

Selectmen's Meeting – January 12, 2010

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

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Davis at 6:15 p.m.

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

Citizen Concerns. Patricia Bauries advised members that she felt it was important to move quickly to fill the vacancy created on the school board by the resignation of Jane Fortson. That vacancy, combined with the absence of another Swanzezy representative, results in Swanzezy's representation on school matters begin reduced by a third. She expressed interest in serving, but even if not selected reiterated the importance of filling the vacancy quickly.

Thompson Covered Bridge Project. This project, focused on scour countermeasures and the addition of a fire suppression system, went out again for bid on 1/11/2010. A pre-bid meeting will be conducted on 1/21 and bids are due 2/1. Results of the bid process will be available prior to the deliberative session. The current engineer's construction estimate for the project is \$811,000.

Budget 2010. Selectmen discussed the proposed budget scheduled for hearing that evening and notice just received that NHDOT officials were seeking to execute agreements for aerial mapping with communities prior to March 1. Consideration should be given to moving funding for the project to the operating budget due to the state's time line. Board members should disclose at the budget hearing that this move is being considered. An updated draft of the warrant was reviewed. An additional petition warrant article has been submitted related to September 11, 2001.

Economic Revitalization Program. Fox relayed to board members additional contact from DRED regarding establishment of an ERZ in the West Village to include the Homestead Woolen Mill property. Whether it would be prudent to establish 2 zones under this program in the west village was discussed. Selectmen requested consideration of these 2 additional zones be forwarded to EDAC for discussion.

Monadnock Regional School Board Vacancy. Selectmen discussed the vacancy created by the resignation of Jane Fortson approving proceeding to solicit nominations. Board members decided to consider submissions on January 26th forgoing the scheduling of interviews with candidates in order to expedite the process to fill the vacancy. The nominee appointed is likely to serve at 2 or 3 board meetings prior to the March elections.

Letter of Intent – ARRA Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program. Selectmen reviewed a project list which included submission of an application

seeking funding for improvements at the Carpenter Home and Police Station. Selectmen authorized staff to submit a letter of intent due 1/15/2010 to seek funding for energy efficiency projects for the 2 properties.

Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Program with City of Keene. Selectmen voted to authorize staff to execute a letter of commitment to participation in this regional hazardous waste disposal program from July 2010 to June 2011. Estimated cost to participate is \$6,804.

General Assistance. Selectmen were advised of a request for a fair hearing filed by applicant #2009-114. Guidelines provided for the board or designee to serve as fair hearing officer. Selectmen appoint board member Tatro to serve as the fair hearing officer for this appeal.

Non-public session – RSA 91-A:3IIa, Personnel Matters. Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3IIa at 6:50 p.m. Present were Fox and Dunham. Selectmen came out of non-public session at 7:05 p.m. voting by roll call to seal the minutes of the session indefinitely.

Notice of Claim, 64 James Road. Selectmen discussed correspondence received and forwarded to the town's insurer for consideration. Selectmen requested they be kept advised of activity related to it.

Consent Agenda. Selectmen reviewed and approved the following consent agenda items:

- Accepting and expending pursuant to RSA 31:95-b a Welldollars grant of \$4,000.
- Accepting and expending pursuant to RSA 31:95-b a grant award from the Quabbin-to Cardigan Partnership of \$4,400 for eligible transaction expenses related to acquisition of a conservation easement by Monadnock Conservancy – Tippin' Rock Farm, Phase I.
- Accepting and expending pursuant to RSA 31:95-b \$5 in proceeds of DVD sales for the Swanzey Rural Character Project.
- Raffle Permits #2010-1 and #2010-2.
- Approving proceeding to engage Vachon & Clukay to perform the annual audit authorizing the chair to execute documents necessary.

Consideration of minutes of prior meeting. Selectmen reviewed and approved the public and non-public minutes of their meeting of January 5, 2010.

Budget Hearing – 2010 Proposed Town Budget. Town Moderator Gus Leraudeau opened the public hearing at 7:30 p.m. reading the notice provided and reporting on its posting. The proposed budget – Attachment #1 – was reviewed following the format on page 2 and 3 of the handout. Information provided on the handout, and the fact that year end numbers were not yet available as the town was still in the process of closing its books for the fiscal year ending 12/31/2009, was discussed at length. The expended 2009 column reflects expenses for approximately 11/12s of the previous year. The final

expenditure numbers for 2009 are not yet available but it is anticipated that a portion of the 2009 budget will remain unexpended at year end, fall into surplus and be available for reduction of future year's commitments. Once the year is closed, those unexpended funds are no longer available to departments.

The proposed operating budget was reviewed by department. Funding for cost of living wage adjustments for town personnel has not been included in the 2010 although funding pools of up to 1.5% of wages to provide for merit based wage adjustments are a component. A listing of town employee wages was requested with Fox advising that information could be obtained if requested during the business day. Concern was expressed by Mr. Bauries regarding why some portions of general government are requesting similar funding in 2010 when all requested in 2009 had not been expended. Fox advised that much of the funds unexpended in areas such as executive, elections, vital statistics and registrations as well as financial administration were due to staffing changes (and the recruitment process which results in position vacancies for some period). The town's insurance budget and changes adopted (to mitigate the impact on portions of that line item of an initial 16% health premium) increasing employee responsibility for funding premium and modification of prescription benefits were reviewed. Turnover in the Police Department and an officer injury, also a factor in that agency's unexpended 2009 funding, is not expected to occur again in 2010. The SRO expenditures during 2009 were also reduced due to position turn over and the recruitment process. How the funding of that budget, through the school, reduces the burden of the regional high school on Swanzezy's taxpayers was reviewed. Whether contractual arrangements requiring service from new hires trained by the town should be pursued was discussed with Chief Busick advising he would investigate other public safety agencies experiences with such agreements. Fire equipment and apparatus deemed surplus was discussed with Chief Skantze addressing questions about units taken out of service and disposed of during 2008 and 2009. A question regarding whether the budget proposed establishing a town operated ambulance service was addressed with Chief Skantze advising that funding proposed assumed continuation of a contractual service. Emergency management services that areas funding requests were discussed. Revenue offsets, provided by NHOEM due to the town's proximity to Vermont Yankee, were also reviewed. EMD Bohannon advised that the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan had just received approval from FEMA. DPW expenditures proposed in 2010, a decrease in funding to support the Recycling Center (due to a drop in MSW volume), animal control, EDAC and other portion of the operating budget were reviewed and questions addressed.

The budget hearing concluded with review of individual and special articles. Selectmen advised they were considering incorporating the \$13,075 requested for aerial mapping into the operating budget due to the state's project timetable. Chief Skantze reviewed a proposal to replace the department's ALS monitors through a lease agreement. Capital reserve and expendable trust funding requested in 2010 was reviewed. Funds requested in 2010 focus more on operational needs. Road reclamation funding has been reduced to re-direct funding toward the capital reserve fund for town bridges to ensure the town has sufficient funding to meet the state bridge aid match requirements for the Cobble Hill Road and Warmac Road Bridges approved for construction funding in July 2010 and July 2011. Trucks in the Fire Department fleet were discussed. Funding requested for acquisition of conservation easements, the value

of land protected and the potential costs avoided if those parcels had been developed for residential uses was also discussed. The hearing was closed with discussion of a proposal which will be on the warrant to establish a revolving fund for the recycling center designating income from the sale of recyclables toward center improvements.

Moderator Lerandean closed the public hearing at 10:00 p.m.

Selectmen adjourned their meeting at 10:05 p.m.

Submitted by,

Elizabeth A. Fox
Town Administrator