

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

February 16, 2017

Meeting held at Town Hall, 139 Main Street, Rowley, MA
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PREENT: Chairman Joseph Perry, Vice Chairman Robert Snow, Clerk Cliff Pierce, Robert Merry, David Petersen (Town Administrator Deborah Eagan, Assistant Town Administrator Amy Lydon)

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Highway Surveyor Patrick Snow, Bernie Cullen; Fire Chief James Broderick

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Perry called meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. He said that this meeting is the meeting that was postponed on February 13, 2017.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Cliff Pierce led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Perry said the meeting is being audio and video recorded digitally.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discuss Water Board FY 17 Reserve Fund Transfer request

Chairman Perry read the request. Petersen asked how much money is in the fund. Eagan looked at the report for Accounting and said \$50,000, and none has been utilized this fiscal year. She said transfers from the Extraordinary and Unforeseen Account – which is the Water Department's Reserve Fund - require the approval of the Board of Selectmen. She said transfers from their Stabilization Fund require the approval of 2/3 of a Town Meeting.

Dave Petersen made a motion to approve this transfer request, Cliff Pierce second, all in favor - aye (5-0).

2. Discuss Feb. 12-13, 2017 snowstorm

Chairman Perry read the following

Town offices were closed on Monday, February 13 due to the snowstorm. The Board needs to ratify the closing and to pay the non-essential employees who were directed not to report to work that day.

Cliff Pierce made a motion to ratify the closing and to pay the non-essential employees who were directed not to report to work that day, Bob Snow second, all in favor - aye (5-0).

OLD BUSINESS

1. Mehaffey Farm Land and Water Conservation Grant Application Update

Chairman Perry read the following

Debbie has not received an update from Vanessa Johnson-Hall of the Essex County Greenbelt on this.

Perry said hopefully we will hear positive news, but until we hear something, there is nothing to report.

10:05 – 10:10 a.m. CITIZEN QUERY

There were no Citizen Queries.

10:10 a.m. APPOINTMENT– Highway Surveyor Patrick Snow to discuss Snow and Ice budget and recent snow storms

Highway Surveyor Patrick Snow said it has been a busy past couple of weeks, and he believes that we will be in deficit spending for the Snow and Ice account after the spending in the next warrant. He said it has been an average year for snow and ice so far, but with the small storms we've had, a lot of salt has been used. He said 1,065 tons of salt has been used so far this year. He said January was nice, but there were a few storms in December, and it has been busy with the storms over the past couple of weeks. He said their sidewalk machine needs a minor repair. He said the staff has been working a lot of hours, and it has reminded them of the snowy winter a couple of years ago. He said after today's storm, they can see a light at the end of the tunnel.

Petersen said he looked back, and the Snow and Ice spending over the past several years is as follows:

FY 13: \$201,000

FY 14: \$233,000

FY 15: \$400,000

FY 16 \$125,000 appropriated for spending

P. Snow said in FY 16 they went over the \$125,000, but not by much. Petersen said his goal is to increase the appropriation for this budget each year, and he hopes we can increase it by \$20,000 to \$25,000 for FY 18. P. Snow said he doesn't feel that they

spend this budget frivolously, but the goal is for safe, passable roads. He said they are all working hard and try to cut corners where they can. Bob Snow said the spending in FY 16 was \$125,000, and that was a light year for snow & ice. Petersen said for small storms, he sees contractors with two to three trucks plowing five to six times. P. Snow said the routes are each designated two trucks, and when the plows are seen, that is just for a portion of their full route, and the full routes take two to three hours. P. Snow said for a storm with one to three inches, the contractors are called in at the end of the storm, otherwise they would be using three to four times the amount of material. He said this would be more expensive than paying the contractors the three hour minimum. He said they use a lot of mixed material, and it is more efficient to call them in to scrape the material off than treat the remaining pack afterwards. He said they have four contractors with fifteen pieces of equipment, plus the Town employees, and some Water and Fire Department employees. Petersen said \$11,000 has been paid to Town employees for snow & ice, and the contractors get quite a bit. P. Snow said the overtime rate paid to employees is \$30 to \$40 per hour, versus the rate paid to the contractors of \$65 per hour. He said the contractor rates will go up next year, and other towns pay a lot more than we do.

