

TOWN OF LITCHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN

April 14, 2014

Selectmen's Meeting

Members Present: John R. Brunelle, Chairman
Frank A. Byron, Vice Chairman
Brent T. Lemire
Kevin C. Bourque
Steven D. Perry

Also Present: Jason Hoch, Town Administrator

5:00 p.m. Paperwork review
6:00 p.m. Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Review of Items for Consent:

1. Minutes of March 24, 2014
2. Accounts Payable Manifest (\$46,237.21)
3. Payroll Manifest (\$45,037.76)
4. Reappointment of John Regan to Zoning Board of Adjustment
5. Reappointment of Roger St. Laurent, Jr. to Conservation Commission
6. Reappointment of Sharon Jones to Conservation Commission
7. Reappointment of Michael Croteau as alternate member of Conservation Commission
8. Elderly Exemption application denial
9. Elderly Exemption application approval (3)
10. Veterans Tax Credit Application approval
11. Reappointment of part-time Police Officers
12. Reappointment of Timothy Kearns to Cable Committee
13. Reappointment of Russell Blanchette to Cable Committee
14. Reappointment of Cynthia Couture to Cable Committee
15. Reappointment of Brian Maillet to Cable Committee
16. Reappointment of Dick Pentheny to Cable Committee

Approval of Consent Items

Selectman J. Brunelle reads aloud the items for consent

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve the items for consent

Selectman K. Bourque **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 5-0-0.**

Request for Items - Other Business - None **Road Improvement Update - Road Agent**

Jack Pinciario states that he and Town Administrator Jason Hoch have been working together to outline a plan for road improvements. J. Hoch tells the Board that he will summarize their discussion and plans for use of the various road improvement funds from the Operating Budget, the Warrant Article as well as the Highway Block Grant. He states that Jack has been working to try and maximize the value from the available funds across different repairs and roads. Jason tells the Board that he has shared a chart outlining the plan schedule for work, and will review it with them. He mentions that the total amount they plan on having available is \$355,500, which will be coming from the 3 above mentioned accounts. Highway Block Grant totals \$170,500 (approved within the Highway Budget), Separate Warrant Article that the voters passed totaling \$170,000 and approximately \$25,000 from the Operating Budget (allocated for pavement maintenance). Administrator J. Hoch highlights the road and dollar amount attached to the following repairs

Mike Lane \$158,411, (which is within the Operating Budget)

Stark Lane (southern end) 1000 l.f. - reclaim \$50,579

Robyn Avenue 575 l.f. - reclaim \$26,329

McElwain Drive 1000 l.f. - repair & overlay \$22,706

Nesenkeag Drive 1000 l.f. - shim \$12,160

Page Road 780 l.f. - patching \$19,500

Albuquerque 200 l.f. - patching 2 areas at Pinecrest & Century \$3,250

Masquah Drive 3645 l.f.- overlay \$36,450

Woodburn Drive - emergency patch within last two weeks totaling \$5,000

Jason states the remaining balance of \$21,115 is being retained to cover unexpected issues (such as Woodburn earlier this month). Depending on the final pricing he states that several of these items have bids still coming in and (values are the Engineer's estimates), the possibility may exist for an overlay of another road segment and/or applying funds to a larger project for 2015. Jason does not want to commit all of the available money at this time.

Selectman J. Brunelle asks if Jack knows when this work will start.

Jack Pinciario tells the Board that the bids to all the projects went out today and Continental was the only one to bid out of 3. He mentions that normally no other Company's tend to bid against Continental in their own town. Jack states that the time frame is up to Rick the owner of Continental, and that the Town has some preparation to do (such as thermal heating at some of the pipe crossings, as well as concrete removal around some catch basin).

