

## Minutes of the Selectmen's Meeting January 12, 2021

Members present: Scott Young, Chairman and Bryant Scott, Brian Monahan

Also in attendance: Building Inspector David Copeland, Fire Chief Scott Whitehouse, Deputy Chief Davis Hartranft, Jim Andersen

Scheduled Appointments: 6:00 Fire Chief Scott Whitehouse

The business portion of the meeting was called to order at 5:35PM. Bills and payroll were reviewed and approved for payment. Balances in the Capital Reserve Funds and TD Bank accounts were reviewed and noted for budgeting purposes.

### **APPOINTMENTS**

6:03 - Fire Chief Scott Whitehouse and Deputy Chief David Hartranft.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Fire and Rescue Department's proposed 2021 budget and warrant article requests. Board members had previously reviewed his submitted budget and expressed their appreciation for the fiscally responsible budget they put forth; insurance, dispatch and NH Retirement System impacted his budget with increases beyond his control.

The discussion moved onto staffing with Board members asking about the progress on the goal of 24/7 coverage and if recent pay increases were leading to the retention that was hoped for. Chief Whitehouse and DC Hartranft spoke positively about the current per diem staff and are encouraged with the retention they are seeing. Moving forward, the 2 chiefs would like to see the per diem and on call wage lines in the budget combined into one salary line and eventually 2 per diem EMTs on through the nighttime hours. The Selectmen explained to the 2 chiefs that they are waiting to see the Town Budget as a whole before they make any decisions about wage increases of any kind.

The discussion proceeded to warrant article requests.

- As in past years there will be requests for ambulance equipment and supplies to be funded by the Ambulance Fund with no tax impact to property owners. Also from the Ambulance Fund will be a request for the second payment on the new ambulance (no tax impact to property owners). In 2020, the Selectmen cut in half nearly all CRF requests from all departments.
- With the new Crown Point Station nearing completion and no longer needing funding, this year Chief Whitehouse would like to focus on a new fire engine with a \$100,000 appropriation to that CRF, with another such appropriation to follow in 2022.
- The Chief would like to add \$5000 to the Dry Hydrant CRF and begin working on the fire pond across from the school. They discussed future fire pond projects.

The Emergency Management budget will continue to accommodate additional expenses due to the Covid situation. The Fire Department will apply for an AFG grant for radios. Mr. Scott suggested there is funding through an Emergency Management Grant.

The Budget discussion ended with some thoughts about future and long term capital improvement plans.

Moving from budget considerations, the Selectmen discussed with Chief Whitehouse 2 concerns raised by residents. The first was a question raised by Eric Almanzan about the protocol for the use of department personnel and equipment outside of their assigned jobs. A few examples were cited in an email that is attached as an addendum to the minutes at Mr. Almanzan's request. The Selectmen discussed the incidents with Chief Whitehouse and were satisfied with his responses. In several cases Chief Whitehouse saw the incidents as both training for his staff in the use of pumping equipment as well as public service to the community; he stressed that, at all times, the EMS personnel and equipment were/are prepared to respond should an emergency arise. Requests for their service outside of delineated responsibilities are addressed as time, personnel and equipment allow. A question was raised about the use of personnel for the hanging and removal of flags on telephone poles in Town. The project for hanging the flags originated as a Coe-Brown senior project. At that time, the Selectmen charged Chief Whitehouse, along with his department, with the care and custody of the flags. Over the years, more flags have been displayed around Town and the Fire Department members have faithfully cared for them in addition to their regular duties. The Selectmen's Office will respond to Mr. Almanzan suggesting he contact Chief Whitehouse if he has further questions.

A second situation was discussed with Chief Whitehouse about a business in Canaan Road area of Town involving heavy truck traffic. The Chief was aware of the situation and had already spoken with the owner. The Planning Board will be sending a letter to the resident/owner of the business to address zoning concerns.

### **CONTINUING BUSINESS**

Several matters pertaining to the Recycling Center were discussed. Jim Andersen was in attendance to report that Compactor 1, which belongs to Waste Management, broke last weekend. They (WM) are searching for a new motor to make the repair as soon as possible. An open container will be used in its place until the repair is made in an attempt to minimize any inconvenience to residents. Compactor 2 is still operational. Residents will be alerted of this situation via the Town website and the Community Facebook page. The Selectmen reviewed a draft of proposed changes in the Recycling Center fees and the current Town Ordinances pertaining to the Recycling Center. A Public Hearing will be held to amend the ordinance that restricts the acceptance of construction material. Following that, the Selectmen will amend the Recycling Center fee schedule addressing all fees and adding fees for disposal of construction material and large loads.

The upcoming Budget Hearing and Town Meeting are revisited at each meeting with new information and guidance from the State being considered. The Selectmen discussed a virtual option for the Budget Hearing, but voted to continue moving forward at this point with plans for an in person Budget Hearing on February 9<sup>th</sup> at the Town Hall.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Building Inspector David Copeland spoke with Board members about his concerns about one of the new zoning articles being proposed. He believes the proposed article pertaining to permeability exceeds the State's requirements and will put undo restrictions on all lots less than an acre. Relief

from the ordinance may be sought through the ZBA, but that involves expense he believes to be unnecessary.

The Selectmen reviewed an email from a resident who was concerned about a worsening situation on Canaan Road involving a large volume of trash and a house in disrepair. The public health aspect was of particular concern. The Selectmen will ask Chief Whitehouse to look into it as the Town's Health Officer.

With no further business to address, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:26PM.

#### ADDENDUM

**From:** Eric Almanzan <eriatc@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 09, 2021 2:40 PM  
**To:** Ellen White  
**Subject:** Fire department resources

Hello Select Board,

Over the summer, somebody posted on the town facebook page, thanking the fire department, for watering their horses all summer. Just today, I became aware that the fire department was filling an ice skating rink, for a resident. I have also heard reports that multiple department members place and remove flags from telephone poles. When asked to participate in trunk or treat at the school this past year, their answer of "no" involved not being able to tie up department vehicles and personnel, should an emergency arise.

I would like to know what, if any, protocol does the department use, for determining what is an appropriate use of public funds, equipment, and manpower.

I would like this email entered into the minutes of the next selectmen meeting.

Thank you,

Eric Almanzan