Petersen asked if P. Snow can have a working session with Eagan over the summer to look at how other towns handle this and how much they spend. He said with the budget getting tighter, we need to find money somewhere. P. Snow he will sit down and talk with anyone about this. He said he goes to meetings about this with other Superintendents. Petersen said P. Snow wants the roads clear since he runs for re-election. P. Snow said it isn't because he is running for re-election, it is because he wants to make the roads safe. Petersen said at some point we need to make decisions on how to move forward, because we are running out of money for projects. Perry said another town may have an idea that they have tried and it works for them.

Petersen asked P. Snow to explain his capital request. P. Snow said the sidewalk clearing machine they have is twenty years old and is having electrical issues that could turn into a headache. He said they are exploring options for a multi-purpose machine that they can use throughout the year for mowing.

Bernie Cullen from Wethersfield Street said there are sizeable potholes on Route 1A. He said it has been a strange winter with the temperature changes. P. Snow said we will see more potholes after this coming warm weekend. He said they will be patching the potholes, but Route 1A is the State's responsibility since they own it. Bob Snow said he calls P. Snow whenever he spots a pothole, and they are great about addressing it. P. Snow said they address the potholes as soon as possible because they don't want any issues with vehicles being damaged by them. Petersen asked P. Snow to emphasize to the contractors not to pile the snow so high on the corners so

that we don't have to pay money afterwards to move the piles. Snow said the corners on the side streets will be addressed in the next couple of days. Petersen asked P. Snow to keep the contractors down to a minimum for budget purposes.

MINUTES

- January 30, 2017 Executive Session

Eagan said these minutes are not available for approval tonight.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Red Cross Blood Drive notice, Tuesday, February 28, 2017, 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Rowley Veterans Association
- Pine Grove School Project Community Engagement Meeting date is changing from March 9th, and the date will be provided at the next Selectmen's meeting
- Rowley Public Library is participating in Bruins PJ Drive Feb. 1 – March 15. The Library will be collecting new pairs of pajamas for babies, children and teens. The PJ Drive benefits DCF Kids and Cradles to Crayons. The PJ Drive's goal is to collect 10,000 pairs of new pajamas for children and teens in need.
- Annual and Special Town Meeting is scheduled for May 1, 2017
- Information on the Pine Grove School project is available on the Town's website at www.townofrowley.net.
- The Town has the following vacancies:
 1. **Fence Viewer** – three positions;
 2. **Wood, Lumber & Bark Inspector**;
 3. **Zoning Board of Appeals Associate** – two seats
 4. **Parks and Recreation Committee** – one seat;
 5. **Deputy Shellfish Constables** – two positionsFor more information on these positions, please contact the Selectmen's Office at 948-2372.
- The Rowley Food Pantry is in need of donations. Donations can be left at the Rowley Public Library. The Food Pantry is open on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and on Thursdays from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

10:30 a.m. APPOINTMENT Fire Chief James Broderick to discuss Fire Department staffing and FY 18 budget

Bob Merry recused himself and left the meeting room at 10:22 a.m.

Fire Department staffing

Chief Broderick said he sent a letter to the Board a couple of weeks ago about the staffing of the Fire Department. He said in 1997 they had 28 firefighters, which included

the Chief and 27 call firefighters. He said in 1998, two call firefighters became the two Captains of the Department. He said the call volume has increased dramatically from 221 to 731 last year, but the department hasn't grown. He said since 1999, the Town has hired 40 call firefighters, but 20 have left for various reasons such as family commitments, new jobs, or moving out of State. He said the Rowley Fire Department is a training grounds for people to get a full time job elsewhere. He said 4 call firefighters were hired last year and will be graduating from the Fire Academy in a couple of weeks. He said the department currently has 26 people. He said the three full-time employees are all pushing 60, are nearing the end of their careers, and will be retiring in the next couple of years. He said there have been a few calls lately where only one person has responded. He said this is because many of the call firefighters are paramedics, full-time firefighters in other communities or DPW workers. He said he was the only one who showed up to a call this morning, and it is not nice to go to a call by yourself. He said he understands that money is tight, but we need to look at other ways to staff the Fire Department. He said we need to sit down and come up with a plan. He said the department hasn't grown in 19 years, and no full-time employees have been added since 1998. He said they have gotten 101 calls so far in 2017 through February 16, 2017.