Selectman B. Lemire asks if Mike Lane is a complete reconstruction. Jack states yes it is a complete reconstruction of road and drainage. He mentions one home at the end continually gets flooded, and its from the drainage of the swale which needs to be corrected. Jack mentions that this project was awarded to American Excavating about a month ago and should be starting soon. Jack also mentions to the Board that Rick looked over Nesenkeag Drive and they agree that the road will need to be raised, so by shimming/overlaying it now the material will be there when the road is completed later.

Selectman S. Perry asks Jack what is the linear footage being done on Masquah. Jack states the whole road which is 3645 l.f. Selectman S. Perry mentions that if there happens to be money left over, he would strongly recommend repairs be done on the North section of Albuquerque near April Drive, feels that section of road and frost heaves are terrible. Jack states that there is not much that can be done with frost heaves, that would be throwing money

away. He feels there are many roads as well as other areas of Albuquerque that need attention more, however will take a look.

Selectman F. Byron states he has a question for J. Hoch regarding how the Town receives the Highway Block Grant money. He believes it is by 4 installments and would like to know when the amount will total the needed \$334,400. J. Hoch states that it does come in quarterly and the amount needed would probably come with the last quarter. He states there is enough cash flow to cover the whole project. He states that in the approved budget there is \$170,500 that was gross appropriated. Jason states this is why he tries to carry a bit of Fund Balance.

Selectman F. Byron states that Stark Lane was built for Government subsidised housing, and would like to know if the Town ever accepted the road. Board discusses this, and states that the Town has plowed and maintained this road for years, we own it regardless. After looking it up online J. Hoch tells the Board that Stark Lane was accepted in 1984.

Board states they feel this is a terrific plan and thank Jack for all his continued hard work and efforts.

Route 102 Initial Discussion

Administrator J. Hoch states that with the passage an Article at Town Meeting, which stated:

Article 19 -To see if the Town will direct the Board of Selectmen to bring to the 2015 annual meeting, an article to study alternatives and potential costs for a controlled intersection allowing access to Route 102.

and the presence of the Road Agent, Jack Pinciario at the meeting, it would probably be a good time to have an initial conversation about how the Board may want to approach the 102 study issue. Jason states that he had a preliminary conversation with NRPC prior to the Town meeting and put it on hold till after the vote. He mentions that he could probably pull them back into the conversation to discuss further traffic counts and studies. Jason states that Article 19 directs the Board to have a new Article drafted that formally studies alternatives and costs for this intersection, and feels discussions need to begin looking at options. He knows that Jack has been considering various alternative for a potential road routing.

Jack Pinciario tells the Board that one thought is to have Albuquerque go across to Cutler by the well, cut over to the 55 or older development, and then over and down to 3A. He states that the Commercial aspect as of today is not an option, but that was originally the plan to open that up for Commercial usage years ago. He states the best avenue today would be if Albuquerque were to go straight across to Cutler and out to 102, (some wetlands would need to be purchased), then make the section of Page (after Cutler) to 102 a dead end. Jack feels coming out onto 102 would make much more sense than trying to bring the road out to 3A. The Board discusses this idea, and the property that would need to be acquired. Also the Circumvential Highway and where that would affect area roadways and property. Board also discusses the possibility of installing a light at an intersection that would come out onto 102 within Litchfield (not 102 and Page Road which is in Hudson). Board agrees this would be a very large project that would need to be broken up into sections.

Selectman F. Byron asks Jack to write out some ideas and proposals for the Board to look at then they could discuss and proceed with some possible estimates.

Jack states that he can speak with the Engineer from NorthPoint who has access to aerial maps and come up with some information and report back to the Board.

Cable Budget

Administrator J. Hoch reminds everyone that a Special Revenue Fund was set up two years ago for Cable Revenues, so Franchise Fees are separated into this fund. These fees no longer go through the Town's Operating Budget. Which is why it is not shown in the annual budget and is not subject to an annual review and approval. Jason states this budget operates in its own world, funded by its franchise fees. These fees were lowered at the time to cover annual costs, plus used as a capital replacement plan. If the balance of this fund is not spent each year it is because it will be used for larger items scheduled for in the future.

