

Regular Session Minutes – Selectmen’s Meeting
Selectmen’s Meeting Room, Town Hall
Monday, January 28, 2013, 7:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Catherine B. Cordes, Chair, Margot R. Fleischman, William S. Moonan, Michael A. Rosenberg, Mark Siegenthaler, and Town Manager Richard T. Reed

ALSO PRESENT: Jessica Porter, Assistant Town Manager; Victor Garofalo, Finance Director; Caroline Fedele, Candidate; Reverend John Gibbons, First Parish Church; James Shea, 30 Independence Road; Ben Thomas, Finance Committee; Kim Siebert and Mary McBride, Press Representatives

Chair Cordes called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

13-166 First Parish Church Presentation
Payment in Lieu of Taxes

Reverend John Gibbons of the First Parish Church presented the Board with a check for \$1,000 as a Payment in Lieu of Taxes. Reverend Gibbons said that it was a unanimous decision by the Church’s Board to make this gift to the Town of Bedford in recognition of the services that the Parish receives for properties it owns which include the Meeting House at 75 Great Road and the Parsonage at 5 LedgeWood Drive. Chair Cordes thanked Reverend Gibbons for his continued generosity, as well as for being a leader in the community.

13-167 Proposed FY14 Operating Budget
Selectmen Recommendations

Town Manager Richard Reed informed the Selectmen that Standard & Poor’s recently reaffirmed Bedford’s AAA rating. This was due in part to: the Selectmen tentatively approving the refunding of bonds, contributing to an Other Post-Employment Benefits Trust Fund (OPEB) and changes to the Town’s health insurance program. Mr. Reed said that a printed rating review should be forthcoming.

Mr. Reed went on to say that the free cash had been recertified in the amount of \$3.3 million and could be appropriated for the upcoming Annual Town Meeting. The Finance Committee suggested utilizing \$1.25 million and leaving \$750,000 unused for emergencies and other expenses. This would be an increase of approximately \$1.3 million from what they previously anticipated.

Upon reviewing the Selectmen’s budget for the upcoming fiscal year, Mr. Reed discovered that \$107,531 in merit money had been misallocated. Therefore, many contingent items, totaling \$81,369, were able to be added. Some of the items include adding 2 heavy equipment operators to the Department of Public Works staff, increase

in funding for police training, vehicle and parts repair for the Fire Department and the creation of a part-time Economic Development Coordinator position with the Town Manager.

Mr. Reed recommended that the Selectmen consider in their final budget proposal to the Finance Committee \$5,000 for a deep tine aeration machine for the athletic fields. Mr. Reed said that if the Board agreed to an increase of \$10,000 for the vehicle/equipment replacement program, they could eliminate this need as a contracted service.

Mr. Reed anticipated that one item, the addition of two heavy equipment operators for the Department of Public Works, would generate the most discussion. He asked Mr. Warrington to attend the meeting to answer any questions or concerns raised by the Selectmen.

Two alternatives to hiring new personnel were researched: hiring a contractor to do lawn mowing and leaf collection at the cemetery and hiring a contractor to do tree work throughout the Town. The costs would be \$93,500 and \$80,000 respectively. Mr. Warrington did not inquire about field work by the contractors as most contractors do not have the equipment necessary to handle such a task. He went on to say that hiring personnel is long overdue and the two new hires could work in various capacities that are in need of attention such as landscaping at schools, island maintenance and snow removal to name a few. Both he and Mr. Reed strongly urge the Board to ask the Finance Committee for the funding of these positions.

Mr. Rosenberg stated that he fully endorsed this proposal and was sympathetic to the Public Works need for staff. He was concerned that there was too narrow a focus to make a strong case for adding these positions. He mentioned that he had some experience with researching contractors with regards to the athletic fields. Mr. Rosenberg spoke with Watertown who had privatized their field maintenance and found it to have a positive impact on the budget. Mr. Warrington stated that it was not a fair comparison between Watertown and Bedford as Watertown's fields were in deplorable conditions and not maintained the way Bedford's are maintained.

Chair Cordes wanted to know if there was a price from a contractor to just attend to the field. She was concerned that the Finance Committee would require that information and that it was not available.

Mr. Rosenberg went on to say that the deep tine aeration could be absorbed by someone else thus reducing the need for that expense. Chair Cordes was concerned that the contractor might do the aeration of the fields but not attend to the watering, fertilizing, lining etc. She went on to say that this need arose out of the public's dissatisfaction with the condition of the athletic fields and that Mr. Warrington, with addition of two new staff members, would have enough manpower to address the needs of the athletic fields as well as the entire Town.

Mr. Rosenberg reiterated that he wanted this project to succeed but he felt that there was more research to be done to justify this expense to the Finance Committee.

Mr. Warrington informed the Selectmen that Public Works had not added new staff since 1998. In that time, the demands on the department has increased exponentially. He feels that the level of service that is expected is not being addressed due to the lack of available staff.

Mr. Siegenthaler suggested the Mr. Reed go to the Finance Committee with a number for the Operating Budget with the understanding that they might require more information from the Selectmen. Mr. Reed said that they could always move the classification of where the money is if they have a higher number. Mr. Siegenthaler went on to say that he was concerned about a perception that the Town of Bedford was contracting out services in order to reduce staff.

Mr. Siegenthaler made a motion to recommend \$15,537,820 for the Selectmen's Budget. Mr. Rosenberg seconded the motion.

The motion was passed 5-0-0.

**13-168 2013 Annual Town Meeting
Review of Planned Articles**

Mr. Reed gave the Selectmen an updated preliminary version of the Warrant Articles for the 2013 Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Reed noted that there were twelve sign bylaw articles as opposed to eleven. He mentioned that there would be further discussion the following week and that the proposed changes were posted on the Town's website as he anticipated public interest in these recommended changes.

Mr. Reed said he was hoping that the proposed amendment concerning the consolidation of the Housing Committees would be added as one proposed general bylaw amendment since it didn't make sense to do one part of it and not others. He said that the Town Counsel was reviewing the draft currently and it would be part of the public hearing the following week.

The next article concerning the Public Works Director's proposal to change the general bylaw to include language stating that "a continuous length of copper pipe from the water meter to an outside sill cock for the purpose of providing continuity so that the Water Division can locate the buried water service," resulted in a discussion about why the use of copper was necessary. Mr. Warrington informed the Selectmen that this bylaw would only apply to new housing construction and that the recent change to plastic interior water piping has necessitated this amendment.

The next article discussed was amending the general bylaw concerning underground utilities with regard to sidewalks and public properties along "areas of The Great Road

from 160 feet west of Bacon Road to the beginning of North Road, and along or across North Road from its boundary with The Great Road..." This proposal would require overhead mounted utilities to be placed underground along the defined areas. The cost of this project would be paid by a 2% surcharge on all electric, telephone and cable TV bills in the Town of Bedford. The surcharge would stay in effect until the construction cost incurred by the utility companies was recovered. These improvements would add aesthetic as well as safety benefits to the Town of Bedford. Ms. Fleischman asked Mr. Warrington if there would be any ancillary benefits to doing this project such as not losing power during ice storms. Mr. Warrington said that would be one benefit as well as not having to 'yoke out' the trees to go around the utility wires.

Mr. Reed discussed changing the Salary Administration Plan Bylaw. Before the creation of the Town Manager's position, there was a Personnel Board that dealt with this bylaw. Since the creation of the Town Manager's position, the Personnel Board's administrative authority has been transferred to the Town Manager. Mr. Reed stated that the charter overrides this general bylaw but that it makes sense to edit the language in the Salary Administration Plan Bylaw referring to the Personnel Board in favor of the Town Manager. Mr. Reed reiterated that this was a 'house-keeping,' provision that was necessary. The public hearing will be held next week.

With regard to Street Acceptances, Mr. Reed said that he has been working with Town Counsel on this matter. There have been many street acceptances that were voted on in Town Meeting in the past with conditions. The question that arose is whether these conditions have been addressed. Mr. Reed is not sure of the outcome of this particular item as there might not be time to address this issue. Mr. Reed stated this item was added as a placeholder for now.

Mr. Reed suggested combining the next items on the article list, Bond Authorization and Proposed FY Capital Project Plans. He referred to a corrected version of the FY 14 Capital Article which changed the cost of the site lighting project from \$190,000 down to \$145,311. The incentives from the utility companies were not factored in thus causing the over-statement.

Mr. Reed informed the Selectmen that this was not the final version of the Capital Article. He urged the Selectmen to make a decision concerning the recommendations from the Capital Expenditure Committee regarding the Capital Article.

The Selectmen were presented with two versions of the FY14 Capital Article. Both versions assumed \$1,000,000 of tax levy according to the Finance Committee's Guidelines. Mr. Reed said that the real difference between the two versions referred to Item #11 which is a \$59,500 Facilities project designed to upgrade the mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems in the Town Hall. One version shows this project being funded by CPA. The other version shows it being funded by the Capital Article. Mr. Reed went on to show that after the \$1,000,000 mark had been reached, there were 2 other projects, Tree Planting and Finance Copier replacement totaling \$20,000, that would be funded from unexpended article balances from the previous year. The next

items, Leak Detection Program and Sewer Pump Station program, would be funded solely by FY14 water and sewer rates.

