



Board of Selectmen Meeting
Town Office
Wednesday, 7/10/19
6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: Selectmen: Bob Hamilton, Roberta Oeser, Karl Pruter, Town Administrator Joe Byk, Executive Secretary Michele Christian, Finance Director Laurie May
Members of the community: Holly Koski, Sharon Rasku, Phyllis McKoon, Roniele Hamilton, Deb Sawyer, Burt Goodrich, Janet Goodrich, Kelen Geiger, Jane Hershey, Tom Coneys, Cheryl McCabe-Charron, Jim Qualey, Deb Qualey, Tim Wessels, Al Lefebvre, Susan Wessels.

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was opened at 6:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Selectmen's Announcements – Roberta stated that the show for the 4th of July was great and it was well attended. Bob stated that a letter was received from Town Clerk Nancy Martin. She and her husband will be looking for a home in the south and she is resigning in September. She has worked for the town for 20 years and Bob would like to thank her for her dedicated service.

Bob read a prepared statement. Last Wednesday night at the Board of Selectmen meeting there was a motion for a second non-public session which was seconded by Karl. Bob opposed this meeting because he was unaware of what was to be discussed and he was not prepared for. At the meeting there was a vote not to renew Joe Byk's contract. The vote was 2-1 and Bob was the opposing vote. It was Bob's strong preference to renew Joe's contract. Bob stated that it is his belief that the non-public session and its outcome were previously determined. In April he set a number of goals. He stated that the number one goal is to treat all employees with fairness, respect and trust. He said that it seems to be a singular goal. With that being said, Joe despite be harassed, humiliated, berated, belittled and badgered you have shown integrity, commitment, fortitude and extreme patience while you continued to perform your duties. Apparently, my thoughts were not

shared so this is to you Joe I thank you for all of your hard work and wish you the best for the future. Joe thanked Bob and the people of Rindge who he enjoyed working with. Roberta stated that Bob made accusations. Bob asked Roberta if she had an announcement. Roberta said that she had a right to respond to his accusations and that Karl didn't even know that she was going to call a second non-public. She stated that Bob was derelict in his duties by not calling a meeting for the purpose of reviewing Joe's contract at least a month ago. She asked Bob when he was planning to review the contract. Bob said that he wouldn't have called a meeting that no one knew about. Bob said that she could have let him know via e-mail or a note but instead there was a meeting that he was unprepared for and was unable to prepare for.

Citizen's Forum

Bob read the procedure for Citizens Forum. Roni Hamilton read an open letter to Joe Byk. She also had read a statement to Selectman Karl Pruter. These are available at the town office. Phyllis McKoon asked why there was always people leaving before Joe came to the town office and they now are staying a so why is this happening? Why would you not renew Joe's contract if he is getting the job done. Phyllis also stated that the minutes stated July 2nd but the meeting was on July 3rd. Bob stated that the minutes would be corrected at this meeting. Phyllis also wanted to know why the minutes were not sealed because it was a personnel issue. She also stated that she saw nothing in the non-public minutes that would cause his contract not to be renewed. Cheryl McCabe-Charron wanted to thank Joe for his service and wished him good luck. Tom Coneys stated his surprise about this decision and is not sure how to approach it. It is a disappointment for the town that we are losing a great individual after many years of chaos in the town office. He asked why Joe was fired because his contract is a public record and wants to know if there was a non-personnel issue. He said that Joe has done a great job with the budget and he doesn't understand the decision. He said that Karl made a management decision that affects the entire town after only four months. Tom said that it indicates to him that there is collusion between Karl and Roberta and they made a very bad decision. Tom said that it indicates to him that there is collusion between Karl and Roberta and they made a very bad decision. There was no disciplinary against Joe. What he has brought to the town is a very solid staff and a good financial situation. If it can be discussed and there is rationale then people might accept it. The department heads liked him and worked well with Joe and the rest of the staff. Al Lefebvre wants to express his concern for the selectmen and there are a lot of things that the public doesn't know. He wants to express his thanks to the Selectmen when making decisions that are for the best of the town.

