



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN/BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JOINT SESSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Present: Roberta Oeser, Chair, Bob Hamilton and Karl Pruter, Selectmen, Sara Gravell, Town Administrator, Laurie May, Finance Director, Lori Rautiola, Executive Secretary, Members of the Community

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chair, Roberta Oeser, called the meeting to order via Zoom on December 2, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Selectmen's Announcements: Roberta announced the Board would be following Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04 until further notice. Roberta announced the Tree lighting on the Common would be Friday, December 4th at 7p.m., social distancing and masks will be required. Roberta also noted the Rec. Department's Senior Dinner will December 10 and the meals will be delivered to residents doors. This event is for Rindge residents only.

Bob congratulated the honorable Dr. James Qualey, Kevin Avard, and Mathew Santonastaso on their victories.

Citizen's Forum: Jeff Dickler questioned the Planning Board meeting in person with Covid still lurking. He stated they should be meeting via Zoom; adding there are people that want to attend but due to health concerns they cannot attend in person. He requested the Board mandate the Planning Board to meet virtually, not in person. He mentioned he would be happy to donate something for the audio so it would be better quality. Roberta explained the Board does not have authority over the Planning Board and cannot mandate them to do so. Jeff disagreed stating it was a lie. Roberta added the Board has suggested each Department operate as they see fit.

Consent Agenda - Approval of:

- Minutes 11/10/2020, 11/18/2020
- Payroll 11/26/2020, 12/03/2020

- Accounts Payable 11/26/2020, 12/03/2020
- Special Events Permit – Tree lighting on The Common

Karl made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Bob seconded the motion and it passed by roll call vote 3-0.

Old Business: Roberta announced the new tax rate was \$22.45. Tax Bills will go out on Monday, December 7th. Karl noted the town portion of the tax rate is much smaller than the school portion and suggested the town produce a graph that shows the breakdown of the town, school and county portions that make up the budget.

Code Enforcement: Sara noted a letter was sent to the owner of the commercial operation on Robbins Road. It was brought to Sara's attention the feather flag was back out in front of the Verizon Store and questioned how the Board would like to proceed with a second violation. Roberta stated she would stop by the store and speak with the owners.

Intent to Cut- Map 9 Lot 17: Karl made a motion to approve the intent to cut on map 9 lot 17, Chadwick Road. Bob seconded the motion and it passed by roll call vote 3-0.

Camper Permit: A camper permit has been submitted by Sven Heistad with a 90 day request. Roberta noted the camper permit is only good for 60 days and he would have to go before the ZBA for a variance for the 90 days. Sven agreed to the permit until 12/31/2020 and will re-apply for 2021. Karl made a motion to approve the camper permit for Map 1 Lot 11-5. Bob seconded the motion and it passed by roll call vote 3-0.

CIP Recommendations: The Board concurred with the recommendation for the Fire Engine 1 lease payment. There was discussion on the CIP Committee's recommendation for the police cruiser. This cruiser would replace unit 4 next year. Roberta stated due to this being on a warrant article, it could potentially be voted down. Chief Anair responded he understood the risk but if it did not go through the CIP they would not have the funds to purchase the cruiser regardless; adding the cruiser is needed and due to Covid, it is very hard to find a cruiser to purchase. Chief Anair stated the Department was fortunate enough to have found this one and strongly encouraged the Board to support the recommendation. He continued stating it is important to maintain a fleet of cruisers and the Department has already exceeded the life expectancy on the 2013 cruiser. The discussion continued on the rotation of cruisers. Bob stated Dan was willing to take the risk and the warrant article should proceed.

Roberta noted the payment #2 on the Rescue vehicle needs to be put on a warrant article and cannot be included in the budget. Bob asked Sara to get the figures for the total amount due of the second payment on the four year lease for the rescue vehicle.

The Highway Garage roof needs to be replaced and the CIP Committee's recommendation overall was to support this with \$50,000 which may be high; however, due to the cost of materials the full amount was the final recommendation.

The CIP Committee recommended \$10,000 for the Library Expendable Trust. Karl noted he would like to hear from the Library. Roberta mentioned it was a lot of money to spend on one building and stated the highway garage needs a new roof and the money should be distributed evenly. Bob concurred adding the Library Expendable Trust recommendation was presented as a last minute request.

