

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – SPECIAL MEETING – NOVEMBER 21, 2017

MINUTES:

Meeting called to order at 7:05PM. Present were First Selectman Don Stein and Selectmen Ray Pech and Mark Hemenway. Also present was Francine Beland, Assessor, and Bianca Beland.

DELEGATIONS: No delegations were present.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No comments were presented by the public.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ray Pech, seconded by Mark Hemenway, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2017, meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mark Hemenway, seconded by Ray Pech, and passed unanimously to approve the following tax refund:

\$160.63	Ross Griffith	refund
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DISCUSSION: The Selectmen reviewed the expenditures through October 31, 2017, and did not see any items that caused concerns. Through the first one-third of the fiscal year, the General Government expenses were on-track at 32%. They also briefly discussed the State's fiscal situation and agreed that it was still important to control all discretionary expenses due to the uncertainties of State funding.

As of Friday, November 17, the Governor had withdrawn an additional \$131,500 from the Town's ECS allocation. This was in addition to the figures included in the Legislative budget, which showed a reduction of \$120,000 from what had been budgeted by the town. Including the use of surplus for FY '18, the projected surplus from FY '17 and the proceeds from the tax sale, the Town's undesignated surplus would be at \$1,276,000 at the end of the current fiscal year, or approximately 10% of the annual budget. The Board of Finance will review the status of the budgets and the revenues at their meeting in January.

DISCUSSION: Based on the current State budget, the Town will receive \$35,692 in LOCIP funds which had been unavailable due to the budget delays, and will also be eligible for \$65,435 this fiscal year and \$41,640 in FY '19. LOCIP (Local Capital Improvement Projects) activities must be part of the Town's capital improvement plan, approved at a Town Meeting, and are subject to a number of restrictions as to what projects are eligible. Such projects could include improvements to Town Hall, lighting upgrades, and road construction and maintenance. Based on the uncertainty in the Town and State budgets, the Selectmen decided that these projects will be deferred until there is greater clarity as to where the Town stands financially.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ray Pech, seconded by Mark Hemenway, and passed unanimously to appoint Jenn Roller as an alternate to the Economic Development Commission for a term from November 21, 2017 to December 31, 2021 and Debbie Brydon as the Town's representative to the Farmington Valley Health District through December 31, 2020. Don Stein also informed the other Selectmen that he had posted openings for the appointed commissions and sent out a town-wide email on the same subject. A number of people have responded and he will present a full roster of these volunteers for consideration at the BOS meeting in December.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen and Francine Beland discussed options for the property tax exemptions available to Military Veterans, which now includes a new statute that allows for exemptions for Gold Star parents. The Town currently has exemptions available for Veterans who meet certain income limits or who are disabled, but the recent legislative session allowed for increases in these exemptions, as well as the new statute pertaining to the Gold Star parents. The Selectmen agreed that they should review the current rules and should consider whether to increase the limits, but any changes would require ordinance changes to be considered at a Town Meeting. Francine will take a look at current exemptions and the impact of increasing the limits or adding new folks onto the list, so that this issue can be considered at another meeting of the BOS, and as necessary, be presented to the residents. The Selectmen did agree that this issue is very much worthy of consideration.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ray Pech, seconded by Mark Hemenway, and passed unanimously to approve the selection of Municipal Valuation Services, LLC to conduct the revaluation of the Town's real estate and commercial assessments. This bidder was recommended by the Assessor, who also recommended that Option B be included in this approval, which was based on measuring and inspecting all commercial and industrial properties, as well as 300 residences. Data mailers would go to all others, and there is an allowance for additional inspections, as required. The selected contractor was the low bidder by a small amount, employs highly qualified personnel, and was given good recommendations by other towns. The selected bid was \$59,000 plus additional allowances and will require next year's capital plan to include an additional \$30-35,000 over the amount approved for the current year (\$35,000).

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen reviewed lighting proposals by Efficient Lighting Consultants, who proposed lighting upgrades to the Senior Center and the Town Garage. Even with Conservation Fund incentives, the payback for these improvements were 6 years and 5 years respectively. The net cost for the Senior Center was \$5,807.19 and for the Town Garage, it was \$14,922.45. Based on the long payback periods, the consensus of the Selectmen was not to proceed with these changes.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen reviewed a request from the proclamations department of NSXCW.org (National School Choice Week). They chose not to participate due to concerns about future costs to the Town for School Choice and the political nature of this activity.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 on a motion by Ray Pech, seconded by Mark Hemenway.
Respectfully submitted,

Donald S. Stein
First Selectman

*The next meeting of the BOS will be the Regular Meeting to be held on December 12 at 7:00PM.
The meeting scheduled for December 26 with be canceled.*