

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire  
**Board of Selectmen**  
Meeting Minutes – November 3, 2012

Present were Selectmen Deborah J. Davis, Nancy L. Carlson, and Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. The meeting was called to order by Chair Deborah Davis at 8:05 a.m. at Swanzey Town Hall. Also present were Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe and Fire Chief Norm Skantze. Others attending later were Police Chief Tom DeAngelis, Public Works Director Lee Dunham, and Town Planner Sara Carbonneau.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Budget Work Session**

**Fire Department.** Fire Chief Norm Skantze went over the proposed 2013 Fire Department budget with the Board. He indicated that the operating budget was up 11% to \$321,795, and all Departmental categories were up 29% to 587,670. Of significance was the Department proposal to increase part-time hours from \$10,000 to \$42,225 to allow for an additional 20 hours per week of administrative and clerical support, as well as added coverage, inspections and EMS coordination. He presented statistics on call volumes and indicated that there had been significant growth and administrative complexity. He stated that, ideally, he would want to see two full-time people on 24 hours per day, and that the Town could consider providing its own ambulance service and increased inspections, but that this would not be realistic at this time. Even with the proposed increase in part-time help he stated that he is unable to guarantee coverage at all times. Also in the operating budget he recommends increasing fire call wages by \$5,000 to \$65,000, reducing protective clothing costs by half to \$10,250, and increasing non-disposable medical equipment costs by \$4,500 to \$9,500 to provide for new AEDs and equipment bags.

Skantze mentioned that the EMS contract is up in July 2013 and he is waiting for new cost figures. He briefly discussed financial opportunities created by the Town providing ambulance service. Colby stated that the Town receives excellent service from its ambulance provider.

For capital expenses, the Department recommended increasing the fire truck reserve expense from \$80,000 to \$150,000. He stated that two pieces of equipment, a 24-year-old engine and the 1978 ladder truck don’t meet current standards. The consensus of the Board was to support the existing \$80,000 figure.

Police Chief Tom DeAngelis entered the meeting at 8:40 a.m.

There was discussion about finding new ways to fund fire equipment. It was the consensus that proposing too high of a capital expense would be detrimental to the rest

of the Department budget. Skantze mentioned that the existing funding strategy would get the Town a used ladder truck.

There was further discussion on personnel expenses.

Skantze left the meeting at 8:45 a.m.

**Police Department.** Chief DeAngelis went over the proposed 2013 Police Department budget with the Board. He stated that the last six months have been very busy for his department as well as departments in surrounding communities, which he indicated was cyclical. . He indicated that the operating budget was up 5% to \$814,590, and all Departmental categories were up 9% to \$930,699. He mentioned that the Department is in good shape with its budget for the current year. The School Resource Officer position is fully integrated into the Town budget due to school funding having been eliminated. This position has helped keep down existing and proposed overtime expenses, which is proposed to decrease BY \$3,000 to \$37,500.

DeAngelis discussed a proposed warrant article for a new vehicle for the Department, mentioning that they have outgrown a three-car rotation. This would be an all-wheel drive crossover vehicle for Department supervisors to cost approximately \$32,000. There was agreement that it is likely that the cost would be a few thousand dollars higher and that the Chief should adjust the article accordingly. The budget calls for a capital reserve allocation of for vehicles of \$7,500.

DeAngelis also discussed a proposed 8.2% increase in the county prosecutor expense of \$4,249 to \$56,109 due to the adoption of a new allocation formula that uses a three-year statistical cycle, which, due to activity spikes in other communities this past year, will help keep the program intact.

Colby left the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

There was discussion about transition in the investigator position. The position is required of the Department and the existing investigator is a civilian and not a certified officer. DeAngelis proposes to backfill the position when it becomes open with an officer. The biggest impact would be an increase in retirement expenses for one-half of the year, which will already be going up dramatically due to recent action of the Legislature.

The Chief recommended a \$4,500 increase in the facilities expendable trust to \$5,000 to address roofing and paving repairs, and a \$2,000 decrease of the information systems expendable trust to \$5,500.

Public Works Director Lee Dunham arrived at 9:25 a.m.

