

Barbara Campbell _____

John Allen _____

Frank DiFruscio _____

**Selectmen Meeting & Budget Hearing #1
January 25, 2022
UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED**

Present: Barbara Campbell, Chairman; John Allen, Selectmen; Frank DiFruscio, Selectmen

Attendees: In Person: Willis Kelley, Hank Dresch, Emily Benson, Fred Tompkins, Gary Allen, Tom Eastman (Conway Daily Sun) and Hank Benesh
Via Zoom: Darlene Ference, Dick Bennett, Chief Perley, Linda Terry, Patricia Hanlon, Penny Miller, Scott Ferrari, Jeannette Heidman, Julie Atwell, Town Administrator and Jay Henry, Fire Chief

Chairman Campbell explained that this meeting had board members attending in person (Chairman Campbell and John Allen) and remotely (Frank DiFruscio) via Zoom due to COVID concerns.

1. Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 3:31PM.

2. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Approval of Minutes:

a. Selectmen's Meeting – January 18, 2022

Chairman Campbell made a motion to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Frank DiFruscio. All approved.

b. Selectmen's Non-Public Meeting – January 18, 2022 - RSA 91-A:3 II (a)

Chairman Campbell made a motion to keep these minutes sealed, seconded by Frank DiFruscio. All approved.

4. For Selectmen Discussion and/or Motions:

a. Fire Station – Update

Chairman Campbell restated (from the last meeting) that she voted in support of adding a new Fire Station to the Warrant, and Frank voted against adding it to the Warrant for this year. Chairman Campbell said that since this was such a big item, they wanted to have all three

Selectmen weigh in for a final discussion and decision. Chairman Campbell wanted to comment that the reason the recommendation is coming to the Selectmen to put the bond for the Fire Station on the Warrant is to allow the public, taxpayers and voters to acquire more information about a new Fire Station. Chairman Campbell said that the vote would allow a bond to be purchased. She said that the price of 5.7 million is what was given to the Committee, but they feel that the Fire Station could be built for much less than that. Chairman Campbell said that the opportunity for the Selectmen to learn more about the Committee's work has always been there. They have had public sessions, documentation, and an open door policy where any of this information could have been obtained and reviewed. She said the Committee was tasked with a Fire Station. Chairman Campbell said that this is why she feels that the Selectmen should be willing to put a Warrant Article out to build a new Fire Station, even though the price is high. The Committee explored all options and felt that even though the Committee vote was not unanimous, that a good recommendation was still being made.

John Allen appreciates all of the work that the Committee put into this research. John said that for him, the price was a lot. He said he normally agrees with bringing things like this to the public to vote on, but he spoke with a few townspeople who feel that projects for the whole town need to be looked at and planned for in the same way vehicles and other things are planned for, and he agrees. He said that this type of planning would allow large projects to be spaced out rather than having them happen all at once. So with that being said, John stated that he is voting against putting the Fire Station on the Warrant today. He said that people could always bring the signature process to the town, and that it is not dead in the water.

Bill Kelley wanted to make a few comments. He said he does not agree with Selectmen DiFruscio's notion that you can be against the Fire Station and still support the Fire Department. Bill said that they are separate issues, and that the Fire Department has always had support from the townspeople. He said that the Fire Station is a town building, and it is not owned or managed by the Fire Department. He said that as a former planning board member (for 16 years) who was involved with several town plans, nothing was done. Everyone is in agreement that the Fire Station needs attention, but it comes down to cost. Bill asked at what price would Selectmen DiFruscio and Selectmen Allen support a new Fire Station. He spoke to Chief Henry, who again said that he thought the cost was too high, and they did not have Selectmen support. Bill Kelley said the Selectmen were elected to manage this town and its property. He said the Fire Station is dilapidated and unsafe, and he feels that things are currently not being managed well. Bill would like to know what the Selectmen's Plan B is for the building if they do not place this on the Warrant. He said that the school has already said they have a big project coming, so he wants to know when there will be a good time for a new Fire Station.

Frank said that there may never be a good time for a new Fire Station, and they may have to repair the existing building. He restated that there needs to be a holistic approach, and all the needs have to be looked at first. Frank said he has always supported the Fire Department, as he agreed with a new \$700,000 fire truck purchase. Frank said that he may not have attended the open house, but he has walked through the building with Chief Henry several times, and thinks repairs could be made. He said he is still a no vote for now.

