

## **MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING**

March 10, 2014

Meeting held at Town Hall

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Robert Snow, Vice Chairman Robert Merry, Clerk Joseph Perry, Jack Cook, David Petersen (Town Administrator Deborah Eagan, Assistant Town Administrator Amy Lydon)

**PUBLIC ATTENDEES:** Lawrence White – FINCOM; Frank Marchegiani - Health Agent; Ken Ward - Building Inspector; Karen Summit - Treasurer/Collector; Doreen Glowik - Selectmen; James Broderick - Fire Department; Jeff Bolduc - Highway; Ron Keefe - Highway; Stephen May - Police; Patrick Snow - Highway; Bill Gaynor - Cemetery; Peter Dalzell - Cemetery

### **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chairman Robert Snow called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. He said the meeting is being audio and video recorded digitally.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Dave Petersen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

None.

### **7:05 – 7:15 p.m. CITIZEN QUERY**

Citizen's Query opened.

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

1. Invitation from Ipswich Conservation Commission to attend Honey Bees presentation on March 26, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Snow said, "The presentation entitled "The Role of the Honey Bee as Pollinator" will be held at the Ipswich Town Hall - Room A, and read the email invitation (COPY ATTACHED). Eagan said this invitation has been distributed to other Town departments. The Board agreed to let the staff know if they wish to attend.

2. Sign Grape Island, Inc. d/b/a Mill River Winery Farmer Winery Pouring Permit

Dave Petersen made a motion to sign the Farmer Winery Pouring Permit for Mill River Winery (COPY ATTACHED), Jack Cook second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Open Special Town Meeting Warrant

Chairman Snow said, "The Board needs to vote to open the Special Town Meeting warrant effective today and to close it at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 27, 2014 ."

Jack Cook made a motion to open the Special Town Meeting warrant effective today and to close it at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 27, 2014, Joseph Perry second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

2. Town Administrator update

Town Administrator Deborah Eagan said Campbell Construction is starting the Annex exterior project on March 17, 2014, and the first day may be used to set up equipment and erect the scaffolding. She said one side of the building will be done at a time with siding that is primed and has one coat of paint. She said once all the sides are done, they will paint the entire building when the weather is better.

Eagan said Senator Tarr's office submitted a \$500,000 Transportation Bond Bill that will be used to install a traffic light at the Route 1 and Central Street intersection. She said if it is passed in the final version of the bill, this will satisfy the Board's request for a light at this intersection.

Chairman Snow thanked Senator Tarr and Brad Hill for their efforts on getting this traffic light. Merry said this light is definitely needed.

**MINUTES**

- February 10, 2014

Joseph Perry made a motion to approve the minutes from February 10, 2014, Jack Cook second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

- March 3, 2014

Joseph Perry made a motion to approve the minutes from March 3, 2014, Jack Cook second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

## **7:05 – 7:15 p.m. CITIZEN QUERY**

Citizen's Query closed. There were no Citizen's Queries.

**7:15 p.m.** Highway Surveyor Ron Keefe and Highway Foreman Patrick Snow for presentation of proclamation in memory of Scott Leavitt

Chairman Snow read the proclamation for the Highway Department employees (COPY ATTACHED).

Dave Petersen made a motion to sign the proclamation for the Highway Department employees, Jack Cook second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

The Selectmen signed the proclamation. Snow said there is a proclamation for each of the three employees, and one for them to hang up in the Highway garage. He said these employees did an outstanding job in servicing the Town during a very difficult time, and he can't say enough about them. Ron Keefe thanked the Board of Selectmen, Eagan and her staff, Pat Snow and Jeff Bolduc for their support during this time. Keefe said Jeff Bolduc drives the flagship fleet and Pat Snow was a tremendous help in working on the transportation bill, and he couldn't have done it without them. Merry said the streets look great. Keefe thanked the Fire Chief and Jack Cook for checking in on the Department since Leavitt's passing. Merry said he personally appreciates the Department's dedication and said they've done a terrific job. Petersen said Leavitt was a working Highway Surveyor, so these three individuals have been doing the work of four people since Leavitt's passing. He said this is a team effort and Leavitt would have been very proud. Perry said he has lived in Town for forty-three years and he has always been pleased with the Highway Department's care of the streets and this has been a seamless transition.

The Selectmen presented the proclamations to the employees.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The Town has the following vacancies:
  - **Conservation Commission** – one seat;
  - **Finance Committee** – one seat;
  - **Fence Viewer**– two positions;
  - **Wood, Lumber & Bark Inspector**; and
  - **Zoning Board of Appeals Associate** – two open seatsFor more information on these positions, please contact the Selectmen's Office at 948-2372

**7:30 p.m.** Joint Meeting - Board of Cemetery Commissioners to discuss FY 15  
Cemetery Budget

Jack Cook left the Selectmen's table and sat with the Cemetery Commissioners in the audience at 7:31 p.m.

Chairman Snow called for a motion to open the joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Cemetery Commissioners. Dave Petersen so moved, Joseph Perry second, all in favor – roll call vote: Robert Merry – aye, David Petersen – aye, Joseph Perry – aye, Robert Snow - aye.

Jack Cook moved to open the joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Cemetery Commissioners, Peter Dalzell second, all in favor – roll call vote: Bill Gaynor - aye, Peter Dalzell - aye, Jack Cook – aye.

Joint meeting opened at 7:32 p.m.

Bill Gaynor presented the Cemetery Department's budget (COPY ATTACHED) and said they are requesting an increase in wages from \$16,450 to \$20,000 due to the fact that they are performing burials year round. He said costs for winter burials are higher because they have to plow and jackhammer. He said the cost for a winter burial is \$750, and a winter cremation is \$300, versus \$250 for each during the non-winter months. He said weekend burial costs are also higher. He said this money goes to the Town and not the Cemetery Department employees. He said they have to mow and maintain about three acres which costs time and gasoline. He said 40% of funerals are now cremations, so they have a cremation-only area that is about an acre. Snow asked how many burials there are in the winter. Cook said the amount varies. He said many lots were sold as five grave lots, but only have two in a lot. He said they are trying to conserve space now and have increased the price for a lot. Snow asked how many burials there are a year. Cook said fifty-nine in one year was a big year. He said they are allowed to spend \$10,000 a year from the Cemetery Revolving Account, so they are operating the Department on an expense budget of \$13,000 per year, which has only increased by \$5,000 in the past thirty-seven years. Gaynor said Ipswich charges \$1,000 to open a grave, and Rowley is very low compared to area towns. Cook said he has lived in Rowley his entire life, and he wants to be fair, but they do have to maintain the cemetery. He said he plows it, and the Highway Department helps out with the burials. Gaynor said the funeral director calls them, they find the grave, make sure they don't disturb the existing graves, schedule the Highway Department to help them dig the grave, make the area presentable, then fill the grave in which they have to sometimes wait to do until the backhoe is available.

Dave Petersen said they have made their case and made a motion to approve the Cemetery Department's wages and expense budgets, Joseph Perry second, the motion was not completed.

Merry said if the budget is increased, will the Cemetery Department be able to take care of the other two cemeteries. He said there is a smallpox cemetery and the Linebrook Parish cemetery which were deeded to the Town with the caveat that the Town maintains them. He said an Eagle Scout project cleaned them up, but the Town needs to try to keep them up. Cook said these cemeteries haven't been addressed in twelve years. Gaynor said this will take a day or two away from what they are trying to do. Petersen asked them to look at the cemeteries to gauge the cost to clean them up, especially with the Town's anniversary coming up, and then we could try to get additional funds at the Fall Town Meeting. Cook said they should be able to clean those cemeteries up in a day or two.

The Board completed the previous vote: Dave Petersen made a motion to approve the Cemetery Department's wages and expense budgets, Joseph Perry second, all aye (5-0).

Gaynor said the cemetery building has three light bulbs, no heat or insulation, and no running water. He said they have a laptop and a software program that allows people to come in and look at information, but they need the building to have heat, and a place for them to sit. He said they are asking for \$4,000 for a heating system, insulation and electrical work. Snow said the light in that building dims when the space heater is put on. Gaynor said the space heater doesn't heat the building up because there is no insulation, he said the building is obsolete, and sweltering in the summer time. Petersen said Gaynor met with the Capital Needs Committee and this will probably be included in this year's budget and this is a high priority.

