

Chesterfield Town Information Hearing Continued

March 03, 2021

Via Zoom

Note: This meeting may be recorded

CALL TO ORDER

Brad Roscoe called the hearing to order at 7:01PM. In attendance were, Fran Shippee, Gary Winn, Jeanny Aldrich, Alissa Thompson, and Jim Barey.

As Moderator of the Town of Chesterfield, due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to the meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, this is to confirm that we are:

- a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means;*

We are utilizing the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting. All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through the Zoom platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # 1-646-876-9923 and by clicking on the following website address:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83185107896>

- b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting;*

We previously gave notice to the public of how to access the meeting using Zoom, and instructions are provided on the Town of Chesterfield website at:

<https://chesterfield.nh.gov/>.

Meeting ID: 831 8510 7896

- c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access;*

- d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting.*

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, we will adjourn the meeting and have it rescheduled at that time.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote.

Brad Roscoe called the hearing to order at 7:01PM.

Roscoe introduced Jeanny Aldrich, Gary Winn, Fran Shippee, Alissa Thompson, and Jim Barey.

Aldrich moved Chair responsibilities to Winn as Vice-Chair.

Roscoe asked that everyone recognize Zoom etiquette and noted that this is a deliberative meeting of the Board of Selectmen and defined the rules therein.

Roscoe provided the public with a summarization of events so far, noting the process in arriving at the current proposed budgets for 2021. Since the town cannot have a town meeting as normal, the state has allowed the use of Zoom.

Roscoe stated that after tonight, the warrant articles will no longer be available for amendment. The public will not be able to provide input as that was done at the previous hearing.

Roscoe shared his screen to exhibit the voting procedure and traffic patterns on Tuesday March 9th, 2021.

Roscoe stated that the objectives for tonight's meeting are: to look at all budget input from the public submitted before midnight on March 1, to deliberate on possible changes to the budget, finalize the budget to go to vote on March 9, and answer any questions coming in from Town Informational Hearing 1. Roscoe noted tonight's focus is strictly on the town articles and the budget.

Roscoe read public comments submitted to the Selectmen's office, noting that he had split the comments into two batches: those addressing budget items, and those addressing zoning items. General comments will be read first and more specific comments following.

Roscoe opened discussion to the Board of Selectmen. Winn began with the software question on revaluation. Winn stated the software was purchased last year and is used in the property records, the software itself does not perform the revaluation, that is still done by a firm. Winn stated what is driving the revaluation is not totally a choice of the Board of Selectmen, the state requires that properties in town be kept within a certain percentage level of true evaluation. Winn continued, stating that due to the increased sales of properties within the last year, evaluations have been drastically skewed. Winn noted that houses have sold much in excess of what they were selling for a year ago and the town is regulated by the state for how the evaluations are kept. Winn continued, stating the upside to doing a statistical revaluation is it will delay a full revaluation for another five years. Winn stated that the other side of that revaluation issue is the money to

perform this comes out of a capital reserve fund so as much as it is a substantial amount of money, it is not having an impact on the tax rate being looked at for this year. Winn noted that one thing to keep in mind, the tax rate last year went down from the year before; partially because North Shore reconstruction had funds appropriated but the project did not occur due to the scheduling of town meeting.

Winn stated in the board's estimates, they are proposing to apply \$200,000 to this year's budget as opposed to \$180,000. Winn noted that this amount is somewhat flexible depending on auditors in the fall. Winn stated he feels that is a conservative figure that the board can live with, noting that the board kept the expected revenue numbers on the conservative side as well. Winn stated that the goal come fall is that the rate will be lower.

Aldrich stated she would like to address Karen Denzler's issues point by point. Aldrich began, stating that the first item asking about changing the way the budget is presented and every year the Board of Selectmen attempt to clarify and simplify the budget. Aldrich continued, stating that Denzler requested the warrant articles to be written more simply; Aldrich answered that the warrant articles need to be written that way and if oversimplified the board could be held accountable for that. Moving on, Aldrich noted that evaluations in the town have gone up but that is in the Capital maintenance plan which is covered by the Capital Reserve, wherever there is a Reserve noted, the money is already there and will not be coming out of taxes, eventually these items will have to be taken care of and the money is already in there to take care of that. Aldrich continued, addressing salary increases exceeding COLA. Aldrich stated that is correct and wants to be very clear; when the Board of Selectmen make a decision as to paying the employees, they must think about what services are expected in the Town of Chesterfield. Aldrich-noted that towns close by have a lot of issues with their Police Departments, noting that Chesterfield is the standard in the area. Aldrich stated that the board could continue down the vein of not paying enough and there would be no new applicants, which would in turn lessen property values as well as the ways of life expected in the town.

Shippee stated she would like to reiterate what Aldrich noted and added that seeing employees retire and finding out that new employees cannot be hired in Chesterfield for what they are asking. Shippee also noted the board are trying to cut costs wherever possible.

Aldrich noted discussion on the Board of Selectmen's attempts to be as transparent as possible during the entire budget process.

