.

Individual warrant article proposals including the additional police officer proposed in September of 2006 and a daytime fire coverage proposal were reviewed. Police and fire special duty and items in other public safety were reviewed.

DPW budgets were reviewed. Questions regarding fuel costs and whether additional department personnel may be required were raised. Increases in the department's road network and development of a long term road plan were discussed. Future plans due to the anticipated retirement of the sexton were reviewed.

Recycling Center and Sewer Department expenses were reviewed. Expansion of the system to include north impacts the sewer department budget and is offset by expected user fees.

Current census at the Carpenter Home and the anticipation that operating revenue will be sufficient to cover the proposed operating expenses and the staffing plan for 2006 were discussed.

The town's opportunity to consider preservation of the Homestead Woolen Mill Dam and the costs available to date to do so which only provide for complete reconstruction were reviewed. A draft warrant article including the cost for reconstruction was distributed – Attachment #2. The long term and short term issues associated with the dam as well as the long and short term costs and benefits were reviewed. DES has advised that this year's town meeting will provide the town with an opportunity to intervene if it chooses to preserve the dam. If the town is not interested in ownership, then initiation of the plans to remove the dam will be undertaken. If removed the Thompson Covered Bridge pier and abutments will require action in the short term to ensure their stability. If the dam remains then steps to stabilize the bridge underpinning will need to be undertaken within the next 10 years. Well impacts and liability were discussed. Concerns that the town had not taken sufficient steps to alert the public of the fact that the issue of the dam would be considered by voters were expressed. Concerns about methods of advertising and whether larger ads should be placed for town hearings were expressed. Mrs. Bauries requested the town advertise the deliberative session on page 3 of the local paper. Liability for damage to the bridge was discussed.

Daytime coverage and the question whether it should be a priority over fire station facility needs were raised. Numbers of calls within the town which have increased from 560 last year to 760 this year were reviewed. Approximately 500 of these were medical in nature. Daytime response problems associated with a "bedroom community" were discussed.

Capital reserve and expendable trust appropriations requested and plans for several road reclamation projects were reviewed – Attachment #3.

The default budget was distributed and reviewed with those present at the hearing – Attachment #4.

Town Moderator Gus Lerandau closed the public hearing at 9:30 p.m.

Selectmen reconvened their business meeting at 9:45 p.m. discussing options related to the dam and methods to better articulate the issues encompassed in the dam removal or preservation question. Once the board determines how it intends to move forward a campaign to communicate the results of any decision needs to be initiated.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Submitted by,

Elizabeth A. Fox  
Town Administrator