Gaynor said they need a truck to haul dirt, and they can't wheel barrel it since the area is so large. He said they are asking for \$38,000 for a Bobcat loader. Petersen said the priority is to heat the building, the \$38,000 is steep, but they will look at the vehicle, and perhaps next year the Highway Department can get a new vehicle and pass down a vehicle to the Cemetery Department. Gaynor said they have a 1978 truck with no floorboards. Petersen said they have been getting by, but now is the time to move forward. Gaynor said the Cemetery has been ignored for years and its getting to the point where they can't continue to operate. Petersen said they have the Board's attention and we need to see how it can be worked into the budget. Cook said last year they expanded into another section, and the money to do this comes from the sales of

lots and graves, not from the taxpayers. Snow thanked the Commissioners for coming in and said the fence looks great.

Dave Petersen made a motion to adjourn the joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Cemetery Commissioners, Joseph Perry second, all in favor – roll call vote: Robert Merry – aye, David Petersen – aye, Robert Snow – aye, Joseph Perry – aye, Bill Gaynor - aye, Peter Dalzell - aye, Jack Cook – aye.  
Joint meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Discuss FY 15 tentative Triton Budget, March 5, 2014 Triton District Communications Committee meeting and Tri-Town Board of Selectmen scheduled for March 11, 2014

Chairman Snow said, "Chairman Snow or Selectman Perry will read the letter that was presented to the Triton School Committee during last Wednesday's budget hearing (COPY ATTACHED). The Board will discuss issues of concern with the huge increase in the Triton Assessment. Attached is information on the Triton Budget. According to Brian Forget, Triton has a free cash certification of \$756,954, and of that amount, the school is using \$68,000, which leaves \$688,954 available to the school. Additionally, student enrollment has decreased by 525 from FY09."

Perry read the letter that was presented to the Triton School Committee during last Wednesday's budget hearing. Snow said the Town approached the schools to split 50/50 the \$600,000 it anticipates in the 2.5% tax increase plus new growth. He said we have to run the Town and fund the school, so available funds must be split equitably and neither should be shortchanged. He said nobody wants the kids to not get an education, but we also need to maintain the Town. He said the Town has approximately \$14,000,000 budget and in eight weeks, every budget line is reviewed, and the Town is a lean mean machine. He said he is very disheartened by the School Committee and this assessment number, the communication has been poor and there needs to be a balance and there shouldn't be an adversarial relationship between the Town and the School.

Perry said he agrees with Snow and was disappointed that they did not hold regular District Communications Meetings. He said in past years he and Finance Committee members attended these meetings to discuss the budget with the School Committee and express the feelings of the Town. He said they had no discussions this year and the meetings they had were on Monday nights when the Board of Selectmen meets. Petersen said he went to the Saturday workshop and at that time the budget was \$400,000 and they said it could go down. He said at a later meeting it was raised to \$440,000, last week it was \$498,000. He said rather than decreasing, it has progressively increased. He said with the 2.5% increase and new growth, the Town

should have about \$600,000 in additional revenue and if we give \$500,000 to the school, and \$38,000 to Whittier, there would only be \$60,000 left to fund the rest of the Town. He said he felt that their minds were made up the other night and they did not listen to us, and ratified a budget with a \$500,000 increase for Rowley. He said Town salaries are going up by 1% for cost of living and 1.25% for steps on the new personnel plan. He said the School is giving employees a 2% cost of living increase and most get steps. He said the Town is frugal, most budgets are being level funded or given minor increases, but the School's budget is increasing by 6.23%. He said this increase is unsustainable, and if an override to fund this fails, the money will have to be taken out of free cash and Town department budgets will need to be cut, and it shouldn't be this way. He said State aid is level funded, and all else is being level funded except for the school. He said the School Committee needs to try to provide the best education possible within the available funds. He said the Town makes tough budget decisions, but the School provides level services and raises and says too bad, the Towns have to come up with the money. He said seven years ago a group started working on an override for months, which only received fifty votes. He said not a single parent attended the School Committee Meeting and he asked who will spearhead the override.

