

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – December 30, 2014
Swanzey Town Hall, 620 Old Homestead Highway, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER

Present were Selectmen W. William Hutwelker III, Deborah J. Davis, and Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. The meeting was called to order by Chair Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. at 6:03 p.m. at the Swanzey Town Hall. Also present were Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

OTHERS PRESENT

Whitcomb Hall Committee members Nancy Carlson and Director of Planning and Community Development Sara Carbonneau, Fire Chief Norm Skantze, Resident Bruce Bohannon, State Representative Ben Tilton, and Interim Carpenter Home Administrator Judy Bohannon

MINUTES

- The regular meeting Minutes of December 23, 2014 were considered. There was a **motion** by Davis to accept the regular meeting minutes of December 23, 2014 with a correction to the spelling of Deborah Davis’ first name. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The Non-Public meeting Minutes #1 of December 23, 2014 were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to accept the Non-Public meeting Minutes #1 of December 23, 2014. The motion was seconded by Davis with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The Non-Public meeting Minutes #2 of December 23, 2014 were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to accept the Non-Public meeting Minutes #2 of December 23, 2014. The motion was seconded by Davis with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Selectmen reviewed and approved accounts payable and payroll manifests.

OLD BUSINESS

Pilgrim Pines Tax Settlement Agreement - East Coast Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church of America, Incorporated

O’Keefe updated the Board stating that the attorneys for the respective parties have crafted an amendment to the agreement previously approved by the Board on June 16, 2004, that calls for the property owner to pay taxes based on 66% of its taxable value (same as for the years 2004 through 2013), and that the agreement shall extend to the end of the 2023 tax year. He noted that representatives of the **East Coast Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church of America, Inc.** have executed the agreement, and asked the Board to consider approval of the agreement at this time. The Board agreed to do so.

Davis **moved** to enter into and execute a tax settlement agreement amendment with the East Coast Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church of America, Inc. regarding properties operated as Pilgrim Pines and Camp Squanto, such being an amendment to the agreement previously approved by the Board on June 16, 2004 to be extended to the 2023 tax year. There was a second to the motion by Hutwelker and no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Whitcomb Hall Renovation budget request

Carlson and Carbonneau spoke to the Board about a request for funding for Whitcomb Hall renovation. Carlson said the plan is to finish the first floor and once that is open the second floor can be worked on using funds from renting the first floor. The Whitcomb Hall Committee is requesting \$50,000 in the 2015 budget for renovations and \$1,500 for operating expenses, the former being through proposed funding of the Whitcomb Hall Rehabilitation Expendable Trust Fund, and the latter through the general fund. Carbonneau spoke about the options for an elevator, which is best to be done on the outside of the building. Carlson and Carbonneau explained that the first floor will take about \$70,000 to finish the renovation, which includes an estimate from Cheshire Builders for handicapped access for bathrooms and handicapped ramp and electrical and light fixtures. They would also add wiring for the front offices. A Recreation Director might use this space according to Carbonneau. While Cheshire Builders did not provide an estimate for a renovated heating system, \$70,000 is total for Cheshire Builders AND the heating system.

Carbonneau said the major expense for renovating the second floor will be the elevator and fire suppression system. Carbonneau noted that the townspeople are supporting the renovation of Whitcomb Hall by attending fund raising events and making donations.

Hutwelker asked for a projected opening date and Carlson said the earliest date would be in 2016. Carlson mentioned that the Committee considered getting help from a professional fund raiser, but they would take 50% of the proceeds. The Committee decided against obtaining a professional fund raiser.

Discussion occurred about putting the requested \$50,000 into a separate Warrant Article. Hutwelker said he would like to see some shuffling done within the Capital Reserve and Expendable Trust Accounts. The request for operational expenses of \$1,500 was discussed. The Board agreed to make budget line WH Miscellaneous Expenses a total of \$1,500.

There was a brief discussion about the new business sign for the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. Carbonneau and Carlson left the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Bond Vote Process – Proposed Safford Drive fire station

O'Keefe discussed scheduling matters and a draft Bond Hearing Notice. Chief Skantze was present to update the Board on his efforts thus far in informing townspeople about the proposed bond.

The draft of the Public Hearing Notice was provided by O'Keefe, and he said it was forwarded to bond counsel and to Steve Bittel who is Chair for the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC). O'Keefe said that the dollar amount needs to be placed into the Notice. O'Keefe suggested \$4.5 million. O'Keefe noted that approximately \$300,000 for the architect will come from an existing capital reserve account.

There was a discussion about equipping and furnishing the proposed fire station and whether or not equipment and furnishings are included in the \$4.5 million. O'Keefe noted the preliminary estimate should come with everything needed for the Fire Station. Skantze also said it was his impression that \$4.5 million was the top estimate covering everything needed for the station. O'Keefe said what is required is a preliminary estimate for the Notice of Public Hearing and the figure could be less once final figures are in. Colby stressed the importance of including everything into the figure.

The Board agreed to use the \$4.5 million number for the Notice of Public Hearing. Hutwelker said that he is concerned that the Notices be published in a timely fashion (postings are proposed for Swanzey Town Hall, Swanzey Post Office, West Swanzey Post Office, Swanzey Recycling Center, Swanzey Town Website, and the Keene Sentinel newspaper.) The notices must be done by January 5, 2015 according to O'Keefe. There was a discussion about publishing by January 2, 2015. O'Keefe said he would contact the Keene Sentinel as soon as possible and agreed to inform the Board as to when the Keene Sentinel can publish the Notice.

