



Warner Board of Selectmen

Work Session Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 21, 2020

APPROVED

1. Open Meeting Chairman Carson opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Attendance: Selectman Clyde Carson – Chairman, Selectman Kimberley Edelmann, Selectman Judy Newman-Rogers and Town Administrator, Diane Ricciardelli

Others present: Tim Allen, Kelly Henley, Martha Mical, John Leavitt, Sean Toomey

2. 2020 Budget

A. Clyde said the purpose of this meeting is to strictly consider changes that came up at the Budget Committee meeting last Thursday. The main changes are in the Fire Department for wage increases and the other is Tim Allen's proposal for building maintenance.

B. Kimberley confirmed the Fire Department was reduced by the Budget Committee by \$26,000. Kimberley asked Fire Chief Sean Toomey if he is good with that reduction. Sean said the thought was phasing-in the wage changes. The Budget Committee reduction is focused on wages, salaries and in-house training. Sean said he printed off a new version from what was discussed at the Budget Committee meeting. On the salaries line, which is really the stipends line, should be \$12,770 not \$12,625. The fire wages line should be \$62,900 which is estimated using 80 incident hours for the members. In-house training should be \$17,000 instead of \$16,600. The bottom line now totals \$195,435 instead of \$219,190, a difference of about \$24,000. The \$219,190 included the full implementation of the wage changes. Clyde asked Sean if the \$195,435 allows for him to compensate his staff correctly for the time they put in. Sean said we will be paying the EMTs for training, it will cover for everything everyone is doing and provide a small wage adjustment. Clyde said the expectation would be to cover the balance of the wage increases in 2021.

C. Judy said because the first line is stipends and not salaries, all the stipends have not been adjusted in a number of years. To adjust the Fire Department stipend line without adjusting any of the other stipends doesn't really seem fair. Sean said what he assumed, right or wrong, is that stipends count for some of the administrative time for the Chief, the Deputies and the Treasurer. Judy said the idea of a stipend is, you take the position knowing what it pays, the stipend is what the stipend is. Sean said he is asking for more because he is adjusting the wages overall. Judy asked if those stipend positions are also paid in the wage line? Sean said yes, if they go on a call. Judy confirmed the stipend positions, their wages have been adjusted in the wage line. Sean said Judy was correct. Judy feels the stipends should be addressed with all the other stipend positions. Sean said he is spending up to 20 hours a week and he's not even doing what he should be doing. The previous Fire Chief said he would spend up to 40 hours a week some weeks being the Chief. Sean said if we are supposed to be paying people fairly and by the hour, what Judy is saying would be going backwards. Judy said, "except it's a stipend position." Sean said he has heard multiple times at these meetings that the Town is trying to pay its employees fairly, that is going against that concept. Judy said she is one Board member. Clyde asked for a better understanding regarding the stipends. Sean explained how he got to the hourly rate for the stipend positions, he said the work load isn't going to decrease either. Clyde doesn't recall ever changing the stipends for the Fire Department, but, does recall changing stipends for other positions. Judy said not necessarily, the stipends are not usually included with the employee increases when they are adjusted. Clyde said the job is definitely bigger than it once was, Sean's proposal is moving the Town more in the direction of paying people fairly. Sean agreed. Kimberley asked why are they stipend positions and not administrative wages. Sean said that is probably what we should be doing. Clyde confirmed the positions get a stipend on an annual basis and then when they go on a call they get the hourly rate as well. Sean said yes. Clyde said an alternative might be get off the stipends, but, if you work 40 hours a week you would get the hourly rate. Sean thinks the total for money is correct, the salaries may be under, but he has no history. Clyde recommends going with what is being proposed for 2020 and then look at getting off the stipends in 2021. Sean said he is good with that, he would keep track of the hours. Kimberley liked Clyde's idea, it's a \$4,000 difference.

D. Judy said going with what is being proposed in the 2020 budget, when you put it in an hourly rate the Fire Chief gets \$30.00 per hour, Deputy Chief \$24.00 and then the Clerk & Treasurer \$14.50. If this is changed in 2021 by keeping track of the hours and going to hourly instead of a stipend, those are the rates the Town is looking at instead of a stipend. She said if the Fire Chief stipend paid \$8,250, it can't really equate to hours, just like the Selectman's position can't. Sean said it's a very different job and maybe Diane could do some research for what's the right thing to do. Kimberley said the difference is the Selectmen are elected, we are not hired for our skill set where the Fire Department is and feels the stipends should be done away with all together and start treating the positions as professionals. What's on the table is do we do that this year or next year. Judy said for the purpose of the budget it should be one or the other, stipend only or hourly only.

E. Clyde is still on board with Sean's 2020 proposal, Kimberley as well and in the long run, the positions should be hourly. Clyde asked what do other town's do. Sean said there is still a mix.

