

## Minutes of the Selectmen's Minutes December 27, 2017

Members Present: Lynn Sweet, Chairman, Bryant Scott and Scott Young

In attendance: Fire Chief Scott Whitehouse, Deputy Chief Dave Hartranft, Steve Johnson

The Selectmen's Meeting was called to order at 5:24PM.

The Selectmen reviewed bills and approved payment. Correspondence was reviewed and signed. Board members requested an appointment slip be prepared making Jean Chartrand a regular ZBA member effective January 1, 2018.

The Selectmen had a lengthy discussion with Chief Whitehouse, David Hartranft, and Steve Johnson about the Fire and Rescue Department's proposed budget and Warrant Article requests. Chief Whitehouse shared well prepared historical data concerning the frequency and timing of EMS calls for the past 3 years in support of the department's budget request to fund 24/7 EMS coverage in Town. The plan employs per diem coverage, with a rate increase from the current per diem rate. With the current rate, the department is unable to attract EMTs, and an additional 6 EMTs, who are firefighter and EMT certified, will be needed. While supportive of the idea in general, Board members suggested several alternatives, perhaps less costly approaches including a multi-year phase in of the plan. Currently EMS calls after 4pm are handled by available "on call" staff and/or mutual aid. The discussion continued about department priorities along with general operations and staffing of the Fire Department. Payment for ambulance calls through insurance and Medicaid was discussed along with some thoughts about how this 24/7 coverage proposal might be funded outside the regular budget. The Board reviewed the other budget items. They discussed the cost of the dispatching service, and Chief Whitehouse explained its benefits for Strafford's department over other dispatching services.

The Fire Department Warrant Article requests which address the capital improvement plans for the department were discussed. Suggestions were made for implementing them over several years. The necessity of a dock for the Fire Department boat was discussed and, for the short term, the need will be met by some maintenance to the shared dock currently used.

Chief Whitehouse will attend the January 9<sup>th</sup> work session at 5:30 to discuss changes to his budget/warrant article requests based on this meeting.

The Department is anticipating a controlled burn on January 13<sup>th</sup> on Wingate Road.

The Selectmen briefly discussed several other items before adjourning. Guidelines for putting projects out to bid along with Selectmen of the same approval was addressed and will be the subject for further discussion in the upcoming year. The Selectmen reviewed the status of two situations being handled by the Town attorney. The meeting with a representative from the State Dam Bureau to discuss the lease on the dam area has been postponed until spring.

Charlie Burnham, Trustee of the Trust Fund, will attend the January 9<sup>th</sup> meeting at 5:00 to discuss the status of the trust funds.

There being no further business to transact, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:04PM.