Snow said looking at the state of the overall economic picture for everyone, federal taxes are coming down due to Obama Care, health care costs are increasing, and any increase people receive is eaten up by federal and local taxes. Petersen said State tax collections are increasing by 5% this year, but there is no increase to our Cherry Sheet or Chapter 70 funding, so all of the increase is put onto the cities and towns. Perry said he would like to hear from parents if they support this increase and if they are willing to pay this increase. Karen Summit from Central Street said she is a Rowley parent and other than technology improvements, she doesn't see anything on the school budget increases that directly impacts her children. She said she sees salaries and insurance increases, but she wants something more for the taxes that she pays, such as roads being plowed and receiving police and fire service in a timely manner. She said with declining enrollments and increases to staff, these increases are not sustainable. Eagan asked why they aren't considering using more than \$68,000 when the Town of Newbury has been in a financial crisis each year for several years. Snow said the enrolled students have decreased every year since 2009 and he doesn't understand the use of only \$68,000 of their free cash. Summit said there will be a \$200,000 override, and the Town also needs a ladder truck. Snow said Newbury needs a new fire truck which will cost \$450,000, their assessment increase is \$539,000 and Salisbury's increase is \$360,000. Merry said the snow and ice expenses so far are \$200,000 over the amount budgeted, and he understands the importance of education, but if you can't plow the roads, the kids won't get to school. He said the school is almost bankrupting the Town.

Snow said there is a Tri-Town Board of Selectmen meeting tomorrow night. He said this budget is distressing. Merry said many Departments are run by volunteers or part time people, most are level funded, so it will be difficult for the Town to cut budgets. Eagan said years ago there was a lot of outreach by the former Superintendent to the Towns regarding the budget, and asked what the School Committee's response was

to the question about why District Communications Meetings were not held during this year's budget season. Perry said Choate said fewer people attended the last meeting. Perry said there were six attendees at the last meeting, but at the other meetings, all the Towns had representation. He said one meeting that had been scheduled was cancelled due to illness, so there has been no meeting since April of 2013. Merry said the School Committee didn't comment about the letter Perry read. Summit asked what will happen if the budget is voted down at Town Meeting. Petersen said if two out of the three Towns vote it down, then the School Committee has to meet to vote a new budget. He said then another Town Meeting has to be held to ratify the new budget. He said there is no requirement for the School Committee to lower the budget, so if an override doesn't pass, then the Town has to cut other Town budgets. He said if the school budget is rejected two times, then the State comes in and tells the Town what its assessment is. Eagan said the if the Department of Education sees the budget, they will see the free cash not applied to this year's budget, and the turmoil the school's budget is causing two of the towns.

## 2. Discuss and review FY 15 Budgets

The Board reviewed seven budgets (COPIES ATTACHED).

Town Clerk/Election/Board of Registrars/Constables

Petersen said the elections budget has increased, but there are two extra elections in FY 15 and the numbers reflect this.

Dave Petersen made a motion to approve the Town Clerk/Election/Board of Registrars/Constables budget, Jack Cook second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Eagan said the Planning Board budget should be held since there is an outstanding question on it.

Eagan said the COA serves an increasing population of elderly starting at age sixty. She said they are quite busy and the Administrative Assistant position used to be funded at twenty-five hours per week several years ago, but was cut due to funding issues. She said the COA Director is asking that the hours be restored to twenty-five for this position, up from the current twenty hours. She said they are swamped with the different programs and age groups they serve, they have a very part time outreach coordinator, and they need to keep on top of the paperwork and database updates. She said the increase of five hours per week is a \$4,000 per year increase.

Joseph Perry made a motion to approve the COA budget, Jack Cook second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Eagan said the Recycling budget is within the guidelines.



Dave Petersen made a motion to approve the Recycling budget, Jack Cook second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Eagan said the Selectmen's budget level funds the Selectmen's stipends, and salaries and wages have been increased in accordance with the guidelines. She said the CPA Administrator has been level funded and money will have to be transferred at the Special Town Meeting to pay the CPA Administrator for FY 14 work. She said Selectmen's expense categories have been level funded and she is unsure if we will need a collective bargaining reserve this year. She said \$1,000 was added to the Pine Grove School Expense line, since the Town owns the building, and there should be a budget to draw from if there is an emergency. She said \$1,000 was also added to the Stormwater Compliancy Expenses line for emergency use.

