



Board of Selectmen's Meeting

Rindge Town Office

Date: January 15th, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

Present: Chairman, Karl Pruter, Vice Chair, Bob Hamilton, Select Board Member, Tom Coneys, Town Administrator, Lori Rautiola, Finance Director, Laurie May, and members of the public.

The meeting opened at 5:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Karl.

First Responder Award Ceremony: Police Chief, Rachel Malynowski presented a lifesaving award and commendation letter to Detective Christopher Martin for his selfless action in saving a man's life from drowning on December 21st, 2024.

Selectmen's Announcements: Tom announced the School District Budget Hearing on Thursday, January 16th, 2025, at 6:30 pm at the lobby in Conant High School. Karl announced the Town Deliberative Session will be on Saturday, February 1st at 9:00 am at the Rindge Memorial School Gymnasium and to declare candidacy for Town positions is from January 22nd to January 31st at 4:45 pm. Bob announced the School Deliberative Session will be on Wednesday, February 5th, 2025, at 6:30 pm at Rindge Memorial School. Karl announced there is no Board of Selectmen meeting on February 5th.

Consent Agenda: Karl motioned to accept the Payroll for 01.16.2025 and the minutes from 12.30.2024 and 01.08.2025. Bob seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0. Karl motioned to accept the Accounts Payable for 01.16.2025. Bob seconded the motion, and it passed 2-0-1.

Selectmen's Appointments: Karl motioned to appoint Al Lefebvre to the Local River Management Advisory Committee. Bob seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0.

Citizen's Forum: There were no comments.

Old Business:

Voting Machine: Town Moderator, Kirk Stenersen recommended purchasing Dominion's ImageCast precinct machine through LHS as opposed to VxScan precinct scanner through VotingWorks. He explained that Jaffrey would be using the Dominion machine, which does not require extra equipment, adding that LHS has great customer service and response time and is a well-established company. VotingWorks is only 7 years old. The cost comparison for both is similar. Tom motioned to accept Kirk Stenersen's recommendation to purchase (2) of the Dominion ImageCast precinct machine through LHS. Karl seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0.

New Business:

Acceptance of Donations from the Ingalls Memorial Library: Library Director, Donna Straitiff stated that these donations are to the Town from the Ingalls Memorial Library. The first check of \$3,000 is for purchasing air-conditioning units in the spring and the second check of \$2,000 is for the concrete pad for the generator purchase to be taken out of the budget. Karl motioned to accept the donation of \$3,000 from the Ingalls Memorial Library to purchase air conditioners for the library pursuant to RSA 31:95b. Tom seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0. Karl motioned to accept the donation of \$2,000 from the Ingalls Memorial Library to the town for the pads for the generators pursuant to RSA 31:95b. Bob seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0.

Informational Items, Communications & Updates:

Town and Gown Committee Meeting: Bob stated Franklin Pierce is unsure if they will have a vendor for the beer garden event so they will work with the Police and Fire Department on location. Franklin Pierce also requested that Fire Chief, Rick Donovan give them a list of Special Events permits that they applied for in the previous year so they can apply for them earlier and appointed Dr. Waite as a point of contact at the university for these permits. President, Peter Eden will be inaugurated on Friday, March 7th, 2025, at 4:00 pm at Spagnuolo Hall. The next meeting will be on February 11th at Lakeside and over Zoom. The college fire program is fully staffed with students and is going very well.

Karl stated that the Hazardous Mitigation Plan will be on the agenda for the meeting on January 29th, 2025, and the results of the air quality test are available at the Selectmen's Office if anyone would like to look at the report.

A recess was taken at 6:07 p.m. and the meeting was reconvened at 6:15 pm.

