

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – March 10, 2020, MEETING MINUTES:

Meeting called to order at 7:02 PM. Present were First Selectman Don Stein and Selectmen Ray Pech and Nick Lukiwsky.

DELEGATIONS: No delegations were present.

Hidden Heroes Presentation – This item was not discussed as Kim Brown was unable to attend the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments were made.

MOTION: A motion was made by, Ray Pech seconded by Nick Lukiwsky, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2020, meeting.

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

\$ 879.94	Bruce VanBerkum	credit
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DISCUSSION: The Selectmen reviewed the budget actuals through February 29, 2020, which represents 2/3 of the fiscal year. As with prior months, the budget is tracking with normal expenditures except in the Town Counsel line item due to on-going lawsuits. Once Town Aid Road and Local Capital Improvement funds are transferred into the Highway Department budget lines, that department's expenditures will also be in line with their allocation. As mentioned previously, the cost of the Resident State Trooper will be less than budgeted and the Town will likely not pay towards Stanclift Cove due to their large budget surplus. It is expected that the overall General Government budget will come in within the amount budgeted.

DISCUSSION: Don Stein presented a second draft of the FY '20/'21 General Government budget. The budget includes a 2.5% pay increase for the employees (plus step increases for employees who have not achieved the top step), a 6% increase in the cost of health insurance, and a 0% increase in the cost of dental insurance. Department and agency budgets are included either as presented or modified in discussion with the department head. The cost of the elections is up since it is a presidential year and it is expected that there will be a very large turnout. Additional funds have been allocated for tree work in Town due to the large number of dead or decaying, dangerous trees and there is funding in the budget for painting the exterior of the Town Hall. Due to the large surplus maintained by Stanclift Cove, the Selectmen opted to reduce the allocation for the Cove. In addition, an email was received from the

State defining the projected cost for the Resident State Trooper, so that figure was incorporated. Nick Lukiwsky suggested that we increase the allocation for Emergency Management to \$2,000 due to the uncertainty being created to the Corona virus.

MOTION: A motion was made by, Ray Pech seconded by Nick Lukiwsky, and passed unanimously to approve a General Government budget of \$ 2,207,690 or a 1.89% increase to the Board of Finance for their consideration and approval.

MOTION: A motion was made by Nick Lukiwsky, seconded by Ray Pech, and passed unanimously to authorize the First Selectman to enter into a contract with CivicLift to develop a new town website at an annual cost of \$2,000. This website will have all of the capabilities of the current website hosted and designed by CivicPlus (no relationship), and will be about \$700 cheaper per year. The design of the website will take place this year with a \$1,000 down payment the second payment of \$1,000 will be due when the website goes live, probably around July 1. This will save \$1,700 in the coming fiscal year, since the down payment will come from this fiscal year's budget.

DISCUSSION: Don Stein reported that no progress had been made in trying to get the Regional 7 Board of Education to reverse their decision to not grant a sewer easement for the project in the western end of Town. It appears that the developer will now run the sewer lines down Old New Hartford Road and will work with Lombard Ford and the Barkhamsted Housing Trust to try to get them to share the cost, which is roughly double what the cost would have been to connect to Regional 7. The next step will be to revise the lapsed Interlocal Agreement and to get it approved by both Winsted and Barkhamsted.

DISCUSSION: Don Stein informed the Selectmen that the conversations with Granby and Hartland about sharing animal control responsibilities with their Officer are moving forward. These conversations are still on-going, but it appears that this affiliation for improved animal control service has good possibilities for success.

MOTION: A motion was made by Nick Lukiwsky, seconded by Ray Pech, and passed unanimously to authorize Holly Krouse, the Town Clerk to apply for and administer the State of Connecticut Historical Preservation Program Grant for FY 20/21. This grant for \$5,500 has typically been used by the Town Clerk for preserving town documents such as land records or maps and has been very helpful to the Town Clerk's functions.

MOTION: A motion was made by, Ray Pech seconded by Nick Lukiwsky, and passed unanimously to respond to a request from the Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA), who had requested that the member communities indicate on a non-binding basis whether they would

consider continuing to utilize MIRA's municipal solid waste disposal services if the cost per ton were to go up to \$145 per ton (vs. 91 now) with a 30-year contract with no opt-out provisions. The Selectmen agreed to say no to both of these questions and to inform MIRA that they were interested in staying with MIRA assuming that the tip fee came down under \$100 and that there be provisions in the contract to leave if it turned out there were better options in the future. The reason for this significant price increase is that the aging waste-to-energy facility needs to be completely overhauled and absent State financial support, the \$330 million dollar renovation cost would be totally borne by the member communities.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen discussed the COVID 19 (Coronavirus) and the information being received by the State and the Federal Government, as well as the constant onslaught from the news media. At the moment, the Town and the School are not taking any actions (such as closure), but are carefully monitoring the situation and working with the Farmington Valley Health District to provide up-to-date information to our residents about preventive actions they can take. Information will be disseminated as appropriate and if more radical actions become necessary in Town, the emergency personnel will be involved to make things work as smoothly as possible.

MOTION: A motion was made by, Ray Pech seconded by Nick Lukiwsky, and passed unanimously to add the following items to the agenda:

1. Consider and act on authorizing the First Selectman to apply for a grant to help fund an Affordable Housing Plan as required by the State
2. Consider and act on for a resolution endorsing the EdAdvance proposal for a Regional Performance Incentive Performance Grant for a Regional Special Education Services Center.

MOTION: A motion was made by Nick Lukiwsky, seconded by Ray Pech, and passed unanimously to authorize Don Stein to apply for a State grant to defer costs for developing an Affordable Housing Plan. The Northwest Hills Council of Government staff will help prepare the plan and hire consultants as needed to be paid for by this grant. Connecticut statutes require that towns develop such plans be proactive and to develop strategies to assist them in meeting the housing needs of current and future residents.

MOTION: A motion was made by Nick Lukiwsky, seconded by Ray Pech, and passed unanimously to authorize Don Stein to endorse a grant application by EdAdvance through the NHCOC to receive funds to purchase and outfit a facility for special education services which would be intended to reduce the costs of special needs students who are now being bussed to various parts of the State at great cost to the local school boards and towns' taxpayers.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald S. Stein
First Selectman