Dave Petersen made a motion to approve the Selectmen's budget, Jack Cook second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Eagan said the wages in the Town Hall budget are within the guidelines. She said expenses have increased by \$3,800 and the building cannot be operated on \$16,318. She said year to date, \$7,000 has been spent on oil, and we expect three more deliveries, and \$5,500 has been spent on electricity, which powers the servers downstairs.

Dave Petersen made a motion to approve the Town Hall budget, Jack Cook second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

Eagan said the Annex budget is level funded.

Dave Petersen made a motion to approve the Town Hall Annex budget, Jack Cook second, all in favor – aye (5-0).

3. Discuss capital purchases and town meeting articles

Chairman Snow read the following:

***Annual Town Meeting***

***Highway Department Truck - Borrowing Article***

*Propose to place a borrowing article for \$180,000 to purchase a new six-wheel dump truck with plow & sander.*

***Police-Fire Station Feasibility Study - Transfer from Sale of Real Estate Account***

*Propose to transfer \$100,000 from this account to be used for a feasibility study for a new police and fire station*

***New Ladder Truck – Borrowing Article Contingent upon passage of a debt exclusion override***

*Propose a borrowing article for \$735,000 to purchase a new ladder truck and a ballot question.*

**Technology & Communications - Appropriation**

*Upgrades to the Assessing Office Vision Server and software - \$8,000*

**Treasurer's Drop Box – Appropriation - \$1,500**

**Additional Police Cruiser - \$26,000 – Appropriation (depends upon availability of funds)**

**Special Town Meeting**

**Capital Improvements – Borrowing Article - \$164,000\***

- *Technology \* Communication – computers, software etc.*
- *Facility needs for various town departments*
- *Vehicles & Equipment for various town departments*

*\*This list is not yet complete*

Petersen said they have been reviewing this list weekly and they are looking to do a five year borrowing, and Summit has provided a debt service schedule (COPY ATTACHED). Treasurer Karen Summit said we have a five-year note finishing in FY 14, and another finishing in FY 15. She said the \$164,000 being borrowed at the Spring Special Town meeting will have a principle payment due in FY 15. She said the borrowing for the Annual Town Meeting will have a first principle payment that is due in FY 16. She said the rate for the five-year borrowing is 2.5% and the yearly payment is thirty to forty thousand per year. She said the Town's percentage of debt is very low.

Petersen said they will meet again and the numbers will be revised to add the Cemetery items. He said they are hoping to do the extra Police cruiser if possible.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary information and events are posted on the Town's website, [www.townofrowley.net](http://www.townofrowley.net)
- Battery recycling box located at the Town Hall and Library
- Rowley Food Pantry is in need of donations. The Food Pantry is open Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Thursdays from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Town Meeting will be held on Monday, May 5, 2014

Chairman Snow called for a motion to go into executive session to discuss strategies with respect to collective bargaining, employee contract negotiations, the lease of real property and litigation because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the

litigating and negotiating position of the Town and not to return to open session. Jack Cook so moved, Joseph Perry second, all in favor – roll call vote: Robert Merry – aye, David Petersen – aye, Jack Cook – aye, Joseph Perry – aye, Robert Snow – aye.

Open meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amy Lydon  
Assistant Town Administrator

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Email invitation Ipswich Conservation Commission to attend Honey Bees presentation on March 26, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.
2. Farmer Winery Pouring Permit for Mill River Winery
3. Proclamation for the Highway Department employees in memory of Scott Leavitt
4. Cemetery FY 15 Budget
5. Letter from Chairman Snow to the Triton School Committee
6. Email correspondence between Deborah Eagan and Brian Forget regarding School Enrollment data
7. Email correspondence between Karen Summit and Brian Forget regarding budget questions
8. Letter from Triton Treasurer regarding the tentative FY 15 assessment
9. Debt Service Schedule for proposed five-year borrowing of \$164,200
10. Debt Service Schedule for proposed five-year borrowing of \$180,000