

Present: Dorianne Almann, Bruce Bellville, Michael Carrier (arrived 6:55 pm), Joe Conroy, Selectmen's Rep Jay Ebbighausen, John Hartnett, James MacDonell, Lewis Major (arrived 6:43 pm), Peter Zavorotny. Excused: Morris Klein, Tina McCosker.

Mr. Zavorotny called the meeting to order at 6:34pm, noted the committee had minutes to accept, and asked for a motion. A motion to accept the minutes of meeting 639 as written was made by Mr. Bellville, seconded by Mr. Conroy, and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Zavorotny said the committee had “a stack of stuff from the Town.” He noted that department heads will be at upcoming meetings, specifically:

- Monday, November 24; Selectmen's meeting, 6:30pm
Jay Matuszewski discusses the Fire Department budget followed by Frank Podlenski discusses the Highway and Transfer Station budget.
- Tuesday, December 2, Town Hall, 6:30pm
School Board, Parks and Recreation Committee, and Community Center Program Director and Seasons program Director discuss maintenance to the soccer field (near Rt. 119), the Community Center budget, and summer programs.
- Monday, December 8; Selectmen's meeting, 6:30pm
Police Chief Todd Faulkner, Dennis Nadeau, and Robert Johnson discuss budgets for the Police Department, Water, and Sewer budgets, respectively.

Mr. Zavorotny said committee members are welcome to attend and encouraged them to do so.

He noted there's been a change to the tentative schedule members set up for joint meetings with Selectmen: There will be no meeting December 8; the December 15 will be held.

Moving the discussion to the budgets provided by TA Jill Collins, Mr. Zavorotny asked the committee how members wanted to address the information: Did they want to take action and tentatively approve the budgets before them or hold off?

Mr. MacDonell's suggestion to handle the easier budgets was favorably received by the committee, so discussion began.

Revaluation of Property

Mr. Zavorotny said the amount looks the same as last year and is a “normal quarterly cyclical review.” Mr. Bellville asked about billing for the service, “Is it pay as you go or do we pay on a quarterly basis?” Mr. Ebbighausen replied it's pay as you go—the town pays as the bills arrive. Mr. Zavorotny asked if there was additional discussion on this budget. Hearing none, he asked the committee to look at the budget for Planning and Zoning.

Planning and Zoning

Mr. Ebbighausen said he would ask TA Collins to provide a summary that gives a high level look. He noted the Selectmen had tentatively suggested a 2.2% salary increase for municipal employees; this increase matched that of the school's.

Mr. Bellville remarked that the biggest change is that the Master Plan is almost completed, so that cost is out.

Government Buildings

Mr. Ebbighausen said, "We've talked about putting something around the roof of the Town Hall for years to hold the snow." Mr. Conroy asked if this is a good idea. Mr. Bellville noted weather shield can't be installed under a slate roof. Mr. Major said that putting up a fence as needed to keep people away might be the simplest solution.

Mr. Ebbighausen said insurance in Planning and Zoning has a 10% cap.

Hearing no more discussion, Mr. Zavorotny had the committee discuss the Fire Department's budget.

Fire Department

The selectmen haven't finished their work on this budget; Chief Matuszewski is slated to meet with them on November 24, so the committee moved to the next budget in their packet.

Building Inspector

Mr. Zavorotny said the salary increase looks far more than 2.2%. Mr. Ebbighausen said he would have the numbers checked. Mr. Zavorotny said the work week is 30 hours; Mr. Bellville replied that is the building inspector's normal hours and that he gets help from the custodian.

Highway Department

The selectmen haven't finished their work on this budget; Mr. Podlenski discusses the Highway Department's budget on November 24, so the committee moved to the next budget in their packet.

Solid Waste Collection

The number is the same as last year's, Mr. Zavorotny said. He asked if the contract for trash pickup is a multi-year contract. Mr. Ebbighausen replied it's a three year contract.

Transfer Station

Mr. Zavorotny commented that the selectmen haven't finished their work on this budget; Mr. Podlenski discusses the Transfer Station's budget on November 24. Mr. Bellville observed that hazardous waste has "gone up considerably." He told the committee that when he brings material to Keene during hazardous waste collection, he's never been asked for the name of his town.

Health

The only change to this department's budget is the salary, Mr. Zavorotny told the committee.

Welfare

Mr. Zavorotny remarked, "Times being what they are, they did well to stick within the budget." Mr. Ebbighausen said the department is looking to increase 1-1/2 hours/week. The committee agreed that Darlene Leonard is doing a good job.

