

MINUTES
SELECT BOARD
TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH
Tuesday, February 21, 2012 – 6:00pm
1 Grove Street, Peterborough, New Hampshire

Present: Joe Byk, Barbara Miller, Elizabeth Thomas
Roland Patten, Gordon Kemp, Bob Lambert, Leslie Lewis, Bertha Harris, Steve Jones, Donald Parkhurst
Also Present: Pamela Brenner, Nancie Vaihinger, Chief Joseph Lenox, Deputy Chief Brian Wall, Jeremy Bouchard, Jeff King, Nicole MacStay

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Public Hearing – Proposed Transfer of Wolcott Conservation Easement

Francie Von Mertens of the Conservation Commission explained that the Town was given an easement on this land, but then six months later the actual parcel was given to the Town. Since then the Conservation Commission has talked about transferring the easement to a land trust since the Town cannot enforce an easement on itself. Since the Town would be giving up interest in a property the Select Board must approve. The assignment of the easement is a short document that is currently being reviewed. There were no questions or comments.

Motion:

Mr. Byk made a motion to transfer the easement on the Wolcott Property to the Harris Center; **Ms. Thomas** seconded.

Vote:

Mr. Byk, Ms. Thomas and **Chair Miller** voted in favor of the motion; the motion carried.

Proposed NEA Grant Application

Karen Fitzgerald said that they have worked on a draft of the application and have support from the Sharon Arts Center, Monadnock Music and the MacDowell Colony. They are still looking for the second half of the match, and are following up on a couple of possibilities. **Mr. Byk** asked about in-kind services; **Ms. Fitzgerald** said that the most they like to see is 1/3 in-kind. Arts Alive does not want to be associated with the project, but Sharon Arts Center has agreed to be a nonprofit partner, and Monadnock Music is also considering partnering. There was some further discussion about the application process.

Motion:

Mr. Byk made a motion to support the application to the NEA for the Our Town Grant and to further authorize Chair Miller to sign a letter to that effect to include in the application; **Ms. Thomas** seconded.

Vote:

Mr. Byk, Ms. Thomas and **Chair Miller** voted in favor of the motion; the motion carried.

Horse Trough Dedication

Roland Patten said that this trough honors David MacGilvary, the man who donated the land for the Town Library. The trough was originally installed at the intersection of Main Street and Summer Street, and had a bronze horse head fountain. Some time in the 1930s the horse head was stolen and never replace. The trough was moved a number of times before finally being placed behind the Historical Society in the 1990s. In an effort to restore the trough private funds were raised and a local artist, Carol Lake, was commissioned to recreate the horse head fountain of bronze. **Mr. Patten** then uncovered the horse head. The trough with the restored fountain will be located temporarily in front of the Town House. **Mr. Patten** then thanked the people who assisted himself and Jim Grant with this project, particularly Ms. Brenner, Mr. Bartlett, as well as Mr. Farashahi who helped with tonight's presentation. Peterborough Tool Company is manufacturing the brass box that the head will sit on, and John Kaufhold has given innumerable hours moving the trough from where it previously stood to his place of business to do the necessary work. When the work on the trough is complete it will be installed at the Town House, and on May 9th at 6:00 pm it will be dedicated as a wishing well, with all the collected coins going to the food pantry in honor of Jim Lenane, founder of the Food Pantry. **Chair Miller** asked where it will go permanently; **Mr. Patten** said that it will be moved to lower Main Street when the street scaping is completed. The Board then discussed potential temporary locations for the fountain.

Motion:

Chair Miller made a motion to place the trough in front of the Town House next to the light post; **Mr. Byk** seconded.

Vote:

Chair Miller, Mr. Byk and **Ms. Thomas** voted in favor of the motion; the motion carried.

Authorization of Recreation Revolving Fund Expenditures

Mr. King explained that there are two expenditures before the Board tonight; the first to divest the Town of Monadnock Softball League funds. Previously there were many leagues in the area, and over a number of years they were able to consolidate those leagues. The funds were administered here because Peterborough had a revolving fund that could support the operation. The league is now strong enough to operate on its own. Approval has been granted by the Recreation Committee, and is now needed from the Select Board. The balance is \$7,919.27 to be turned over to the league, as well as dues for this year of \$568.08, bringing the total request to \$8,487.35.

Motion:

Chair Miller made a motion to expend the funds per Recreation Revolving funds rules and turn them over to the Monadnock Youth Softball League; **Mr. Byk** seconded.

Vote:

Chair Miller, Mr. Byk and **Ms. Thomas** voted in favor of the motion: the motion carried.

Mr. King said that he and the Recreation Committee are looking to install new basketball standards in the drill hall of the Community Center. The best of the options they have looked at and the most cost effective are portable units which have 425 pounds of ballast which make it so that they can't fall over if someone tries to hang from the basket. To purchase two is \$3,094 including shipping. They are adjustable for children and adults, so they are very versatile. **Chair Miller** asked how these are being paid for through the revolving fund; **Mr. King** said that people who have paid for the basketball over the years have paid for the program.

