

ASHLAND BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 19, 2015

Call to Order

Chairman DeWolfe called the Board of Selectmen (Board) meeting to order at 7 PM.

Roll Call

Members present – Jeanette I. Stewart, Fran Newton, Norm DeWolfe, Philip Preston, Steve Felton

Others Present – TA Paul Branscombe, Clerk Pat Tucker, members of the public

Chairman DeWolfe called for remembrance of Martin Luther King Day and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Preparation for SB2 Deliberative Session

Moderator Bobbi Hoerter and Assistant Moderator Sandra Coleman met with the Board to prepare for the January 31 Deliberative Session. The warrant was reviewed and Board members selected which article they would speak about. Moderator Hoerter has made a few modifications to her rules of procedure which will be given out to those attending the session.

**Action – TA Branscombe will call DRA Michelle Clark regarding Article 3**

Default Budget Revision

The Board completed the task of revising the default budget in order to best comply with the intent of the description of how the default budget is to be arrived at. Finance Officer Brenda Paquette took the figures back to the office to recalculate.

It was noted that the Water and Sewer Default budgets were revised – water now \$217,692 and sewer \$314,422.

Brenda presented new default figure totaling \$6,202,044 (Breakdown - Town \$2,567,158; Electric \$3,102,772; Sewer \$314,422; Water \$217,692). It was noted that Attorney Steven Whitley let the Board know that the default budget could be changed after the Budget Hearing.

Discussion ensued regarding the use of an “escape clause” when leasing vehicles or equipment. **No action was taken at this time.**

Signing of Warrant

The Board signed the warrant subject to correction on Article 4 and spelling correction on Article 17.

Town Administrator Update – Paul Branscombe

- Scott Heath has not responded to Board’s request for amending the agreement; Chief Heath will talk with Fire Marshall’s Office
- Moo Corners Bridge – received letter from Conservation Commission asking if Wetlands Permit had been submitted; Mr. Graton was not aware that a permit was needed but will check with the state to see if an after the fact permit is needed.
- Booster Club door has been winterized.
- GIS Mapping – contract for Michelle Roberts was signed and pilot project is ongoing
- CCS Sharepoint Program – on CCS agenda to move forward
- Morris Camper – we have petitioned the court to seek the monies that we have from the sale of the camper in order to pay the bills and the taxes

- Town Office Weatherproofing – evaluation done; after budget passes the project has to be completed by March 30. 35% will be rebated
- Priority Table – this will be renamed and is in the process of being updated
- Town Report – on target for publishing
- Voter’s Guide 2015 – will be available January 26

Health Insurance Comparisons

TA Branscombe referred to the Health Insurance Memo previously sent to the Board; discussed by the Board; **Action – Board wants TA to move forward with research.**

Union Negotiations – Next Step

This item was on the agenda to discuss setting up a timeline; one year contract offered after the team met at the utility office; union did not accept offer; Selectman Stewart asked if the negotiating team had held a meeting; answer was yes it was held at the Utility Office and no minutes were taken; *no action was taken following discussion with members of the Board and Neil Smith.*

Modification of Bargaining Unit

Town received a Notice of Modification to add a position (Administrative Assistant) to the bargaining unit. If this is not contested the labor board will act within 4-6 weeks. The Board needs to respond by January 26, 2015.

DRA Educational Visit

Our state auditor Michelle Clark is willing to talk about the process, but would not be able to do so until sometime this summer. It was discussed that perhaps we could host a meeting with a few towns that also have Michelle as their auditor.

Salary Scale for Non Union Employees/Positions

TA provided memo with comparisons; discussed; **action – Board asked TA to use salaries from towns of similar size and region.**

Temporary Recording for Board of Selectmen Meetings

Pat Tucker will do this for four months.

Health Insurance for Retirees – Letter from Ashland Resident

Receipt of letter was acknowledged; Selectman Stewart asked the Board to reconsider their action of having any new retirees pay 10% toward their insurance; this was discussed and **no further action was taken on the request to reconsider.**

Ray Burton Legacy Dinner – notice of this dinner was received

Spending Freeze

Board discussed and felt that the department heads be allowed to handle their budgets without a “spending freeze”.

Board of Selectmen Specific Objectives for Town Administrator

TA Branscombe presented his list of objectives as discussed by the Board; further review will be done by the Board.

Board of Selectmen Meeting with Department Heads – January 28 at 8:30 AM – Fire Station

Citizen's Complaints

Bobi Bigelow expressed concern regarding the use of “jake brakes” in the middle of the night; Chief Randall followed up with an email to her; TA Branscombe will contact the NHDOT District Office to let them know that someone is using them

Ron Boyce expressed several concerns about Tim Paquette and the Public Works Department; following discussion - **action will be to have TA Branscombe respond to the concerns in a letter to be reviewed by the Board before sending.**

Selectmen's Items

- Gordon McCormack has resigned from the Planning Board and Conservation Commission
- Letter from NHDOT regarding “safety funding” – this was referred to Police Chief Randall
- Announced that “Meet the Candidates” will be February 12 – 7PM – School Cafeteria

Motion to adjourn at 10:02 PM – Newton; second – Felton; vote 5-0 in favor

**Taken by Patricia Tucker**