

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – JANUARY 25, 2022
MEETING MINUTES
TOWN HALL

Meeting called to order at 7:00PM. Present were First Selectman Don Stein and Selectmen Ray Pech and Nick Lukiwsky.

DELEGATIONS: No delegations were present.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments were made.

MOTION: On a motion by Ray Pech, seconded by Nick Lukiwsky, and passed unanimously, the minutes of the January 13, 2022, Special Meeting and the January 18, 2021, Special Meeting were approved.

No tax refunds were received from the Tax Collector.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen reviewed the latest data on Covid-19 and noted that the infection rate is slowly dropping and that the percentage of folks in town was increasing, but slowly, especially in the elementary school-age population and with folks in their 30's to mid-40's. The schools are still seeing many cases, and whole families are being infected, but there is some optimism about the severity of cases and the trend towards lower rates. The town will continue to monitor the numbers and evaluate any changes to policies (masking, vaccination, etc.), as appropriate.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen discussed the budget process for the FY22/23 budgets (capital and General Government). The Board of Finance will review all of the budgets at their meeting on March 15 in preparation for the April 6 Annual Budget Hearing. They will set the budgets at that meeting for the town vote at the Annual Budget Meeting on May 3.

Don Stein indicated that he had met with Rich Novak to discuss the highway department budgets, including getting a replacement schedule for trucks, whether there was a need for security cameras at the highway garage, final pricing for the requested truck washer, and also an updated list of paving priorities. Rich will also look at the budget items in his area to reconcile the year-to-year variations that we see in the various line items in an effort to make those lines more accurate. One major area of concern is the cost of eliminating dangerous trees in town. Nick Lukiwsky asked if cutting trees for public safety is eligible for ARPA funding, so Don took the action to investigate if this activity qualified under the new rules.

Don Stein also indicated that he has requested budgets from all of the town hall

departments and will be meeting with them to discuss their requests. In addition, he will be looking at the use of ARPA funds to supplement town funds in an effort to make the best use of this money.

Relative to capital, the town has put two funds in place in the capital plan, one for repaving the town hall and school parking lots, and one for truck replacement. Don also took the action to find out if any of that money could be spent now, and therefore be qualified for the application of ARPA funds. The Senior Center parking lot is on the list for the coming year and that project could be done under ARPA. The School is re-evaluating their capital budgets and both sets of information will be discussed at the upcoming Capital Committee meeting.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen reviewed the spreadsheet that had been presented and reviewed by the ARPA committee and the Board of Finance.

On a motion by Ray Pech, seconded by Nick Lukiwsky, and passed unanimously, the following two projects were approved: the request from the Pleasant Valley Methodist Church for \$15,000 to help them recover from lost revenue due to the pandemic; and \$4,700 for installation of equipment to make the two restrooms in the Town Hall accessible to someone with a walker or a wheelchair.

Other discussions centered on a request for \$1,000-\$2,000 from the local Girl Scouts, consideration of a refurbishment of the Senior Center garage, which has a great deal of rot and needs a new garage door, windows and siding, and the sharing of a part-time Economic Development consultant being hired by Winsted. This was deferred pending a scope of work and costs for the consultant which will be developed after discussions with Winsted. The question was also raised as to whether ARPA funds could be used for the tree work in light of the public safety hazards being created by the dying ash trees due to the Emerald Ash Borer.

The Economic Development Director concept was endorsed by the EDC and the Selectmen also thought it would be worth trying out for a year to determine if it was beneficial.

The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be the regular meeting of February 22. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald S. Stein
First Selectman