Culture & Recreation: Patriotic Purposes

The money in this budget is spent on buying flags for soldier's graves and for the town during holidays.

With all the budgets discussed, Mr. Zavorotny asked the committee how they wanted to handle the budgets. It was decided to hold off action until all budgets had been reviewed.

Mr. Zavorotny encouraged members to look at the budgets that will be discussed at Monday night's Selectmen's meeting and to attend.

Mr. Ebbighausen spoke up, saying parks & rec is being reconstituted with the ending of a 10 year grant. When the grant ended, funding was year-to-year. Mr. Bellville noted that this "pitted community against community." Mr. Ebbighausen told the committee that with the ending of the grant, the department is "looking at the town to absorb \$8,000." Mr. Zavorotny noted, "That's the killer with grants"—what do you do when the grant ends? Mr. Bellville said the school "must've taken a big hit" when the grant ended. Mr. Ebbighausen said the school was able to find the money.

Mr. Hartnett said the school is returning about \$600,000 to the town and about \$200,000 is coming from the town. Mr. Ebbighausen said the amount from the town would be somewhat less as the Department of Revenue Administration requires a 5% cap to be set aside for catastrophes. Mr. Hartnett continued, asking if there was something the town needs to which the money could be directed. "It's already been collected. Instead of lowering taxes by \$10, maybe lower it by \$5."

Mr. Ebbighausen said that the "department heads are told to keep a tight rein on expenditures, then at the end of the year, they have a tidy amount left over." Mr. Zavorotny said that money wasn't spent for the fire escape or the roof. Mr. Bellville said that the \$200,000 that wasn't spent will "go back into the General Fund or to taxpayers." Mr. Zavorotny said "we want to be careful that taxes don't spike."

Mr. MacDonell noted that in terms of Vernon Dam, money is being put aside for Public Service of New Hampshire. Mr. Hartnett said he read an article about the City of Brattleboro renting out land for a solar array. The contract Brattleboro negotiated means the City is getting their energy for free. Mr. Ebbighausen spoke up, saying this is net metering. He went on to describe what Andrew Keller from NhSolarGarden presented to the Zoning Board of Adjustment on November 13, 2014.

About a year ago New Hampshire's governor signed Group Net Metering into law. It took about six months after that for projects to be developed. Following development of interim rules in January 2014 people associated with solar farm projects began to talk to towns around the state.

Community solar gardens are built at one central location and the energy is shared with community participants. The concept is similar to that of a club--you have to join.

Participants get a discount. Developers look for an anchor—one customer with significant demands for energy.

This led several committee members to describe alternate energy generators in the area. Mr. Hartnett said that “between here and Worcester, there are lots of solar arrays.” There’s a huge solar array in Northfield, MA. Mr. MacDonell said Templeton has a wind turbine. Mr. Conroy said a family member works for Vermont Electric Power Company; there’s “so much solar and wind energy coming out.” The issue is distribution—who is paying for the infrastructure? Mr. Bellville said the current situation related to solar arrays is “beneficial to home owners and small business owners.” Mr. MacDonell told the committee that the Planning Board is setting up a sub-committee to develop a solar array ordinance. He said the process should be fairly simple to develop the ordinance—the ZBA has solar array ordinances from several towns the use as reference. If the array will be set up on the ground, the thought is to have the developer go through the site plan process; if the array is to be mounted on a roof, a building permit should be sufficient.

Mr. Conroy told the committee that solar is being built into roads. Ms. Almann said that the world's first road capable of turning sunlight into energy opened for traffic in the Netherlands. Mr. Hartnett said that Germany generates 100 watts of solar energy/person. The US, 23.

Mr. Zavorotny asked the committee if there was anything more they wanted to discuss. He reminded members about the upcoming meetings next week.

The police station garage was mentioned. Mr. Conroy said that he gave TA Collins a booklet on pre-fab buildings. They are far less expensive than a building built via a bid, he said. He said that people voting for the new police department at Town Meeting “didn’t understand they were voting on a concept.” Mr. Bellville said people thought they were voting on a building *and* a garage. Mr. Ebbighausen said that footings for the new police station are expected to be poured November. 20

With nothing more to be discussed, Mr. Zavorotny asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Conroy made such a motion, was seconded by Mr. Bellville, and the meeting adjourned at 7:19pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorianne Almann
Secretary