Budget Hearing: At 6:15 p.m. Karl motioned to open the public hearing pursuant to RSA 32:5. Bob seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0. Karl gave a brief overview of the proposed budget. The total proposed budget is \$5,625,278 because of the Budget Advisory Committee's (BAC) recommendation and agreed to by the Board after multiple cuts. The default budget is \$5,487,882. In the 2025 proposed budget, there was an increase of \$81,839 for two police officers, adding \$53,973 for a 53rd work week for all employees, and an increase of \$40,000 for Ambulance Services that were built into the budget and needed to be met before any other needs. There were savings in the 2025 budget, which included almost \$73,000 in switching Health Insurance. Tom added that the town did not meet the request for the Ambulance service so there is another warrant article to make up the difference. Karl added that the phrasing of the warrant article is such that if the budget were to go Default there would be money to provide the service.

Pat Martin, Farrow Road, asked about excluding propane from the town buildings' default budget. Laurie May answered that heat was split between oil and propane but for the default, it is not split. Roberta Oeser, a BAC member, commented that the BAC was very concerned with the original proposed budget, but the current proposal is reasonable as it protects the pay plan and focuses on employee retention. She stated she hopes the entire BAC supports this proposal as expenses have risen. Karl commented that the BAC did a wonderful job and commended them and the board for adhering to the established pay plan. Ashley Saari asked if the budget included a cost-of-living adjustment and/or a scheduled step increase in wages. Bob answered that it includes the step raises in the pay plan and a 2% merit-based wage increase. Daniel Whitney added that no one ever properly estimates the unseen costs of training new employees. He continued that the proposed budget is well-balanced and hopes the town supports the budget at the Deliberative Session in February and the Town Meeting in March.

Bob stated that warrant articles nine and ten are duplicates so article nine can be removed. Karl stated the town's attorney finalized the warrant articles. Karl motioned to recommend Article 13, Ambulance Service. Tom seconded the motion. Bob asked if Article 14, Establish Ambulance Service Expendable Trust Fund is redundant. Tom answered Article 14 covers the \$40,000 difference between the request from the Ambulance Service of \$125,000 and what Rindge offered of \$85,000. Article 13, Ambulance Service ensures the town will pay them \$85,000 if the budget does not pass. Dan Whitney asked if the DRA would accept Article 13. Lori stated that they cannot tell you whether to place a warrant on the ballot and will advise you to defer to your legal counsel. Dan suggested they carefully word the voter's guide on this warrant article, so the voters do not vote against what they want. Tom answered if the budget passes warrant article 13 is null and void no matter what the voters answer. He continued that it is important that the ambulance service is fully funded and maintained. Roberta added she is optimistic that the budget will pass.

Karl stated the Solid Waste Contract Warrant Article is to raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000 for the funding and cost of the solid waste service. If the Operating Budget passes this article will become null and void. If the operating budget fails and this article passes, then the appropriation will be included in the following year's operating budget and default budget. This is to make sure the solid waste contract is funded if the operating budget fails. Roberta stated this should not

be in the warrant as the budgetary impact is only \$2,000, not \$30,000, and the money will be taken out of the revolving fund so the default budget will cover this contract. Laurie May stated that the budget does not show any increase in solid waste for contracted services. The entire increase is coming out of revolving because the Board was looking for cuts. Tom added that the DPW Director believed with the changes in the fee structure the Revolving Fund would cover the increase in the contract, adding that it could be removed from the warrant. Dan Whitney asked for the exact increase in the contract and what amount is being shifted to the revolving fund by the deliberative session on February 1st. Karl added that one of the problems with using revolving funds is that budget numbers disappear, and fees increase. The biggest examples are the Recreation Department and the transfer station. Bob asked Laurie what the estimated total is for Dump Sticker and Punch Card revenue in the coming year with the increased fees. Tom motioned not to place the solid waste contract article on the warrant. Karl seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0.

Karl motioned to recommend the ambulance service article. Bob seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0. Roberta commented that for the Highway Department Capital Reserve Fund the Board of Selectmen are not named as agents to expend. Bob made a motion to amend the Highway Department CRF article to add the phrase "and further to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend." Karl seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0. Karl motioned to recommend the amended article, and it passed 2-1. There was a discussion about the purchase of a truck for the Highway Department. Roberta questioned if they needed to reference the Camping Ordinance in the warrant article. Lori stated that the Camping Ordinance will be put on the website and be available at the Town Office.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Stenersen

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Executive Secretary