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Board of Selectmen Minutes 02/07/2012

Board of Selectmen's
Meeting Minutes
February 7, 2012

Present: Selectmen Russell Galpin, Lou Ann Rousseau and Steven Venezia, John Stetser, Iris Campbell, William Goss, Kelly Dearborn-Luce, Dana Brien, Lauralee LoMonaco, Luke Levesque, Patricia Matheson, Glen Matheson and Administrative Assistant Wendy Brien-Baker.

Mr. Galpin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Galpin asked if anyone had anything for public comment?

Mr. Venezia made a statement that he feels they have been a reactive Board and hopes they can become a pro-active Board. They need to continue to develop policies, work as a team and develop things to change the Town while working with the Economic Development Commission.

Mrs. Rousseau said they will be able to set goals after town meeting.

Mr. Galpin said they need to take the lead instead of follow.

6:05 p.m. Phoebe Galpin and Virginia Burton entered the meeting.

The Board signed the following:

- a. Selectmen's Meeting Minutes 01/31/2012 - Mr. Galpin asked for an amendment to the minutes on page 4 as follows: Chief Roarick said Mr. Stetser had called to say the Board wanted him to trim his budget to ~~by~~ 5%. He has trimmed it to ~~by~~ 4.9%, by removing \$20,000 for a new cruiser and placing that into a warrant article for the Town to vote on. This leaves \$10,000 for the lease payment on the new cruiser.
- b. Payroll Voucher #6
- c. Sign Permit
- d. Tax Abatement

6:08 p.m. Shane O'Keefe, Bob Johnson, Yvonne Wiegelman, David Roarick and Charles Gaides entered the meeting.

Mr. Johnson spoke to the Board about a group of senior citizens that have come together regarding the need for a senior center. A census for Hillsborough and Deering was looked at which showed the seniors account for 24% of the population in the two towns. He read a proposed article recognizing the formation of the senior group.

6:15 p.m. Gail Johnson entered the meeting.

Mr. Galpin said the Board has a tentative article currently in the warrant. He read the article as follows: "To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the amount of **Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00)** from the account "Hillsboro Senior Outings" for the purpose of recognizing and supporting the Hillsborough Senior Services Committee to research and develop programs for seniors."

Mrs. Brien explained the funds from the Hillsboro Senior Outings account is a regular savings account held by the Town Treasurer. She said it hasn't been added to in many years.

Mr. Galpin said he agrees with the article.

Mrs. Rousseau asked how it would effect Mrs. Brien.

Mrs. Brien stated there is some confusion as to what was intended with her hours when she became full-time. She said if the Board asks her to she will help out with the senior group as long as it does not effect her ability to stay within her welfare budget.

6:22 p.m. Leigh Bosse entered the meeting.

Mrs. Wiegelman said this group had the benefit of a good volunteer base.

Mr. Brien said she is excited to hear there is a large number of seniors wanting to move forward and will be glad to help everything move forward.

Mr. Galpin said the article will be in the warrant.

Mrs. Matheson said the group has found a space available for them and Peter Brigham has told her the van would be available for them to use.

Mr. Venezia asked where the facility is.

Mrs. Matheson answered the Valley Bible Chapel.

Mr. Gaides said the Town of Deering will have a similar article on their warrant also.

Mr. Galpin asked for the figures for COLA increases for the non-union employees. Mr. Stetser handed out calculations including 2, 3 & 4%

Mr. Galpin said he had done his own calculations of a 1.5% increase and asked what time of year the increases would go into effect.

Mr. Stetser said after Town Meeting.

Mrs. Campbell said the personnel policy state it is to be after Town Meeting.

Mr. Stetser said he wanted to make a statement that these non-union employees are very important to the town, with most being department heads having many years of experience. He feels now that the union negotiations are over, we should shine the light on our core employees, keep the town running smoothly and make sure people want to come to work.

Mr. Galpin agreed but had one concern. When he calculated his figures, he did not include Lauralee LoMonaco because she received quite an increase last year when her job description was changed and turned out to be more than he intended because he based his figures on 40 hours versus 35.

Mr. O'Keefe stated that he thinks they are getting their monies worth out of Lauralee, she is here working much more than the 35 hours that she is paid for, the quality and amount of work she does is a bargain.

Mr. Galpin and Mrs. Rousseau agreed.

Mr. Stetser said he is asking the Board to approve the COLA, he would forego any COLA that he would receive and would allow it to be used towards Lauralee's increase.

Mr. Venezia asked where the wage study the Board wanted completed stands?

Mr. Stetser said he has all the paperwork to initiate it and it will cost approximately \$7,000 to do the study on all employees.

Mr. Venezia asked if the study would include job descriptions and Mr. Stetser answered yes and said they had

planned on doing the study in 2013 but didn't see any reason why it couldn't be done in 2012, if there was money to do it.

Mr. Bosse pointed out that Henniker just did a wage study and perhaps they would share that with us.

Mr. Stetser was asked to check with Henniker.

Mr. Galpin brought up an issue regarding one union employee being grandfathered to keep the current buyout and asked do we grandfather the non-union employees currently on the buyout?

Mrs. Campbell pointed out there are 4 non-union employees that currently receive the buyout.

Mr. Galpin said the plan was to reduce the buyout to \$1,500 this year.

Mr. Venezia asked what the employees thoughts were on everything being discussed.

Mr. Levesque said he has looked into his situation and if the buyout is reduced to \$1,500 he will be forced to take the Town's insurance, which will be an approximate \$5,000-\$6,000 increase to his budget.

Mr. Bosse said the citizens of Hillsborough recognize the job the employees are doing and would support raises.

Mr. O'Keefe reminded the Board that he ran numbers last summer showing a comparison of the cost of living adjustments from a federal standpoint versus local. The local was not going up as the federal was and he provided a projection of the loss of buying power and it was significant.

Mrs. Campbell asked if the study would be done by an outside company. Mr. Stetser said the quote he has is from the Local Government Center.

Mr. Goss said they are not accurate.

Chief Roarick said he thinks there is a conflict of interest with LGC because we pay them and they look at population only. He feels they need to look at demographics.

Mr. Goss asked if the Board has given any thought to giving longevity pay that the union employees have in their contract to the non-union employees.

Mr. Galpin said he does not agree with the method used to figure it and believes longevity is what giving raises is for.

Mrs. Rousseau said she leans towards grandfathering the buyout.

Mrs. Rousseau made a motion to grandfather the non-union employees currently receiving the health insurance buyout at \$3,750. Mr. Venezia seconded the motion. The Board voted all in favor.

Mr. Venezia made a motion to adopt a new buyout provision that any future employees wanting to receive the health insurance buyout will receive \$1,500 effective immediately. Mrs. Rousseau seconded the motion. The Board voted all in favor.

Mrs. Brien-Baker asked about the different health insurance plan being offered to one of the unions and would the non-union employees be changing to this insurance as well?

Mr. Venezia said the plan chosen by the union is a less expense to the Town and the employee and wouldn't have a problem changing over to a less expensive health insurance plan.

The less expensive health insurance plan was discussed.

Mr. Galpin asked the other two Board members whether they wanted to give a raise and if so how much?

Mr. Goss said last year was the first time in 33 years that he got a small raise but has less in his paycheck because of the health insurance contribution.

Mr. Venezia said the non-union employees are just as valuable as the union employees and thinks a structure similar to what has been agreed on with the union is reasonable and justified.

Mr. Goss asked how many department heads do their own payroll figures, he thought Mr. Stetser did all of those figures, but Chief Roarick does his own.

Mr. Levesque said around budget time they never get a say about payroll and asked if there are other departments other than police that do that as well? Mr. Stetser answered no.

Mr. Goss asked if any other department head put raises in their budget this year? Mr. Stetser answered no.

Mrs. LoMonaco said actually Peter Brigham put in for raises for his employees and she went to Mr. Stetser to ask since he had previously told her no raises for anyone and we moved Peter's budget back to zero. Therefore, he asked for a raise for his employees but he didn't get it because we were going on the assumption that no one was getting raises.

Mrs. Campbell explained that previous administrators had always handled it because you could have department heads saying their employees deserved one amount and another saying another amount. Whereas if you had the administrator doing it then everyone would be getting the same amount.

