

APPROVED

Town of Grantham Board of Selectmen - Meeting Minutes November 24, 2014

The regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 5:00pm on Wednesday, November 24, 2014 by Chairman Warren Kimball. The meeting was held in the Grantham Town Building, Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room at 300 Route 10 South, Grantham, NH.

Present: Chairman Warren Kimball; Selectman Ken Story; Selectman Constance Jones; Town Administrator Melissa White; Administrative Assistant Ann Jasper; Fire Chief Jay Fountain; Conservation Commission Member Richard Hocker; Simon Mayer; C. Peter James; and Alice Ely

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Town Administrator Melissa White

ADMINISTRATIVE - APPROVED

1. Payroll Manifest #437
2. Accounts Payable Manifest #428
3. Property Tax Refunds (Due to overpayment):
 - M/L 237-042-000; \$182 Split Rock Road - \$21.05
 - M/L 215-009-037; 837 Cove Drive, Unit 37 - \$2,690.00
 - M/L 225-053-018; 18 Niblick Lane - \$3,223.39
4. Property Tax Abatement:
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 - M/L 221-001-000; Route 10 North - \$597.13
5. 2015 New London Communications Center Dispatch Fee
6. Building Permits:
 - M/L 225-083-000; 61 Troon Drive - Generator
 - M/L 222-261-000; 45 Hummingbird Hill – Patio and Hot Tub

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular and non-public meeting minutes of November 12, 2014 as written was made by Selectman Story; seconded by Selectman Jones. **Unanimously approved.**

APPEARANCES:

- Alice R. Ely, MVHI/Upper Valley Public Health Advisory Council: Alice R. Ely, of Mascoma Valley Health Initiative (MVHI) and the Upper Valley Public Health Advisory Council, informed that the Upper Valley Public Health Advisory Council is exploring interest in creating a mutually funded social worker position to aid/support towns in our public health region in handling town welfare assistance. Ely explained that the people within town government who handle welfare assistance are not social workers who have a professional background in dealing with counseling, assessment and trying to figure out

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how to help somebody with very complex needs and the idea came up at a meeting last summer that the region could benefit from having one person who was hired to be a municipal social worker/case manager/crisis intervention worker. She added that some of the major social service agencies in the region have said that if there was somebody in a position like that to assist the towns and help usher people around to the service agencies and help them through that process, they could probably move them to the top of the waiting list because they would know that they have that wrap around support and that services can be provided to them in a way that was really going to push them forward and not require the agency to do a lot of case management that they are not in a position to do.

Ely clarified that the Council is exploring this idea with the various towns in the region and trying to determine how much they would benefit and how the towns would pay for the position such as by paying a set fee or paying on a fee for service basis. She informed that there are 12 towns in the service area and the cost would be split among the towns which elect to participate.

Selectman Jones stated that Grantham is in Sullivan County where most of the other towns are in Grafton County and asked how that would fit in. Jones added that Grantham has had a couple cases this year so far but is generally not overburdened with them and Town Administrator White has been able to work quite well with the social agencies needed in those situations. She said she would need more time to evaluate this idea and see where Grantham would fit in with the other towns. Ely said that, from the perspective of the New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services, Grantham is part of the Upper Valley Health Region and nothing she is talking about doing has any direct interface with county government so Grantham being in Sullivan County does not have any bearing on them being able to do this.

Selectman Jones asked what she thought this position would cost. Ely estimated a ballpark figure for salary and benefits to be about \$75,000 per year for a full time position. She added that they are still trying to determine whether the position should start out as a full time position or part time and grow as the demand requires. Selectman Jones asked if extra monies would need to be raised to help pay for placing this person in the agency they will be working out of or if the agency would contribute to the cost. Ely said she did not know the answer to that at this time. Jones asked if there were grants that could be obtained for this. Ely said she is confident that there are grants that would help pay for at least the startup of this position.

Ely asked the Board if they would complete the questionnaire that was in the packet she provided to White earlier to assess the potential benefit of this proposed position and give her some feedback. Chairman Kimball said yes.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Constance B. Howard: A letter was received from Constance B. Howard resigning her appointment to the Grantham Conservation Commission effective December 1, 2014. She said it has been a pleasure to serve and she enjoyed working with the other members of the Commission. The Board regretfully accepted her resignation and commented that she is a wealth of knowledge and thanked her for her service.

