

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MARCH 2, 2016**

Present: First Selectman Melissa M. Mack, Timothy Reynolds, Joanne Sullivan, Melvin Chafetz and Krystal Holmes

Also in attendance: Director of Public Works John Cloonan

Approval of the Minutes from the February 17, 2016 Regular Meeting

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the Minutes from the February 17, 2016 Regular Meeting. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Public Comment

Tom Frenaye thanked First Selectmen Melissa Mack for the successful live streaming of the Board of Selectmen meeting

Presentation by Advisory Commission for Capital Expenditures (ACCE) on recommended Fiscal Year 2016/2017 capital projects and multi-year projected capital projects plan

Selectman Mack introduced Michael Stevens and thanked him for providing the group with the budget presentation of behalf of ACCE. Mr. Stevens presented a spreadsheet and outlined that ACCE had received \$14.8 M in capital requests as of February 29th. All projects outlined on the spreadsheet would fit into their projected window of \$3.1M million in capital expenses. In addition, Mr. Anderson of the Board of Finance clarified that \$125,000 remaining from previously approved but completed capital projects may be utilized. Mr. Stevens confirmed that approved grants were noted in the spreadsheet.

Mr. Stevens explained that the list was not in order of priority but that safety and foundational issues (i.e., roofs, pavement management, etc.) had “bubbled to the surface.” Selectmen Holmes made a suggestion that Swing Rental Space should be rolled in with the Town Hall Bond Project and not an ACCE item. She felt that the Town Hall Bond Project contingency should cover it. Selectmen Chafetz cautioned that the problem with contingency is that it can disappear extremely quickly based on unforeseen issues of a given project. First Selectmen Mack expressed her concerns with the Town Hall Project, and specifically the projected Town Clerk’s vault space. She questions whether the projected space will cover the needs of the Town in the near future, let alone down the road. She feels that we will need every penny of the contingency. Public Works Director Cloonan confirmed Selectmen Mack’s concerns. The group worked through each line item and asked questions. Selectmen Chafetz wanted clarification on Door Locks and Cameras. Mr. Stevens explained this is not just for the Police, but rather a Town-wide project. Selectmen Chafetz also questioned a

Reserve Fund of \$350,000 which Mr. Stevens explained would be used for safety needs for town fire engines. Selectmen Reynolds questioned the amounts for the High School Tennis Courts. Highway Foreman Cervione explained the current state of the High School Tennis courts and why a total reconstruction is required.

Selectmen Sullivan questioned the Remington Street Bridge Replacement and asked if the Hydroponic Tomato Farm will help with this expense. The grant financing was discussed in relation to this project, and new standards that will be required for bridge construction. Selectmen Chafetz inquired as to what was included in “Dredging of Congamond Lake with the Town of Southwick”. Mr. Stevens explained this item only included the Town of Suffield’s portion of the project and it was required in order to make the area usable. Selectmen Holmes asked about whether the highway department currently has a mini-excavator and what the town will do with it. Highway Foreman Cervione explained that it would assist with off- road drainage, wooded areas and easements. He noted that the Town currently has 12-15 miles of off-road drainage where we have been unable to do clearing. The mini-excavator is the perfect tool to help with these types of projects. Selectmen Holmes asked if the Town will look at used as well as new? Cervione replied that the town would look at both.

Technology became a topic of discussion and a review of the new Facility Dude software was provided by Director Cloonan. Tennis Courts and Turf Field Management was addressed as well. The maintenance has been done properly on the current turf field and this line item will continue to support that effort as well as cover any minor crack issues that may arise with the tennis courts. Selectmen Holmes asked if the numbers were still in need of fine tuning. Mr. Stevens suggested that there could possibly be a few changes to the priority list. A comparison over the prior year’s numbers was also made. Selectmen Chafetz expressed his concerns with the current bathrooms at the Kent Memorial Library and wished for funds to be included for that particular project. Mr. Stevens explained that currently there were higher priority items and First Selectmen Mack asked that the “dust be allowed to settle” before doing anything further with the library. Selectmen Holmes voiced her desire to have Farmland Preservation be a higher priority. She also recommended that it be moved to a Recurring Expenditure. Selectmen Reynolds asked if a vote is needed. First Selectmen Mack said yes and read the section of the Charter which outlines the necessary steps. First Selectmen Mack asked one final question of the Highway Department. In an effort to possibly reduce our trash costs and bring the collection process in-house, would it be feasible to purchase garbage trucks and utilize them as plows in the winter months. Highway Foreman Cervione said it could be done, however, the cost might not be conducive. She asked that he do some research and revisit the topic at a future time.

