

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – FEBRUARY 28, 2023
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
BARKHAMSTED TOWN HALL

Meeting called to order at 7:02 PM. Present were First Selectman Don Stein and Selectmen Ray Pech and Nick Lukiwsky. Also present was Ted Shafer, Economic Development Consultant.

DELEGATIONS: No delegations were present.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments were made.

MOTION: Ray Pech made a motion, seconded by Nick Lukiwsky, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting held January 13, 2023.

MOTION: A motion was made by Nick Lukiwsky, seconded by Ray Pech, and passed unanimously to approve the following Tax Refunds:

Allen Boratko	\$205.89	Credit
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DISCUSSION: The Selectmen reviewed preliminary capital and General Government budgets for FY2023/2024 as presented and discussed at the Board of Finance meeting on February 21. With some adjustments for inputs from outside agencies, the General Government increase is 6.87%. Included in this figure are salary increases of 3.2% for employees plus step increases for the two newer union employees, an increase in pensions due to their eligibility for pension contributions after 1 year of service, and increased hours for the Receivables Clerk/Assistant Town Treasurer and the Building Official. Both of these are based on additional work load requirements. Also included is a line item for the part-time Economic Development Director shared with Winsted (\$13,200). This position, which has been funded by ARPA for the past 9 months was discussed with the BOF and a final decision on continuation will be made at the BOS meeting on March 14, when the General Government budget needs to be voted on by the Selectmen for referral to the BOF.

The proposed budget reflects the increase in cost for heating oil (\$3.20 per gallon) and diesel (\$3.40) and the annual usage. The Emergency Management line was decreased as there is a \$5,000 grant available when the Town updates its Emergency Operations Plan. New Hartford Volunteer Ambulance asked for a significant increase in their allocation due to their need to hire paid staff vs. volunteers, and the ever-increasing cost for these essential workers. Computer expense may be a reduced a small amount based on input from PC Wizard, the IT service provider. Other line items were adjusted based on reviewing the past couple of years of activity and the Liability Insurance showed a significant increase due to the inclusion of cybersecurity insurance, as necessitated by the problems occurring in many places.

A road plan will be prepared by the Highway Foreman and that will form the basis for a decision on whether to increase the road maintenance line items due to the increase in cost of paving. School budgets are not yet known, but the cost of the loans for the Town Garage and the school roof/solar has gone down slightly as the principle has decreased.

No changes were made to the Capital budget since the last meeting.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen reviewed the Economic Development Consultant position with Ted Shafer, but did not vote on whether to include it in next year's budget. That vote will be part of the budget approval to be done at the next Selectmen's meeting on March 14. Ted had provided a summary of the 9 months he worked under ARPA funding and provided a list of goals and objectives for the position if it is retained by the Town. At their Economic Development Commission earlier in March, the EDC voted to keep the position in the budget, and the Board of Finance discussed it, but did not come to a decision. They were waiting to see how the budgets added up at their meeting on March 21.

Highlights of the discussion are as follow:

- Ted had previously been First Selectman in Burlington and is currently acting as the part-time Economic Development Director in Winsted
- His goal is to get the business community more connected to the town and he feels that his visits are accomplishing that goal. Part of this activity is also to build loyalty to the town with the emphasis on business retention.
- He has been working on regional events and is interested in building collaboration between the two towns, including multi-town grants
- He is also working with the Conservation Commission to help the Town get certification in Sustainable CT, which is a positive step for the town and which can provide grants to the town for projects that promote conservation, green projects and economic development
- He is also working with business owners to fill the empty commercial spaces in Town, including the pending move by Tractor Supply.

The Selectmen will review the submitted goals and objectives and discuss them at the next meeting and also vote on the budget for this position.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald S. Stein
First Selectman