Chief Roarick disagreed saying there is no better person in that department to know what their employees deserve and what their need is other than the department head with the final decision being the Board of Selectmen. He said there is a reason for the raise he put in for the non-union, which is to balance out with the union because the patrolman will now be making more than a supervisor.

Mr. Venezia agreed 100%. He feels the department heads do know what's best. The feeling is that budgets should not be micro-managed and that it comes down to the bottom line. The Chief was asked to reduce his budget and it was up to him to figure out where to reduce it and that should be the case with everybody.

Mrs. LoMonaco said that is great except for those department heads that were instructed not to put anything in for payroll.

Mr. Venezia said if we look at the chart, the 2% increase across the board nets out at about \$11,000 to the Town. He asked how many tax payers we have? Mrs. McDonald answered approximately 3,300 parcels. Mr. Venezia said that would be a cost of \$3.00 to \$4.00 per parcel per year and he would be willing to pay that amount to give these employees what they deserve and to keep them happy.

Mr. Venezia made a motion to give a 2% COLA increase to the non-union employees pursuant to the personnel policy. Mrs. Rousseau seconded the motion.

Chief Roarick asked if the 2% increase applied to the police non-union also? He stated the union employees are receiving a 2.2% and a 2.5% increase along with not paying the 5% towards the health insurance for a year that the non-union have been paying. This puts them already behind and doesn't even touch the other incentives that are in the contract.

Mr. Goss said it was not too long ago that the police got their time knocked back and their pay stayed the same.

Chief Roarick said that applied to the whole department and when some got increases last year, they did not. He said it is difficult when the union employees get bumped up and the others don't.

Mrs. Brien-Baker asked wouldn't that be looked at in the wage study as to whether they are at the right levels or not? She also said we are talking about a 2% COLA, not a wage adjustment.

Mr. Venezia said we have an opportunity to do a wage study and that we do a 2% across the board for everybody and re-address in 2013 once a wage study has been completed to address wage adjustments. Mrs. Rousseau agreed.

The Board voted all in favor on the previous motion.

Mr. Venezia said the health insurance can be decided later and would like to give the employees a chance to look at the lower plan to see if they would want to switch to that one.

Mr. Stetser was asked to get pricing for a wage study from different companies.

Mrs. Dearborn-Luce asked for a non-public session.

Mr. Galpin made a motion to enter a non public session under RSA 91-A:3II(a) - The dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee or the investigation of any charges against him unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted. Mr. Venezia seconded the motion. The Board voted by roll call: Mr. Venezia - yes, Mrs. Rousseau - yes and Mr. Galpin - yes.

Mr. O'Keefe asked if the non-public session had anything to do with him and would like to invoke his right to have it in public.

Mr. Galpin said this is based on the grievance given to the Selectmen which was concerning John Stetser and his handling of the case.

Mr. Stetser asked where that leaves him? Mr. Venezia said where it pertains to him he has a right to ask for it in public. Mr. Stetser said he doesn't even know what the grievance is so he would rather do it in non-public.

Mr. Dearborn-Luce said it was actually about her, following up on what she started.

Mr. O'Keefe said if it's related to an investigation then the person being investigated has a right to have it in public and not necessarily the right to be in the non-public session.

Mrs. Campbell said then this has nothing to do with our grievance?

Mrs. Dearborn-Luce said this is following up on what we started but it's on my non-public minutes.

7:27 p.m. The Board entered a non-public session with Mr. Stetser and Mrs. Dearborn-Luce.

Mr. Venezia made a motion to return to a public session. Mrs. Rousseau seconded the motion. The Board voted by roll call: Mr. Venezia - yes, Mrs. Rousseau - yes and Mr. Galpin - yes.

8:04 p.m. The Board returned to a public session.

Mr. Galpin said the minutes were not sealed and there was a discussion whether or not the Selectmen are following up on the grievance. He admitted they have not done their duty properly in that they were supposed to have given a written report within seven days and they have not done that.

Mrs. Campbell said what about the grievance that we brought forward about Mr. Stetser not handling the situation correctly and asked if that was what they discussed in the non-public session.