Discussion and approval of proposed capital projects for Fiscal Year 2016/2017 and for five years thereafter and recommend to the Board of Finance

Selectman Chafetz made a motion to approve the proposed capital projects for Fiscal Year 2016/2017 and recommend to the Board of Finance in the amount \$3,281,656 with

the amendment that Farmland Preservation be moved up to recurring expenditures.
Vote 5-0 in favor.

Approval of use of LOCIP (Local Capital Improvement Program) funds for certain Highway Department capital expenses and recommend to Board of Finance

First Selectmen Mack provided a brief background regarding the LOCIP by explaining that these funds are comprised of 2013 and 2014 monetary allocations totaling \$183,000 which have not been spent yet. This does not include the 2015 current year allocation which is for road use or the 2016 fiscal year amount not yet awarded. First Selectmen Mack introduced John Cloonan, Director of Public Works and asked him to present his proposed plan for use of the LOCIP funds. Director Cloonan explained that the Highway Department was looking to ease the burden on ACCE for the 2016 fiscal year by utilizing the LOCIP grant funds to purchase certain items that are currently needed. He outlined the following items and their associated cost.

1) Mini-Excavator	\$ 80,000
2) Truck with plow (2 @ \$35,000 each)	\$ 70,000
3) Dumpster @ Landfill (4 @ \$5,000 each)	\$ 20,000
4) Facility Dude Software (Work Order System)	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
TOTAL	\$175,000

First Selectmen Mack mentioned that these items are currently included on the ACCE list and if they continue through the process they will have proven to be a priority of the Town. Selectmen Chafetz requested clarification as to what the LOCIP funds actually were and why there was a differential in the amount being spent versus the amount First Selectmen Mack had mentioned was available. First Selectmen Mack responded by stating that the LOCIP grant money is from the State which is received by Suffield on an annual basis. She clarified that the \$183,000 was available but the Highway Department was only asking for \$175,000 which would leave an available amount of \$8,000. Board of Finance member Ryan Anderson, located in the audience, also responded by saying that these funds are normally put toward pavement management projects but for some reason they were not allocated to pavement management in 2013 or 2014. Selectmen Holmes inquired as to whether there were stipulations surrounding this money, such as whether it had to be used for transportation or Department of Public Works projects only. Board of Finance member Ryan Anderson commented that that the guidelines were rather flexible. A hard copy of the guidelines and list of allowed usages was provided for review. Selectmen Reynolds asked Highway Foreman Mark Cervione how the Highway Department would be utilizing the mini-excavator. Mr. Cervione outlined usages such as off-road drainage, catch basins and road work projects among the main usages. He also explained that although the Town currently owns a large back hoe, the mini-excavator is much smaller, easier to transport and is very multi-functional. Selectmen Reynolds asked if the Town currently owned one of these mini-excavators and the answer was no.

Selectmen Holmes made a motion to approve the use of LOCIP (Local Capital Improvement Program) funds for certain Highway Department capital expenses and recommend to Board of Finance. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Appointment of Charles J. Roumas to the Water Pollution control Authority to fill the vacancy for the remainder of Ann Huntington Mickelson's term (until 11/2017)

First Selectman Mack introduced the agenda item and explained that based on Mr. Roumas's experience and impressive resume he is an incredibly qualified candidate. She believes his significant experience in public service is exactly what the Water Pollution Control Authority needs and she is very much in favor of his recommendation and appointment. The Town of Suffield is currently struggling to attract commercial enterprises due to high connection fees that are being charged by WPCA. These fees have become a disincentive and are causing viable business opportunities to steer away from Suffield. First Selectmen Mack is hoping that Mr. Roumas will identify better ways of doing things from a financial perspective to enable WPCA to reduce expenses and charge competitive fees. Selectmen Reynolds asked Mr. Roumas what he is doing at the current time. Mr. Roumas explained that he is a retired American Express executive who still serves on the investment committee of one of the largest credit unions in Vermont, although it does not take up a lot of his time. He has additional time to serve his community and he looks forward to the opportunity to do so.

