

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 22, 2021 meeting held at Hinsdale Town Hall Community Room

Present: Chairman Steve Diorio, Selectman Bernie Rideout, Selectman Mike Carrier, and Selectman Richard Johnson; Town Administrator Collins and Kim Worden. Bob Truesdell, Rick Carrier, Sarah Hudon, Bob Johnson, and Chief Rataj also attended. The Budget Committee joined the meeting at 6:30.

6:00 p.m. Chair Diorio called the meeting to order.

Selectman Carrier made a **motion to approve** the manifests of 11/22/2021; and public and non-public minutes of 11/15/21 second by Rideout. The vote is as follows: Diorio-aye; Rideout-aye; Carrier-aye; Johnson-aye; Motion passes unanimously.

New Business:

None.

T.A. Reports/Requests:

T.A. Collins reported that she had an update and the tax breakdown and the tax rate was lowered to \$32.65. Following a question from Selectman Carrier and discussion, Selectman Johnson made a **motion to approve** the Tax Collector Warrants, second by Rideout. Motion passes unanimously.

T.A. Collins indicated that she had a Purchase and Sale Agreement re: Tessier. Selectman Carrier made a **motion for the Chair to sign** the P & S re: Tessier, second by Rideout. Motion passes unanimously.

T.A. Collins read a letter addressed to Peter Stamnas re: the beacon near Runnings. Selectman Rideout **made a motion** for the Board to sign the letter, second by Carrier. Motion passes unanimously.

T.A. Collins presented the ad for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent position. Discussion followed with clarifications and explanations. Chair Diorio suggested changes, specifically in removing the word "incumbent" and stating the *range* in salary. Chair Diorio asked about specific places to advertise, as well as MRI, including the Boston Globe, Springfield Union, Burlington Free Press, and Berkshire Eagle. T.A. Collins will make those changes and advertise.

T.A. Collins advised that she had a tentative hiring for non-public.

6:14 p.m. Selectman Rideout **made a motion to enter into non-public session** under RSA 91: A-3, II, (b)- hiring, second by Carrier. The vote was as follows: Carrier-aye; Diorio-aye; Johnson-aye; and Rideout-aye. Motion passes unanimously.

6:18 p.m. regular meeting reconvened.

Selectman Carrier **made a motion to seal the minutes**, second by Rideout. The vote was as follows: Carrier-aye; Diorio-aye; Johnson-aye; and Rideout-aye. Motion passes unanimously.

Richard Barry was present with his nephew and introduced himself as having a construction company in town. His nephew, Dan, is a senior and has worked for him. As part of ELO program, they came up with an idea for putting the dugouts in the baseball field and donating them to the Town. T.A. Collins explained that the Board would need to approve this. Selectman Rideout **made a motion to approve** the plan so that Mr. Barry can go forward with the donation, second by Johnson. Motion passes unanimously.

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Board Comments:

Selectman Johnson discussed guidance for Jill on the split position with the School for a Human Resources position. This person would report to the Chair of the Board. Jill expressed her concerns: that the T.A. currently has oversight of employees and evaluations; the Town Managers she has reached out to, in most cases, oversee the H.R. person; the H.R. person would only be in Town Hall one day per week; and the expense. She mentioned that she spoke with John Ratigan. The School Board and Selectmen have previously discussed this and would like to move forward. T.A. Collins expressed that it is micro-managing and not a good idea. Chair Diorio felt it would ideally free up some of her time and it was fact-finding and informational at this point. Selectman Johnson asked if she reached out to the Municipal Association. She reached out to other Town Managers. Selectman Johnson noted that he appreciated her input.

Selectman Carrier attended the Planning Board Meeting. The Library Trustees Meeting was held and they finalized the Librarian and Assistant Librarian job responsibilities.

Chair Diorio mentioned there was a Budget Meeting last week where there were some initial questions and some were answered.

Citizen Comments:

Rick Carrier indicated that he would like to hold his comment until after the Budget Committee.

[6:30 Budget Committee joined the meeting and Budget Committee was called to order]

Robert Johnson, Wastewater Treatment Plan Supervisor was present for questions and discussion.