Dick Pentheny, Chairman of the Cable Committee speaks to the Board regarding changes to their Budget.

01-4589.10-302 Peg Contracted Services - \$8,000 (increased by \$2,000) - in order to cover the additional Department meetings that the Board of Selectmen mandated be recorded effective May 1, 2014.

Selectman J. Brunelle asks Dick what was spent last year. Due to this not showing in the expense report, J. Hoch states because everything is in Fund 5, Fund 1 reports are not always run or printed. Selectman J. Brunelle states these reports should be shown. Jason states that he will look into the distribution of all these reports. J. Hoch tells the Board that \$2,800 was spent last year. Board discusses that in May all the meetings will be recorded which will double this figure.

J. Hoch reminds the Board that by approving a number, the Board is approving authorization up to that amount. If less money is used, there is no money going back to the taxpayer (no money is used to offset) with this Budget. It is a closed system. If money is not spent in this account it will move forward to the Capital Plan. Upon reviewing the Capital Plan if there are sufficient funds to run current operations and future capital needs, than a future action would be a reduction of the franchise fees. Board discusses the contract and how the Board of Selectmen have final approval over this budget, even if it is regarded as a special fund the Committee cannot spend more than the BOS approves.

01-4589.10-341 Telephone/Internet Access - \$8,000 (unchanged)

Selectman J. Brunelle states they are trying to work on eliminating the online PEG streaming of all recorded Town meetings, at \$3,000/year. But have not worked out all the issues regarding uploading everything to Youtube. This is set to renew in November and they hope to have better answers by then.

01-4589.10-410 Electricity/Heat - \$2,600 (unchanged)

01-4589.10-620 Office Supplies - \$100 (unchanged)

01-4589.10-630 Building Repairs & Maintenance - \$2,500 (decreased by \$41,000)

Dick presented a reduction in this line due to the central air being installed. However, the Board had previously discussed and planned for the painting of the building using the Prisoner Exchange Program. J. Hoch states that this is on the schedule to be completed, and should be kept in this budget.

Selectman F. Bryon mentions that aside from the \$1,000 allotted for the Prisoner Exchange Program, paint and other supplies will need to be purchased. Board discusses and agrees to add \$2,500 to the budget.

01-4589.10-631 Equipment Repairs & Maintenance - \$750 (unchanged)

01-4589.10-693 Minor Tools & Supplies - \$350 (unchanged)

01-4589.10-740 Equipment Purchases for Peg Stations - \$20,000 (decreased by \$2,000)

Dick Pentheny states that the Cable Committee has been trying to get citizens and students to come in and learn Public Access TV/Video but has not been too successful. He mentions that he has tried the schools, however it would require a sponsor or teacher to oversee a program to work with the students and this has not been successful either.

Dick states that the Committee is trying to make some infrastructure changes and would like to make some purchases this year. They have a difficult time generating messages with the outdated equipment that is no longer supported. He would like to upgrade with 2 Digital Signage units for titling and expanded messaging capabilities. He originally based his figures on the old equipment prices (\$8,000 each), but after researching finds they can be replaced for about \$4,000 each. Also would like to purchase 2-3 Title Generators with date/time stamps as a video overlay for live and recorded meetings, at about \$5,000. Dick also tells the Board that two GL-2 portable cameras are in need of new batteries which total \$80.

Administrator J. Hoch states that the new bottom line Budget amount is \$35,300

Selectman F. Byron asks Dick if the Cable Committee has thought of subscribing to another Town's broadcast, such as Derry. They seem to do a lot of interviews with local people and politicians. Dick states that yes they have and it is getting easier to share this information that surrounding Town's are producing. He tells the Board most are free or a minimal charge.

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve the Cable Committees new bottom line Budget in the amount of \$35,300.