Selectman Sullivan made a motion to appointment Charles J. Roumas to the Water Pollution control Authority to fill the vacancy for the remainder of Ann Huntington Mickelson's term (until 11/2017.) Vote 5-0 in favor.

Appointment of Heather Van Deusen to the Permanent Building Commission to fill the vacancy for the remainder of Gene Torone's term (until 12/31/16)

First Selectmen Mack explained that the Permanent Building Commission has vacancies in a permanent position and two alternate positions. A handful of people have expressed interest in these positions and resumes are still being collected and reviewed with the hope that the alternate positions will be filled shortly. First Selectmen Mack indicated that the BOS is being presented with this candidate because it is the PBC's first choice for the permanent voting position. First Selectmen Mack read a small piece of Ms. Van Deusen's resume which outlined her qualifications for this position. She cited Ms. Van Deusen's current focus on public education projects as an asset to our Town. Her experience includes work on Field Houses, High Schools, Academies, and Gymnasiums. Selectmen Chafetz mentioned that Ms. Van Deusen is with S/L/A/M and will be the second architect from this firm and wanted to know what she would "bring to the table" that was not there already. It was noted that resigning director, Gene Torone, is also an architect with S/L/A/M. Director Cloonan responded by saying Ms. Van Deusen is extremely detail oriented and with the two large projects that the Town is undertaking it is always good to have "two sets of eyes" by architects. He also mentioned that this

would not be the first time we have had two members of S/L/A/M working for this committee. First Selectmen Mack expressed that initially she was concerned that two people from the same firm may have the same philosophy. However, after reading Ms. Van Deusen's resume, First Selectmen Mack determined that Ms. Van Deusen is highly qualified and her skill set would be extremely beneficial to our Town. Selectmen Reynolds asked which party she was affiliated with. It was believed that she was a Democrat.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to appoint Heather Van Deusen to the Permanent Building Commission to fill the vacancy for the remainder of Gene Torone's term (until 12/31/16.) Vote 4 in favor and 1 abstain.

Discussion and approval of Youth Services Director anniversary salary increase and recommend to the Board of Finance

First Selectmen Mack explained that the Youth Services Director was told that on her anniversary date she would receive an increase. This promise was made by a different administration. The off-budget increase was not in writing or approved by the Board of Selectman or Board of Finance. First Selectmen Mack noted that the Human Resources Director was aware of this oral promise. In an effort to honor this unusual scenario, First Selectmen Mack is requesting that the Board of Selectmen approve this as an "off-budget" salary increase. The current annual salary for this position is \$57,000 and will be increasing to \$58,710 per year. It will be total of \$731.50 payroll transfer and \$55.96 as an employee benefits transfer from Contingency.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the Youth Services Director anniversary salary increase as stated and recommend it to the Board of Finance. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of presentation of proposed Selectman's Fiscal year 2016/2017 budget

First Selectmen Mack presented the Selectman's fiscal year 2016/2017 budget to the Board of Finance on Monday, February 29th and reported that it had gone "pretty well". She presented a 2.9% increase, noting that a few changes had been made since the printing of the spreadsheet. In addition, the spreadsheet accidentally included an additional firefighter position. However, this position is going to be the subject of a grant and not included in the budget. In addition, a "vacancy rate" was added to account for open positions throughout the fiscal year. These updates reduced the budget to 2.29%. First Selectmen Mack indicated that her intent was to reduce the budget further and discussed the dollar amounts required to make this happen. If she is able to shave another \$45,000 off the budget, she will be at 2.0%. If we are able to shave \$118,786 she will be at 1.5%. The 1.5% target is what she is hoping to achieve. First Selectmen Mack noted that the spreadsheets currently do not reflect all costs associated with the three new positions proposed. The spreadsheets include; salary, FICA, Medicare, and Social Security, but do not include additional benefits, overtime, etc. Benefits are estimated to be an additional \$70 to 75K, which will need to be factored in. Selectmen

