



**Warner Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 21, 2016
APPROVED**

Selectman Carson opened the meeting at 10:00 am.

In attendance: Selectman Clyde Carson - Chairman, Selectman Allan N. Brown, Selectman John Dabuliewicz, Jim Bingham – Town Administrator

Others present: Kimberley Edelmann, Judy Newman-Rogers, John Leavitt, Barbara Annis

1. Manifest – (Fire Station Land)

Chairman Carson moved to authorize the Selectmen to sign manifests and order the Treasurer to sign Accounts Payable check numbers 52250 ~ 52251 in the amount of \$215,266.49 for the purchase of 148 West Main St. for the new fire station. Selectman Brown seconded the motion. Chairman Carson asked why two checks? The Town Administrator said one check is the net going to the seller and the other check is for the attorney in the amount of \$2,003.99, the balance going to Gordon Trust in the amount of \$213,262.50. All were in favor, the motion passed 3-0.

2. Budget Process Discussion

- A. Chairman Carson wanted to talk about the budget process from the Selectman's perspective, he would like to talk about the Selectmen's time table as well. Budget Committee member Kimberley Edelmann provided a revised Budget Committee meeting schedule.
- B. Chairman Carson said what takes the longest because information is not available until later in the year is things that involve wages and benefits, everything else can be worked on earlier and he want to start working on the capital budget early as well, doing so, the Board could use the summer and fall to complete the wage study which would be the basis going into the salary discussions.
- C. Selectman Dabuliewicz asked what is the starting point from which we proceed with the wage study? Chairman Carson said the Town Administrator conducted and presented a wage study last year, the Board got to a certain point, and then the Selectmen had to present a budget and couldn't do much with the study. He's thinking to pick things up where the Board left off last year and have a discussion on how to move forward. The Town Administrator said the wage study answered the first question, is the town in line with other towns. Selectman Dabuliewicz asked what the next phase is. The Town Administrator said the question at hand is what philosophy and methodology will be used to develop a compensation schedule for the employees. There was a grade and step schedule which is currently suspended in the sense it was originally set up that there would be a step increase on an annual basis. Chairman Carson pulled the conversation back to the budget process and recommended further discussion when the Board is at that point. Selectman Dabuliewicz said he has one issue about that, he asked if just the Selectmen will do the study or will someone from the Budget Committee be involved as well. Chairman Carson said the Board. Selectman Dabuliewicz would like the Board to consider Budget Committee involvement. He said what he has seen so far, a Budget Committee member will be trusted more than the Board, John wants to build that trust. Chairman Carson said first the Board needs to discuss how to move forward and then discuss how to involve the Budget Committee and other people.
- D. Selectman Brown said there were many involved in the last process that was created and now it's suspended, it didn't work. He said wages and benefits are the Selectmen's. John asked why it didn't work. Chairman Carson said by suspended, we don't follow the rules that were originally set up, it was set up at a time when the economy was doing well and it was easy to give 2.5 % wage increase each year with cost of living on top, then the economy tanked so now another discussion needs to take place.
- C. Chairman Carson said the question is how do we put a schedule together that allows sufficient time to address the wage study and the capital budget discussions. He would like to start working on the operating budget right now. Selectman Brown feels you have to be careful working on the operating budget this early

in the year because you can't get a quote this early and expect it to be valid until next March, typically a quote carries for 30 days. Selectman Brown feels the Board should be working on the wage study now.

- D. The Town Administrator feels most of the operating budget can be completed by the end of September. The stumbling point in the past has been what do we do about compensation and what do we do about benefits which we have tied the two together and he is not sure that is wise. He feels the town should be looking at health and dental at a stand alone basis, what does the town want to do in the next 5 years so that the town is compliant with the Affordable Care Act and that we're working a program that's not going to show increases and premiums year in year out. Compensation should be seen on its own and the Board needs to review what was done in the past, why the process was not followed precisely and come up with a workable process for the town to move forward.
- E. Chairman Carson feels the Board should begin immediately on the wage study and run parallel with the creation of the operating budget. Selectman Carson recommended having copies of the wage study available to the Board and then arrange a meeting to sit down and discuss the pace for that particular piece of it, then hash through what kind of process does the Board want to go through to complete that aspect. Selectman Dabuliewicz asked if there are other resources available regarding compensation. The Town Administrator said the NH Municipal Association does complete a wage and salary survey which is updated every 2 years. When the Selectman's office did a wage comparison they went directly to the towns.
- F. Selectman Brown mentioned hiring a professional company to complete a wage study. The Town Administrator said the town recently received a survey from New Durham being completed by a third party, That information will be shared when completed.
- G. Chairman Carson proposed to meet again in about 2 weeks to talk specifically about the wage study and then lay out a time line for the fall budget process. The current wage study will be distributed to the Selectboard. The Board will meet on Thursday, May 5, beginning at 1:00 pm. Selectman Dabuliewicz said he will contact NH Municipal Association about other compensation options.
- H. The Town Administrator said to Kimberley that the administration is trying to have the Budget Committee hold their public hearing earlier, the reason is when the hearing is held in the first week of February there is very little time to finish the Town Report.
- I. Selectman Brown feels the capital budget can also be created earlier. The Board will begin at the end of May.
- J. Chairman Carson feels most of the operating budget can be developed early as well. The time sensitive items such as health care costs can be dealt with as the figures are received. The goal is to set the process i to have budgets ready for November 10 to mid December. The Town Administrator said past history shows he will be bringing forward operating budgets in the first week of September and onward. Chairman Carson wants to start that process earlier in the year. Chairman Carson and the Town Administrator will put together a schedule. The Town Administrator said he will create a schedule from past years, when budgets were presented to the Board and then adjust accordingly. His general feeling for a town of this size is we spend too much time on the budget, he feels it could be done in 8 weeks, other towns do it. He also believes the Board should be scheduling enough discussion time on the projects the Board is facing this year and next year. The Board needs to be looking at the project list making sure progress is being made through the year and not letting anything go cold, making sure all project time lines are being met.
- K. Once a schedule is created the Board will meet with the Budget Committee Chair and Vice Chair.
- L. The Town Administrator wants the Board to review the procedural document in terms of what we do now. He would like to send it to the Budget Committee members because it may help with understanding some of the concerns that were brought up at the last Budget Committee meeting with respect to budgets, how they're done, whether the Budget Committee is getting all the information they need because there is some concern that keeps getting raised on that. He said the Department Heads and himself make a strong effort to give as much information as possible on each budget. The Budget Committee's concern about not getting all the information, or that budgets are revised without department input confuses him. Chairman Carson said that's a good topic to talk about when they meet with the Budget Committee Chair and Vice Chair.

- M. Judy said she thinks it's a good idea to be scheduling ahead of time because sometimes there's a chance to see what meetings can be combined. She said sometimes it's a little repetitive. Maybe combining the meetings with the Department Heads where they attend a meeting with the Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen would be a more efficient way to handle things, it would decrease the amount of meetings and everyone is together in the same room hearing the same thing. Selectman Dabuliewicz feels the Department Heads need to meet with the Town Administrator. The Town Administrator said when the Department Head's budget is presented to the Board, they are usually there too. He said in some towns the Department Head meets with both the Selectmen and the Budget Committee.
- N. Selectman Brown asked if all towns that have Town Administrator's have Budget Committee's? The Town Administrator said most Town Administrator's that he has spoken with after some point it's pretty clear both the Department Heads and the Town Administrator present to the Selectmen a lean budget. There are some towns that have dropped the Budget Committee. He said a Budget Committee works as long as the rapport between the two bodies is good, in his estimation the rapport between the Selectman's office and the Budget Committee is not good and he is trying to figure out why.

3. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 11:20 am.

Board of Selectmen
Clyde Carson
Allan N. Brown
John Dabuliewicz

Recorder of the minutes: Mary Whalen