Board Action

Chairman Carson made a motion to accept the numbers as submitted by Fire Chief Sean Toomey for the Fire Department for 2020. Selectman Edelman seconded the motion. The motion passed 2-1 (Judy Rogers Dissenting)

3. Fire Equipment Capital Reserve

A. Sean talked about the funding he requested for equipment replacement. Judy said there is over \$19,000 in the capital reserve, Sean's request to fund the reserve amounted to \$25,600, not knowing if Sean wanted a total of \$25,600 or the difference between what is in the capital reserve and what is being requested is \$6,600. What needs to be clarified is does Sean want all of the \$25,600 added to the capital reserve. Sean said the \$25,600 is a recurring fee to spend for the year to replace 4 sets of gear and 3 portable radios. Sean said he didn't know about the balance in the capital reserve. Sean said as long as \$6,600 is funded for 2020 and is available, in 2021 he will also need \$25,600. Sean will also provide a copy of his capital plan to Diane. Martha Mical suggested leaving an amount that covers a set of gear in the capital reserve so it doesn't zero out.

B. Clyde proposes adding \$25,600 for equipment and the amount for wage adjustments in 2021 operating budget. The \$25,600 will be off-set by the capital budget in 2021.

4. 2020 Highway Department Budget

A. Clyde said the Board met with Tim Allen and Tim Hayes 2 days before the Budget Committee meeting and decided that it made sense to allocate Tim Hayes position to full-time Building Maintenance. The Budget Committee came up with a different idea. The bottom line after shuffling things around between all the Departments resulted in a \$900 difference. It was done with a different variety of different resources and putting things in different budgets which makes it harder from Clyde's perspective to try to manage from Tim Allen's perspective and it doesn't give Tim Allen the ability to manage his total resources.

B. Martha Mical who is on the Budget Committee said the Budget Committee heard that discussion, it was a proposal from one of the Budget Committee members, she said the Committee didn't necessarily agree with the conversation. Clyde said his take on it was it was very complicated and resulted in only a \$900 difference. He said it made more sense having Tim Hayes allocated to 100% building maintenance with the ability to pull Tim Hayes back into the Highway crew when needed made more sense to Clyde. Clyde is proposing leaving the Highway Department as the Board submitted it. Kimberley asked Tim Allen what he thinks. Tim Allen said the only question he has with the Budget Committee proposal is, part of the proposal is to zero-out the building maintenance line in his budget to \$41,796, which is Tim Hayes' wages and reallocate \$20,000 of that to different building maintenance lines in the other budgets, then add the remaining \$21,796 into the full-time line. Tim Allen said in his mind he is losing not only the new hire, he is also losing a position that he already has. Tim Allen said he needs more time to put more work into this. Clyde is saying what the Board approved a week ago is what should be done, it was a good idea. Kimberley asked if the Budget Committee proposed adding a salary line to the Government Buildings? Clyde said it was math that he couldn't follow, he said the bottom line according to the Budget Committee Chair was a \$900 difference. Clyde said again, he supports what Tim proposed at the meeting they had last week and to stay with that proposal. Judy agreed that Tim's proposal made sense and if it doesn't work out after a year, the Board and Tim can then re-evaluate it.

C. Kimberley said the Budget Committee is asking the Board to use the budget documents in a way that it's not being used. What is it that they are really looking to know, they are using the budget sheets as the vehicle. Is the Budget Committee trying to figure out how much effort goes into maintaining buildings, if so, the town can keep

track of that without messing with the budget sheets. Kimberley asked about the person that made the proposal on the Budget Committee, what were they looking to learn about building maintenance. Kimberley asked John Leavitt if he was at that Budget Committee meeting. John said first of all, it was agreed that it was only a \$900 savings but that wasn't figured into the benefits which would also be a savings. John said the purpose of the proposal was to keep the maintenance of buildings a part-time position, to keep from paying benefits. Clyde said the person that is currently doing the building maintenance is a full-time person receiving benefits, unless you're going to reduce that person to part-time, Tim Allen is losing a person from his crew. Martha Mical said Tim Allen would still have half a person. Clyde said but it's the same person. Kimberley asked from the proposal the Budget Committee made, what happens when the buildings don't need maintenance, does that person go away? John Leavitt said at last week's Budget Committee meeting it was said Tim Hayes would never go back to the Highway Department because of the heavy work load. Clyde said he didn't hear that. John said that he made the statement and Tim Allen agreed. Clyde said he wants to go back to the meeting the Selectboard had and certainly the Selectboard feels that building maintenance is pushing toward the full-time area, but, if Tim Allen is managing Tim Hayes' time and needs more help with the Highway crew, Tim Allen will address that; Clyde liked that concept. Martha Mical said as a personal observation, of the list of items that were presented for building maintenance on all the buildings, there is nothing on that list, with the exception of plowing the new Fire Station and mowing the lawn that wasn't done by the very first maintenance man at 12 and 18 hours per week. Clyde said if that is the case then the Building Maintenance can go back to work for the Highway Department, but, the Board does not believe that will be the case.