Due to the size and cost of the remaining items, the Capital Expenditure Committee (CEC) believed that they warranted being bonded projects. These projects include: water main improvement which would be incorporated to future water and sewer rates to recover the cost, dispatch center upgrade and ladder replacement for the Fire Department, both of which rated highly on the CEC list, and energy efficiency projects and site lighting. These last two items were initially bundled together but the payback period differed. Mr. Reed said that the Town's goal was to have a reduction of energy use of 20%. He believes that the site lighting and energy efficiency projects are worthwhile and would pay for themselves in 5-6 years. Mr. Reed anticipated that by doing these projects there would be a reduction in energy budgets for the Town to offset the costs. He stated that there would be approximately a \$40,000 - \$50,000 difference between what they expected to pay in debt service verses the cost of the projects.

Mr. Moonan added that the CEC, upon reviewing this information, found the 5-6 year time frame to have projects pay for themselves to be a good cut off for future energy projects. He feels that the CEC would be inclined to approve this project given this information.

Mr. Reed said that the Selectmen needed to come up with a final draft of the Capital Article in the next week or two for the Town Meeting Warrant. He stated that if the Community Preservation Committee approved the use of CPA funds for the Town Hall project, then Version A was the more likely article they would present. Mr. Reed went on to say that if the Finance Committee approved more than \$1,000,000 for capital expenditure to come from the tax levy and agreed on the bonding then potentially more projects could be added to the capital article list.

A discussion on which version of the capital article to use led to the decision that version A, showing the Town Hall project paid for with CPA and adding \$10,000 to purchase a deep tine aeration machine was the Selectmen's choice to present to the Finance Committee.

Mr. Reed said that there would be a public hearing next week to discuss the Salary Administration Plan bylaw. He presented the Selectmen with information as to how the merit article funding was calculated. He indicated that the model assumed \$147,030 of merit article funding with \$107,000 coming from the Selectmen's budget. The other boards have been given their share of the merit articles and would be meeting with the Finance Committee to illustrate that they were, or were not, meeting these guidelines.

Mr. Reed also spoke about the potential of adding language to the OPEB trust fund appropriation article to address not only funding of post-retirement benefits, but authorizing the transfer of those funds to the State Treasurer to invest in the state trust fund. He is not sure if staff is comfortable making this recommendation currently, but said it could become part of the article in the Warrant.

Next, the Sick Leave Buy Back fund was discussed. Mr. Reed indicated in the past there was an article to fund this program. Its current value is approximately \$336,000. It is proposed adding another \$25,000 to this as there is a large number of potential retirements anticipated over the next few years.

Mr. Reed said that the Finance Committee proposed adding another \$50,000 to the Stabilization Fund. Mr. Rosenberg asked if the utilization of Free Cash was at all affected by the Town of Bedford receiving funds from the state for the education of military dependents factored into this fund. Mr. Garofalo stated that money was accounted for in the school department's budget. Mr. Reed said the money received through this program is used to fund the next fiscal year's budget.

**13-169 Minutes – Regular Session Minutes – January 14, 2013
 Executive Session Minutes – January 7, 2013**

Mr. Moonan made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of January 7, 2013, as amended. Ms. Fleischman seconded the motion.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

13-170 Town Manager's Report

Mr. Reed stated that the Hanscom Area Towns Committee (HATS II) currently had 2 members representing the Town of Bedford. They are Lisa Mustapich from the Planning Board and Selectman Rosenberg. HATS II would like to have a full membership which would require four members from each Town. The Conservation Committee has two members who have volunteered to serve. HATS II requires that there is one member from the Conservation Committee per Town. Selectmen Rosenberg does not feel it is appropriate to have 2 members from the Conservation Committee serve on HATS II. He suggested that the Volunteer Coordinating Committee (VCC) seek out volunteers for the fourth HATS II position. Chair Cordes recommended that Selectmen Rosenberg write up a description of the position for the VCC to aid in their recruitment.

13-171 Open Discussion

Chair Cordes stated that she attended the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Conference on January 25th in Boston. She said she was impressed that the Town of Bedford was so well represented, not only by the Board of Selectmen and Mr. Reed but also the Directors of Finance, Public Works, Youth and Family Services, the Assistant Town Manager. Mr. Moonan mentioned that the Director of Youth and Family Services and the Assistant Town Manager had presentations at the conference as well.

Mr. Rosenberg made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Fleischman seconded the motion.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

The Regular Session Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.