

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S & ASSESSORS' MEETING
Hope Board of Selectmen
Hope Board of Assessors'
Tuesday, July 25, 2017
6:30 PM
Hope Town Office

Board Members Present:

- Brian Powers Jr., Wendy Pelletier, Dick Crabtree, and Sarah Ann Smith

Others Present:

- Samantha Mank, Mary Tolles, Vern Ziegler, and John Monroe

Call to Order: Board of Assessors

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

Public Comment: None

New Business:

- Tax Commitment – Assessors' Agent, Vern Ziegler: Vern presented the Assessors with two municipal tax rate calculation forms. He explained how all of the calculations were made. The Board will determine the mil rate based on these calculations. Although there was an increase in the towns valuation, they were lost due to the higher approved county, municipal and school budgets. Also, Homestead exemptions increased from \$15,000 last year to \$20,000 this year but the reimbursement rate did not increase as the state had promised. In order to meet all the budgeted obligations, the Assessors must choose a mil rate of .0148 (14.8) with an overlay of \$18,900.06 or a mil rate of .0149 (14.9) with an overlay of \$39,122.66. The overlay is money that is used for things like tax abatements. After much discussion, Dick made a motion to set the mil rate at .0148 for this tax year with an overlay of \$18,900.06. It was seconded by Sarah.

Motion passed 4-0

- Signatures required on past previously approved abatement form: A house keeping item needed to be handled. Original signatures were needed on an abatement that was already approved last year and had been properly processed. The Assessors who were on the Board at the time signed the paperwork.
- Adjournment: Sarah made a motion to recess the Board of Assessors. Seconded by Wendy.

Motion passed 4-0

Call to Order: Board of Selectmen – Brian called the meeting to order at 6:57 PM

Public Comment: None

Minutes from 7/11/17 meeting:

- Dick made a motion to approve the minutes as written. It was seconded by Wendy.
Motion passed 4-0

Town Administrator Report:

- Received information from MMA legal regarding the legality of accepting electronic signatures on A/P and payroll warrants from school board members and superintendent. Selectmen may choose to accept the electronic signatures or not. The law that specifically applies to local governments (*10 M.R.S.A ch. 1051*) states that both parties to the transaction have to agree on using electronic signatures and for which documents. In short it is legal. However, MMA did suggest having some sort of policy in place for particular safe guards such as tampering and making sure that the signatures were actually “authorized”. The Town Administrator will contact the Board of Education and the Listserv for sample policies on this matter.
- Last week, a representative from TRIO came to the Town Office to give trainings on using the code enforcement module and the payport module. I have been digitizing the property jacket information and getting the various permits and other information uploaded into to TRIO.
- Dick and I had a phone conference with DEP/EPA last Thursday regarding current status of Union Chemical superfund site.
- 42 liens were filed on 7/25/2017 totaling \$76,573.33 for delinquent 2017 real estate taxes.
- There are 13 outstanding 2016 real estate tax accounts totaling \$23,791.24 with liens that will automatically foreclose in January 2018 if the accounts remain delinquent.

New Business:

- Quarterly Financial Report – Bookkeeper, Mary Tolles: Mary presented a preliminary 4th quarter financial report to the Board of Selectmen. There were a couple of line items that went over budget. The Town Administrator had reported on this in a previous meeting. Mary is also beginning to prepare for the annual audit. Mary informed the Selectmen that the town does not have a mechanism to have a line item vacation accounting liability as a result of the revision to the Personnel Policy. There is currently nothing in the budget and a liability line is needed. She suggested using \$5,000 as a carry-over from the admin line to make a reserve account for vacation payouts. Wendy made a motion to carry over \$5,000 from the unspent administration budget and to create a reserve account for vacation and sick time benefits. It was seconded by Sarah.
Motion passed 4-0
- Roads Salt & Sand, Updates - Road Commissioner, John Monroe:
 - Salt & Sand: The Road Commissioner will be getting some paperwork so that the sand bid can be awarded. John is still recommended Lucas. He also made inquiries about purchasing some road salt. He made calls to several different companies. Neither Harcros nor Morton returned his call. New England’s price is \$58.39. John is suggesting that the Selectmen approve the salt purchase from New England. Brian

asked if the Road Commissioner had received anything in writing yet. John stated that he will have bid proposals at the next Selectmen's meeting.

- Paving: The Road Commissioner and the Town Administrator had some discussion regarding the paving contractor because the contractor was asked to provide proof of insurance and to provide a performance bond. After some consideration, the Road Commissioner waived the bond. The worker's comp and liability certificates have been sent to the town. The contractor still has not signed a contract. Brian wanted to know how much longer the town should wait before awarding the contract to a different bidder? The Road Commissioner suggested that the Selectmen wait until the next meeting before withdrawing the contract award.
- Plowing: The plowing contractor now has 3 sanders. 2 of them are like new. He has obtained all of his trucks and they are being rigged now. The Road Commissioner believes the plowing contractor will be ready by the September 1st deadline.
- Recess Board of Selectmen- Reconvene as Board of Assessors:
- Dick made a motion the recess as the Board of Selectmen and to reconvene as the Board of Assessors at 7:50 PM. It was seconded by Sarah.
Motion passed 4-0
- Vern presented the Assessors with the Assessment Warrant/Assessors Certification of Assessment for their signatures. Dick made a motion to accept and to sign as it has prepared. It was seconded by Sarah.
Motion passed 4-0
- Dick made a motion to adjourn as the Board of Assessors and to reconvene as the Board of Selectmen at 8:00 PM. It was seconded by Sarah. **Motion passed 4-0**
- Union Chemical Update: The state has written the permanent environmental covenants for the former Union Chemical site. The state will also be seeking to have the property removed from Receivership. The Selectmen will need to determine if this issue will go before the voters again to see if the town want to take it back or they will have to vote to not take it back. The Selectmen will see if the Town Attorney, Bill Kelly, is the right person to discuss the matter with or if he could direct the Selectmen to the right place. Dick reiterated that as a Board they need to decide if "we" as a town want it back or not.
- Maine Municipal Association Annual Election: Sarah made a motion to have the Town Administrator vote for the Town Hope in the MMA Annual Election. Seconded by Dick.
Motion passes 4-0

Old Business:

- Support Letter for Coastal Mountain Land Trust Discussion: There was much discussion about the pros and cons of preserved lands. Dick pointed out that all of the money that the CMLT is trying to get a grant for was already approved in a statewide referendum vote. Since the money is going to get spent, it might as well have some of it spent in Hope. Sarah spoke about the beauty of the undeveloped land which is actually an attraction and could provide more business to the couple of stores that are in town. Brian and Wendy are opposed to supporting the acquisition and control of publicly owned land and the many restrictions that are placed on those lands once they've been put into a permanent Land Trust. Dick made a motion to sign a letter of support from the Coastal Mountain Land Trust to purchase a

Conservation Easement from the Maine Water Company. It was seconded by Sarah.
Motion fails 2-2 (*Brian & Wendy*)

Other Business:

- The voters at the Annual Town Meeting voted to exercise the “Put Option” and finalize the towns dealings with PERC. The Selectmen signed a letter informing PERC & MRC of that vote.

Review & Sign Warrants #'s:

- The Selectmen reviewed the warrants. Dick made a motion to approve and sign warrants # 5, 6, & 7. It was seconded by Sarah.
Motion passed 4-0

Adjournment:

- Dick made a motion to adjourn at 8:41 PM. It was seconded by Sarah.
Motion passed 4-0