

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes – November 13, 2012

CALL TO ORDER

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 6:00 p.m. at Swanzey Town Hall. Also present were Town Administrator Shane O'Keefe and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard. Others attending later were Emergency Management Director Bruce Bohannan.

MINUTES

Regular meetings of October 30, November 3 and 6, 2012 - motion to approve by Colby with minor corrections for November 3rd, and October 30 Minutes, seconded by Carlson, all in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Non-Public meetings of October 9 and 30, 2012 - motion to approve by Colby, seconded by Carlson, all in favor. ***Motion passed.***

NOMINATIONS

Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)– **motion** by Colby to re-appoint Greg Johnson and Art Boufford to the EDAC for three-year terms, Carlson seconded. All in favor. ***Motion passed.***

OLD BUSINESS

Tree Trimming - The Board discussed a letter from Tiffany Mannion dated 10/30/2012 regarding tree trimming on Old Richmond Road in front of her home. It appears that she is looking for additional compensation than what was offered originally. The Town offered to replace a rose bush that was removed and hire an arborist to inspect her trees, and create a policy change for future tree trimming. It was not clear to the Selectmen what Mannion was asking of the Town now. O'Keefe offered to contact her and ask her for specifics as to what she wants. The Selectmen agreed.

Request to acquire Town property – Cobble Hill Road (Map 71, Lot17) - Former owner of property acquired by the Town through Tax Collector's deed on 4/20/2012 wishes to re-purchase the land. A check purported to be from Mary Beckwith was received with a certified letter advising the Selectmen that the \$1500 check is "to cover taxes only". There was no return address on the letter. The Town has indicated to Beckwith that property ownership could be restored to her upon payment of all outstanding property taxes and other charges. O'Keefe recommends that the Town return the check to the bank and then follow through with a calculation of all the taxes and charges due from her in order to retain the property and to inform her of same. The Town prefers a lump-sum purchase. O'Keefe will return the check to the bank asking that it be returned to the customer who initiated it.

NEW BUSINESS

Review 2013 Budget proposal – Recycling Center – Steve Stewart was not able to attend the meeting. Carlson asked about the Assistant Manager position at the Recycling Center. O'Keefe offered that Stewart suggested to him that perhaps it would be best not to elevate anyone to Assistant and just keep a foreman. Colby suggested the Board wait until Stewart is available to discuss. Carlson thinks that the Town should have an Assistant as a back-up to Stewart. Carlson would like to see someone younger get the job and get training to address long-term personnel needs. Stewart to attend the next Board meeting.

Bruce Bohannon joined the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

Review of Change Order request for the Ashuelot Rail Trail project - Bohannon reviewed the rail trail project, in particular part I of phase II. Lee Dunham, Department of Public Works Director, agreed to pay Pat Rawson Construction for the work that they did, which is under budget by \$5,092. Bohannon stated that the work completed thus far has been very good. The final billed amount for work completed is \$39,667.96. **Motion** by Colby to pay in full part I of phase II of rail trail project, seconded by Carlson, all in favor. **Motion passed.** Part II is requiring a change order request for repair of the historic stone box culvert. The Change order request, with Selectmen permission, will extend the contract of \$104,995.00 by an amount not to exceed \$20,000. The Town will be receiving a Recreational grant for \$20,000. Total Adjusted Contract Amount is (not to exceed) \$124,995.00. Bohannon reported that the contractor will start on part II of the project on November 26th. A **motion** to approve the change order request for culvert repair and authorize the Chair to sign on behalf of the Board was made by Carlson, Colby seconded. All in favor. **Motion passed.**

Review 2013 Budget proposal – Emergency Management – Bohannon reviewed the Emergency Management Budget. In the Emergency Management budget he needs two budgets, one for Vermont Yankee, and one for the Town. On March 27th, the Board approved the Vermont Yankee budget of \$26,395 for 2012. That goes to the State of New Hampshire (NH). Bohannon received a letter from the State as to what is approved for reimbursement. The State did not approve \$300 of the budget. Therefore, the balance approved by the State was \$26,095 to add to the Town budget. The Swanzey Emergency Management Budget for Year 2013 shows changes in the requests from the State. The budget is always larger in the years when there are scheduled drills. Bohannon requested that Line item #2 be changed to Drill/Training Salaries, instead of Drill Salaries. Bohannon stated that he is unhappy with the IT provider (Worldwide Tech Support) because they are expensive. They get \$110 per hour. Bohannon's IT budget has increased substantially. The increase in Food line item is because of Vermont Yankee planned exercise. Bohannon elected to keep the Notification System line item in the budget because the State notification is not yet ready. The State will be instituting its version of a Code Red telephone notification system. The Town won't have to pay anything once the state has the system in place, but the system isn't ready yet. An amount of \$2,350 will be returned by Vermont Yankee as a reimbursement. The line item for Training and Meetings, will cover a trip down to Long Island to see what emergency planning did with Hurricane Sandy. Generator Repair went up to \$807.50, covering two generators. Some of the line items will be reimbursed by Vermont Yankee, such as Fuel for Generator. As to the line item for Other expenses –if an unanticipated opportunity to purchase supplies cheaply arises, this funding allows for taking advantage of the opportunity. New Equipment – Bohannon stated that he needs a computer and should have put in more dollars for this. Instead he took out \$1,625 in anticipation of the Board asking him to cut expenses. For Disaster Planning, Bohannon put in \$5,580 to update Swanzey Emergency Operations Plan. The State says it needs to be updated. It hasn't been updated since 2004. A quote of \$6,000 to upgrade plan was given to Bohannon. If the Town gets a grant, the Town can get 50% back, if not the whole thing. Lee Kimble would be able to do the update. Bohannon recommends that the whole town is involved in the plan. Bohannon realized that the line item for Disaster Planning should be \$6,558, not \$5,580. It should be \$6,000 in the budget and under reimbursement column \$580. \$6580 minus \$580, net of \$6000. Bottom line becomes \$24,420 instead of \$23,420. The Radio Upgrades line item is the same as last year. Bohannon doesn't plan on spending it, but if radio breaks he needs money to buy. Biggest change is getting the plan updated. For the next three budget cycles there will be dollars for professional update requested. It is important to keep the plan up-to-date for liability purposes.

Emergency Communications Budget- Bohannon stated that he typically asks for \$5000 but is prepared for the Board to deny that request. Beth Fox, the former Town Administrator, asked for a communications plan. Bohannon asked about the amount of money that is taken out by other departments. He is putting money into the Expendable Trust and Capital Reserve account for matching grants. Last year \$22,500 for Emergency Communications was put into the Expendable Trust and Capital Reserve account of the Town. He wants no department to take out money that they didn't put in. If they need it, it should be in their capital budget. The Town had to change radios for narrow band communications. Bohannon has been putting money away for repeaters for these radios. He has talked to respective department heads about it. Davis suggested that the department heads get together to discuss the situation and come up with some kind of agreement before coming back to the Board. O'Keefe suggested that the budget show the withdrawals for the year. The Capital Reserve and Expendable Trust account was \$5,000 for Emergency Mgmt Facilities & Equipment and they are looking for that same figure this year. Bohannon also said he wants \$22,500 in the Emergency Communications fund again. He noted that the \$4,500 withdrawal came out for the Fire Department. Each department asks for trust funds from which they can draw upon if needed. Other departments may draw against the funds only if an emergency situation. Bohannon suggests that items for purchase shouldn't come out of the trust funds, and instead come out of operations budget.

Bohannon left the meeting at 7:24 p.m.

Review of 2013 Budget Schedule - O'Keefe passed out the schedule of dates. The Board reviewed the schedule. Carlson suggested that they need to know the impact of health insurance costs. O'Keefe is working on a spreadsheet to be able to input insurance percentage increases and show impact on other budget numbers. O'Keefe said the Town will be getting money back this year from the Local Government Center. Carlson said the budget needs to be done before Christmas. O'Keefe reported that the replacement for Assessing Coordinator Victoria Barlow is coming on board December 3rd. The candidate has accepted the offer and all the paperwork is done. It was noted that Victoria Barlow used to do the Town Report. O'Keefe suggested that Barlow might be willing to come in to assist with it this year as well. The Board usually gets letters from social services groups, but they do not appear in person before the Board. A budget is submitted for Recreation and Libraries. The Open Space Committee intends to request \$50K for Land Acquisition Account, but it wasn't in Chairman Jeanne Thieme's letter. In the letter, she only asks for \$5,000 for the Operating budget. Thieme needs to add the Land Acquisition dollars for the request.

Establish 2013 tax payment schedule for the Monadnock Regional School - The Board reviewed the schedules and they were signed by the Board of Selectmen.

Authorize transfer of funds to Town Capital Reserve and Expendable Trust Funds – Motion by Colby to authorize O'Keefe to initiate transfer of the funds as stated in Article 4 of Town Meeting 2012 to Capital Reserve and Expendable Trust Account of the Town of Swanzey, seconded by Carlson. All in favor.
Motion passed.