Skantze updated the Board regarding his efforts to inform fire personnel and townspeople of the status of the proposed Fire Station. He said he is planning a focus group meeting January 5, 2015 at the Central Fire Station to review the proposed Fire Station plans. Skantze said the Board of Selectmen and the Capital Improvements Program Committee (CIP) members have been invited to attend along with Fire Department personnel. Skantze passed out a list of townspeople that will be invited to attend future focus groups and an invitation to the presentation and discussion.

Skantze recommended Dave Bergeron from Brickstone Land Use Consultants LLC be invited to speak about the land that is proposed to be used for the Fire Station. He suggested that Bergeron could also attend the Public Hearing and the Deliberative Session. Skantze showed the Board materials he has gathered to present to the public. The second focus group is scheduled for Saturday the 10th Of January, and the third on Thursday the 29th of January, 2015. Skantze suggested that different folks be present to respond to questions that address different aspects of the proposal. Hutwelker mentioned including Conservation Committee member Wally Smith in focus groups.

There was a brief discussion about a two-story building versus a one-story building and the costs associated with each.

Emergency Services

Skantze presented some estimates to the Board regarding ambulance costs and revenue generated by same. Also, he conveyed some ideas about the costs of vehicles for ambulance services and spoke about grants that might be available. Skantze left the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

West Swanzey park fence

There was a brief discussion regarding the new fence at the new park on Main Street in West Swanzey.

Discuss 2015 Budget

O'Keefe presented to the Board the 11th draft of the 2015 Town Budget at the meeting. O'Keefe noted that the proposed operating budget and the estimated net appropriation would be 0.7% higher than for 2014. There was a brief discussion about training for employees with a budget proposed of \$1,000. It was noted that Full-time Code Enforcement has been included in the Land Use Board proposed funding.

O'Keefe also discussed with the Board capital reserve/expendable trust funding, and projected revenues. The Board was also asked to consider employee compensation adjustments; the Social Security Cost of Living Increase is 1.7% for 2015, up from 1.5% in 2014. A discussion occurred about using 3% for combined Cost of Living and merit increases as determined by Department Heads. The Board agreed on 3%.

O'Keefe raised the issue of 37.5 hours per week versus 40 hours per week for Town Hall employees and the impact on the budget. Colby suggested holding off on consideration for changing weekly hours until the next Board meeting so that financial impact details can be presented and considered.

Bohannon suggested that taxpayers will want to know if there is a change in employee contribution to insurance plans. O'Keefe said that the contribution percentage remains the same, the premium rate increase is minimal, and the budgeted amount is down for 2015.

It was noted that there is a substantial increase in the cost of Worker's Compensation (39%), which O'Keefe mentioned reflected several claims over the past couple of years. Hutwelker raised a question about Land Use Boards Professional Services Applications.

Bruce Bohannon left the meeting at 7:31 p.m. as did Tilton and Skantze.

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3II(b) Hiring of a Public Employees(s)

Motion by Hutwelker to enter Non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3II(b) Hiring of a Public Employee(s). The motion was seconded by Davis. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into non-public session at 7:33 p.m. **Motion passed.** Present were the Board members Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., Deborah J. Davis, W. William Hutwelker, III, Town Administrator Shane O'Keefe, Interim Carpenter Home Administrator Judy Bohannon and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

Motion was made by Davis to leave non-public session and return to public session. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker, with all in favor. **Motion passed.** Non-public session ended at 7:55 p.m.

Motion was made by Davis to seal the minutes of the non-public session. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to seal the minutes. **Motion passed.**

Carpenter Home Discussion regarding Interim Healthcare

After a brief discussion, the Board agreed by roll call to terminate the contract with Interim Healthcare due to lack of need for temporary employees now at the Carpenter Home and to authorize the Town Administrator to write a letter of termination and thank them for their services. Bohannon left the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3II(b) Hiring of Public Employee(s)

Motion by Hutwelker to enter Non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3II(b) Personnel Hiring of Public Employee(s) . The motion was seconded by Davis. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into nonpublic session at 7:59 p.m. **Motion passed.** Present were the Board members Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., Deborah J. Davis, W. William Hutwelker, III, Town Administrator Shane O'Keefe and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

Motion was made by Hutwelker to leave non-public session and return to public session. The motion was seconded by Davis, with all in favor. **Motion passed.** Non-public session ended at 8:02 p.m.

Motion was made by Hutwelker to seal the minutes of the non-public session. The motion was seconded by Davis. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to seal the minutes. **Motion passed.**

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Hutwelker, second by Davis, and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

- Personnel Allocation Posting memo

In addition to items discussed as part of the agenda, the Board received the following documents:

- Letter from Town Attorney, dated December 23, 2014, regarding election of Library Trustees.
- Appraisal Report of Utility Properties as of April 1, 2014, prepared by George E. Sansoucy, P.E., LLC.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Davis, second by Hutwelker. No further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.** Adjournment occurred at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary

Approved on January 6, 2015