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- Sullivan County Treasurer: A letter was received from Jessie Levine, Sullivan County Manager, informing that Grantham's portion of the Sullivan County Tax Apportionment is \$1,471,602.00 and is due by December 17, 2014. The letter also extended thanks to the Board for opening up a Selectmen's meeting to discuss county matters.

OLD BUSINESS

- Olde Farms Road Bridge: Town Administrator White informed that she corrected the dates on the RFP and is awaiting Bridge Engineer Darrow to make the final changes to the plan.

NEW BUSINESS

- State of New Hampshire Board of Tax and Land Appeals: James Sweeney; M/L 215-010-029; 629 Otter Road: White reported that an agreement has been reached in this matter reducing the assessment from \$188,200.00 to \$160,000.00.

A motion to approve the abatement for M/L 215-010-029; 629 Otter Road was made by Selectman Story; seconded by Selectman Jones. ***Unanimously approved.***

DEPARTMENT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Fire Department – October Report:
 - Responded to 15 calls consisting of 5 EMS and 10 Fire/Rescue.
 - The Department held its annual open house in conjunction with the annual health fair and flu shot clinic. FireProTec was in attendance demonstrating, selling and repairing fire extinguishers.
 - The Fire Department joined the Police Department on Halloween for Safety Day at Grantham Village School as well as putting apparatus out on the street to light up safe crossing for the trick or treaters and parents and attempt to slow down cars.
 - Training on ropes and knots along with ladder operations was conducted.
- Town Administrator
 - Town Clerk/Tax Collector Rita Friedman submitted a report informing that, to date, \$3,678,475.10 has been collected on the 2014 second issue tax bill. Unpaid to date is \$2,441,209.67. The due date is December 1, 2014.
 - Upcoming Meetings:
 - The Open Space Committee meeting is Thursday, December 4, 2014 at 8:30am.
 - The Planning Board meeting is Thursday, December 4, 2014 at 7:00pm.
 - The Trustees of the Trust Funds meeting is Tuesday, December 9, 2014 at 1:00pm.

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OTHER

- C. Peter James: C. Peter James asked why the Board doesn't delegate the signing of Building Permits to either Town Administrator White or Building Inspector Roger Woodworth instead of requiring people to wait a two week period between Selectmen meetings. Chairman Kimball explained that having the three Selectmen look over the Building Permits provides a much better check and balance to see exactly what is being done and to be sure the permit is complete and none of the requirements are missing.
- Simon Mayer: Referring to the letter sent in December 2013 regarding the 52.8% increase in the town portion of his property tax bill, Mr. Mayer asked why he had not received a response. Mayer explained the Town portion was \$2.61 in 2012 and went up to \$3.99 in 2013. He stated that property taxes go up every year and is a very high burden.

Mayer said he does not agree with how the property tax works and believes the property taxes need to be spread differently and collected in a way that is more fair to everyone. He said he has written to the Governor twice and spoken to local representatives, but to no avail. He asked the Board of Selectmen to take a stand and start working towards this goal. Chairman Kimball and Selectman Jones explained that the tax rate is not just for operational purposes but also includes projects such as building a new bridge. Selectman Story added that one of the reasons for the jump in the tax rate is that the Selectmen had been using a larger portion of the fund balance in previous years to keep the tax rate down.

Selectman Jones suggested Mayer have someone at the state level explain the property tax because it is very confusing. In addition, the state determines how much the towns have to raise in order to provide what the state considers an adequate education for children but the state does not necessarily provide any money for that. Mayer said what he would like to see happen is the property tax portion get split up into different segments of who is paying what, for example, a retiree who has no children in school should not pay any portion of the school tax. He continued that he believes municipalities should get involved with the state to try to fix this problem. Chairman Kimball apologized for not getting back to him. Mayer thanked the Board for their time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Selectman Story moved to adjourn, seconded by Selectman Jones; **by unanimous vote, the Board adjourned at 6:50 pm.**

The next Selectmen's Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, December 10, 2014** at 5pm in the Grantham Town Building; Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room at 300 Route 10 South, Grantham, NH.

Respectfully submitted,



Ann Jasper
Administrative Assistant