Holly said that he was also on the search committee and she is going to miss Joe. Kelen stated that she was on the committee and it was a long process. She said that they took

all the information passed it to the Board. She said that Joe is the most honest person that she knows. He has never spoken badly about any of the employees and was always kind even when she lost her temper.

Jim Qualey stated a few facts one that he has worked more closely with Joe than anyone else in this room because he was Board Chair for a year and a half. He has been a real asset to the town. He was always available. He stated that in his opinion the Selectmen made a huge mistake and he is very disappointed. He stated that one Selectmen has conducted a shameful and disgraceful campaign against Joe. The town office has operated efficiently with high morale since Joe has been here. Deb Sawyer asked if any of these remarks would make a difference. She asked if the Board knows how people regard him in town. Joe has come here and done a wonderful job. Karl said that he would not do a job review of Joe in a public forum, it would not be fair to him.

Janet Goodrich stated that there are employees in town and the public is not in a position to evaluate performance. The Selectmen are in a position to evaluate Joe and there is information that the public is not privy to and the townspeople have to trust.

Kelen Geiger also asked if there was a committee being formed for the new Town Administrator. Bob said that it takes a lot of time to get people in and have it reviewed by a search committee.

Roni stated that the disgusting treatment has got to stop. Phyllis McKoon said that Karl said that the review process is flawed. Tom Coneys said that he wanted a revote.

Holly reported that there is a farmer's market tomorrow from 3-6.

Roberta stated that personnel issues are not discussed in public. The minutes from a non-public did not have to be sealed per the state statutes. Any votes that occur during a non-public have to be available.

Karl applauded those who gave positive comments about Joe. He said he likes him as many people in the town do. He also stated that it was inferred that something bad happened that caused Joe's contract not to be renewed and that is not the case.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Changes to the Consent Agenda

1. Consent Agenda

2. Approval of:

- **Minutes 7-10-19**
- **Payroll 7-18-19, 7-25-19**
- **Accounts payable 7-18-19, 7-25-19**

Karl made a motion to approve the payroll and accounts payable seconded by Bob. Approved 3-0-0.

Bob made a motion to accept the minutes of 7/10/19, seconded by Karl with Roberta abstaining. Vote 2-0-1

Old Business - There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

a) Cemetery Trustees request.

Bob stated that Burt Goodrich and the cemetery trustees have been working on a five year plan to improve the cemeteries. They are requesting to spend up to \$12,000. They have done a wonderful job making repairs, trimming trees at the Meeting House Cemetery and sealing the lanes in the Hillside Cemetery.

Bob thanked Burt Goodrich, Bill Harper and Doug Hoyt for taking on this task. Burt spoke about the work that has been done thus far and he thanked the DPW for their help with maintenance of the cemeteries. Roberta asked if he knew of someone who does stone wall work. Burt said that they have talked to three contractors but none of them have given a proposal yet.

Roberta made a motion that the cemetery trustees move forward with more repairs not to exceed \$12,100 seconded by Karl. Approved 3-0-0

b) Budget Review – May revenues and expenditures

There are some issues with the budget. Some of the departments are overspent. Karl stated that the IT budget is underfunded but we need to move forward getting new equipment for the dated machines that need to be replaced. Karl said that our new IT vendor expects the replacements and he may not be willing to stay on with us if that doesn't happen. Bob says that the Welfare budget has had some extraordinary expenses

and they are already 85% spent as of June. Bob expects the Welfare budget to be \$50,000 over.

Tom Coneys said that if you are looking for more money in the budget you just found \$22,000 in Joe's salary. Bob asked that the department heads be notified that there will be no discretionary spending.

Informational Items/Communications

Committee Updates

Bob moved that we take a vote in public for transparency that we renew and renegotiate Joe Byk's contract, seconded by Karl. Bob voted yes and Roberta and Karl voted no.

The town administrator position was discussed. Roberta said there was nothing from the newspaper ads. The ad will be posted on Indeed, Craigslist, NHMA and Facebook. The ad will have a deadline of August 5, and a meeting will be scheduled the week of August 12th to review resumes.

Roberta has an electronic file of the ad and will send it to Michele for posting.

Roberta made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Karl.

Approved 3-0-0

Adjournment 7:10 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Michele Christian

Executive Secretary