**Accept and expend unanticipated funds per RSA 31:95-b.** Chief DeAngelis provided to the Board a check in the amount of \$500 from C & S Wholesale Grocers with a letter indicating it was to be used “to support education and safety programs for local youth”. DeAngelis requested that the funds be directed to the Swanzey Police Benevolent Association to fulfill the purpose of the gift. **Motion** by Colby to accept the unanticipated funds of \$500 from C & S Wholesale Grocers and to authorize the expenditure of the funds to the Swanzey Police Benevolent Association for use in conformance with the stated purpose of the gift. Second by Carlson, all in favor. **Motion passed.**

### **Budget Work Session (continued)**

**Public Works Department.** Public Works Director Lee Dunham went over the proposed 2013 Public Works budget with the Board. The Highway operating budget is proposed to increase \$13,800 to \$775,325, a change of 1.8%. Overtime expense is reduced by \$2,000, while radio repairs are up by \$1,400 due to needed improvements in the Town-wide radio system. Vehicle repairs are proposed to increase from \$14,000 to \$20,000 as there are costlier repairs to some of the newer trucks, particularly having to do with exhaust systems.

The Cemetery and Parks Maintenance budget is proposed to raise \$550, or .6%, to \$94,645. There was discussion about the funding allocation for the full-time salaries, and the breakdown in hours for part-time salaries.

Regarding street lights, there is no change in the budget from 2012 to 2013. Dunham mentioned that the cost per light to the Town is just under \$10 per month, and that the cost to remove a light is about the same cost as it is to leave it in place for a year. A discussion on street lighting ensued, and it was mentioned that there could be a petitioned Town Meeting article requesting that the Town taking over the street lights of the Eastfield Crossing development.

Costs for dam maintenance and repairs remains unchanged for 2013. There was discussion about removal of the Upper Wilson Pond Dam, as discussed on September 18, 2012, as well as engineering costs, and Dunham was asked to look into how this would be funded.

Regarding equipment, Dunham mentioned that another one-ton truck was scheduled for purchase next year.

Town Planner Sara Carbonneau arrived at 10:20 a.m.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**Proposal for improvements at Cal Ripken League baseball fields.** O'Keefe spoke of some concerns that had been raised by staff about the proposed improvements at the Cal Ripken League baseball fields on South Road, which had been discussed at the previous Board meeting. O'Keefe stated that he had been under the impression that there had been an agreement between the Town and the League for use of the Town land that would set forth rights and obligations of the parties. There was concern expressed for defining maintenance responsibilities, liability matters, field scheduling, costs, building quality and usage, etc. This same set of concerns was discussed by the Board about other Town-owned lands being used by private entities, such as Brown Fields and the Potash Bowl.

There was also question about whether the proposal would be considered a governmental use of property and therefore be exempt from local land use regulations per RSA 674:54. Carbonneau mentioned that the Planning Board was scheduled to meet on this matter on November 8, 2012, and it may be continued pending a Selectboard decision on this question. The potential for increased septic loading and system improvements on the site was raised.

It was mentioned that the League has been using the property baseball for years and that other improvements, such as signs and irrigation, have been made over that time. There was consensus among Board members that the proposal from the Cal Ripken League was premature and that there needs to be an agreement in place that protects all parties and clarifies matters before they proceed.

Regarding Brown Field, it was mentioned by Dunham that the property was donated to the Town in 1962 and that the Town does not pay for lighting the fields.

The Board asked O'Keefe to contact Jonathan Hoden to convey the Town's desire to put the project on hold pending the execution of a usage agreement for the property, and to contact other municipalities to see what types of agreements they may be using in order to move this along.

**Aushuelot Rail Trail project.** There was a brief discussion on the ongoing rail trail project.

Carbonneau left the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

**Inspectors of Elections.** The Board again discussed the need to appoint Inspectors of Elections for the November 6, 2012 General Election, per RSA 658:2, due to the failure of the parties to do this by the October 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. The Board referred to the Voter Checklist and several people were contacted by telephone.

Dunham left the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

Carlson made a ***motion*** to appoint Bill Hutwelker and Liz Colby as Republican Inspectors of Elections, and to deputize the Town Moderator to appoint two Democratic Inspectors of Elections, who will be ratified at a meeting of the Board at 7:00 p.m. on the evening of the election. Davis seconded the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**Tax Rate.** O'Keefe mentioned to the Board the need to further discuss setting the tax rate as soon as possible.

O'Keefe was asked to warn a meeting of the Board for November 6, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. to consider these appointments, and also to discuss setting the tax rate.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

***Motion*** to adjourn by Carlson at 11:30 a.m. Second by Davis, all in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Respectfully Submitted,

Shane O'Keefe  
Town Administrator

Minutes approved: November 13, 2012