Selectmen’s meeting minutes of Monday, November 16, 2009

Present from the Board: Selectman Katherine Dawson, Selectman Normand Boudreau, Selectman Pat Consentino, and Selectman Sandy Plessner. Selectman David Wadleigh was not present.

Also present Town Administrator Joyce Fulweiler and Secretary Catherine A.Woessner.
Selectman Dawson called the meeting to order at 8:45A.M.

Public Works Director, Dennis Allen-Budget 2010
Dennis informed the Board that he spoke with one of the Parks Commissioners who informed him that the Commissioners have made a decision and have selected someone to do the work at the Riverfront Park. The Board discussed this and Selectman Dawson said the Parks Commission can select a contractor, but they cannot enter into any contracts without the Board of Selectmen’s approval. They will have to present this to the Board.

Public Works Director Dennis presented his budget for 2010. Dennis explained to the Board that he prepared a budget for a full time worker, and one for a seasonal worker, part-time for plowing the sidewalks. The part time position wages would be $9,600, and for the full time position wages would be $31,200 plus benefits.

Selectman Consentino asked to have further discussion regarding this until they speak to the Parks Commissioners. Selectman Dawson asked to have the Parks Commission attend their meeting on Thursday evening at 5:00PM.
Dennis Allen will also be present for that meeting and Selectman Dawson asked him to prepare information regarding the part time position’s wages and for the full time person as well. Selectman Dawson also asked Dennis to look into the cost for a pesticide license.
Selectman Dawson informed Dennis of a decision by the Board to have him put a sand/salt mixture on Manville Road. Dennis discussed this with the Board and he said after the road is salted later on it should be plowed. Selectman Dawson asked Dennis if he could come up with a plan regarding sanding/salting Manville Road. At this time Selectman Dawson made a motion to reverse their decision that was made at their November 12th meeting to use a sand/salt mixture on Manville Road and let the Public Works Director come up with a plan, seconded by Selectman Plessner. All were in favor.

Dennis reported that there is a 7.1 percent increase in his budget. Dennis said there are some items in his budget that he does not have control over. Dennis said the difference is $70,243.00 in the budget. One item is the street lighting is increased by $6,000, the solid waste is increased by $45,000, and the curbside collection is increase by $5,000. Also the janitor's wages is part of Dennis's budget. He is responsible for cleaning the town offices, police department and Riverfront Park. The Finance Officer said these wages are credited out to each of those departments. There was discussion regarding removing this item from the Highway Department budget. Dennis is the supervisor of the janitor right now and if this is removed from his budget into Administration, he would have a new supervisor. There would be a supervisor from the police department and one from the Town hall. Selectman Dawson said ultimately the Selectmen would be his supervisor.

Dennis reported he is using 3.5 percent for merit raise pool.

Dennis asked if they were going to have warrant articles for the capital reserve funds. He reported that the repair of the Pine Street Bridge will have to be a warrant article. Dennis said depending on the price it would be either through a bond or other financing. Right now there is $50,918.00 in the Capital Reserve and out of that amount some has been used for engineering purposes. Last year they appropriated $25,000 at town meeting. There is a town road Capital Reserve which they have been putting in $40,000 per year and have a total of $138,291.00 in that account now. Dennis explained that 95 percent of the roads in town have been overlayed. The next step when roads need to be done is that they need to be ground, fine graded and then two inches of asphalt on them. Dennis reported that
the Peabody Capital Reserve Fund says the reserve fund balance is closed out, but the project is not completed. The warring course still have to be done and is hoping this will be done next spring. The price will be around $15,000. Joyce suggested Dennis have a contract for this project as the original warrant article did not say non lapsing, but if there is a contract then he can encumber the money.

There was much discussion regarding the cost to repair Pine Street Bridge. This project will be bonded and the block grant money will go into town road repair.

There was discussion regarding restricting the Highway Block Grant money. Selectman Dawson said this money should be dedicated to the Highway dept., use. Dennis said he wants to utilize the Highway Block Grant money for Highway road use.

Cindy Reinartz, Town Clerk/Tax Collector’s proposed budget: Cindy addressed the board regarding her wages. She is asking for an increase in her salary and has reviewed the hourly rate of the town employees for a comparison. Cindy said she has worked for the town for nine years and is presently making $21.23 per hour for a 40 hour week. This is a salaried position. Cindy discussed the amount of revenue she collects for the town as the tax collector and that it is a tremendous responsibility. Cindy said she would like to be making $24.04 per hour which $50,000 per year for the position of both town clerk and tax collector. Cindy said part of this increase is what she was told she would receive when she ran for the position, but did not receive.