Selectman F. Byron **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 5-0-0.**

Administrator Report

New Business

Policy Review

Administrator J. Hoch states that there are a group of policies slated for annual review. He has shared all of them with the Board. He tells the Board that he would like over the course of the next few weeks to have the Board review and forward any adjustments or questions they may have. Jason states that just because they are up for review it does not mean every policy will need to be adjusted, some have been reviewed already this year. Board decides to review the Background Check Policy, Cash Receipt Policy, Conference Meeting Policy and the Credit Card Policy and have recommendations and questions given to Jason and be ready to go over and approve these policies at the next BOS meeting on April 28.

Social Media Policy

Administrator J. Hoch tells the Board that since we continue to rely on social media, it is time for the Board to formalize a policy regarding this matter. He states the Police and Fire Departments have been considering more Department specific policies given the types of information and circumstances they face. The Fire Chief attended a workshop and has been collaborating with the Police Chief to work on a policy that applies to their specific issues within their Departments. Jason mentions that there was a discussion on the manager listserve in February on this topic and he has borrowed from a policy or two that seemed appropriate and has circulated it amongst Department users for input. He completed it before Town Meeting and has tabled it for

a few weeks due there being larger issues to consider. Jason states as with other policies, he is introducing it to the Board for their initial review and would be interested in any comments or questions in the hopes of approval of a policy at a future meeting.

Selectman F. Byron mentions that he read part of the policy and does not believe that the Town would want to be or should be put in a position to censor.

Selectman J. Brunelle states that the Town has active Facebook and Twitter pages, as well as the Police and Fire have pages that are used to inform the citizens of this Town. He states that there is a lot of information that is exchange within these social media sites. They have been very successful tools, however unfortunately the public can also make comments within these sites which has currently brought up this policy issue. He mentions that a comment was left on a Town posting that was very inappropriate and it was discussed and removed. But he feels this has brought up the issue that there should be some guidelines/policy to help clarify things. Posting comments cannot be stopped, however if someone writes inappropriate material, than there should be a policy in place to block or manage it if necessary.

Selectman F. Byron understands the intent of this but feels this will end up being a policing matter that never ends with postings on these sites and does the Town want to be in the position of controlling who can say what.

The Board discusses having the people who are authorized to post information be the ones who police the site on behalf of the Town. Also by the Town having a site that allows anyone to place public comments, who has the right to decide what is appropriate or offensive, and how will a policy be enforced. Jason states that most administrators and individuals who are involved in posting information (Jason, John and Terri) on the sites, they have a good sense of what is right or wrong. Most information that is posted is informative such as Board videos, Community updates, Special Town Activities. But what happens when these situations change and new people may be brought in. Without a policy or guidance on what is appropriate to post or comments that may be inappropriate or hurtful to a citizen how and who decides to remove it. Board sees both sides to this issue and decides to gather thoughts and questions for a further discussion at the next meeting.

Public Input

Jason Guerrette 11 Perry Court, tells the Board that he thinks Facebook is better than the HLN- Thumbs column because at least you know who it is. He feels if someone broke the law that would be one thing, if they are just being unpleasant just ignoring is best. Jason does not feel a policy is needed, and censoring in this area can lead to its own problems.

He also would like to mention that since moving to Litchfield in 2005, he has heard time and time again how important life safety is in this Town. Equipment, Vehicles and training for our Police and Fire Departments, has been used for a rational for every Budget since he has been here. So he was surprised to read in the paper that the Town was shutting down the Fire Department on the weekends. He states that as a citizen out there who may need help or someone who's house catches fire, minutes matter for life safety. The paper stated that it was due to the Default Budget, he does not think this has anything to do with it. He feels these things should be kept in the Budget regardless of a budget passing or not. Life safety should not ever be an issue. Jason states he will be interested to hear about the reallocation of funds that the Board may be discussing this evening. He states that the Board should rethink this decision,

and states that he has spoken with many citizens who are very uneasy regarding this matter. He also mentions that he will be interested to hear where the BOS deferred salaries will be allocated and what they will be used for, as well as salary increases for Town employees. Selectman J. Brunelle closed public input.

But would like to state that the decision to close the Fire Department for 3 hours each day on Saturday and Sunday, was based on the call statistics that do not support the Department being open. Having the Station open does not impact the safety of the Community, the response times are shown to be the same. Most FireFighter's that respond on the weekends live in Town and do respond to the alarms. So to imply that the Citizens or Community are in any way at risk due to the closing of the Station, he feels this is not the case. There were other demands within the Fire Departments Budget that were more of a priority.

HealthTrust Rates

J. Hoch states that he shared with the Board the Towns renewal rates for HealthTrust effective July 1. This is for maintaining the current roster of plans the Town offers. Guaranteed Maximum Rate was projected at an 8.5% increase (which is the budget number used) and the renewal rate is 4.8%. Jason mentions that since it is budgeted for 6 months at the GMR, there is some "savings" in the budget numbers for the last 6 months of the year - which is approximately \$7,400 (based on the Town's current employee census). This does not yet take into consideration any further adjustments to benefit packages. Given the passage of the teacher union contract, we face a major decision by the July 2015 renewal as the Town will no longer be in the rating pool with the School District and the Town's base cost will be higher. Jason states that right now HealthTrust rates the Town with the School so the rate is lower. So due to the School contract change the Town will be a smaller group insured at much higher rate. Jason tells the Board that over the next few weeks, he will plan on investigating short and longer term alternative to see what may be constructive for the Town to consider. One will be to keep the same plan but increase the office visit copay from \$5 -\$20 dollars. Also deductibles can be increased as an option also.

Selectman J. Brunelle asks what the savings would be on a \$20 office copay. J. Hoch states that is would be approximately \$13,000 annually.

Jason tells the Board he will gather information and report back to the Board, but will be needing answers by the end of May.

Selectman J. Brunelle also asks if there is another refund expected from HealthTrust.

Jason states no it was for Property Liability. However HealthTrust is now also Property Liability Trust. He states he shared a letter from HealthTrust which includes information (previously received) about returns of surplus, which are assets of Property Liability Trust. These are already planned for revenue and return to employees and retirees within the Operating Budget.

Old Business

Default Budget

Selectman J. Brunelle states that at the last meeting the Board accepted modifications to the Budget which included deferring items till next year. Selectman S. Perry asked Jason what the total amount being deferred would be as opposed to one time reductions, he was concerned about too much being loaded onto next years Budget. He tells the Board that Jason shared a

spreadsheet that shows the amount being deferred to next year is \$73,500. The one time items removed (ex. background checks, Dispatch coverage, community programs) totals \$30,300. Administrator J. Hoch tells the Board these items can be discussed as the year continues and the Board may choose to change some as priorities change. He states that the Budget was defeated again this year and maybe they should take a look at what they have been doing and possibly stop doing it.

J. Hoch also mentions that the updated line item budgets have been input into the Fund Accounting System so reports should show progress against initial budget allocations. Two adjustments from last meeting are the Library's health insurance needs have changed, so the Library allocation adjusted accordingly downward. Net result is a balance of \$1,488 unallocated. Jason states that rather than go back and adjust any particular lines, he placed it in the budget for Insurance Deductibles.

He states that he will keep an updated spreadsheet called "Projected 14" for the Board to view in the "Reference Items" section at the bottom page of the agenda, as these items will continue to change.

Selectman F. Byron asks if the Board is finalizing this tonight. Jason and the Board discuss that this was finalized with a motion last meeting. Selectman F. Bryon states he does not recall a motion regarding this that was voted on. Jason reads the motion from Selectman B. Lemire that was seconded and amended by Selectman F. Byron and passed by a vote of 5-0-0 at the last BOS meeting.

