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Town of Danville
Board of Selectmen
Monday, September 25, 2023
7:00 pm

Meeting is Video-Recorded

Selectmen present: Shawn O’Neil, Chairman; Annemarie Inman, Vice Chair; Sheila Johannesen, Dennis Griffiths, Joe Hester

Others present: Kimberly Burnham, Selectmen Administrator; Wade Parsons, Chief of Police; Officer Padraig Capsalis; Lisa Stith; Chris Tracy, Town Clerk

Shawn called the meeting to order and opened the meeting with a moment of silence for the troops who put themselves in harm’s way. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. Delegate Session

There were no delegates.

II. Agenda

Danville K9 Unit Agreement and Policy

Chief Parsons updated the Board on the contract and K9 policy in which Chief Parsons has signed off on some minor corrections were made and given to Kim. Officer Capsalis and the Chief signed off on them and the corrected copy is in the signature file.

Officer Capsalis gave an update on the progress of the canine, an 18-month-old German Shepherd in his third week of training. He said all the dogs are learning a lot. Week 1 was obedience, and our dog has moved onto bite work, building searches, and tracking, both friendly and suspect, and is excelling on all skills. Other canines have washed out of training, but he is doing well. He will graduate after Christmas this year, as he currently has eleven weeks left of training.

There has been a lot of positive feedback from the community. A family has sent in toys to the department. Shawn stated that if someone is thinking of donating, please contact the Police Department first to see what the needs may be. This will avoid the duplication of donations and allow all donations to be used well. Chief Parsons expressed his appreciation for all the support.

The dog was invited into the meeting, and he greeted all those present.

Annemarie said she's met with Chief Parsons regarding the policy and asked him to attach an addendum on non-deadly force and canine force. She stated she wanted this included in the policy as it is referenced on page 6. This was reviewed and all agreed to attach these to the policy.

Shawn stated this is a big commitment of all the officers. The enthusiasm of Officer Capsalis is evident, and the town has gained a huge plus, not only in having another full-time, trained officer but the grant that he brought with him. He did all the work and all the Selectmen had to do was agree with the grant and sign in. Officer Capsalis continues to answer all questions regarding the grant and the K9 unit.

Appreciation Coin

Joe is still reviewing the challenge coins. We can keep the design provided we make the coins every three years, and they will be kept in the facility for three years. The cost will be \$372 for 100 or \$400 for 100 coins depending on what type of metal is used or if there is a picture, etc. He will have more information for the next meeting.

It was stated that the volunteers are appreciated as it is not easy to take time away from families and other pursuits. Gratitude for the volunteers' time is not expressed enough and Shawn apologized for not thanking them more often. This discussion will be put on the agenda for next week.

Budget 4140-02 Voter Registration

Chris Tracy presented the budget to cover elections in 2024, explaining that there will be four total, including a presidential election. She has added additional ballot clerks just for that election. She stated that the last presidential election was very busy, and an additional line will hopefully cut down the time spent in line waiting for a ballot.

Chris said that most of the other numbers were the same: the printing will be done by LHS Associates again who supplied their estimated cost. Postage has also been increased. She explained that the request for absentee ballots increased this past year. She said that LHS estimated the cost of ballot printing based on Danville having about 3300 registered voters and over 300 absentee ballots turned in at the last election. There was a short discussion of having to print copies, which then requires hand counting them. This is something that can be avoided if enough ballots are printed by LHS.

Dennis asked if early voting will be allowed. This requires an increased amount of mailing. Chris answered that we don't do early voting, however all those who vote via absentee ballot, a type of early voting, sign under perjury that they must vote absentee. Dennis said that early voting may be passed down from the state and he wondered if there was a contingency plan for this, although it's not likely that New Hampshire will be doing this any time soon.

Shawn said that all the numbers in this budget make perfect sense. Sheila made and Annemarie seconded a **motion to approve Budget 4140-02 Voter Registration in the amount of \$36,064.00**. The motion **passed** unanimously.

Budget 4440 General Assistance

Chris explained that they went over budget this year in rent and utilities, under the 4442.10 Direct Assistance line. She had spoken with the Board last June about being over budget. The figures for next year were based on a discussion with Budget Committee after speaking with them last year. These figures were not in the default budget. It was mentioned that we could have another year of the operating budget not passing, causing this line to be over budget again next year.

Isaiah 58 has been added to the vendor list although she does not have an account number from them from MRI. There was a short discussion about Community Caregivers (CC). Chris reported that they appear to not be doing much in the community. She received a call today from a resident who had contacted them regarding rides to dialysis. The resident was told by CC that they don't service Danville. Chris will contact CC to verify this. When asked what they do for the town, Chris said they used to recruit volunteers who would then provide rides to appointments and otherwise spend time with the elderly. They have a loaner's closet with medical equipment that can be borrowed free of charge. Funding for CC comes from all area towns. Annemarie asked Chris to contact them tomorrow and find out what they've done for Danville lately. Chris was advised that if she is not pleased with the level of help, then to consider removing them from the budget.