Petersen asked what the percentage of calls are for medical reasons versus calls for fires. Broderick said 48% of calls are for fires and 52% of calls are for medical. He said they don't go to all medical calls, for example they don't go to psych calls. He said they play an integral part in the treatment of patients in many calls, such as those for car accidents. Snow asked what types of fire calls they receive. Broderick said fire alarm activation, brush fires, leaks, there was a house fire a couple weeks ago, and mutual aid calls. He said these types of calls are all on the rise, and on average they are getting forty to fifty more calls per year. He said kitchen fires are on the rise due to inattention. Perry asked if the drought has been an issue. Broderick said compared to other towns, no, but there have been more issues due to it than in the past. He said furnace fires, for oil and gas, are increasing due to improper maintenance.

Petersen asked Broderick for a breakdown of calls based on the time of day. Broderick said he can do that, but it has to be done manually. He said he can also report who goes out in the first truck, who shows up at the scene, and the calls on the east side versus the west side of Town, which are about even. He said mutual aid has increased, and they have gone to Georgetown, Newbury, Ipswich, Newburyport, Salisbury and Essex. Snow said years ago, there was a lull in house fires, but they are now picking up, and mutual aid is essential. Broderick said they depended on mutual aid for the last house fire.

Petersen said we keep hearing about these needs from the Chief, and we keep putting this off. He said he thinks it is time to seriously look at, after Town Meeting Broderick should meet with Eagan and a Selectman. He said there isn't time to address this in the FY 18 budget. He said in the meantime, the Chief can compile data. He said funding will be an issue, and we may need to look at doing an Fire Department staffing override, and this is a public safety issue. He said the Fire Department has done a good job over the years making do with what they have, and we need a mechanism to increase the staffing of the department without using one-time funds. He said a general budget override will get the funding added to the budget forever. Perry said the meetings about this need to start as soon as possible after Town Meeting. Petersen said we can look at options such as adding more full-time firefighters, or hiring call firefighters daily.

Snow said it is alarming that we have gone from 28 call firefighters to 25. He said he understands that people move towards more lucrative careers, and asked Broderick if he has an ideas on how to attract people to this field. Broderick said people need the desire to do this, and it is not for everybody. He said people have to invest a lot before they are able to ride on a fire truck. He said the job is a lot more technical now, and dangerous without training. He said it is less of a fraternity than it was in the past, and people are afraid of the danger from the exposure to carcinogens. He said they have four young firefighters who have gone through the program. Snow said the Dallas Fire Department has been renamed to Dallas Fire Rescue, and this demonstrates the job changes in the last twenty years. He said it is difficult to attract people to this field. Broderick said we are not the only town that is having this issue. Snow said firefighters are a very close knit society, like a family, who depend on each other for their lives. Broderick said they are always looking for new people, and they need to live close-by. Petersen said the training commitment and the overnight hours of the calls is very disruptive to the employee's whole house. He asked Broderick to remind us in June to sit down and talk about this. Snow said the Selectmen will need to prepare the townspeople as well.

Fire Department FY 18 budget

Broderick said the payroll budget was increased by 2.25%. He said he tried to level fund expenses, but there are a couple of issues, and he needs a modest increase. He outlined the following issues:

- The 2002 E1 Pumper Truck has severe corrosion on the frame rails. An ultrasound was performed to diagnose it, and we have lost 10% of the steel on the frame rails. He said they did the repair work at a cost of \$7,000. He said during the work they discovered the fuel tank was severely corroded and a new tank was installed for \$2,000. He said the corrosion is being caused by calcium chloride which is used by the State to pre-treat roads. He said the salt and sand just sits there, but at the new

station there will be an adequate space to wash the trucks, and the chassis can be washed on a routine basis. He said they can spray a rust inhibitor on it once a year.

- NFPA recommends that tires be replaced every seven years regardless of their wear and tear since there is a heavy weight sitting on them. He said 21 tires need to be replaced at a cost of about \$8,000.
- The building generator is due for a major tune-up at a cost of \$2,000.
- They are looking at purchasing on-line burning permit software to eliminate numerous calls to the Police Department in April and May.

Broderick said they are looking for \$5,400 additional in their expense budget. He said their budget has been level funded, they aren't spending extravagantly, and need the extra money for maintenance of the vehicles.

He said the REMA budget has been level-funded, but this will have to be re-evaluated once they have the new building.

Eagan asked if a Special Town Meeting Article should fund the emergency generator since it is a one-time item. Petersen asked if the generator should be held off since they are getting a new building. Broderick said if we wait, we risk not having power if there is an issue since the generator is 13 years old. Petersen asked if Broderick can build in the purchase of the tires into the budget, by buying three tires per year for example. Broderick said he can do this.

