

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 16, 2019 at SAU – Workshop with School Board

Present: Chairman Darcy, Selectmen Diorio, Rideout, Kondrat and Carrier. Kim Worden was present. T.A. Collins was excused.

School Board Members Holly Kennedy, Sean Leary, Jeana Woodbury, Kaylah Hemlow, and James O'Malley were present. Superintendent Wayne Woolridge and Ann Diorio also attended.

6:00 p.m. Chairman Darcy called the meeting to order and indicated that the Select Board's only item of business is that the Tax Collector requested that they look over the contract with an independent contractor for doing title searches as has been done in the past. This is the same contractor as used previously. Discussion followed. The Tax Collector indicated that she did a good job last year and didn't change her rate. Selectman Diorio made a **motion** to sign the contract, based on the Tax Collector's recommendation, second by Rideout. Motion passes unanimously.

Holly Kennedy informed everyone that this was a joint meeting, intended to be quarterly or so, for the budget process. Sean Leary stated that they would like to try and figure out Selectmen's wishes and directives to their departments. Chair Darcy noted that packets were sent to Department Heads. Information will then go to Jill and a budget packet will get put together for the Select Board. When the Board receives that, they will look to setting the tax rate. Discussion included that the hopes are the rate will be set in November. Budget timelines and working together were discussed.

Sean asked about unassigned fund balance and whether there were any guesses. The hope is to be able to get back to having a 5% unassigned fund balance. The guess is right about or just under 5%. We hold 5% and the rest goes toward paying down the tax rate.

Chair Darcy indicated that employees were told to figure in (up to) 3% merit to put into their budget. COLA is at 1.9%. School figures discussed were 3.15% for coming year teacher contracts and 5% for paras. Administration has not yet been discussed. Discussion included that Selectmen go first this year for Town Meeting.

There was discussion on the possibility of collaborating on a Budget Forum with Select Board and School Board.

Selectman Rideout indicated that he will probably suggest and push the issue of cuts in all budgets.

Selectman Kondrat liked the forum idea and joint effort.

Sean Leary felt it makes sense to share notes, and work together as money is coming out of the same pocket. It shows unified effort.

Chair Darcy asked if there were any updates of goings on at state level. Superintendent Woolridge noted that the governor indicated that he is in support of the original budget and by Friday we should have an idea. There are obstacles but overall the revenue side looks good.

Chair Darcy noted that as far as new growth, there is nothing up and running before April 1st, therefore nothing to improve the tax situation. There was discussion of concerns that potential developers and contractors' have for development in town. It was mentioned that Bridge end date is now at 2023.

Selectman Rideout mentioned contact from a developer regarding utilities in town.

Different possibilities for growth were discussed and it was pointed out that there will be no money from new growth in the next two budgets. It was noted that the solar farm recently signed extensions on their options. Sean questioned

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when they are due to give updates. There was discussion on the former track property and Walmart's deed restrictions. Superintendent Woolridge noted the funding lawsuit that went the Supreme Court recently where Hinsdale is a beneficiary but this is a lengthy process.

Selectman Diorio heard from a resident recently questioning the 1% tax in Brattleboro and whether we could do something similar. Discussion followed. The Tax Collector indicated that a similar bill was defeated enabling a town to have that option.

Kaylah Hemlow discussed her welcome basket idea (a resource for information to new-to-town families) and status. There is question on where the funding will come from. Suggestions and ideas were given including getting together with the Community Development Director and Sean Leary on their notes from Sunday's planning session. Also suggested were establishing a non-profit in order to do fundraising.

Selectman Diorio attended *Picnic in the Park* on Sunday. He felt there were really good thoughts and discussion. He thought it would have been nice to see the Town Administrator, Program Director, and Highway Superintendent there. It was not well attended with about seven public members, however the area basketball players joined them and added ideas and useful information. It was indicated that Kathryn Lynch, Community Development Coordinator, may be getting on the Agenda to discuss the event.

All agreed, after discussion, that the solution on School Street is enforcement. The Board would like to see the Police Chief again to discuss enforcement on School Street.

It was agreed that Selectman Diorio and Selectman Kondrat will be the Selectmen Representatives and Kaylah Hemlow and Holly Kennedy will be the School Board Representatives for organizing and coordinating a joint forum. The forum will be in late January, around 1/29. At that time another joint meeting will be scheduled.

Workshop ended.

7:04 p.m. Selectman Diorio made a **motion** to adjourn, second by Carrier. Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim P. Worden
Secretary