Salaries have been increased per the COLA. This will be noted in the comments.

Sheila made and Joe seconded a **motion to approve budget 4440 General Assistance in the amount of \$94,832.00. This amount includes \$30,082.00 under 4445.20 Vendor Payments, \$51,200.00 under 4442.10 Direct Assistance, \$13,550.00 under 4441.10 General Assistance.** The motion **passed** unanimously.

Budget 4140.10 Town Clerk

Chris reminded the Board that there was a discussion last year about merit raises for the deputy and assistant to keep their salaries consistent with surrounding area employees. This is shown as 5% merit increases for each. It was clarified that unless it's in this year's budget it will not carry over into the default budget. She was told the Board will vote on this but not tonight. Dennis said the Board has the power to give anyone a salary increases and said it's his opinion that this should be looked at this year. It was noted that if the operating budget doesn't pass again, we will have a two-year-old default budget and the Board should look at adding merit increases to salaries.

Kim stated she's not sure anything was done in Budget Committee and reiterated that salary increases will be a conversation held at another time.

Chris explained the other lines as presented. Figures were obtained from Interware for the software.

Sheila made and Annemarie seconded a **motion to approve Budget 4140.10 Town Clerk in the amount of \$114,010.00.** The motion **passed** unanimously.

Budget 4150.04 Tax Collector

Kim presented the Tax Collector budget and said 5% increases were added to the salaries. Postage was increased due to an increase in the population. There is a small increase for the Avitar software, but everything is level funded except for deed recording fees which were decreased.

There was a short discussion about putting the deputy and assistant salary lines separately. Shawn explained that it's the same for other departments who employ more than one person in a position: the salaries are combined into one figure, and each is paid out of that line. A department head has the authority to move money around inside the budget if necessary.

Sheila made and Joe seconded a **motion to approve Budget 4150.04 Tax Collector in the amount of \$84,356.00**. Before a vote was made, Annemarie said she wasn't sure the bottom line was correct. The salary line for the tax collector was corrected to be \$42,267.00. This would amend the bottom line to be \$82,356.00. Sheila amended the motion, which Joe agreed to second again, but another discussion ensued before a vote was taken.

The line for software was discussed. The proposed budget has increased more than 5% as noted in the comments. Kim clarified that this line wasn't increased last year. The actual bills are printed by the vendor which has increased the costs.

It was stated that with the operating budget not passing, we're two years in the hole as this was not adjusted. It will be in the default budget if it is passed by the Budget Committee. Kim said she always purchases the Forever stamps from the post office, so she is good with the budget.

Dennis mentioned he doesn't like the term "COLA". This is a term borrowed from Social Security that has been misused.

Sheila amended and Annemarie seconded the **amended motion to approve Budget 4150.04 Tax Collector in the amount of \$82,356.00**. The motion **passed** unanimously.

Budget 4130.01 General Government Executive

Kim stated the salary is straightforward. There's been a decrease in FICA due to 1099 not being paid for vendor. The phones have been upgraded and this will be level funded.

There's been an increase in Professional Services. The creation of the 2022 Town Report was outsourced, which worked out well. Dennis said the Town Report is no joke and recommended to Kim that she not take on that project. Kim stated that Janet Denison will be helping with the minutes for this meeting and the next few meetings due to circumstances with the other recording secretary.

Several lines have been level funded.

Dues and subscriptions are increased. There was a discussion about the use of the funds in this line. Kim stated that USA Filing is for our grant writing number. The Police Department uses a grant writing number which is added to submitted grants and we are billed each year for this number.

Annemarie had a question about Adobe and if the software used in the town offices is Adobe Acrobat. She said Adobe Reader is free and Shawn said Adobe Acrobat is used for the town report. AdobeSign comes with the Acrobat license. Annemarie suggested looking at the services and ensuring we're not paying for duplicate or unnecessary services.

Kim said the \$1000 can be removed from Tax Lien Expenses. This was more for 599 Main Street.

There was a short discussion about the recording secretary expenses. Kim said she's unsure where we can find another person to do that work at that level of pay.

Dennis asked what the Finance Director does. It was explained that this is what MRI provides.

Sheila suggested that the Board members forgo their 2024 salaries and give those funds back to the town. The consensus was that the sentiment is good, and a COLA increase may not be necessary, but it has yet to be determined who will be on the Board after March 2024. Shawn said there is a lot of work behind the scenes, and it is not just showing up on Monday evenings for meetings. He's always thought of the small salary as a thank you from the town and it allows the members to take their significant others to dinner on the town's dime.