D. Tim Allen said there are other things that play into this that has not been discussed. Tim asked about the sidewalk network, is that a maintenance issue or is it a Capital Improvement project, meaning the repairs that are needed to to the current sidewalks. Clyde said the Board talked about that last week as well as part of the building maintenance projects. Diane agrees it's a maintenance issue rather than going out to bid to have the work done. Martha Mical thinks originally it was considered Highway, not a specific person in the Highway Department, it's the Highway Department's job to maintain the sidewalks. Tim said this plays into his entire plan, right now he doesn't have manpower to work on the sidewalks. Martha Mical said that would be the choice of the Selectmen. Judy asked Martha Mical if she thinks the sidewalk is a capital project. Martha thought it is a maintenance issue. Tim Allen said he cannot see this Town affording these projects to be farmed out, the Town doesn't have the money. He said right now he could put \$25,000 extra in his budget to maintain these sidewalks and keep them clear because somebody is going to fall. The sidewalks are so far out of shape, it doesn't matter what material is applied, or what is tried to remove the snow and ice just to maintain them in the winter. Tim said to him, that investment should be done in the summer time to improve the structure of the sidewalk. Tim said his point is if we take this route of dedicating one person to building maintenance and another person to help on the crew, with Tim's supervision he could have them work on the sidewalks. The remaining 3 man crew can maintain other issues. Clyde said the Board approved Tim's recommendation last week and recommends staying with that decision.

E. John Leavitt said he is on the fence and doesn't care which way the Board goes because he doesn't think it makes too much difference either, he was just clarifying what was said last week. What was said tonight and what was said last week is a little bit different. Last week it was stated when the full-time maintenance person is caught up with his work, he could help out the Highway crew. Tonight what John is hearing is if Tim needs help on the Highway Department he can take the full-time maintenance guy off for a little while to help out with the Highway crew. He said if you're going to hire a full-time maintenance man, he should be full-time maintenance until he is caught up with his work. Clyde agreed. Tim Allen said that is his intentions and the position he feels the full-time maintenance should have is buildings and grounds. There is also the roundabout that needs to be maintained which is a \$2,100 cost. Tim said he receives a lot of calls about the roundabout, when will it be weeded, when will there be bark mulch added, etc. Clyde said again, the Board stands by their decision they made last week.

5. Election Meals

Diane reported that the Budget Committee reduced Election Meals to \$900 instead of \$1,000.

6. Social Security Costs

Diane said the line for Social Security Costs changed from \$93,666 to \$90,315 and she is not sure why. Kimberley said that line is calculated, there must have been a change in wages, but we need to make sure.

7. Registry of Deeds

Diane reported that the Budget Committee reduced the line for Registry of Deeds from \$200 to \$100.

8. Landuse Tax Map

Diane reported that the Landuse Tax Map line was reduced from \$500 to \$300.

9. Equipment Maintenance in the Police Department Line Item

Diane reported that this line item was reduced from \$950 to \$850. Clyde asked if the Police Chief was okay with that. Diane said he was at the meeting and had no objections.

10. Emergency Management

Diane met with Ed Mical, Emergency Management Director. Ed made the following reductions: Outside Services from \$1,000 down to \$850, emergency supplies from \$1,500 to \$1,300, mileage from \$800 to \$700, and exercises from \$250 to \$200.

11. Parks & Recreation Commission

Diane said there was a wage increase to the salary line. Diane will be meeting with Apryl Blood, from Parks & Recreation, to explain about the expenses that were removed from the Parks & Rec. budget that will be funded from an established capital reserve.

12. Library

Diane reported the \$3,300 approved by the Board was added to the Library for their budget short fall in 2020.

13. Wages

Diane said she needs to go through the 2020 budget for wages to make sure they are all correct. Clyde said the retro pay that was approved in 2019, he said he spoke to the auditor's and there is a way to journal those increases so it hits 2019.

14. Indebtedness

Judy said the Budget Committee wants the maturity dates for the loans the Town has as well as the reconciliation on the Fire Department Loan.

15. Warrant Articles

Judy wants to close two capital reserves, the one for the New Fire Station Site has \$800 plus in it and the Old Fire Station Building Renovation has \$7,100. Clyde asked if the money left in the new Fire Station reserve could be used for landscaping. The Selectman's Office will research the two articles to see what they were established for. Diane is also creating the warrant articles for 2020.

16. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 pm

Board of Selectmen
Clyde Carson – Chairman
Kimberley Edelmann
Judith Newman-Rogers

Recorder of the minutes: Mary Whalen