Motion:

Chair Miller made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$3,094.00 to purchase basketball standards; **Ms. Thomas** seconded.

Vote:

Chair Miller, Ms. Thomas and **Mr. Byk** voted in favor of the motion; the motion carried.

Post Issuance Tax Compliance Policy and Procedures

Ms. Vaihinger explained that this is a policy that was written and recommended by the town's bond counsel. These are all things that are being done now, mostly by myself and the department director overseeing the project. The IRS has decided that it will begin examining various municipal bond issuers to check their compliance with arbitrage and rebate. Additionally, we have a form a form we file with every bond issue, which now includes two questions, one of which asks if the Town has this policy in writing.

Motion:

Mr. Byk made a motion to accept the Post Issuance Tax Compliance Policy and Procedures as presented; **Chair Miller** seconded.

Vote:

Mr. Byk, Chair Miller and **Ms. Thomas** voted in favor of the motion; the motion carried.

Signing of Wastewater Treatment Facility Bond Issue

Ms. Vaihinger said that the proceeds of the bond will be used to pay off the current loan with the state. The amount is \$6,986,000 with an interest rate of 3%. Payments will be made from 2013 to 2039.

Joint Select Board/Budget Committee Meeting

The Select Board was joined by Bertha Harris, Leslie Lewis, Bob Lambert, Roland Patten, Gordon Kemp, Steve Jones and Donald Parkhurst.

Ambulance Transfer Program

Clinical Director **Jeremy Bouchard** gave a PowerPoint presentation which reviewed the benefits of the Ambulance Transfer Program. Peterborough and the surrounding communities now have 24/7/365 paramedic coverage. The Transfer program is generating revenue that helps to offset the losses in the emergency response budget, allowing the department to work towards achieving its goal of being self-funded. Wait time for patients requiring transfer has been reduced, as has patient case load for MCH's doctors and nurses. There is additional manpower at the fire station, allowing personnel to handle emergencies in a more timely manner. By having such highly skilled critical care paramedics on every emergency call, patients suffering from heart attacks and other acute illnesses can now be taken directly to definitive care facilities such as Catholic Medical Center in Manchester or Dartmouth Hitchcock. We now have two pilot programs; the first allows us to transport patients on ventilators, and the second transmits the EKG readouts to the cath lab in CMC where cardiologists can proscribe heparin and other treatments over the phone to the paramedics en route. These are the first programs of their kind in New Hampshire.

This program has created jobs for Peterborough businesses, particularly Emax Medical Billing who hired on a full-time employee to assist with the increased billing. New jobs were created by hiring on new personnel and increasing hours with more work. There is also a trickle effect whereby PFR personnel are busier and being exposed to more seriously ill patients, and being mentored by extremely qualified and experienced paramedics increasing skills, education and confidence. Also, newly hired paramedics are teaching and training, which saves money by keeping training in house. Local vendors are benefiting from the additional staff members who are shopping and completing errands in Peterborough.

Mr. Lambert asked if first responders are trained to respond to electric and hybrid vehicle accidents; Deputy Chief Brian Wall said that they are, and that is part of the extraction training that is done yearly, with updates each month for new vehicle models. **Peter Gosline**, CEO of Monadnock Community Hospital said that the staff at MCH is grateful to have this program. This service is superior to their previous service, and is also local. The service has not missed a single transfer call or emergency call, and they have been providing better care. Additionally they have not had to send a single RN on a transfer since this program started, which is very important. There has been an incredible reduction in response time, from two hours down to an average of ten to fifteen minutes for response to a non-emergency transfer, and five minutes in an emergent situation. The use of helicopters has been cut down, and the staff is wonderful. **Claudia Cleary-Nichols**, Emergency Department RN added not having to send a nurse on transfers has been wonderful; they don't have to worry about leaving their patients while on a transfer, and there has been less overtime. We now have a standardized process that is working wonderfully.

Ms. Vaihinger and **Ms. Brenner** reviewed the financials, showing that not only have they made the programs self-supporting, but expenses have been moved out of the tax-supported budget, saving taxpayer money, and at the end of the first three months, showed a net revenue of \$13,128. **Fran Chapman** asked what is the management structure and who is responsible for the program; Chief Lenox said that Deputy Wall is responsible for the Ambulance service, and there are three supervisors who oversee the program, but ultimately he is the responsible party. There was an discussion of the effects that the success of the program has on the budget. **Mr. Gosline** said that this model is being recognized statewide – Peterborough's ambulance service is getting a lot of attention for this program. **Mr. Chapman** asked who sets the rates; Chief Lenox said that they took an average of what services are being billed statewide as well as what Medicare and private insurances pay out, and set their rates in the middle.