Hank Dresch said that he agrees with Chairman Campbell, and said that he feels the building is not fit for use by the Fire Department. He thinks that to say that the town has all these other unknown needs is just a typical delaying action that you see in a lot of organizations. He said to

let the townspeople decide if they will support this or not. He said they would not be asking for the people to support the 5.7 million, but rather the concept of a new Fire Station.

Bill Kelley got some updated information from the Department of Revenue and Secretary of State's Office regarding the bond process, and the wording of a Warrant Article.

Selectmen DiFruscio doesn't agree that looking at the town is a stall tactic, and he feels that since the Fire Chief is against this, people should listen to the Chief.

Chairman Campbell said that based on the votes, the Selectmen will not be placing a Warrant Article for the Fire Station this year.

b. Hazard Mitigation Review – Emily Benson

Emily Benson explained that every year since the Hazard Mitigation Plan was implemented, an annual update is required. The update indicates progress that has been made on the action items. Emily wanted to point out that on the training action item, both the Deputy EMD, Deidre Braun and Deputy Health Officer, Beth Dyer, have passed the Fire Fighter One course. Emily has listed some items that could qualify for the ARPA funding. **John Allen made a motion to approve the Hazard Mitigation update and review for the year, seconded by Frank DiFruscio. All approved.**

c. Helfrich Land Swap – Finalize the culvert issue

This is a proposed land swap with the Town, for parcels of the same size, to correct encroachment issues. Sean Bergeron has submitted plans to correct the culvert issue that had yet to be resolved. **Chairman Campbell made a motion to approve the Helfrich Land Swap matter, seconded by John Allen. All approved.**

d. PD Cruiser – Discussion

The Police Department has a cruiser that has aged out, and rather than sell it, the Chief will be giving it to Kevin Bennett, because Kevin has been using his personal vehicle for years to do his job. The vehicle will just be transferred from the P.D. to the Building Inspector. This will have no financial impact. Chief Perley said this is a 2014 Chevy with 96,250 miles on it.

e. Renewal of Annual Tax Anticipation Note

Every year we renew the Tax Anticipation Note (TAN), which we have not had to use, but we have available in case any funds are ever needed. **John Allen made a motion to renew our TAN with Mascoma Bank, seconded by Frank DiFruscio. All approved.**

5. **Short Term Rentals - Applications for approval:**

a. New permits:

1. BEGIN, ARTHUR	82A WENTWORTH HALL AVE
2. HEIDMANN, JEANETTE	93A DINSMORE ROAD

1. **John Allen made a motion to approve Arthur Begin's, 82A Wentworth Avenue, Short Term Rental, seconded by Chairman Campbell. All approved.**

2. **John Allen made a motion to approve Jeanette Heidmann's Short Term Rental, at 93 Dinsmore Road, seconded by Chairman Campbell. All approved.**

b. Violation Notices:

1. Denaro – 1st Violation notice (operating an STR without a permit)

Frank DiFruscio made a motion to file a violation notice for operating a short term rental without a permit, seconded by John Allen. All approved.

c. Pending:

1. Nonni:

They have not yet submitted their meals and rooms tax number, so their approval is still pending.

d. Complaints:

1. 18 Spring Street – Parking Complaints:

Two complaints were received. Snow accumulation at this residence has caused renters to park in the neighbors driveway. They have already received a parking violation in March, so this is a second violation. The problem is the owner is not having the driveway plowed for the short term renters. Chief Perley said that this is a private road, so the police can not enforce parking violations other than parking to block private driveways. **Frank DiFruscio made a motion to file a second violation notice, seconded by John Allen. All approved.**

5. **Building & Driveway Permits:**

- a. Approved Building Permits:

None

- b. Approved Driveway Permits:

None

6. **Upcoming meetings:**

- Tuesday, February 1st at 3:30pm
 - Budget Hearing #2 – following the Selectmen's Meeting
- Tuesday, February 22nd at 3:30pm

7. Public Comment:

Chief Henry wanted to let the Selectmen know that three firefighters have passed the Fire Fighter One training (which is about 900 hours for all three), so they are now all certified. The members are: Beth Dyer, Deirdre Braun and Brooks Dodge.