Mr. Galpin said yes it was part of the grievance and partly the fact that they did not continue the investigation.

Mrs. Campbell said that was not what her impression was when they went into non-public and that it was just to reiterate a continuation of the grievance Kelly had and that it didn't have to do with the grievance we had as to how the situation was handled.

Mrs. Rousseau said it was more of how Mrs. Dearborn-Luce felt.

Mr. Venezia said it was in relation to Mrs. Dearborn-Luce, communication in relation to her.

Mrs. Campbell asked where are you at with the grievance we submitted regarding how Mr. Stetser handled the situation and his response to our meeting with him?

Mr. Venezia said we talked to you and then met with Mr. Stetser and talked about training and he is going to undertake the training to help remEDIATE the issue, but still need to formally write something.

Mrs. Campbell requested a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3IIc.

Mrs. Rousseau made a motion to enter a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3IIc - Matter that, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the body or agency itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant. Mr. Galpin seconded the motion.

Mr. Venezia said I believe Mr. Stetser has the ability to request the meeting in public.

Mr. Stetser said that Iris did not state it was about him. Mr. Venezia asked Mrs. Campbell if it was?

Mrs. Campbell said it has to do with our grievance letter.

Mr. O'Keefe said under "c" it's only if the individual is entitled to a meeting or hearing as well.

The Board voted by roll call on the previous motion: Mr. Galpin - yes, Mrs. Rousseau - yes and Mr. Venezia - yes.

Mr. Stetser said that if it involves him he would like to have it in public session.

Mrs. Campbell gave the Board a letter which read as follows: "We respectfully request the Town of Hillsborough Board of Selectmen arrange for a confidential, independent evaluation of Town Administrator John H. Stetser's job performance including his interaction with employees and elected officials."

Mrs. Campbell said she is aware of many incidents concerning Mr. Stetser that were reported to a member of the Board and never investigated.

A discussion continued where Mr. Galpin explained he had gotten legal advice from Attorney Douglas Hatfield that caused him to determine that it was hearsay and couldn't be considered until the person effected came forward.

The group of employees expressed their dissatisfaction with the Board's actions regarding their decision to do nothing.

Mr. Venezia, who was not on the Board when the initial reporting took place, said it was unfair to put blame on the fact that they received legal advice from Attorney Hatfield that may have not been correct especially since he is not the Town Attorney. He said the accusers and the accusee deserved immediate action and it was just swept under the rug. He said there has been a big cloud hanging over everyone and the effected group agreed.

It was decided Mr. Galpin would call the Town Attorney the next day to get advice about the appropriate course of action to take.

Mr. Galpin made a motion to accept the budget as presently prepared with the inclusion of a 2% COLA increase for non-union employees. Mrs. Rousseau seconded the motion. The Board voted all in favor.

Mr. Stetser presented the Board with the most recent version of the warrant and said the figures for the union articles will be filled in by the budget hearing on Tuesday.

The Board went through the warrant and discussed who would present the articles at the budget hearing and town meeting.

Mrs. Campbell was asked to contact the Water & Sewer Department Secretary to assure a commissioner would be at the budget hearing and town meeting to present their articles.

Mr. Galpin asked about the school impact fees. Mr. Stetser presented a letter he wrote to the SAU asking for explanation.

The Board reviewed and acted on the following Correspondence and New Business:

- a. Copy of letter to Louise Bergeron SNHS
- b. Copy of letter to Ernest Muserallo SAU 34
- c. Transmittal of Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments
- d. Letter from Carrie Basha RE: Girl Scout Cookies - Mrs. Campbell was instructed to contact the Moderator to get his approval.

e. Letter from Tracy Houghton RE: Resignation

Mr. Venezia relayed to the Board that he received an email and a phone call from Jim Coffey asking the Board for a truce and offered to meet to talk about the impact fee.

The Board didn't feel a meeting regarding the impact fee was necessary as they have been informed there isn't anything they can do at this point except to watch it the next time it is paid out.

Mrs. Rousseau made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Venezia seconded the motion. The Board voted all in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Brien-Baker
Administrative Assistant