Merit Increase

Ms. Vaihinger reviewed the memo she submitted, explained what a merit increase is, and said the proposed 3.5% merit increase is based on the CPI and what the Social Security Administration is granting as a cost of living increase to benefit recipients this year. **Mr. Byk** said that 3.5% is too rich for him, and that the Hospital is taking a decrease in pay because of the loss of a grant from the state. He said that the town pays well and has a great work environment, and so he is disappointed that he has to say what he is saying. He said that he believes that basing a merit increase on Social Security is unfair because the average recipient only receives \$10-12,000 a year. **Ms. Thomas** said that Peterborough is not the highest paying town in the state, but is in the middle. She added that the town is well served by its employees, and should work to retain them.

Mr. Chapman said that he supports the need for a 3.5% merit increase for town employees, and said that he thinks that merit is the best thing since sliced bread. He said his observation is that the economy, Washington, the State and the school district are in disarray, but how they manage their

operation is their responsibility. Good management says that we must retain staff and be competitive with other operations in the region. I believe that we can strike a balance with a 3.5% increase and retain employees. He said that comparisons to either ConVal or MCH are not fair because they are at opposite ends of the spectrum; ConVal has more than \$500,000 in increases in their salary line, and their employees only pay 6% of their health insurance costs, whereas town employees pay 20%.

Mr. Lambert said that since 2008 all employees only got two raises. He said that there were two salary adjustments, but those were not equal to all employees, and were not fair to other employees. **Marsha Patten**, Library Trustee, said that she is very impressed with the wonderful and talented people at Peterborough Fire and Rescue, and the whole town. She said that you can get a good feeling about your town, but if you think you are not being treated fairly, that good feeling can go down very quickly. That raise should be on par with the increases she and her husband are seeing in the their Social Security checks.

Ms. Lewis asked if the merit increases are not given, how would that impact the operating budget; **Ms. Brenner** said that it would go down from a 2% increase to essentially a flat budget. **Ms. Lewis** asked **Mr. Byk** if he would like to cut \$55,000 from somewhere else in the budget and retain the merit increase and make the budget flat; **Mr. Byk** said that it is not so much the end game, but he doesn't buy the argument that by becoming more efficient then we should spend more. He went on to say look at what is happening at the hospital today. **Ms. Lewis** said that is comparing apples to oranges to compare what is happening in the town with what is happening at the hospital. She said that she thinks that **Marsha's** point should be taken to heart, and that there are indirect costs to not giving healthy merit increases. **Mr. Byk** said that he agrees with the argument for retention, and said that is why they did some adjustments. **Ms. Lewis** said that those were done to bring a few up to market, only three of four positions. **Mr. Kemp** asked if **Mr. Byk** wanted to wait until staff leave to award raises like what happened at the Police Department, that is what has been done for the last three years, or should we be proactive.

John Vance, Library Trustee, said that he endorses and supports what **Ms. Patten** said, and said that there is a strong case for consideration. **Ms. Lewis** agreed, saying especially when you consider that 3.5% doesn't lift up an employee, it is barely keeping them even with their expenses. **Mr. Chapman** said that he deals with more town employees than anyone else in the room, and couldn't exist without them. Each one of them provides a service when he needs them. He said that **Brian Hackert** and **Leo Smith** are both fantastic. **Mr. Lambert** asked on the last salary adjustment, how much is left; **Ms. Brenner** said that the Budget Committee allocated \$25,000, and \$12,000 was spent. **Ms. Thomas** said that she feels strongly that they should approve the 3.5% merit increase.

Motion:

Mr. Patten made a motion to adopt a 3.5% merit increase; **Ms. Thomas** seconded.

Vote:

Mr. Patten, **Ms. Thomas**, **Chair Miller**, **Chair Kemp**, **Mr. Byk**, **Mr. Lambert**, **Ms. Lewis**, **Ms. Harris**, **Mr. Jones** and **Mr. Parkhurst** voted in favor of the motion; the motion carried.

Review of Overall Budget

Chair Kemp asked if there were any questions or comments on the budget as presented. **Mr. Chapman** asked if assessments will stay where they are; **Ms. Brenner** said that the town will see a

bounce from Rivermead, and hopefully we have seen the bottom of values. **Mr. Byk** said that the bad side of that is that in FY 2014 there the school bill will go up.

Motion:

Mr. Byk made a motion to approve the budget as proposed; **Mr. Patten** seconded.

Vote:

Mr. Byk, Mr. Patten, Chair Miller, Chair Kemp, Ms. Thomas, Mr. Lambert, Ms. Lewis, Ms. Harris, Mr. Jones and **Mr. Parkhurst** voted in favor of the motion; the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nicole MacStay, Assistant to the Town Administrator

PETERBOROUGH
SELECT BOARD:



Barbara A. Miller, Chair



Joe Byk



Elizabeth M. Thomas

ACTION ITEM PENDING LIST

1.