

TOWN OF LITCHFIELD

Selectmen's Meeting

January 18, 2010

The Board of Selectmen held a meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Conference Room.

Members present: Frank A. Byron, Chairman
M. Patricia Jewett
George A. Lambert
Steven D. Perry

Absent: Andrew M. Santom, Vice Chairman

5:30 p.m. Review of Paperwork and Communications

Also present for public session: Linda Langille, Office Manager

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT ITEMS/ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Any Other business: 1. Bureau of Land & Tax Appeals. 2. Keys. **Consent:** 1. Abatements.

PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

AVITAR & STATE REPRESENTATIVES

This was cancelled until February 1, 2010.

DELIBERATIVE SESSION

Mr. Byron **MOTIONED** that the Town Deliberative Session be held January 30, 2010, at 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon at CHS auditorium. Mrs. Jewett seconded. Motion carried 4-0-0. The Board had previously voted the meeting to be held at 1:00 p.m. but due to an error in the papers, it is now 2:00 p.m.

WARRANT ARTICLES

The Board reviewed the warrant articles.

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Article 4 -The Town budget is \$4,387,436.00 and the Default budget is \$4,372,742.00. Mr. Lambert **MOTIONED** to recommend the article. Mrs. Jewett seconded. Motion carried 4-0-0.

Article 7 Ethics - The Budget Committee recommends the article as it relates only to the appropriation requested in the article and expresses no opinion on the merits of the Ethics Policy.

Article 13 Petition Article - Resolution to State Representatives, State Senators, Speaker of the House, and Senate President that the citizens of New Hampshire should be allowed to vote on the amendment to the N.H. Constitution that defines marriage. Mr. Lambert **MOTIONED** to recommend the article. There was no second. Motion failed.

Article 14 Default Budgeting Process - The Budget Committee voted to recommend the petition article 5-3-0. Mr. Lambert explained the position of the people on the Budget Committee who signed the article voted against it. "Budget Committee Members felt the petition has merit because they feel there is oversight to the default budgeting process but they also felt that the Board of Selectmen had done a reasonable job in the past of trying to submit a reasonable default budget. So, it is not clear as to whether or not that is an appropriate thing to do so there were arguments on both sides". Mr. Byron: How can there be any oversight if the Budget Committee does it all (Budget and Default). There would be zero oversight because the Budget Committee would do it; so they are arguing against their own merits. Their argument is against their own merits of their decision. Mr. Lambert: At the end of the day the default has to be prepared by, even if the Budget Committee recommends it, people who know the budgets which is the Board of Selectmen's office so unless they are getting a suggested default budget from the department, from the school and from the town, then they (Budget Committee) cannot do it on their own...that means their role would be making sure it is reasonable.

Talk ensued. Mr. Lambert agreed that this petition article the way it is written has the potential to risk too much power with the Budget Committee and they could slash the default, slash the operating budget and leave the Town in a position to not operate. Mr. Byron: And the only alternative in that case would be to cut services. Mr. Perry **MOTIONED** to not recommend the petition article. Mrs. Jewett seconded. Motion carried 4-0-0.

2010 WARRANT

Mr. Byron **MOTIONED** that the Board of Selectmen hereby approves for signature the 2010 Town Warrant as amended at tonight's meeting. Mrs. Jewett seconded. Motion carried 4-0-0.

2009 SPENDING

Mr. Byron discussed the 2009 budget. There are still bills coming in. If the Town overspends its budget, the Department of Revenue would have to be contacted. Mrs. Langille pointed out that if

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the Town is aware it would overspend its budget, then it can petition DRA but if the Selectmen are unaware of it because department heads bring in late bills, it can't petition DRA.

PART-TIME HELP

Mrs. Langille talked about getting help in the office. There are a lot of things that need to be done in excel and the office personnel have not been trained. This was discussed. It was mentioned utilizing volunteers and having training for the office at the high school.

Mr. Byron **MOTIONED** to authorize Linda to seek the hiring of a part-time office help as well as volunteers to assist in the Selectmen's office and manage to the bottom line. Mrs. Jewett seconded. Motion carried 4-0-0. Mrs. Langille to contact the school as to possible high school seniors to do work in the office as senior projects.

COOKIE SALES

The Board is in receipt of a request to sell Girl Scout cookies in the Town Hall parking lot. Mr. Byron explained it would be a drive-by cookie order. Mr. Byron had suggested that people would come in from Hillcrest Road to Liberty Way and then set something up at the driveway entrance and continue out to Albuquerque. The Board is waiting for official dates from the leaders.

STREET LIGHTING CONTRACT

The Board is still waiting for information from PSNH.

UPDATE ON STATE HEARING - TAX LIENS

Mr. Lambert reported on the hearing he attended and a copy of his testimony is available for perusal. He stated that the Tax Collectors' Association of NH is not in favor of the proposed Bill of acceleration of required payments for tax liens for mobile homes. They believe it is unconstitutional. The conflict with manufactured homes is the property is taxed separately from the mobile home and you have two separate interested tax parties competing and if the Town takes the mobile home separately from the land, you could end up with non-value in the mobile home. The problem is liability but treating the people in a separate category creates a liability and a number of other problems in taxation. The Bill is in committee and has not been voted on as yet".

PSNH ENERGY AUDIT

Mr. Lambert contacted PSNH and Kevin Lynch and PSNH was provided with a list of buildings for an audit. It is moving forward.

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COMMITTEE/DISTRICT REPORTS

Planning Board - There will be a Planning Board meeting in the Town Hall tomorrow night.
Recreation Commission - There was a meeting last Tuesday at Town Hall.

Nashua Area Mental Health Group - There will be a meeting tomorrow night in Nashua at 4:00 p.m.

School Board - The School Board will meet in nonpublic session on Wednesday night.

Deliberative Session - The Town Deliberative Session will be held on Saturday, January 30, 2010, at 2:00 p.m.

Budget Committee - Mr. Lambert reported on the budget hearing Friday, January 15, 2010 at Campbell High School. The Budget Committee also met on Thursday night to vote on the teacher's contract and they recommended the contract.

COMMUNITY BULLETINS

State Representative Laura Gandia and Police Chief Joseph O'Brion were at State House for a public hearing on a Bill regarding Hawkers/Peddler's permits. The Bill would extend outside New Hampshire regarding background checks. Mr. Lambert also attended the hearing.

PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

CONSENT ITEMS

Mr. Byron **MOTIONED** that the abatements are approved with consent. Mr. Lambert seconded. Mr. Byron **AMENDED MOTION** approved as recommended by Avitar. Mr. Lambert seconded. Motion carried 4-0-0. Main motion carried 4-0-0. Motion carried 4-0-0.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Bureau of Land & Tax Appeals - Mr. Byron **MOTIONED** to approve the abatement (Anastasiou) as recommended. Mr. Lambert seconded. Motion carried 4-0-0.

Keys - Mr. Perry told the Board that he is making progress but the keys would not be available until February.

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There being no further business, Mrs. Jewett **MOTIONED** to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Byron seconded. Motion carried 4-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Frank A. Byron, Chairman

M. Patricia Jewett

George A. Lambert

Steven D. Perry

Lorraine Dogopoulos
Selectmen's Secretary
(transcribed from tape)