It was mentioned that no one is on this Board because of the salary but we still can't make that decision for next year's board on which there may be two new people. All agreed that they'd support the removal of the COLA increase, but next year's board members should not be encumbered with doing this work for no salary.

Dennis asked about the employees working in the Selectmen's office. Shawn said that their salary dollars should be reflected in the Executive budget. Kim said they are employed during the down time and she's fine with the way the budgets are. Dennis stated that he has an issue with someone being hired for one job, then being pulled into another job in which they did not apply or were hired to do. Shawn said he agrees that the employees should be aware of the multiple purposes for which they are hired. Kim said that they are. Shawn also stated that this should be accounted for on the Selectmen side of the budget. That would allow for, over time, reviewing budgets appropriately with increases or decreases. We need to ensure there is proper accounting.

Kim said there was tracking for this under professional services when Patty Shogren was in the office. This year the only person paid out of the professional services line was Janet Denison for the town report. The extra help in the Selectmen's office this year was not paid out of the tax collector budget. Dennis asked how many hours extra were used to date that would be noted in a line if a separate line were created in the budget. Kim stated that professional services is the line that was created for any extra help that may be needed. She said she is not changing her tax collector budget.

It was clarified that the entire amount in professional services was paid to Janet Denison for the creation of the town report. Shawn asked how the employees from the tax office were paid when they did work in the Selectmen's office. He said that this is the accounting problem that needs to be resolved. Kim said that the tax office employees have certain tax office hours each day, and it is during their down time in that

office that they help in the selectmen office. Shawn said that what we want to do is track the hours they spend in the Selectmen's office and have them paid from that budget. That dollar amount can be subtracted from the tax budget and put into professional services under the selectmen budget.

Dennis made and Joe seconded the **motion to approve Budget 4130.01 Executive in the amount of \$225,463.00**. The motion **passed** unanimously.

Minutes

The minutes of the public and non-public meetings on September 18 were reviewed. Sheila asked if everyone responded to the request to send their budgets to Kim. Kim reported that not everyone has, and some are still compiling their information.

From the public minutes, line 94 should read, "emergency management plan".

Joe made and Sheila seconded a **motion to approve the September 18, 2023 public minutes as amended**. Shawn abstained. The motion **passed**.

Sheila made and Joe seconded a **motion to approve the 7:04pm non-public minutes of September 18, 2023 as written**. Shawn abstained. The motion **passed**.

Sheila made and Annemarie seconded a **motion to approve the 7:16pm non-public minutes of September 18, 2023 as written**. Shawn abstained. The motion **passed**.

Announcements

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be held October 2 at 7pm in the Town Hall. The budgets to be discussed will be Financial Administration, specifically 4150.01 Trustee of the Trust Fund, 4150.02 Auditing Services, 4150.05 Treasurer, and 4150.06 Information Technologies.

Budget Committee will be meeting on October 3 in the Town Hall.

There will be a senior coffee hour on September 29 from 10am to noon at the Community Center.

The next bulk waste pick-up will be October 14, starting at 7am. Sign-ups must be completed by Thursday September 28 in the Town Hall by the close of business. There will be no exceptions to this deadline. Sheila reminded everyone that the items to be picked up must be covered in the event of rain.

Other Business

Joe asked if liaisons have come back to report to the Selectmen. He was informed that updates can be given at any time or items may be put on the agenda for discussion.

There was a short discussion of the ambulance contract and whether it has been read. Shawn said he wants to recommend it to our fire department. The cost will be a big hit to the town but otherwise there will be no ambulance service.

Shawn said he's read it and it doesn't matter whether this goes into the Fire Department budget or Selectmen budget as it's a contract for the town. It was stated that we are able to do some transports, and this contract will be additional support. The town is paid when we do our own transportation. It will be a good thing to see what our chief and chiefs from the surrounding communities think of this and if there is a long-term plan. Plaistow is doing their own thing. If they have issues, it's up to them to resolve them. The goal is to have this contract signed by the end of this week.

Sheila said she's seen a lot of activity on Olde Road. An 18-wheeler was coming into town and turned to go down Olde Road. The width of this road does not allow another vehicle to pass if an 18-wheeler is on it. Joe said the Planning Board has discussed this, but the road is in the commercial zone and the property owner has the right to have a business there. Dennis asked if this is being discussed with Planning Board and Joe said it is.

Annemarie stated there could be safety issues if the Fire and Police Departments cannot access the length of the road. Dennis also asked if there are plans to improve the road. Joe said he's unaware of any plans at this time to widen the road, but all of these will be on the list for Planning Board to discuss.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Denison