

Town of North Canaan  
Board of Selectmen  
March 7, 2024, 6:00pm  
Special Meeting

Present: First Selectman Brian Ohler, Craig Whiting, Jesse Bunce, Treasurer Emily Minacci, Paul Mattingly, Executive Assistant

First Selectman Ohler called the meeting to order at 6:08pm

Selectman Ohler thanked everyone for their openness to the change in style. In keeping with transparency these budget meetings are being held open to the public.

This being a special meeting, there is no public comment and no dialogue with the audience will occur. This budget process is a high-level overview tonight and will not finish tonight. Selectman Ohler briefly explained the budget process.

Town Treasurer Emily Minacci went through the budget changes. Items that were of note were:

- Decrease in the third selectman salary as he has indicated he will forgo a salary.
- Increase in salary for the Executive Assistant due to increased hours and responsibilities.
- Election expense has a large increase due to early voting. This is from the State and cannot be changed. It is across the board in all towns. We are expected to receive \$10,500 grant monies from the State for this which will be shown on the revenue side when that is done. Selectman Ohler explained that the early voting needs to be staffed for 2 weeks in November including weekends. Rosemary and Patricia Keilty have submitted their plan to the Secretary of State which has the voting in the privacy of the registrar's office and the rest of the town hall open.
- Auditing services have a place holder in case there is a federal audit. The federal audit only occurs if we go over a certain amount of money.
- Assessor 4% increase for the clerk. Selectman Ohler is hesitant to do increases for the assistants as the town clerk's assistant is new and the assessor has not used the budget she has in the current budget. This needs to be discussed.
- Tax Collector Postage and Printing increase from having to send out numerous notices for back taxes increased.

- Tax Collector Legal notices increased.
- Tax Collector miscellaneous expenses. Selectman Ohler would like to discuss coming down on that as there has not been a lot of spending on that line item.
- Treasurer payroll service increase. Financial software is up a bit.
- Town Council – varies from year to year.
- Town Clerk assistant up 4% but as indicated by Selectman Ohler, this will be discussed.
- State Fees depend on what is sent into the state for what the town clerk collects.
- Life, medical, dental insurance is planned for a bigger number as a person is being added as well as a single to a family place holder.
- Computer services Selectman Ohler would like to stay at \$10000.
- Fire protection had an increase for life insurance.
- Resident Trooper plan for the \$162000 in case residents vote it in again.
- Building official and clerk are up 4%. The software contract is up from prior years.
- Homeland security has been removed. This is Emergency Management. Selectman Ohler explained this department will be rebuilt. Looking at the last 3 years funding increased from 0 to \$4400 and no money has been used.
- Town garage – electric is up and snow removal is up. Plow blades are not bought every year. Selectman Ohler would like to add \$1000 to \$2000 for consulting for water issues in town.
- There was a budget this year for summer help which did not happen.
- Transfer station some things down. Additional salaries going to \$90,000.
- Women's Emergency Services (now called Susan B Anthony) is a duplicate name – it is listed as zero and cannot be removed for 3 years.
- Town Rec Dept – same amount of money but they have moved funding around. There was a question if they spend their yearly budget when they open the pool? Ms. Minacci stated she is not sure, but it does get expensive at the end of the year.
- Zoning Officer up 4%
- Town Historian has to be brought back up to \$1500.
- Temporary borrowing is a mandatory amount.
- Union Station will be coming off completely when the State pays back the \$40,000.
- Fire Equipment line: Selectman Ohler has spoken with the Fire Chief and this line has stayed relatively consistent, and both the Fire Co and the Ambulance received money from AARPA funding, however, they would ideally like the line item to be \$130,000. There is only 7 years left until the ladder truck will need to be replaced and CURRENT replacement cost is around \$1.5million. The cost is not completely

the towns as the fire co is a 501(c)3 but would be great to be able to pay for part of it. This warrants some conversations. The current fund is at \$838472.37.

- School budget should be a savings this year, but next year we are sending 38 kids to high school, which will be a large increase. There was a discussion of general fund expenditures and the possibility of offsetting some of it. There are still a lot of moving parts.
- The Executive Assistant increase is for 40 hours inclusive of grant writing and other responsibilities.

Selectman Ohler stated that there will be another meeting prior to the presentation on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Constant Contact: At the recent Selectman's meeting there was a conversation regarding the creation of a newsletter which Selectman Bunce was doing with a committee, and including town items as well as things from boards, commissions, committees. After some backlash, Selectman Ohler reached out to the town attorney to ask for guidance. Selectman Ohler read his letter to the town attorney and the response from the town attorney into record. The summarization being that anything from town boards or committees will be handled with the Board of Selectman. This was a legal advisory.

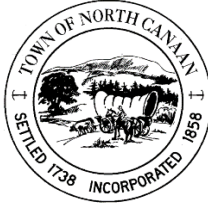
**Selectman Whiting moved to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Bunce seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:59pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ayrslea A Odell

Recording Secretary



# Town of North Canaan

100 Pease Street, North Canaan, Connecticut 06018

## Legal Advisory – Administrative Policy

### Re: Municipal Communications and Publications

The contents of this letter, and all matters of legality and validity, have been compiled and subsequently drafted to address municipal communications and publications, and all correspondence, both directly and indirectly associated with the Town of North Canaan. Such legality and validity have been overseen and approved by D. Randall DiBella, Attorney, Chief Legal Officer, Town of North Canaan, Connecticut.

As a Board of Selectmen, the duties of the Selectmen are as follows according to C.G.S. 7-12, “The selectmen of each town shall, forthwith, after the election or appointment of any town officers of whom an oath is required by law, cause them to be sworn to a faithful discharge of their respective duties. They shall superintend the concerns of the town.” As for the duties of the First Selectman, according to C.G.S 7-12a, “The First Selectman to be chief executive officer and ex-officio member of town boards, commissions and committees. Unless otherwise provided by law, the first selectman, in each town for which its board of selectmen is the executive authority, shall be the chief executive officer of such town and shall be an ex-officio member, without vote, of all town boards, commissions and committees; provided nothing herein shall be construed to affect any special act which gives the first selectman the power to vote on such boards, commissions and committees.”

Regarding the matter of town correspondence and all informational subject matter that bear the town logo, or claim to articulate official town policy, or offer opinion and/or positions on issues, both formal and informal, and all types of communications, not limited to, print, email, handwritten, solicited, compiled, and web-based; such acts may only be conducted under the direct guidance and

authority of the North Canaan Board of Selectmen. This policy has been established, so as to ensure that the residents of North Canaan, and all persons who have opted to receive any of the aforementioned correspondence, are in receipt of material that has been duly vetted, corroborated, validated, and ultimately approved by the North Canaan Board of Selectmen; and its content consistent with official town policy free of political bias. With noted exception, however, regarding the matter of town correspondence, residents of the Town of the North Canaan, of whom are duly elected, appointed and sworn, or have volunteered to serve in an official capacity, may create and distribute such correspondence, so long as it is in direct coordination with the chair(s) of the board, commission, and or committee they serve.

Nothing herein should be construed to attempt to prevent the free exchange of ideas of private parties via any medium. The purpose of this policy is to prevent the use of the Town of North Canaan name and images by non-officials that promote and disseminate political positions that appear to be official communications, but are not. At no time, shall private residents, businesses, or outside agents purporting to be acting on behalf of the Town of North Canaan, produce, copy, distribute any of the aforementioned correspondence to advance a political position.

Any misrepresentation, by image, text or implication, that is claimed to be or advance an official position of the Town shall result in legal action being undertaken on behalf of the Town of North Canaan, for the sole protection of the municipality and its residents, against any private resident, business, or outside agent, engaged in such misrepresentation.

Signed on this day:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Ohler', with a stylized, cursive script.

Brian M. Ohler  
First Selectman  
Town of North Canaan