Penny Miller asked if Kevin Bennett will be able to take the new vehicle home. She is concerned about the wear and tear of the vehicle. Chairman Campbell said she did not think he would have a need to bring this vehicle home. She also asked if the police house checks were tallied separately on their yearly report, and if the Selectmen considered charging people for these checks because of labor costs and wear and tear on the vehicles. Chief Perley said that the house checks are tallied separately as a house check on the report. The Chief would be opposed to charging residents for this service, because they pay the Police Department to be vigilant and to be on patrol. There is no additional cost, because they are patrolling these areas anyway, which has led to zero burglaries for three years in a row.

Tom Eastman asked if the proposal for the Fire Station is still open for a petition. John said it could be open, and that 25 registered voters would be needed. Tom asked if there was an idea of what the town feeling was about the Fire Station. Chairman Campbell said they do not know how the town feels. There was no survey sent out. There were several open houses where people expressed support, but Frank has also heard from people in town, that they are not in favor of a new station. Bill Kelley said the people he has heard from have been supportive. Chairman Campbell said the only remaining question is if you can submit a petition for something as large as that and if there would be any restrictions on it. She said that was something that would have to be looked at to make sure it is legitimate.

8. John Allen made a motion to adjourn the Selectmen's Meeting and move into Budget Number One, seconded by Frank DiFruscio, All approved.

9. Chairman Campbell called Budget Hearing Number One to order at 4:13PM

10. Review Operating Budget

Chairman Campbell said that they would concentrate on the Operating Budget (and not the Warrant Articles) since this is a big task. Chairman Campbell wanted to start by addressing the salary increases. This year there is not a flat three percent increase that has been done in the past. Each department head was asked to review salaries using the New Hampshire Municipal salary surveys and other towns for comparisons. The Social Security (6%) increase was also considered as another tool to measure town salaries. Additionally, with the turnover in the Highway Department, and no responses to the advertisement for the position (which surprised the Selectmen) they made individual adjustments. Chairman Campbell said that the increases represented in the Budget are fair and deserved for the staff that we have. In every department, through COVID and all of the turmoil, the Selectmen feel that the staff is deserving of the increases represented in the budget. The Health Insurance decreased by 9% with our current company. Other companies were considered, but it was decided that this was the best option for this year.

Frank DiFruscio agreed with Chairman Campbell's comments, and he wanted to add that since he has been in this position before (1988-2003), and he has worked with a lot of people during that time, he feels that the folks we have working for us are unbelievably dedicated and good. He said they deserve what is being proposed. He mentioned the highly competitive world for employees, and stated that Jackson is lucky to retain these people and keep them happy.

Chairman Campbell reviewed the Operating Budget section by section. Changes in each section can be seen under "notes" at the end of each section.

Penny Miller asked if the Building Inspector position was a full-time position. Chairman Campbell responded that this became full-time two years ago.

Chairman Campbell was at an Ambulance meeting, and it was decided that Hart's Location would be asked to contribute \$2,500 toward the Ambulance rather than the previous \$500 annually that they had been paying. Bill Kelley suggested that the Selectmen could work with Fish and Game, and let the State know that the Bartlett/Jackson Ambulance is going to rescue calls (many in Harts Location), but can not bill because the individual has refused a medical transport. **Frank DiFruscio made a motion to ask Hart's Location for a \$2,500 contribution this year, rather than the \$500 they had been paying, seconded by John Allen. All approved.**

Chief Henry asked if the Selectmen would like to increase the Fire Department Budget for maintenance. John Allen feels that it should be increased. Chief Henry is going to come up with a list of repairs to be discussed at the next meeting addressing the most urgent items.

John Allen asked Gary to review a few items for the next meeting because he saw items that were over budget, and they may need to be increased.

Roger Aubrey made a correction to the actual budget numbers. He will send the updates to Julie Atwell for correction.

Bill Kelley suggested using money from the Fund Balance to cover some of the Fire Department Maintenance expenses.

Budget Hearing Number Two will be next week (2/1/22) following the Selectmen's Meeting.

11. Discuss Options for the ARPA Funds

This will be discussed at a future meeting.

12. John Allen made a motion to adjourn the Budget Hearing, seconded by Chairman Campbell. All approved.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Erik Atwell

To view the full video recording of this meeting visit www.jacksonflicks.com/Jackson