

MINUTES
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Friday, January 12, 2024

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Janet Wall (JW), Mark Avery (MA) partial attendance, Tim Burt (TB)
OTHERS: Eric Fiegenbaum (EF), Deb Ahlstrom (DA), Jay Moriarty (JM) as Road Agent; and Jim Morse, David Goldsmith and Giana Gelsey from the Oyster River Cooperative School District.

CORRESPONDANCE

- On a letter regarding HB 1479 to limit the ability to budget for legislative advocacy, TB moved and MA seconded a motion to send the model letter supporting the NHMA position. Motion passed.
- On a letter from the NH Retirement System, JW will bring more information on Monday.

SIGN: accounts payable, one payroll. TB moved and MA seconded a motion to sign the Intent to Cut from Van Dessel on Nute Rd. Motion passed.

MINUTES: the approval of available minutes from 11/20 was deferred to Monday.

GUESTS: Jim Morse, Superintendent, along with David Goldsmith, Moharimet Principal, and Giana Gelsey, at large school board member, came before the Selectmen to provide an update on the school district. Morse gave a list of accomplishments including sports, strings, robotics and a music festival. He noted it took about \$21,000 a year to educate a student in the district. The district is a high performer in SAT scores and graduation rate. There have been improvements since COVID. \$3.5 million comes in from out-of-district students. The budget has been hit by a large increase in health care costs. The request is for a 6% overall increase. He noted that it is the last year of the bond for the middle school; next year the cost is in the operating budget. The mental health of the students is a large concern. The proposed budget estimated impact on Madbury is about \$0.97 per thousand. Article 4 is new for tutor staffing, Article 5 for buying out the solar array at the Middle School, Article 6 is new to address the turf fields at the middle and high school, and Article 7 for setting aside the collection of revenues for facilities in the future. Mutualink is still a work in progress; Moharimet is the model for the other schools. Madbury will have an open seat to fill in the upcoming school board election.

NEW BUSINESS

- EF gave a brief overview of the elderly exemption and provided a handout comparing the history and values of other nearby towns. There was a discussion to modify the current criteria and exemption rate *which was set in 2016* using a comparison with other towns and an inflation factor. Elderly deferral was explained. ~~AA~~ *The US Bureau of Labor Statistics'* inflation calculator yielded exemption values for \$114k, \$142k, and \$168K, income of \$45k (single) and \$58k (married), and \$230k in assets. EF was asked to see how the new considerations would change the amount the town was forgoing in taxes.

OLD BUSINESS

- MPL has responded to the reductions to their budget by working with a two week unpaid leave for the Director and some reduced operating hours.
- The approach to providing guidance to next year's budget requests and philosophy was discussed including offering a pre-meeting and maybe a Zoom option.
- On the new cleaners, EF is investigating their proof of workers compensation insurance. They currently work for Lee and Durham.

- The public hearing on the budget and warrant was set for February 5, 2024 with a snow date of February 9, 2024. February 2 can be a review time.
DA will bring draft warrant articles including the elderly exemption, road maintenance funding and expert highway agent.
- The draft letter to the Walkers, of 54 Evans Road, was approved for sending.
- EF will draft a letter to Martin's lawyer regarding contacting the Planning Board on the subject of their use, including home occupation.
- After discussion, it was decided that no action was needed to address the guardrail option being proposed for the Freshet Road bridge.

BOARD UPDATES

- none

OTHER:

- TB provided some feedback that he was not impressed with the snow removal efforts during the latest storm. ~~At times~~ Mill Road was just one cleared lane *for approximately 2 hours.* JM said that three complete passes of the whole town and been accomplished. Others talked about road conditions in other towns near the Madbury borders.
- The school district continues to work with the vendor to implement Mutualink.

Meeting ended at 11:50am.

Submitted by: *Eric Fugenthal* Approved: *4-11-2024*
On approved minutes, proof changes are noted through italics for additions and strikethroughs for deletions.