Bob mentioned that the equipment is getting older and needs attention. He has tried to hold the line on everything as was asked. Chair Diorio asked if he had a Wish List. Bob responded that a ton of things need to be done. He is waiting for grant money and hoping it will be coming down the line with the infrastructure funds in order to not cost the users a lot of money. Selectman Rideout asked him to provide a list and Bob responded that he will do that. Ken Howe asked what has been done to consider lowering the bottom line. Bob explained energy efficient items done in the last few years and that he has tried to save but there is no where to cut. He spoke of a recent incident/unexpected issue with a \$6000 cost that had not been budgeted for.

Chair Diorio suggested that they don't TA (tentatively approve) budgets tonight since they haven't discussed any of them as a group. Jill suggested the two committees go through the Budgets and discuss and they can TA the beginning of January. It was agreed that the next joint meeting will take place on **January 3rd at 6:30**.

Sarah Hudon was present for her Budgets (**Summer Program, Pool, Community Events, and Community Center**).

The budget is down nearly \$6400.

Karen Johnson asked about camp and pool salaries and noted checking in Vernon, Winchester, Brattleboro and Keene and felt that we are overpaying for a 6-week program. Sarah responded all were short-staffed and some tried to lure our staffers. Richard Johnson added that a pay rate should be for that position, not person. He thinks we need to get away from the mindset of rate of pay for the person in these instances – 6 weeks in the summertime. He also didn't agree with the cost of living increases for these positions. Jill explained that we do have a job rate for the position.

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Selectman Rideout agreed, but felt we need to be competitive. Chair Diorio feels there should be a change from year to year if we expect to get Lifeguards back. Lindsay Blake added that she doesn't agree with COLA. Karen also asked about the \$20 flat rate for Water Aerobics and why that person didn't receive COLA. Jill responded that she did. Sarah discussed the Pool Budget being down \$1100 from last year. She explained that Lifeguard I and Lifeguard II are both under \$15 and you can find any job for \$15 now.

Sarah discussed **Community Events**. She explained that when she started a percentage of her salary (20%) came out of that budget but there was a shift due to doing various jobs and salary is now placed in other areas. Seasonal Sports Director is in this Budget. Karen asked if another job description had been done. Jill responded that it has not.

Community Center budget was discussed. There was a jump regarding salary (since not in Community Events) and telephone was up in order to having access to cable/internet/phone which has been a great improvement with an example given to the recent vaccination clinic held there. Selectman Johnson asked who the Assistant Program Director was last year. Sarah explained using Community Center hours and Welfare hours where she and Colleen split up coverage and make it work. Selectman Johnson asked about previous Welfare Salary being budgeted and spent and a concern. Jill will look into this and see what can be done. Following Ken Howe's question on what has been done to lower the bottom line, Sarah explained that they haven't been able to do regular programs, she tries to be really mindful and frugal of ways to save (giving examples), and to stay on top of issues.

Chief Rataj explained that he went through each line item and looked at where to cut and what he didn't need and the end result was \$28,000 less than last year. Health care was a big reduction. Salaries from two years ago are down as he has turned attention to completely new people. The incentive program is up \$2000. There are no major changes in overtime, though that is hard to predict. Retirement is down \$3000. He explained Uniforms being up (7 new full-time people). There is no increase for telephone and computers this year. They will use grants for computer upgrade. Cruiser repairs are down \$2000. Discussion on cruiser repairs and rotation followed. Chief Rataj indicated that knowing it may take a year and a half, he may plan a request for a Charger sooner. Gasoline has restored to \$11,000. Cruiser supplies discussed are up \$1000. Crossing Guard line was trimmed by \$500 and discussed. Building repairs and maintenance increased by \$1000. Animal Control was lowered to \$22,000. The Chief was thanked and Chair Diorio appreciated the detail and felt the budget looked good.

T.A. Collins mentioned that next week Jack White, Water Superintendent, Terry Zavorotny, Fire Chief, and Bob Truesdell, Highway Superintendent will discuss their budgets.

Rick Carrier, the Board, and Jill had discussion on his comments and inquiry concerning the shared Human Resource Position, when it was discussed and what RSA the Board went under. Holly noted it was mentioned in a joint School Board and Select Board Meeting.

[7:52 p.m. Budget Committee adjourned.] Jill commented on a question from last week that painting for parks was lowered and not in the Budget this year (Parks maintenance). She also added that she did some cutting in Emergency Management.

7:55 p.m. Selectman Rideout made a **motion to adjourn**, second by Carrier. Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim P. Worden
Secretary