

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Hope Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, January 10, 2017
6:30 PM
Hope Town Office

Executive Session:

- The Board of Selectmen entered into Executive Session at 5:45 PM Pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §2702 (1) (A) – Town Attorney Interviews
- The Board of Selectmen exited Executive Session at 6:25 PM

Board Members Present:

- Brian Powers Jr., David Bosken, Wendy Pelletier & Dick Crabtree

Others Present:

- Samantha Mank, Langley Willauer, John Monroe & Ryan Herz

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Brian.

Public Comment: None

Minutes:

- Dick made a motion to accept the 12/27/16 minutes as written. Seconded by David.
Motion passed 4-0

Administrator's Report:

- Informed the Selectmen that the 45-30 day notices were mailed out and that there were 10 properties that have 2015 tax liens which could possibly become tax acquired by the Town on January 31, 2017 which is the lowest number since 2008.
- Updated the Selectmen about the Planning Board meeting on January 4, 2017 regarding the Hobbs Pond Dam repair. The application was approved with 3 conditions: (1) Corrected book/page for the easement deeds from 1989 on the permit application, (2) HFPA will choose an engineer to certify to the CEO that the proposed design will restore the water to the historic levels and are consistent with the DEP requirements, & (3) Once the construction is complete, an engineer will certify to the CEO that it was built to specifications.
- After much review of all of the documents, it was concluded that the Monroe's property is not a part of the Oaks/CELL subdivision and I recommended writing a letter to the Monroe's detailing this.
- The Selectmen received the 2nd quarter financial report. The operating accounts have increased steadily. 84.77% of the expected budgeted revenues have been recognized and 49.88% of the expected budgeted expenses have been spent as of December 31st.

New Business:

- **Award Tax Acquired Property (Bull Hill) Bid:** There were 2 bids for the property that were opened in a public forum on Friday, December 30, 2016. The first bid was from Kim Herz for \$21,000. The second bid was from C. Douglas Johnstone for \$21,500. Ryan Herz requested an opportunity to speak with the Selectmen prior to awarding the bid. He told the Selectmen that his bid was lower than the other bid by \$500. He was there speaking to them because he knew that they had reserved the right to accept or reject any and all bids. He said

that he had already been approved for a construction loan and intended on building a house on the property. He is just coming out of a 16-year failed marriage and this is a perfect way to start over. He asked them to strongly take in to account the “human factor” and accept his bid over the higher one. Dick was unsure about how much latitude the selectmen actually had or what criteria they had to go by other than the actual bid itself. Having a home on the land would be good for the town as it would increase its taxable value. However, something could come up and Ryan’s project might not happen although he has good intentions. The best option for the taxpayers is to take the highest bid. Therefore, Dick made a motion to accept the \$21,500 bid. It was seconded by Wendy.