OTHER MATTERS

Discuss Meet Me on Main Street planning charrette - O'Keefe thought the recent "Meet Me on Main Street" community charrette in west Swanzey went very well. Sara Carbonneau, Town Planner, did a great job in planning for the charrette and many others donated: First Student donated buses, Dunkin Donuts donated donuts, Gomarlo's donated sandwiches. The Board stated that the organizing committee did a great job. The Coordinator from Plan New Hampshire was very pleased with the

turnout of the town. Approximately 50-60 people went on the walking tour and all the sessions were full of residents. All three Selectmen were at the presentation. There is a Whitcomb Hall Committee that will be following up. Carlson suggested that perhaps a "Revitalization Committee" should be focused on the entire project, with other committees focusing on specific aspects of the project. O'Keefe noted that Carbonneau has suggested the "now and then" photos created for the charrette be displayed at Town Hall and kept for historical purposes and eventually placed in the Town museum. Duplicates could be made for others who would like copies. Susan Karalekas - Bridges Inn innkeeper, sent a letter to the Board. She wants the Town to consider the purchase of the AA building that is for sale. The owner said he would negotiate. The owner has apparently dropped the price down to \$69,000 (from \$75,000). O'Keefe suggested that The Town could purchase the property and then convey it with restrictions on how it can be used. Colby suggested that the Open Space Committee could get involved in that property. Colby suggested that the benches donated by a logger for use on conservation easement trails could be donated by the same logger for a riverside park in West Swanzey. Carlson said that some of the land along the east side of the river is owned by Southwest Community Services.

Discuss General Election – Town Moderator Pat Haselton wrote some notes about the election for the Board. These were reviewed by the Board. Some inspectors were noisy and need to be quiet and sit still but not the inspectors chosen by the Board.

The Agenda and Minutes - O'Keefe noted that Board meetings do not necessarily follow the Agenda and that it makes it difficult to keep the Minutes. He asked the Board if it made sense to change the way the Agenda goes. The Board responded that they prefer to keep the Agenda as is even if there are items that are not covered, it serves as a reminder about those items. But the Board also agreed that the Minutes should reflect the meeting as it occurs, not as presented in the Agenda.

Town policy for Emails - Colby suggested that the Town use the Town of Atkinson policy on email as a reference point for adopting a similar plan for Swanzey. O'Keefe will get a copy and do a "cut and paste" to make it refer to Swanzey and will have it ready for review at the next Board meeting.

Credit cards for the Town - Colby raised the issue of Town employee use of credit cards, and mentioned that it needs to be researched further. Colby would like to sit down with Linda Faulkner at Cheshire County Federal Credit Union to discuss having a credit card with just the name "Town of Swanzey" name on it. The Selectmen agreed that Colby will do that. O'Keefe noted that he had contacted several communities about their credit card practices and was awaiting word from a few others in order to give the Board this information.

Town land being used for Recreation - Colby reported that at the last Planning Board meeting, Jon Hoden came in for the Cal Ripken baseball association and presented a request for major changes at the South Road ball-field on land owned by the Town. Colby stated that one awareness that came out of the meeting was a lack of communication between residents and the ball-field use. At the end of the meeting, the abutters said they wanted to see the ball-field continued for use by kids, but they need to see an improvement in communication between them and the Town/Cal Ripken. Davis reported that they had heard complaints before about parking on Mill Lane. Colby reported that Planning Board Chair Glenn Page raised an issue regarding governmental use of land. If this use is a governmental use of the land, then it is not subject to zoning regulations. However, if the use is not considered to be governmental use, then the users of the land are subject to local land use regulations. The concern by the Board is that there is no clear cut answer. O'Keefe suggested that the Town should have a good Usage Agreement for uses of Town land. Davis said there is a concern regarding bathrooms and a cook

shack on the ball-field site and the impact on the well. O'Keefe has a meeting tomorrow with Hoden and Public Works Director Dunham to make sure the bases are covered, not to deny the request for improvement, but to inform Cal Ripken association that the Town has to have agreements regarding use of the land and improvements made on it. Colby suggested that that should extend to other uses on Town property like Brown Field. O'Keefe is waiting to hear from other communities for Usage Agreements. Davis reported that the field used to be primitive and now there is much more there so it is a concern. It is a work in progress.

Keys to Town Hall - Colby reported a disconcerting situation regarding locking the door to the building after the Open Space Committee meeting on Wednesday, November 7th. Chairman, Jeanne Thieme could not at first find her key to the front door to lock it, but it was eventually found. In focusing on the door and looking for the key, Colby discovered he had left paperwork at Town Hall and had no way to retrieve that paperwork since Thieme had left. As a Selectman, he is requesting a key for Town Hall. Carlson and Davis agreed that Colby should have keys. O'Keefe will get Colby a key.

Tax Reports – O'Keefe mentioned that Victoria Barlow had assisted at Town Hall today and she finished the work on tax reports to allow for preparation of tax bills. She may have to do some additional work to get bills out so that the bills are out by November 21 with payments due December 27. Since it takes 5 days from readiness of bills to mailing, O'Keefe needs the Board to be ready to sign the warrant reflecting the tax rate by Thursday. **Motion** by Colby for Board to sign tax collectors warrant when available, seconded by Carlson. All in favor. **Motion passed.**

Recommendation for Former Employee of Town - Davis will handle recommendation request for former employee.

Invitations from Pilgrim Pines were distributed to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT- **motion** by Carlson to adjourn, Colby seconded. All in favor. **Motion passed.**
Adjournment at 8:45p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary