

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
December 9, 2019**

Members Present: Selectman Murphy, Selectman Bennett, Selectman Guthrie

AA to Board of Selectmen: S. Theriault

Budget Committee: T. Lovell, D. Green, S. Bookless

Known Visitors: R. Krol, N. Gallo, Chief Beaudoin, J. Forbes, J. Dimando, J. Worthen, S. Wentworth, M. Wentworth, Chief Carrier, M. Johnson, and P. Williams (Tri Town News)

Public Announcements

- Drop off for Toys for Tots is at the Hampstead Police Station, Mon-Fri from 9 am to 4 pm. December 14th is the last day to drop off any toys.
- Waste Oil, car batteries and thermostats are collected at the Town Garage on the first and third Saturdays of the month 8 am to 1 pm.

Visitors Comment

C. Cote- Collins Drive- Mr. Cote asked for an update on the written statement regarding the easement for at the Hadley Road area. S. Theriault responded that there is a written comment from Town Counsel and it has been provided to the Chairman of the Selectmen and Chairman of Conservation. She noted it was up to them to disseminate it the letter but that the Conservation Commission wasn't meeting until January to discuss it. Mr. Cote asked if the document was available to the public and was told not at this time. Mr. Cote then went on to state that he has an issue with the wording "utility" being on the easement. He then went on to read definitions of "utilities". He stated that it was too broad and leaves a loophole and asked that the Selectmen remove the word utility and/or change it to underground utilities. Chairman Bennett responded that the letter has been sent to the Conservation Commission for them to review,

Department Heads

There were none

New Business

Veteran's Exemption Change- H. Steadman

H. Steadman asked that the Selectmen consider changing the Veteran's exemption from the current amount of \$500 to the new allowed amount of \$750. There was no discussion.

Selectman Murphy motioned to accept the recommendation of the Lt. Col. Steadman for a warrant article to increase the veteran's exemption and let the voters decide. The motion was seconded by Selectman Guthrie. The motion passed with three in favor. (3-0)

Requests to Encumber 2019 Funds

Recreation Department- Chairman Johnson

M. Johnson noted that at the last meeting he had asked for some funds to be encumbered. With the changes in the weather, one of the items that was going to get done may need to wait until spring and they would like to also encumber that work. They are requesting \$800 be encumbered from account 45202-61000 for SGS to seed field 2.

Chairman Bennett motioned to allow the total amount of \$1,700.10 be encumbered from line 445202-61000, as proposed by M. Johnson. The motion was seconded by Selectman Murphy. The motion passed with all in favor 3-0.

Ordway Park- Chairman Forbes

J. Forbes was in to ask if she could encumber funds from her lines to cover the cost of removing the remaining Christmas trees and stumps at the park. They will be chipping and grinding the stumps as well.

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The amounts she was looking for is \$6,225 and \$775. She also went on and explained how over the years there has been significant volunteer labor doing the work at the park and it has been getting more difficult to do that ever year.

Chairman Bennett motioned to encumber \$6,225.00 and \$775.00 from 41945-43000. The motion was seconded by Selectman Guthrie. The motion passed unanimously 3-0.

Highway Department- Jon Worthen

Mr. Worthen asked if the Selectmen could encumber the piping for the Shore Drive project. He is looking for \$10,000. He also asked if the Selectmen would consider using any left-over funds in his budget to purchase a plow for the loader. He explained that it would be an 11-foot blade. Mr. Worthen was asked when he would be looking for this and if there were issues with contractors that he needed to add the loader. Mr. Worthen responded that it would be nice to have and that with the plow on the loader, some of the work could be done in house instead of hiring a company. Down the road, he stated that he would like to add a sweeper for the loader. Chairman Bennett stated that he had no issue with the piping, but was not in favor at this time of the plows, especially where there are only two employees there. Chairman Bennett also asked if it was possible to pay off any of the leases with any funds left over.

Chairman Bennett motioned to encumber up to \$10,000 for the pipes for the Shore Drive project and the funds will come from 43180-33000. The motion was seconded by Selectman Guthrie and it passed unanimously 3-0.

Police Department- Chief Beaudoin

Chief Beaudoin reported that with the Lieutenant position not filled, he believes he will have money left in his 2019 budget. With that is asked for the Selectmen to allow him to encumber funds totaling \$21,551.70. He is looking for replace computers at \$9,044.95, purchase of three portable radios at a cost of \$3,980.85, \$6,230.90 for new training room furniture and \$2,295.00 for a new radar unit. He asked the Selectmen to approve the encumbrances but stated it would be based on his final budget, which he expects to have about \$70,000 left.

Chairman Bennett motioned to allow Chief Beaudoin to encumber \$21,551.70 as listed. Selectman Murphy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 3-0.

Award Crack Sealing RFP

There were two bids received for the crack sealing. J. Worthen asked that the proposal be awarded to Petra Paving. The bid they submitted was a per day cost and J. Worthen expects the job to take about 6 to 7 days. At a rough estimate, he thinks the cost may be around \$32,200. (\$2,900 per day crack sealing and \$1,700 per day routing). It is not known if there would be any routing done, but Petra has the equipment available if needed. Most of the crack sealing would be done on the new roads. The Selectmen were looking to determine a not to exceed cost to move forward. J. Worthen suggested they go forward with \$25,000 to do the work.

Chairman Bennett made the motion to approve up to \$25,000 for crack sealing and to award the RFP to Petra Paving. The motion was seconded by Selectman Guthrie. The motion passed unanimously 3-0.

Discussion on the 2019 Operating Budget,

Animal Control- M. Wentworth requested that the Selectmen put back some funding in her assistant line. She currently doesn't have one, but will be looking for one to cover for her. She asked that they move the funds back to \$2,500. Everyone agreed to add that back to her budget which is now at \$22,072.0, which is a 5% decrease from 2019.

Cemetery- Steve Wentworth

Mr. Wentworth was present to discuss the \$100,000 request for funding made by the Cemetery Trustees to cover the cost of building two urn walls at Lakeview Cemetery. The Trustees look at it as a capital improvement which they felt could be in the budget, or as a separate warrant article. They are requesting that it be placed in the budget for the full cost. He explained that as Trustees, they are responsible for the

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planning and maintenance of the cemeteries. Last year they presented the cost at \$65,000, but had no support from the Selectmen and it failed as a warrant article. Mr. Wentworth went on to explain that cremations are now about 50% of the burials and if they build the urn walls, then the cemetery lots will last longer because they won't be selling a single lot to just bury an urn. He also mentioned putting the money from the sale of the urn wall spots into a trust fund to help build more later. The \$100,000 is made up of \$45,000 for the wall and the balance for the site work etc. They are hoping to get a deal on building two from the company. There is currently a wall at the Veteran's Cemetery in Boscawen that they got the idea from. The purchase cost would be \$1,000 for a single spot or \$1,250 for up to two urns, and includes the engraving. There is no place to expend in town and the Trustees need to look at ways to have the current lots last. He pointed out that the time to do it is now. In the last 15 years they have sold 500 lots and there are currently about 700 left. When they added the new addition to Lakeview, they thought the lots would last a lot longer than they are. Chairman Bennett stated that he would be okay with supporting one in the budget and does see it as a planning need. The Selectmen discussed putting it as a warrant article with their support and see if it passes. If not then they would put it in the budget in 2021. J. Dimando stated that she had an issue with putting something into the budget that was voted down by the town, that it was negating their vote. S. Wentworth stated that the Selectmen have done this in the past such as the Shop Pond Dam project.

Selectman Guthrie motioned to budget \$50,000 for an urn wall in the 2020 budget. The motion was seconded by Chairman Bennett. The motion passed 2 in favor (CB, JG) and 1 against (SM). This will put the proposed budget for the Cemeteries at \$98,500.00 which is up 105%

Police Department- Chief Beaudoin

Chief Beaudoin asked if he could increase the uniform line in his 2020 budget to make it \$17,500. He is estimating that he will have a new hire that he will have to be outfitted. This brings his total 2020 budget to \$1,612,201 which is a 3% increase from 2019.

S. Theriault reported that in the proposed budget this evening, the health insurance and dental insurances have been updated to reflect the actual cost based on current population. She stated that the Selectmen had previously approved to fund money in the personnel line to cover for changes in insurance through the year. She suggested that they budget for a family plan for the open police position under the personnel lines and then when someone is placed in that position to move the funds over to the police department. Chairman Bennett liked the idea, but Selectman Murphy and Guthrie agreed to leave it where it is now, in the police budget.

Fire Department- Chief Carrier

Chief Carrier reported to the Selectmen that the only change in his budget was the first year lease payment on the new forestry truck. When the Selectmen accepted the unanticipated funds from the State of NH, they agreed to use the funds to purchase the forestry truck outright. His proposed 2020 budget is at \$1,129,789.00 which is up 4%. Chief Carrier was asked why he hadn't spent anything in the hose line and was still asking for some in 2020. Chief Carrier responded that he was over in communications and underspent the hose and fittings to cover for it. He also pointed out that 95% of the increase in the 2020 budget is the cost of the new hire approved last year, without that, his budget for 2020 would have been lower than the 2019 one.

Highway- Jon Worthen

The proposed 2020 budget is at \$1,029,280.00 which is a 19% increase. The paving was up \$200,000 accounting for most of the increase. Mr. Worthen reported that looking over the RSMS numbers from Rockingham Planning, he thinks that they are a little higher than what it will actually cost so he said that the paving budget could be changed, if needed. The big roads have been done and there is no grinding planned. Selectman Murphy asked if Mr. Worthen would still be following the RSMS recommendations if the budget is reduced. Mr. Worthen responded that they estimated \$500,000 for the roads in 2020. He has done estimates based on actual costs and predicts it will be more like \$400,000 or \$425,000. He gave an example of the crack sealing which the RSMS estimated at \$87,000 but the estimate he has is \$35,000. He

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would still be able to follow the plan and use more realistic numbers. Chairman Bennett pointed out that the RSMS plan is more a planning guide not to be taken verbatim. The Selectman agreed with the Road Agent and brought the 2020 budget amount for paving to \$425,000.00. This brings his 2020 budget to \$954,280.00, which is a 10% increase. Chairman Bennett asked Mr. Worthen if he had an estimate on a lighted sign for the end of West Road at the gym. The response was a cost of \$1,600.00

Recycling and Waste Disposal- Chris Kowalski

This was the first presentation of the RAWD budget for 2020 and it is at \$842,727.00 or a 4% increase. The largest increase is in the Household Hazardous Waste line because Hampstead is the host for 2020. Portions of the cost for that day will be billed to the participating towns so there will be revenue to offset the increase. There was a question about the site maintenance and what the plans were. Mr. Kowalski explained that they were in the process of getting a 40 foot by 8-foot trailer for a structure to have a place for the employees to go into and use the other half as a swap shop. They are looking to purchase the trailer in 2019, but some of the site work will be done in 2020.

Library- Rosemary Krol and Natalie Gallo

The proposed 2020 budget for the Library is at \$591,212.00 which is an increase of 2%. There are no changes other than to the health and dental insurance lines since the last budget meeting. Selectman Guthrie reported that he has been attending the Trustee meetings and he has confidence in the budget they are putting forward. He also mentioned that he would like to take their policy for recognizing longevity and use it for town employees. R. Krol noted that is still a work in progress. She also reported that they met with the Budget Committee to present their budget and answer any questions that they had. Chairman Bennett asked about the Library contracts line. R. Krol reported that this is for electronic services and is the state contract which is going up on the E-books due to an increase in usage. Selectman Guthrie stated that he has been getting statistics from the Library and there is an increase in use of the facility each month. Chairman Bennett told the Trustees that he appreciated the 2% increase and that they did a good job.

Trustee Chairman, Natalie Gallo presented the warrant article for \$10,000 for the repairs and maintenance account. They currently have \$13,000 in the account and with the proposal of another \$10,000 it will be about 3 years before they can do the proposed work. The work they were looking to do would be about \$32,000.00.

Ordway Park- Julia Forbes

J. Forbes stated that the cost for the park are up \$2,500 due to replacing 2 frost free hydrants that were the source of a leak at the park, the drainage is below grade and connected to a frost free water line. She then went on to explain all the work that has been donated at the park saving having to put money in the budget such as the work done by the Garden Club and the Lion's Club. She thanked those that have helped along the way. She also announced that it has been 20 years since the consent decree was put in place and that now there are improvements and repairs that will need to be done.

Rest of the budget- Sally Theriault

Building Department- S. Theriault reported that the Building Department has adjusted for \$7,000.00 for a new vehicle to lease instead of the Building Inspector using his own vehicle. The proposed budget is at \$147,277.00 which is a 1% increase from the 2019 budget.

Buildings and Grounds- S. Theriault reported that there is \$21,900.00 in the budget to fix the tennis court on West Road. This will be based on the drainage around the tennis courts being corrected. The drainage work is in the highway budget for 2019. If the drainage isn't done, the repairs to the tennis court will be scheduled for 2021. They want to be able to go through a spring season after it is repaired to make sure it is the issue. P. Carideo asked why there isn't an engineer looking at the issue and have the work done properly. He stated that we should invest a little to make sure things are done properly including road work. Chairman Bennett stated that if they did a boring test, it would need to be done in the center of the tennis courts under where the net goes and then it could be patched up. L. Sarapas mentioned that there was direct push technology that could be used now. P. Carideo stated that we would make developers go

through this process. The groundwater needs to be taken away and no one knows what is below the surface, it could be loam. Chairman Bennett agreed and stated that he would talk with the Recreation Commission at their next meeting. P. Carideo also stated that what was used to build the tennis court (underneath) is probably a lot different than what is used now.

Recreation-Senior Committee- S. Theriault explained that the Senior Committee wants more funds allocated for the coordinator. They were going to go forward with a warrant article, but hadn't completed a job description so they decided to wait a year before coming forward with a new part time person and just increase slightly the current coordinator.

The other budgets had no changes since the first presentation, other than health and dental costs so there were no questions.

Warrant Article on changing the Board of Selectmen from a 3 member board to a 5 member board can't be brought forward by the Board of Selectmen, but can be brought forward by a petition article. It was agreed to withdraw the article and Selectman Guthrie stated to not be surprised to see a petition article come in.

Old Business

Continued Discussion on the Elderly Exemptions

D. Genovese of Granite Village reported that she went back to check to see how many towns were higher than Hampstead and stated that she was interested in seeing the income levels change for a married couple to about \$65,000 to \$70,000. Currently Sandown is at \$70,000 and Hampstead is at \$40,000. There was also a question if it is gross income or net income. Selectman Guthrie offered a disclaimer, that although age wise he was eligible for "Elderly Exemption", he doesn't qualify and therefore felt comfortable discussing the subject. He would like to see the actual exemption amount change because homes have changed in value. He was concerned with the amount that homes have increased and felt that increasing the value of assessments would cover a lot of those that had the values of their homes exceed the exemption amount. Chairman Bennett stated that they understand that the age limits are set by the state and can't be amended to different brackets. He also stated that we were on the lower side for income but on the higher side for the exemption.

Selectman Guthrie stated that he would like to see if changed from age 65-75 to \$175,000, age 75-80 to \$250,000, and then over 80 to \$250,000. He was in favor of changing the value instead of the income, but was open. Chairman Bennett stated that in looking at Chester they have similar income levels, except they are a little higher on the married.

D. Genovese stated that they would like to have the Selectmen move forward an article to change the exemption instead of going with a petition article. She stated that the recent tax increase was terrible. Selectman Murphy explained that the values on the mobile/modular homes were under valued about two years ago. The Selectmen chose to not have a study done at that time knowing that the full revaluation was coming so those residents actually underpaid their portion for two years so they got hit harder this year. He also pointed out that their property is now more valuable than it was 5 years ago. D. Genovese responded that people just can't up and sell their properties and move because things are expensive everywhere. Selectman Guthrie stated that he would like to help a senior stay in their home. He stated that it has been a while (possibly 2005) since the last changes and that alone justified making adjustments. Chairman Bennett suggested changing the income levels on a single to \$35,000 and married to \$45,000. Selectman Guthrie suggested \$35,000 and \$50,000. S. Theriault reported that right now there is about \$192,000 in taxes that are exempted under the Elderly Exemption that gets redistributed to the rest of the taxpayers. Selectman Murphy stated that it wasn't important to know now, but would need to know the amount so that people voting know the impact of that article.

Selectman Guthrie motioned to see if the Town will vote pursuant to RSA 72:39-b to modify the elderly exemptions qualifications from a net income of not more than \$32,500 to \$35,000, or if married, from a combined net income of not more than \$40,000 to \$50,000 and assets not in excess of \$100,000. And, to modify the elderly exemption from property tax in The Town of Hampstead based on the assessed value for qualified taxpayer to be as follows for a person 65 years of age up to 75 years of age from \$125,000 to \$150,000, for a person 75 year for age up to 80

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years of age from \$150,000 to \$200,000 and for a person 80 years of age or older from \$200,000 to \$250,000. The motion was seconded by Selectman Murphy. Chairman Bennett wanted to know what the impact would be on those changes. There was discussion about the changes in the exemption amount and it was amended by Selectman Murphy to change the that a person 80 years and the exemption would be \$230,000. The amended motion was seconded and it passed with all voting in favor. The amended article passed with all voting in favor. S. Theriault was asked to have the potential impact on those changes.

Liaison Reports

Selectman Guthrie- He attended the Senior Dinner and announced it was a great job done by the Recreation Commission and that everyone was happy from what he has heard. He also stated that it was good to have it in town (at HMS).

Selectman Bennett- Nothing to report

Chairman Murphy- Nothing to report

AA Report:

Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

In the past, when Christmas and New Years were in the middle of the week, the BOS allowed for an early closure the day before the holiday, usually close at noon on Christmas Eve and either noon or 2pm on New Year's Eve. The Board of Selectmen were asked if they would approve of closing early on these two days. After a small discussion on New Year's Eve there was a motion.

Selectman Guthrie made a motion to close at noon on December 24th and December 31st. The motion was seconded by Selectman Murphy and it passed unanimously 3-0.

Definition of default budget as it relates to the COLA

The personnel policy and the definition of default budget are inconsistent as it relates to COLA. The default budget omits appropriations "not likely to reoccur". Historically the COLA has been added to the matrix and included in the operating salary line items. The personnel policy however, "employees will receive a pay adjustment equal to the approved COLA percentage each year, pending voter approval of the operating budget". The Board of Selectmen were asked to think about if they would like to include the COLA in the default budget.

Health Insurance

Employees have been advised that enrollment for Health Insurance and the FSA are due by December 13th.

Communication Committee

Another person is interested in the Communication Committee has submitted her letter of interest. The initial proposal is on the credenza for review and there are now four interested people.

Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes of October 28, 2019 have been signed by the Board of Selectmen and are ready for approval at this time.

Chairman Bennett motioned to approve the minutes of October 28, 2019. The motion was seconded by Selectman Murphy. The motion passed unanimously 3-0.

Activity Log

It was reviewed and it was reported that the Road Agent Handbook will be ready for the next meeting.

Re- Appointments/Appointments

Call for candidates:

- Zoning Board of Adjustment, Alternate member – monthly meeting
- Trustees of the Trust Funds, alternate members – meetings as needed

Correspondence

There was none

Visitors Comments

Chairman Bennett asked if it was possible to pay off some of the leases if there were funds left at the end of the year.

A motion was made by Selectman Guthrie to enter into a non-public session under RSA 91A:3 II (a) employee matters at 10:05pm.

Selectman Guthrie, yes: Selectman Bennett, yes: Chairman Murphy, yes.

The Selectmen discussed the position of Police Lt and the ranges through the recent salary review study that was done and any updated information from Gary Thornton and Associates. It was stated that the salary is competitive. Responses on the open position are due from internal candidates December 13th. If there are no qualified internal applicants, it would scheduled to go out the public after that.

A motion was made by Chairman Murphy to close the non-public session under RSA 91A:3 II (a) employee matters at 10:15 pm. The motion was seconded by Selectman Bennett. The motion passed on a roll call vote.

A motion was made by Selectman Guthrie to enter into a non-public session under RSA 91A:3 II (c) reputations at 10:15pm.


Selectman Guthrie, yes: Selectman Bennett, yes: Chairman Murphy, yes.

There was discussion about an ongoing code enforcement issue and the process of fining the business for failure to follow the site plan. It was asked that the Chief Building Official attend an upcoming meeting with the record to go over it with the Selectmen.

A motion was made by Chairman Murphy to close the non-public session under RSA 91A:3 II (c) reputations at 10:20 pm. The motion was seconded by Selectman Bennett. The motion passed on a roll call vote.

Selectman Guthrie made a motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 pm. Selectman Murphy seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

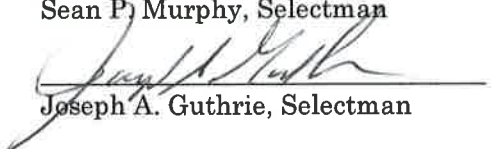
A True Record:


Tina Harrington, Recording Secretary

Approved By:


Chad R. Bennett, Chairman

Sean P. Murphy, Selectman


Joseph A. Guthrie, Selectman