Fairpoint Abatement Request

Administrator J. Hoch states that the Town has had an ongoing disagreement with Fairpoint regarding the taxation of their public right-of-way (PRW). They have filed cases in Superior Court challenging many Town in the State. Jason shares the latest update that Fairpoint has taken offense to Avitar's request for additional information for their latest abatement application. You will recall that the prior year's abatements are still being litigated. He has copied this letter to Upton & Hatfield, the Town's counsel on this issue. Jason states that he also shared a follow-up letter with the Board from Gary Roberge at Avitar, recommending denial of the 2013 abatement application since "no data was provided or any evidence to support..and note that Fairpoints refusal to provide any supporting documentation."

Selectman J. Brunelle **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to deny the 2013 abatement application from Fairpoint, as recommended by Avitar.

Selectman S. Perry **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 5-0-0.**

Media Relations

Administrator J. Hoch states that August 26th of last year the Board took an action regarding inquiries from the press and how the Board members should handle this issue. J. Hoch states that in light of some recent issues with formal policies by a nearby school board with this issue. He would like to clarify the Board's preference that media inquiries are routed to the Chairman or Town Administrator when possible, but that any Board member, as an elected official, can provide an opinion when asked. Also that in such a case the Chairman is to be advised that a media inquiry was received.

The Board discusses this issue and thought the understanding was that the only person who could share the opinion of the Board was the Chairman or his designee, that individuals were certainly entitled to their opinions, but the Chairman or Town Administrator were the only ones who could commit to the press regarding actions of the Board. Also that the Board Chairman should be notified if any conversations take place.

Selectman F. Byron states that a motion was made on August 26, 2013 and was voted on by the Board 5-0-0 that only the Chairman of the Board or someone he appoints is to handle speaking to the press.

Board continues to discuss previous incidents and discussions with the media, and what the intent of this motion was in August. Also that it was not the intent to censor or tie a Board member from speaking. Board decides to clarify this with a new motion.

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to approve a media policy. That it is the preference of the Board that the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen or his designee speaks to the press regarding the action of the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman J. Brunelle **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 5-0-0.**

Other Items

Audit

Administrator J. Hoch tells the Board that the Audit has been taking place over the past 2-3 weeks, and most is done electronically now. They have had various inquiries and requested documents which Karen has been coordinating over the past few weeks. As needed, other staff have compiled information or shared any relevant items. The Auditors will be on site this Wednesday the 18th. This year's department cash review is the Library (having previously covered the BOS, Clerk, Police and Solid Waste). Jason reminds the Board this is a look at cash handling only.

Legislation Re: Recounts

Administrator J. Hoch states that after the last BOS meeting Senator D. Soucy informed him of a Senate Bill she was sponsoring regarding recounts. This is to clarify State law about how the notification process should be regarding recounts of a ballot questioned. Currently as the Town was made aware last month, there is nothing in the State law documented regarding this. Jason states that language for the Bill has been proposed and is working it's way through the system, Committee has to approve the amendment and add it to the Bill, then the Bill will have to go to the House and the long process continues for final approval. He feels the Town, its Representative and the Senator gave good information in speaking in Concord on this matter.

NH Retirement Reporting

J. Hoch mentions that a Bill came through last year designed to have all Retiree's (not just part-time) be tracked. So if you are a Legislature, Selectman any public Official who is paid, unpaid, hourly or stipended you Municipal Employer has to report your hours each month. Selectman J. Brunell asks how will this be tracked.

J. Hoch states that is a good question and his guess is as good as anyones, they are trying to do the best they can. Jason mentions that Selectman F. Byron has been working on some legislation to try and correct this, and areas of concern such as Employees being paid hourly. Selectman F. Byron states that he has had a meeting with the N.H. Municipal Association, Lobbyist and a Representative from the N.H. Retirement System as well as Senator Carson (she is the Chairman of the Senate Executives Departments Administration). Selectman F. Byron mentions that unfortunately the Committee Chairman of his House, incorrectly did not allow him to make an amendment. So he then went to the Senate and the Chairperson of the same Department, and she was more than willing to allow him to make an amendment, so he presented to the Senate Committee and amendment (to the surprise of the House Committee Chair). So they will incorporate it into the Bill. He is hopeful this will go through, but feels the Committee of Conference may be an issue.

Selectman S. Perry would like to ask about the Fire Departments Ford Explorer. J. Hoch states that the vehicle has already gone to auction.

Selectman S. Perry states that the Building Department has been suing the Town vehicle (Explorer) and would like to know how many miles are on this vehicle and how old is it.

Selectman J. Brunelle mentions that he thinks there are 30-40 thousand miles and it is a 2005, but would need to check.

Selectman S. Perry mentions that the Fire Chief stated that this vehicle may not be a good permanent solution, but it is working for now. He adds that the Board will need to think about this next year, and wonders would it be better to by the Code Enforcement or the Fire Department the new vehicle.

Jason states that all the vehicles will be taken a closer look at in the Capital Plan. But one suggestion looked at different vehicle needs for the Code Enforcement, such as a small pickup truck. He states that the Explorer is appropriate but not necessarily an adequate fit for the Fire Department. This will be looked at for next year and just because one type of vehicle was used prior it may not necessarily be recommended again.

Selectman S. Perry states that the Town Explorer has been used by many Personnel to go to meetings, training and off site travel and needs to be kept in mind before turning it over possibly to the Fire Department. He also asks how much the Town received for the Explorer at auction. Jason tells him that the auction will not be until next month, but they are expecting less than \$1,000.

Selectman Reports

Selectman J. Brunelle states that he missed the Conservation meeting. But he did send an email to all the Chairs and Committees regarding all meetings will be recorded effective May 1, 2014. He also took the opportunity to remind everyone there is a State statute to file their minutes with the Town Clerks Office and suggested they take a look to make sure all are up to date.

Selectman John Brunelle mentions that he watched the Budget Committee meeting that Selectman F. Byron attended, and heard a few comments regarding the way the Board of Selectmen present their Budget that he would like to comment on. One was regarding not

having Department Heads available at the BC meeting. He states that Department Heads have always been there to speak to the technical aspects of their Budget, (unless like the Zoning Board or a few others that have nothing in the Budget to present).

Selectman F. Byron states that he and a School member also commented that they were frustrated with the BC having the Department Heads there one week and not ask them any questions, then the following week when they are not there the BC asks a whole bunch of questions which would have been appropriate to ask the Department Head when they were in attendance.

Selectman J. Brunelle also mentions the BC comment on needing a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote to reopen the Budget lines. He feels this means that they don't care if the BOS reduce a line, they will not reopen up the Budget again. He understands it can be frustrating at times, especially if the BOS are coming in the end of December and need to open all these lines due to changes, but that is part of the process if better numbers become available.

Selectman F. Byron states that the one thing that was discussed was setting a calendar date for the BC and the BOS to have timelines to open the Budget, so it would not have to be done at all different times. The Board agrees with this process.

Selectman F. Byron states that a concern he had was the BC asking for the Default Budget so they could formulate their thinking on the Budget.

Selectman B. Lemire states that the Default Budget is not the BC Budget it is the BOS Budget. Selectman F. Byron did ask the Committee why they needed the Default Budget to put together their Budget, but they did not have an answer for him.

Board discusses Revenues and Selectman F. Byron states that he and Jason were attending a BC meeting and they took a vote not to look at the Revenue numbers.

Selectman J. Brunelle mentions that he also thought it was the BOS understanding that they would not do Encumbrances until the last meeting of the year.

Board discusses the timeline issue and when the final figures could be presented and how close to the Budget Hearing can they be.

Jason suggests that the Board schedule some time at one of the June meetings to discuss the Budget process and to really take a hard look at what the Board wants to do this coming year overall. He states that the Town has had 2 Default Budgets, so he feels the message needs to change. What they (BOS) are doing is not working, so something has to be done differently and how can they engage the BC to revisit their process as well. He states because truly it has been their Budget that has been defeated 2 years in a row. He understands everyone's frustration, but some of the BC frustration is procedural and of their own making.

Selectman S. Perry states that he feels the BOS should invite the BC into a meeting and have an open discussion and ask them what it is they would like this Board to do. Then this Board can make a decision if that is something they are open to doing. If this Board wants to get on the same page, so both Boards can present the same Budget and get the voters behind it. He feels there is a need to find some middle ground that both sides can agree on.

The Board agrees with Selectman S. Perry.

Board continues to discuss this topic and what may be done to come to a better understanding. Jason states he feels something different has to be done to get a different result.

Selectman S. Perry states he finds it very difficult to get a Budget passed when you have two different Boards stating two different views on the same Budget, it becomes very confusing. He

states that if the voters are watching and seeing that the people who know the process cannot agree, they think heck I will just vote the cheapest way for me. And its not for any other reason sometimes other than they don't understand and see no one can agree. He feels it will take concessions on both sides. And they need to listen to the public, and he would really like to sit down with the BC and listen to what they may have to say. It may change his way of thinking it may not, and the same may go for the rest of the Board as well as the BC, but has to start somewhere.

Board discusses that they feel they are doing the right thing by cutting services, then someone else feels they are not. That the two Boards are looking at the Budget process very differently. Selectman F. Byron states that the hard decisions come from the BC it is their Budget and their responsibility to present and defend that Budget to the voters. We can agree with it or disagree, but we have to live with that decision. He feels that it is great for both Boards to be able to voice their opinions, but it is still the BC that makes the final decisions.

Selectman B. Lemire agrees with Frank, but the BOS job is to go line by line and present the best Budget they feel is based on the needs of the Town and recommendations of the Department Heads, and present this to the BC with the BOS discussing their views, but it is up to the BC to present this to the voters.

Board discusses how the BC reduced the Budgets bottom line by \$80,000, then the BOS had to find a way to reduce line items, they feel the BC should of had to identify where those cuts should come from.

J. Hoch states that he feels sometime everyone is so focused on the line items that they can't see the forest through the trees. The Board is doing their due diligence on every single line and then ultimately the Town is given a number but how did they arrive at that number . He mentions that the voters have given the Board a number for the past 2 years and the Town Administrator, Department Heads, BOS and BC then spend hours upon hours looking at lines, somewhere there is a difference.

Selectman S. Perry states that he did not agree with some 20 odd questions on the ballot, but the vast majority passed by the voters. Apparently there should have been 40 because that is where the money passed. Maybe there is something to it and the Board needs to stop and rethink the warrants, because they worked. Board discusses this and the effect "no means no" might play into this option.

Items moved from consent - None

Other Business - None

Public Input

Jason Guerrette 11 Perry Court, he would like to thank Selectman S. Perry. He believes he touched on something that listening really helps. He states that there are two very different opinions within this Town and the only way to solve that is to bring both sides together to talk. He feels that effort needs to be made by both parties, and that may bring more people out to speak on topics such as himself. By listening he feels Selectman S. Perry is correct people will feel a part of the process not on the outside. He also mentions that the Default Budget is his favorite topic and it is not to be manipulated. He states that the language of the Budget includes

increases and decreases, it is not a one or the other thing. Example if there is an increase in salaries it must be taken, if there is a decrease due to less of something being used it must be taken. He states that there is no authority in the State of New Hampshire to challenge this, no one to validate the Default Budgets. So people make it what they want it to be.

Selectman B. Lemire **motioned** for the Board of Selectmen to adjourn
Selectman S. Perry **seconds** the motion. **Vote carries 5-0-0.**

The next Board of Selectmen's meeting will be on April 28, 2014 at 6:00pm at Town Hall

Approved April 28, 2014