Roberta noted to remove the recommendation for the Revaluation due to someone at the DRA had informed her they were no longer required by law to conduct a five year physical inspection on each property. The next time it would need to be done is 2030. This will be a significant savings.

Bob noted the International Dump/Plow Fund was established as a saving account and should help with future purchases in 2022. Bob stated he was in favor of the Cemetery Expandable Trust and was unsure of the highway garage roof costs, due to the cost of the fluctuating prices of building materials.

The discussion returned to the police cruiser. Holly Koski stated the Town needs to find a way to pay for the cruiser. Tom Coney agreed with Holly stating he supported Chief Anair in moving forward with the request for the cruiser and taking a chance it does not pass on the warrant. Tom mentioned the Committee did question the highway roof, but he and Dan Whitney agreed \$50,000 should cover it. Karl agreed with the recommendations for the roof as well as asking for the \$30,000 for the cruiser. Sharon Rasku strongly agreed with Dan and Tom. Dan noted the maintenance budget was overspent this year by \$5,000. If the cruiser is not purchased this year the maintenance budget would be overspent even more next year. Dan continued, adding the Department has done a good job with maintaining a solid fleet of cruisers and he would like to be able to continue to do so. Roberta mentioned in the past the maintenance budget was upwards of \$10,000.

Tom stated the CIP Committee feels it is important to support the cruiser and that it is smart to maintain the fleet of cruisers; adding, the Town could be down a cruiser if this does not get passed by the voters. Bob and Roberta concurred.

New Business: Roberta noted there has been some information given to the Moderator regarding the procedures for deliberative sessions and elections. She mentioned the State has allowed the Moderator and Select Board to hold the deliberative session via Zoom if they feel it is unsafe to hold the meeting in person. She asked for a show of hands in support of holding a virtual Deliberative Session. No hands were raised. Roberta stated she was not in favor. It was mentioned the Town may reach out to Franklin Pierce on possibly using one of their facilities that could accommodate a larger gathering and most likely have the technology to have a two way meeting. Judy Unger Clark mentioned it was a good idea to discuss these issues ahead of time and the Board needs to come up with a safe plan so all can attend public hearings safely. Judy questioned if the state had required the municipalities to meet via zoom. Roberta responded that the State did not require but allowed municipalities to meet virtually; however, the State has left it up to the individual town to make those decisions as they see fit. Judy stated there needs to be a two way Zoom meeting so people can feel safe and attend virtually. She reiterated what Jeff Dickler stated in the beginning of the meeting, regarding the Planning Board.

Bob stated FPU may not want such a large group of people within their facilities, they are keeping it locked down to the students in order to slow the spread. Bob mentioned the State held an outside meeting for the State Representatives and Senators to be sworn in, adding it would be a possibility to have Deliberative outside.

Karl mentioned if you are going to have public meetings in a public place it needs to be done effectively. Roberta stated as far as the Planning Board goes, it is very hard to look at plans of a subdivision when it is done virtually as there are so many details to the plans. Roberta supported the PB on having their meetings in person as well as Zoom. Karl pointed out the Board should look into other options for public meetings. Roberta reiterated the Selectmen have no authority over the PB. Karl responded the State does have authority and we should look into it more. Judy agreed with Karl. Roberta noted the PB has always made it available for the public to make a comment via phone, email or regular mail.

Informational Items/Communications and Updates:

Sara noted Consolidated has been making progress with the splicing. She also noted the process on rekeying the town buildings has started at the Town Office.

Karl stated there was an issue with the vacation pay. Roberta mentioned this should be a discussion for non-public. Bob stated the Board will not allow the officers to lose their vacation pay and agreed with Roberta that it would be discussed in a non-public meeting. Chief Anair stated he understood the Board's concerns, but felt it was just delaying the inevitable; adding it is not just an issue for one officer but for several. He stated he did not want to wait until last minute, the year ends and it is potentially too late.

Any Other Business before the Board

Roberta stated there has been poor communication from the school on their 2021 budget.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Rautiola