



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
October 27, 2021**

Present: Karl Pruter, Chair, Bob Hamilton and Marybeth Quill, Selectmen, Lori Rautiola, Secretary, Members of the Community.

Chairman Pruter called the meeting to order at the Town Office with the Pledge of Allegiance on October 27, 2021 at 6:10 p.m.

Selectmen's Announcements: Karl stated former Finance Director, Laurie May will return as Finance Director. Bob added regretfully, the town will be looking for a new Executive Secretary. Karl stated Rachel Malynowski has been appointed as the new Chief of Police.

Citizen's Forum: No comments were made.

Consent Agenda – Approval of:

- Minutes of the 10/13/2021 Meeting
- Payroll & Accounts Payable 10/21/2021 & 10/28/2021

Bob made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Marybeth seconded the motion and it passed 3-0.

Old Business:

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): Unused vacation time should qualify under the grant requirements. Bob noted Sara Gravell's comp time should be added to the payroll under the ARPA funds. Karl stated what was on the list for this grant should qualify. Bob noted the Finance Department will be audited to provide reports for the money spent. The Fire Department has asked for a canopy for storage and this should qualify as it is needed to store PPE.

New Business:

Treasurer Investment Policy: Bob noted any investment will be prudent. Craig Clark stated currently the Town has about 60% in bonds and 40% in equities.

Town property donation: Rachel Malynowski stated the Department would like to gift newly retired Chief Anair with his service weapon that was issued to him years ago as a token for his service to the Town. Bob made a motion to transfer the ownership of the service weapon to Dan Anair pending all paperwork and to remove the weapon from the Departments inventory list. Marybeth seconded the motion and it passed 3-0.

Copier for Tax Collector & Rec Department: There was a brief discussion on the copier for the Tax Collector. It was noted the Town Clerk has a copier in her office that adjoins with the Tax Collector. Marybeth questioned if it would be possible for the two Departments to share. The Board agreed to research the possibility of the departments sharing the now Town Clerk's copier. The Rec Department is in need of a new copier. Bob made a motion to authorize Sara to make the purchase on a new copier for the Rec Department. Marybeth seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Budget Updates: Bob noted he met with the Rec Department whose budget will have a slight increase, about \$300 in the overall budget. The Police Department's budget went down by about 1%. He also met with the Planning Board whose budget will have a slight increase of about \$6,000. Karl noted he met with the library whose budget has increased minimally. Holly reminded the Board of past Planning Board budgets being much higher than what is being requested for 2022. Craig Clark noted there will be an increase in the Trustee of the Trust Fund budget due to training.

Karl noted the Fire Department will remain flat. Marybeth met with Town Clerk and DPW, both budgets were reasonable. DPW trash contract was re-negotiated, as the Board anticipated; however, the salt has increased substantially.

BTLA Hearings: Bob noted KRT will meet with the residents at the Town Office and the meetings should be completed by December 1, 2021.

Informational Items/Communications & Updates:

Warrant Article 19 Committee update: Dan Whitney and some members of the Warrant Article 19 Committee were present. Dan explained the Committee had decided to focus on the income and asset levels for the Elderly Exemptions since that was where the majority of the "lost tax revenue" comes from. What they discovered was: the consensus of the Committee to work with the town staff to improve the applications and the process of applying for the exemptions. Also, for the Assessing Clerk to be allotted hours in the budget to accomplish the duties. Dan explained the Committee's decision to hold off on changing the income and asset amounts due in part to the timing of the next revaluation and to allow the Assessing Office to send out revaluation letters to all who have the Elderly Exceptions and have them reapply.

Pat Martin stated the Committee was thankful for Mary Drew's assistance and her viewpoints that the program Rindge has now is helpful to residents, and is much easier to do a property tax exemption verses food stamps and she thought it was a preferred way to contribute. Pat added Rindge should be proud of the program currently in place. Roberta noted her concern was the 22 percentile across the State for the amount of exemptions the town grants. Adding people who have more than \$150,000 in assets can most likely afford to pay their taxes therefore, the asset level should be adjusted. Roberta also stated some of the exemptions have been incorrectly applied, so a revaluation is necessary. Some people that are getting the exemption and should not. Roberta noted she is advocating for the tax payers to drop the amount of assets. Karl stated both arguments were not exclusive and he agreed with expanding the Assessing Clerk's hours. Bob and Karl thanked the Committee members for their time and diligence.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Rautiola
Executive Secretary