Snow asked how old the trucks are. Broderick said E4 is 30 years old, the newest truck is the 2015 ladder, Engine 1 is a 2009, and Engine 3 is a 2002. He said the life expectancy for these trucks is 25 years, and E4 will be the next truck replaced. He said it is beyond its useful life, and the idea was to replace it after the ladder truck is paid for, but there is rot on E3. Snow said as the trucks age, the safety requirements change, so they are not as valuable for the trade-in. Broderick said E4 is probably the last truck of its type in New England, and it is hard to get parts for it. He said E4 should be replaced sooner rather than later, and E3 has maintenance issues.

Broderick said the turnout gear is ten years old and beyond its useful life. He said their goal is to have two sets for each person so they have a set to use if one is out for repair or drying. He said the 16 sets they need include four for the new firefighters and 12 replacements, at a cost of \$38,812.

Petersen said they will be looking at capital requests. He said as far as the radios, new ones were purchased 10 years ago to comply with Federal Government requirements. Broderick said all their radios are now business class radios which are not designed for use by firefighters. He said they are getting old, with the newest one being 8 years old. He said he has applied for a Federal grant to replace them and the whole project will

cost \$175,000. He said the Town has to match at 5%, which is \$8,000, and he is not sure if we will get the grant. He said if we do, he will try to pay for this out of his budget, but if not possible, he may need to ask for extra money. He said this is a FEMA grant, and the town has received FEMA grants twice in the past.

Petersen said it sounds like the Fire Department is deteriorating at a rapid rate, and we need to look at increasing the maintenance budget by more than requested. He said we can't promise that we will increase the budget, but we need to start budgeting for these items. He said this needs to be looked at along with the staffing problem.

Broderick said he has tried to make everything last as long as possible, and it is hard to believe ten years have passed.

Snow asked how many fire alarm boxes there are in town. Broderick said 34, 5 of which are for Town buildings. He said the cost to replace the wiring for this system would be \$175,000, but he took this out of the budget since he would like to look at alternatives to this system with the new building coming online. He said an option would be for a company to monitor the buildings for fires along with the intrusion monitoring. He said if the town moves away from this system, the businesses who use it would be given three years notice to find an alternative system. He said there haven't been problems with the system since money was spent on it a couple of years ago, but they don't make new parts for it. He said the system dates back to the Civil War, and it is time for it to go. Snow said this should be discussed along with the staffing issues.

Broderick said they are looking at new computer software. He said the Police Station uses IMC software, which has a fire component. He said they could share a database with the Police Department if they had the fire component, and it would cut down on errors and speed up their report writing process. He said it would cost \$16,000 to start up this system, and there would be a \$2,000 annual licensing fee. He said their current software license fee of \$2,000 would be eliminated.

Eagan asked where do we go from here. Petersen said an article at the Special Town Meeting can be used to cover the generator and the tires and if we can, we should increase the FY 18 expense budget by \$10,000 to \$14,000. He said we need to build up the budget, and we are spending the money anyways. Eagan said the Chief has requested an increase of \$5,420. Petersen said the FY 18 budget should include that increase, plus another \$10,000 if possible. Broderick said he will provide a revised budget sheet.

Dave Petersen made a motion to endorse the Fire Department budget with the amendments discussed, Bob Snow second, all in favor - aye (4-0). Bob Merry - ABSENT.

Petersen thanked Chief Broderick and the Fire Department for all that they do.

ADJOURN

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Perry called for a motion to adjourn. Dave Petersen so moved, Bob Snow second, all in favor - aye (4-0). Bob Merry - ABSENT.

Bob Merry returned to the meeting room at 11:29 a.m., after the vote to adjourn was completed.

Open meeting adjourned at 11:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Lydon
Assistant Town Administrator

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Water Board FY 17 Reserve Fund Transfer request
2. Meeting memo regarding New Business #2: Discuss Feb. 12-13, 2017 snowstorm
3. Meeting memo regarding Old Business #1: Mehaffey Farm Land and Water Conservation Grant Application Update
4. Print-out from Accounting system - FY 17 Snow and Ice Account
5. Letter from Fire Chief James Broderick dated January 19, 2017 regarding staffing of the Rowley Fire Department
6. FY 18 budget packet for Rowley Fire Department