Motion passed 4-0

- **Road Commissioner’s Report:** On Monday, 1/2/17 around lunchtime, David was almost at the salt/sand shed on a day when there was no storm, no snow, and no ice. He passed a Farley & Sons truck loaded with sand. As he pulled into the parking lot he could still smell the trucks exhaust so he knew it had just left the sand shed. When he opened the sand shed door he noticed that approximately 2/3 of the sand was gone. He wanted to know why did Farley & Sons have a truck full of sand when it was not needed and where has all of the sand gone? John told the Selectmen that we have gone through more sand this year than we ever have in the past up to this point in time. The Road Commissioner informed the Selectmen that he had received a call on December 29th that Farley & Sons had sanded a private driveway with town sand. A couple of days later he received another call from the same resident saying that it had happened again and this time there were 2 witnesses. John called Farley & Sons and spoke with Mike. At that time, Mike said that the plow driver was just stopping at a family members house but that he would check into it. John received the follow up call from Farley & Sons and was told that it was not town sand. The loader at the sand shed was broke down so the roads were being sanded with sand from Farley & Sons. This was an issue a few years ago, and it was expressly addressed that Farley & Sons could not use any other sand on Hope roads other than that that belonged to the Town. The resident called John again and wanted to know what the Town was going to do about it. As the Road Commissioner, he felt an obligation to bring the matter before the Board of Selectmen and informed the resident that his identity would not be kept confidential once it was officially reported. John doesn’t know how to specifically handle this. He did say that the Town should know that the plowing of the roads is a big job and we don’t want to find ourselves without a snowplowing contract this late in the season. The Selectmen decided to check around with other surrounding towns to see what percentage of sand/salt they have used so far. In addition, see who other towns that do not have a public works department are using for plowing their roads. There was also a complaint that the Hope sand was being used to sand the school parking lot. The school has a separate contract and their plower is to supply their own sand. The Selectmen will review the current contract and continue the discussion at the next meeting.
- **Advertise Invitation to bid for Town Mowing Contract:** The Administrator will place an ad that will run for 5 weeks as an invitation to bid for the Town mowing contract. The bids will be opened publicly on Friday March 10, 2017 at 2:00 PM. The Selectmen will award the bid at the following Selectmen’s meeting on Tuesday, March 14, 2017 at 6:30 PM.
- **Town Snowplowing Contract:** The current contract ends at the close of this snow season. The Selectmen have the option of extending the contract for an additional 2 years. Although everyone is pleased with the service, the Selectmen would like to review all of the previous bids before making a decision on extending or advertising for an invitation to bid.
- **Roads Snowplowing Contract:** The current contract ends at the closing of this snowplowing season. The Selectmen have the option of extending the contract for an additional 2 years.

The Selectmen would like to review the current contract as well as all of the previous bids before making a decision on extending or advertising for an invitation to bid.

Old Business:

- **Finalize Budget Calendar and Budget Process:** Administrator reported that the Budget Committee approved the proposed calendar. Samantha expressed to the Selectmen that since the entire budget is the Selectmen's budget, she would like the department heads to present their budgets to the Selectmen before any presentation to the Budget Committee. This would make sure that the Selectmen had ample time to review and hear the rationale to any of the proposed department budgets. Department Heads must submit their budgets to the bookkeeper by January 25th. Preliminary budget books may be available for the selectmen by Feb. 1st. Once the Selectmen have heard all of the budget proposals, the bookkeeper will make the appropriate adjustments and budget books would then be available for the budget committee.
- **Delinquent Personal Property Taxes:** The Selectmen have discussed removing some outstanding, uncollectable, and burdensome personal property taxes from the municipal books. The Assessor provided a copy of the statute that would legally allow the Selectmen to do so. Dick made a motion based upon 30 M.R.S. 105 §760-A Minor or burdensome amounts, that the Selectmen vote to remove all personal property taxes that have been assessed from the municipal books. It was seconded by Wendy.

Motion passed 4-0

- **Delinquent Real Estate Taxes:** The Tax Collector asked if the Selectmen would authorize the payment of \$45.23 from the Hope Chest for delinquent taxes in order to avoid acquiring the property through automatic foreclosure. David said the Hope Chest is to be used for charitable causes and that this did not meet that standard. The Selectmen decided to take no action on the matter.
- **Marijuana Moratorium process discussion:** The Administrator provided a sample moratorium warrant as well as a sample ban warrant for the Selectmen to review. Dick expressed that this is a highly-charged topic and that as Selectmen they want to make sure they do it right. He suggested taking no action until an attorney could review the documents. All of the Selectmen agreed.

Other Business:

- David discussed the need for the Selectmen who are also the Assessors to know how the assessing process works. It is the other half of the Selectmen's responsibility. It seems as though it is a very vague process. He would like the assessing to be more transparent and less of a mystery. He suggested a pamphlet that taxpayers could read to know how their property is assessed and why they are charged the amount on their tax bills.

Warrants:

- Dick made a motion to approve and sign warrants 52,53,54, and 55. Seconded by Wendy.

Motion passes 4-0.

Adjournment:

- David made a motion to adjourn at 9:09. Seconded by Dick.

Motion Passes 4-0.