Selectman Consentino said she looked at the LGC Wage and Salary book of the surrounding towns and for a town this size and the revenue taken in, it is right around what Cindy is asking for. Cindy said she feels this is a fair hourly rate for the responsibility and the commitment and her years to the town. Cindy is asking for an adjustment to her salary to $50,000 and then add the merit increase in July to that figure. Selectman Boudreau said he would like to see it retroactive to January 1, 2010 as an adjustment and no merit.

In discussion of the merit raise, Selectman Dawson said Dennis has indicated a 3.5 % merit raise and the contract for the Police Department is 3.5% and feels that if those employees are getting 3.5 % then the rest of the
employees should be receiving the same. Selectman Dawson asked the Board how they feel about this. Selectman Plessner said she is in agreement with Selectman Dawson. Selectman Boudreau said this is exactly what he said last year at town meeting and feels the same way this year. Selectman Wadleigh and Selectmen Consentino are also in agreement.

Selectman Dawson said she feels the tax collector/town clerk's wages have not been what they should be for some time and was reduced when it became a combined position. Selectman Dawson said she would like to see the increase so that it will bring her wages up to $50,000. Selectman Boudreau said if they adjust her wages to $48,250 then Cindy would receive a merit raise when everyone else does. If they make it $50,000 retroactive to January 1, 2010 she would not receive a merit raise in 2010, she would have to wait until July of 2011 like the rest of the employees. These are the two options the Selectmen are discussing. Selectman Consentino feels the $48,250 will be more acceptable to the people at town meeting. Selectman Boudreau suggested they make this retroactive from January 1, 2010. The 3.5% merit raise would be effective in July and at that time would be at the $50,000. The Selectmen are in agreement.

Cindy said she would like to do the same for her deputy, an adjustment to her wages. The deputy's current hourly wages are 13.26 and Cindy would like to adjust it to $15.00 per hour. The deputy was hired at $12.00 per hour and after ninety days probation she received an increase of $1.00 per hour, to $13.00 per hour and in July received a 26 cent per hour, which was less than the merit, which annually is $27,580.00. Selectman Boudreau said this should be done the same as the Selectmen proposed for Cindy. This would be adjusting the deputy's hourly wage to $15.00 per hour less the 3.5 percent merit, retroactive to January 1, 2010. Selectman Consentino said she is in agreement for paying a fair wage to employees, particularly the ones that are very deserving of one. Selectman Consentino suggests they bring the deputy town clerk/tax collector up to what the police dispatcher's pay rate is because this is comparable. Selectman Dawson said she is in agreement with Selectmen Consentino which would bring the deputy's rate to $15.52 in July. The Selectmen are in agreement with this proposal.
Cindy also discussed some overtime for the deputy. She is suggesting 10 hours per month overtime which would be $22.50 per hour. Cindy informed the Board she would like to close her offices for two days for the town clerk's conference next year so her deputy can attend as well. The total amount for all of the conferences the town clerk/tax collector will attend including having her deputy attend the town clerk's conference will be $1,550.00. After the Board discussed they were in agreement.

**Chief Cormier, Police Budget, 2010:** Chief Cormier presented his proposed budget to the Selectmen. Chief Cormier reported that he included a 3.5% merit raise across the board for Officers wages. Selectman Boudreau asked if another officer was included in the budget to replace Corporal Weisensee who was just promoted to Corporal. Chief said that is included in his budget. Selectman Consentino said she is advocating holding the line on a new hire. The Board is in agreement with this and will revisit replacing one of the detectives when Corporal Ashburn returns from duty. Chief Cormier will adjust his budget to remove the wages for a new hire. There was discussion regarding raising the rate for Special Detail from $55.00 per hour to $60.00 per hour.

Chief Cormier discussed leasing two cruisers in 2010 and believes there will be enough money in the special duty fund would cover the lease. Chief Cormier said if they do get to vehicles, two will go off line.

The Board discussed the request from Old Home Day for $2,500.00 for 2010 budget. After the Board discussed this they were in agreement with the request.

At 1:01PM Selectman Dawson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Selectman Consentino. All were in favor.