

TOWN OF ACTON SELECT BOARD MEETING
January 10, 2024
6:00pm

MINUTES

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Winchell, Jr. called the meeting to order.

2. WARRANTS/BILLS

Signed.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Walsh made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Norwood made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR WEEKLY UPDATE

n/a

6. DEPARTMENT HEAD / COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES

Leslie Berlin, Warrant and Finance Chair

Warrant and Finance held a meeting this past Monday and went over the preliminary proposed budgets. Berlin provided a spreadsheet of excess funds from the last five to seven years (both municipal and school) to the Board to review.

Winchell, Jr. questioned if anything has been received from the Road Commissioner. Roux advised budgets should go to the Board first. McGurty addressed the timing of the budget process and if there were any questions. Berlin advised meetings are scheduled for February, with the anticipation of having the Warrant ready on February 1. Meetings are being held on February 5, 12 and 20: to meet the Warrant and Finance Committee deadline of February 21.

7. LIAISON UPDATES

McGurty: Municipal Management / Warrant & Finance, APAT, Cemetery

McGurty advised the final draft audits were received for the school and the town. The Town had a surplus of \$573,000; the school had a surplus of \$602,000; for a total of \$1,176,000.

The Town has an Undesignated Reserve Fund of \$2,441,000; the school has an Undesignated Reserve Fund of \$1,627,000. Once approved, McGurty will explain where the surpluses are coming from and compare expense lines to budget.

McGurty made a motion to adopt the audit report issued by RHR Smith for the year ending June 30, 2023, as presented; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

Once the school approves their budget, the town can incorporate the short form into the annual report and send it to the printer.

McGurty continued discussion (from last Select Board meeting) regarding the accounting firm no longer working with the Town. The Board has started to discuss the possibility of creating a position for the Director of Finance to establish higher level services for the town for budget development and management. McGurty is also continuing research for other firms and has found two firms that offered these services. A conference call was held this morning with a principal located out of a Portland office: they reviewed the current contract during the call and the company has expressed interest in working with the town. Conversations will continue.

Walsh: Fire Department, Transfer Station, Lincoln School

n/a

Norwood: School Department, Conservation / Forest, Mary Grant

The Forest and Conservation Committee had their first meeting yesterday.

The School Committee will be meeting tomorrow and will have a budget meeting, which Norwood will be attending.

The Mary Grant Committee will be meeting on January 20.

Winchell: Roads & Road Committee, Recreation Committee

The Recreation Committee had a meeting last week with the Warrant and Finance Liaison to discuss the budget.

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. EMA Action Plans

Roux advised per prior discussion the EMA director has provided a packet to review for the Board; he will be present at an upcoming meeting to discuss concerns with recent storms.

B. Town Report Draft

Roux provided a draft Town Report to the Board for review.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. APAT Update

Mike Corey, APAT

APAT was almost in the red last year due to unforeseen circumstances: revenue checks from the franchise agreement decreased between \$2,000 and \$4,000 annually due to cable subscription cancellations. Last year, funding was requested from the town to offset the rest of the budget. Corey researched other options. Neighboring towns use a program called Town Hall Streams, which helps eliminate the overhead, and allows

the ability to broadcast directly to the website for instant access to live feeds. This will provide savings of roughly \$15,000 annually.

Winchell, Jr. questioned the additional benefits of using this program. Corey advised of the ability to present a live feed of all meetings from the town website. This program would require one camera and one microphone and would be turned on and off by a member of the committee and/or board using the hall for the meeting. Shapleigh and Wakefield are using this program already. Norwood advised that this sounds like a smart move for the town and appears to be cost effective. McGurty questioned the timeline for being available online. Corey advised within one day.

Public comment/questions:

Charlie Hydek questioned the potential of an equipment failure: will there be a monitor to confirm that the feed is working. Corey indicated he will have to look further into that. Roux added, the town can include in the contract discussions to have an APAT member present during the first meetings to confirm proper use and knowledge of the new system. Hydek questioned if storage of the data will be on site. Corey advised it is stored off-site and will be transferred to the town servers.