Chafetz asked First Selectmen Mack what exact dollar amount she needs in order to run the town. She responded by stating that the number is currently “a moving target.” While there are certain line items that can be specifically nailed down, there are still more discretionary items and unknowns to be uncovered. She described her efforts to work closely with Finance Director Deborah Cerrato and each department head to get “into the weeds” and find areas where expenses can be cut. First Selectmen Mack stated that she and Finance Director Cerrato have looked back over several years and questioned increases or items that simply do not make sense. She has requested that certain expenses be renegotiated or consolidated in an effort to be more cost effective. She is aware of what she can and cannot give up and if necessary she will request that pro-rata reductions be made. She is hoping that by allowing department heads to be more accountable and by giving them a more “hands on approach” it will eliminate the desire to “pad” budgets. Selectmen Chafetz expressed his concern surrounding the idea of “padding” and feels that no padding has been included in budgets for the town. First Selectmen Mack disagreed by stating that after her in depth look at the budget she is confident that “it is simply human nature to pad budgets.” Selectmen Chafetz continued to press First Selectmen Mack for a specific number she needs to run the Town. Selectmen Reynolds also voiced his opinion that the number is a moving target and it is especially difficult to determine when receivables are an unknown, explaining that there are two parts to every budget. First Selectmen Mack pointed out that one area of concern is Overtime, which is currently “out of control” in some departments. Selectmen Reynolds would like to see a 1.5% increase. Selectmen Chafetz challenged this. First Selectmen Mack went on to explain that last year included 53 weeks of payroll which accounted for 1% of overall budget. The 1.5% increase this year would actually be a 2.5%. Selectmen Holmes asked First Selectmen Mack if she felt that she could run the town on that amount of money. First Selectmen Mack responded that she felt she could. She believes she can sit down again and find additional savings without taking away necessities or putting the Town in jeopardy.

Selectman Updates

Commission Updates – Selectmen Chafetz attended the Library Commission and noted that they are now waiting to get approval to get in the building. Public Works Director John Cloonan updated the group by stating that progress is being made. The test for outside PCB’s has passed. The air balancing test has passed. The test for air quality has been conducted but results will not be available for a week to ten days. The Environmental Protection Agency still needs to give the Town their approval prior to moving anything back into the Library. Director Cloonan is hopeful that the move will be completed by the end of March. Selectmen Chafetz mentioned that \$60,000 in furniture purchases should be done soon. First Selectmen Mack asked that all the old library furniture be saved for a future town auction once the renovation of Town Hall is also complete. This is another example of trying to maximize every dollar for the Town.

Selectmen Holmes discussed miscellaneous correspondence she had received. She mentioned receiving a resume for Cami Beiter who is interested in joining the Historic

District Commission. First Selectmen Mack discussed her vision and plan surrounding future recommendations and appointments to various committees and commissions. She is looking closely at each Commission and Committee to determine the function of each group and the needs of said group. Emphasis is being placed on exercising diligence in selecting individuals who are most experienced. Each town committee (DTC & RTC) is being given an opportunity to make their recommendations, however, First Selectmen Mack is also interested in trying to encourage those who might not normally get involved in town government to come forward and serve our town. Resumes will be reviewed by the BOS and decisions surrounding the filling commission seats will be based on the most qualified candidates. Selectmen Holmes mentioned that she wants fairness in the process and feels that the entire Board of Selectmen should review the possible candidates and be involved in the decision process. First Selectman Mack agreed that fairness was important and did not see a problem with communicating this information. She also mentioned that she is still waiting on some recommendations from the town committees prior to making decisions.

Selectmen Holmes mentioned the Town Annual Report. Discussion surrounded the difficulty in gathering information and the need to set a public hearing. First Selectmen Mack noted that although the required information from the former First Selectmen has now been received she is not ready to set a public hearing as there are still departments who have not submitted their reports. A discussion as to setting the public hearing will be included on the next Board of Selectmen Meeting agenda. First Selectmen Mack also discussed the possibility of having some of the administrative piece done in house for next year which will be a cost savings.

First Selectmen Mack reported that she attended ACCE. In addition, she attended the Economic Development Commission, which is excited to do some things and make changes, including moving the Highway Garage. She looks forward to sharing options for that process when available. The Economic Development Commission will tour the old seminary/culinary institute to create some familiarity with the property in the hopes of getting that property into use at some point.

Public Comment

Michael Stevens mentioned that he updated the ACCE spreadsheet and it is available.

First Selectman Mack moved to adjourn and by unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

The next regular Board of Selectmen Meeting will be Wednesday, March 16, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary