

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2016 Shutesbury Town Hall

Select Board members present: Mike Vinskey/Chair, Michael DeChiara, and Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil

Staff present: Becky Torres/Town Administrator; Linda Avis Scott/Administrative Secretary

Guests: Tim Hunting/Highway Department Superintendent, Jeff Lacy/7 Baker Road;
Finance Committee members: Bob Groves, Jim Hemingway, George Arvanitis/Co-chair, Eric Stocker/Co-chair, Elaine Puleo, and Weezie Houle

Vinskey/Chair calls the meeting to order at 6:34pm.

Agenda Review: No changes.

Public Comment Period: No one attends.

Administrative Actions:

1. Highway Department Personnel Action Form: Torres: Doug Smith/Highway Equipment Operator has attained his Hoisting License; Hunting would like to increase Smith's pay-rate one step (\$.50/hour). Hunting: Smith is a good worker to whom he would like to give a raise in recognition of his obtaining the Hoisting License; this license requires continuing education to maintain. DeChiara: is there urgency to this pay raise; could the decision be made during a subsequent Select Board meeting? Vinskey: what is FinCom's role relative to pay raises outside of the budget cycle? Torres: if approved by the Select Board, the FinCom will consider how to accommodate the raise. Torres: typically, when a department head requests a staff pay raise, the Select Board approves the increase before FinCom considers the raise; in this case, Smith obtained his Hoister's License after the FY17 budget process. DeChiara: it may make sense for the Personnel Board to weigh in first; is it a given that attaining a certain level of certification means a raise in pay? Torres: some are automatic, i.e. Tax Collector and Treasurer certifications. Hunting: asking for a staff raise outside of the budget season is rare and has occurred only three times during his tenure as superintendent. Vinskey recommends approval by the FinCom and Personnel Board before Select Board consideration; the raise could be made retroactive to the date Smith obtained his Hoisters License. Makepeace-O'Neil and DeChiara agree with Vinskey's recommendation.
2. Chapter 90 Request for Project: Vinskey's concern is that the current owners be aware and supportive of the Baker Road project proposal. Hunting explains that he will be meeting with the Jeff and Liz Lacy/7 Baker Road on 9.28.16; temporarily, the puddle has been filled and Lacy made a small cut to let the water flow out of the puddle. Hunting: the options are either to let the water flow into the Lacys' field or install curbs on both sides to direct the flow down Baker Road - the re-grading will create a steady pitch for the water to flow; a catch basin

could be installed; the Conservation Commission will need to assess the area where the water may flow. Hunting: unless the weather stays mild, work in this area may not occur this calendar year; the Chapter 90 Project Request is to obtain funding for the project. Vinskey moves the Select Board approve and sign the Chapter 90 request for funds; Makepeace-O'Neil seconds the motion that passes unanimously.

3. Dump Truck Bid Award/Contract: Hunting: three bids were submitted - the International bids did not meet his specifications; Patriot met the specifications however theirs was the high bid. Hunting reviewed the bids with several resources; his initial thought was to choose the second International bid with a Cummins motor however Patriot met all of the required specifications; the only way to allow Patriot to respond to the smaller motor specs utilized by International was to rebid. Hunting recommends the Western Star/Patriot bid for ~\$107,000; the International was for ~\$103,000; there was only one bid for the dump body. Torres: there is the possibility of a trade-in and Hunting could pay the \$292 overage from another of the department's expense accounts to cover the overage. Torres: the contract needs to be amended to \$107,164/truck and \$85,128/body for a total \$192,292. DeChiara moves to approve the bid from Western Star for a total of \$192,292/truck and body; Makepeace-O'Neil seconds and all approve the motion. Torres: the contract will be attached to the full bid specs for both the truck and the body. Vinskey will sign the contract 9.14.16.

Unanticipated Item:

1. Draft letter to Ronald Meck/12 Birch Drive: Vinskey explains that he spoke with Nancy Long/Dog Officer earlier on 9.13.16: no barking occurred during her visits; per Long, Police Sgt. Masiuk has had some concerns about the dog's living conditions. DeChiara: earlier today (9.13.16), via email, Meck stated that he called Shelburne Control the evening of 9.12.16 to report a barking incident. Torres, referring to Long's 9.12.16 email: Long is contacting the State to determine a course of action, i.e. possibly removing the dog; Police Chief Harding was notified by dispatch that Meck contacted Shelburne Control; as this point, it appears a hearing will be necessary; Town Counsel will be present during the hearing to provide guidance to the Select Board. DeChiara: can the dog be removed in the interim? Torres: no, removing a dog is a difficult process. Vinskey: Meck needs guidance on how to proceed. Vinskey will confer with Harding and Torres prior to finalizing the letter to Meck. Torres requests the Select Board consider a date/time for a dog hearing; the main message to Meck needs to be that a dog hearing has been recommended by the Dog Officer and a date is being planned. DeChiara: given the recent developments, recommends a brief note to Meck be sent via email followed by hard copy.

Discussion Topic:

1. General FY18 Budget Policy Discussion with Finance Committee: Vinskey refers to his 9.7.16 email listing suggested topics for tonight's discussion: concerns he raised during the FY17 budget season about stabilization and free cash funds identified the need for a conversation earlier in the year. Arvanitis: FinCom's charge is the budget; budget information for FY18 still needs to be gathered, i.e. the amount the State is going to send for revenue; the gap between revenue and expenses is usually closed with a 2.5% levy; if the tax levy is going to be decreased, needed cuts will have to be evaluated; the Town is in great condition because we have a lot of cash; the FinCom agrees with the need to meet with the Select Board on a regular a basis and to determine what conversations are needed with department heads. Torres: finalization of the FY16 budget is expected in about two weeks. DeChiara states he would not jump to not raising taxes as an assumption and affirms the need for conversation early on. Puleo: the FinCom needs to be aware of costs the Select Board may see on the horizon, i.e. expenses related to executive session matters; we do not yet know where Broadband costs will come from; you do not want to fund your operating budget out of free cash – free cash can be used for exceptional expenses. Arvanitis: we will be receiving an actuarial study for paying OPEB; we are talking about how to live within the 2.5% levy; because of the new Fire Department and Highway Department trucks, we are fully funded on debt service; we can mitigate debt exclusion by using stabilization for one-time expenses such as Broadband. Groves: if there is a 2.5% increase and Social Security did not give a cost of living raise, is it fair to raise the levy when incomes are not rising; what kinds of stress are we putting on residents – are we promoting gentrification - people are not taxed on their ability to pay. Arvanitis: how can we close the gap between what departments are asking for and income sources? DeChiara: we need to invest in infrastructure to maintain the vitality of the town without creating pressure on residents. Arvanitis: this meeting is setting the tone for going forward; the All Boards' meeting is coming up; notes the need for more attendance at the Four-Town meeting by Shutesbury representatives – it is critical we are there. Vinskey: the truck loans will be paid by line items; why take a loan when we have capital stabilization? Arvanitis: because we have Broadband and OPEB; if we analyze properly, we will find the best way to fund Broadband. Stocker: the truck loan interest rates are very low. Houle: you always want to maintain some debt in order to keep our bond rating high. Lacy: how much debt is necessary to establish credit? Arvanitis: the loans need to be for large items, i.e. dump trucks; we do pay for some line items out of free cash, i.e. police cruisers. Torres: it will be important to review the items that are usually under/overspent, i.e. health insurance, snow removal, and unemployment; the big drivers of free cash are things that cannot be controlled. Vinskey: basically, we need to close the gap by making decisions about what will and will not be funded; it will not be difficult to close the gap by using free cash; there are underspent line items year-to-year that can be looked at - this indicates that there is leeway. Puleo: we continue to put money into the accounts that are uncertain, i.e. snow removal; free cash is substantial and we may not need to add to it. Arvanitis: one approach would be to trim certain line items and substantially

increase the FinCom reserves to cover overages. Puleo notes the need for care with such an approach. Arvanitis: there are some years when it is acceptable to have large cash reserves; we are looking at several large future expenses. Torres: because we are paying debt via line items, we will not have the inflow into capitol stabilization and stabilization that we have had in recent years. Houle's fictional example: when the trucks are paid off in 2020, we will be able to utilize those funds to pay for Broadband – in this way, we could avoid an override and new taxes. DeChiara: assuming Broadband goes forward, the MLP will need a manager; a good time for the next FinCom/Select Board meeting will be after the sequence of department head meetings; what is the process for the Select Board to request items? Torres: the Select Board would fill out a budget request form. Houle: every year, the FinCom prepares a letter and budget request form to come out in October. Vinskey: the All Chairs meeting is scheduled for 10.25.16. Arvanitis: the FinCom will notify the Select Board when the FY16 budget finalization becomes an agenda item. DeChiara, as planned during the 9.6.16 Select Board meeting, he spoke with Steve Sullivan/Regional School Committee Representative 9.12.16: the ex-superintendent has been paid a significant portion of her payout; as per Hootstein's numbers, the payout was broken out – the Region's portion is \$159,000 of the \$300,000; Shutesbury's portion is \$12,720 of the \$159,000; there will most likely be a lawsuit from the Pelham parent against the superintendent. DeChiara: in Union 28, all four towns share the superintendent; in Union 26, there is no documentation about how the superintendent is shared; one could argue the lawsuit is Pelham's responsibility or it is a shared responsibility.

DeChiara moves and Makepeace-O'Neil seconds the motion that is approved by all to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 8:12pm.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Chapter 90 Project Request: Locks Pond and Baker Roads
2. 8.12.16 Invitation to Bid: 10' Multipurpose Dump Body with Related Equipment
3. Amended 8.1.16 Invitation to Bid: 6-Wheel Cab and Chassis Truck
4. Draft letter to Ronald Meck
5. 9.7.16 Vinskey email: SB/Finance Committee meeting

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Avis Scott
Administrative Secretary