Susan Meehan asked about the ability to email questions during the meeting. McGurty advised for live questions someone would need to manage/monitor a feed. Corey continued that it won't provide the capabilities of social media streaming.

Corey will reach out to local towns using the service to discuss live communication options and if they are using them. Winchell, Jr. and McGurty agreed this could add to participation and would be great.

Joyce Bakshi questioned the price for this updated service. Corey indicated the cost savings are approximately \$15,000. McGurty advised that due to budget discussions, we don't have further numbers to share at this time. Corey continued that the annual service currently being used is \$3,300.

McGurty made a motion to move forward with reviewing and negotiating a contract for service with Town Hall Streams effective March 1, 2024; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

B. Budget Presentations

- Transfer Station

Robin Ham, Superintendent, presented the Transfer Station Budget. Walsh indicated it appears there was an error in the budget. Berlan advised there was a deliberate decision to make the specified change but doesn't recall the reason. McGurty questioned if bids were received while making the budget. Ham confirmed. McGurty suggested that we should be bidding out and not just renewing contracts.

Hydek reviewed the line items changes: 7680 (equipment repairs) and 7252 (equipment repairs and maintenance) – what is the difference between the two line items and budget amount changes. Norwood suggested potentially from the account changes with Roy. McGurty suggested Ham, Walsh, and Berlin review the lines again and come back.

Dennis Long questioned the budget for chipping. Roux advised that due to the combination of line items with the Roy takeover, some items are no longer stand alone. Ham advised that due to the combined accounts there was difficulty in creating the budget this year. Roux advised the accounts will be changed back to what they were previously and breakdown will be provided to clarify what each account currently includes.

- Fire Department

Wayne Ham, Fire Chief, presented the Fire Department Budget. Roux indicated the previous TRIO accounts are on the top page, and the combined accounts from Mark Roy are on the second page. Ham provided a proposal for a command vehicle for the Board to consider. Discussion occurred regarding insurance through the town and/or personal insurance for the vehicle while in use.

Hydek reviewed multiple line items with Ham: training, equipment, and maintenance.

Joyce Bakshi advised that there should be some capital improvement needs upcoming for the Fire Department. There were funds left over last year and training that was not utilized, which may help accommodate putting the command vehicle proposal in place in the upcoming fiscal year. Ham further addressed questions regarding the budget process.

Hydek questioned the use of the proposed command vehicle and the type of vehicle proposed. Discussion occurred.

Bakshi also wanted to express gratitude for services received from the Fire Department during the recent snowstorm.

Berlin questions when the social services paperwork will be received. Roux advised that packets are being put together and will be available soon.

C. Cartographic's Contract

Walsh made a motion to sign the Cartographic's contract with the increase of \$400; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried. Contract signed.

D. Sealed Bid - Old Fire Station Items

Roux reviewed a Request for Bids for items left within the Old Fire Station.

McGurty made a motion to accept the bid as written; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

E. Executive Session 405 6.A – 1 Personnel Issue

Norwood made a motion to go into Executive Session 405 6.A-1: Personnel Issue at 7:55 pm; seconded by McGurty. All in favor. Motion carried.

Walsh made a motion to come out of Executive Session 405 6.A-1: Personnel Issue at 8:13 pm; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

Norwood made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by McGurty. All in favor. Motion carried.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Hydek was reviewing the TRC building assessment and noticed on the aerial view a building that is not on the tax map. Roux advised that there is an option to opt out of having a building picture online. Roux will review off camera.

11. PENDING

- A. Speed Trailer 01/11/2024
- B. Mooring Ordinance

- C. Old Fire Station RFP - 01/24/2024
- D. Meeting Hall / Kitchen Upgrade

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Website

13. MEMBERS PRESENT: David Winchell, Jr., Tom McGurty, Ed Walsh, Daniel Norwood, Jennifer Roux

14. ATTENDANCE: Wayne Ham, Joe Ruma, Robin Ham, Susan Meehan, Nancy Ruma, Dennis Long, Joyce Bakshi, Charlie Hydek, Leslie Berlin, Lee Robator, Virginia Deboer, Michael Corey