Roscoe read Denzler's comments on the Highway department proposal to reduce the phone stipend from \$50 to \$25 per month. Winn noted discussion is occurring and some of the phones will be reduced to \$50 and some personal phones are used as town phones. Aldrich responded to Denzler's written comments concerning the Highway radio system, that it is helpful to be able to send text messages in dead zones which will affect radios as well. Aldrich continued, stating that employees are able to take photos to send to supervisors so they have a real idea of what is

happening. Aldrich noted that after all the deliberation the board has conducted, this is the most cost-effective way to do this.

Roscoe read Denzler's questions on whether there is a Capital Reserve Fund for IT. Roscoe noted that there is not as it is a year-by-year expense. Winn noted that discussion on one has taken place and there is always maintenance to be done on the system and equipment has a limited life span. Winn stated this is something new that has just begun in the past year as previously there was no organized IT service. Winn stated the board is looking to bring the town more up to date and secure as far as computers and technology goes, as a result software is being upgraded to Office365 and the board is looking at upgrading the website to make it more user friendly. Winn stated the town has come to rely on the technology for storing information especially in the Police Department.

Roscoe read Denzler's comments on the Health Officer salary. Aldrich responded that the Health Officer position is not salaried, it is an hourly position.

Roscoe read from Denzler's comments regarding Article 5: Rebuilding North Shore Road, noting that this is a rhetorical question for the public before voting. Aldrich responded that this is one of the most heavily traveled roads in town.

Roscoe read Denzler's comments on Article 27: Right-of-Way survey. Winn answered that the fund was started with the intent that if there was an issue requiring surveyor services, there would be funds to utilize in doing so.

Roscoe read Denzler's comments regarding raising \$10,000 for the Spofford Lake remediation fund. Aldrich stated that this warrant has been verbally explained at every meeting. Roscoe stated every reserve fund has a goal to be maintained and looked at every year.

Roscoe relayed Denzler's questions regarding funds for the Police department radar trailer. Aldrich noted it is up to the voters but there is much more impact to the roads around the lake, and this trailer would help to assist the officers.

Roscoe read comments from the Starbuck's requesting that the Board of Selectmen reinstate full funding for the Health Officer.

Roscoe read James Corliss's comments urging the town to reinstate full funding for the Wastewater regulation

Roscoe read comments from Schoolwerth who are supporting the original budget proposal set forth by the board.

Roscoe read comments from Pam Walton supporting the Health Officer funding proposed by the Board of Selectmen.

Roscoe read comments from Ron Rzsasa, requesting that all budget items follow the Board of Selectmen recommendation and not the Budget Committee recommendations.

Roscoe stated at this point he grouped the last of the comments together as they spoke about the same topic. Roscoe shared his screen of Article 4, breaking out all information previously available and exhibited which columns were represented by the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee.

Roscoe stated the board is now allowed to discuss and vote on any amendments.

Winn stated the Board of Selectmen have reviewed the input from the public and the only lines they wish to address are the ones where they differ with the Budget Committee. Winn stated that the first line in question is Elections, Registrations, and Vital Statistics. Winn noted there has been extensive conversation on the topic and the board is not totally in line with the Budget Committee recommendation. Winn stated the board had reviewed and saw a justification for increases in the deputy clerk for the records retention project. Winn also noted that the responses the board had received are in favor of restoring this line.

Gary Winn moved to amend the assistant clerk line by adding \$1,714 to that line from the Budget Committee recommendation which would make a total of \$78,553. The motion was seconded by Jeanny Aldrich.

Discussion: Shippee stated she came up with a slightly different number by \$20, but she is fine with the current amendment.

The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Winn noted discussion on the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Winn stated that including this line item is strongly suggested by NHMA and is used by other towns. Winn stated the board recognizes that the Zoning Board only worked for half of the year and there were times where the board may have sought the advice offered. The board is looking to maintain this position for another year before being removed.

Gary Winn moved that the Zoning Board of Adjustment line be increased by \$1,500 to a total of \$10,890. The motion was seconded by Fran Shippee and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Winn stated the next line is the Highway Town Road Maintenance line. Winn noted the Board of Selectmen feels there is a benefit to cell phones on the job, part of the understanding with the employees implementing this is that they are responsible for the maintenance of their phones, to have them keep a maintenance contract on their phones or if not, they assume responsibility on repairs.

The Board of Selectmen moved to amend the budget line to return to \$845,077. The motion was seconded by Fran Shippee.

Discussion: Aldrich stated she would like to clarify why the Board of Selectmen are choosing

\$50 over the Budget Committee recommendation of \$25. The average pay is \$50 per phone per month and employees do have to pay for their own insurance. Aldrich stated that when a business requires employees to carry a phone, employees should be compensated as if a business required the use of the employee's personal vehicle.

The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Winn stated that the final line in question is the Health Officer budget. Winn noted that the board calculated for Wastewater implementation as well as \$13,500 to implement the budget. Winn stated that at this point the board feels there will be continued emphasis on Covid that the Health Officer has been actively involved in, as well as continuing to inspect day cares, public kitchens and other such places.

The Board of Selectmen moved to amend the Health Officer budget to the original \$27,139. The motion was seconded by Jeanny Aldrich and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Winn noted there were no other articles to change. Winn stated that the only other discussion is on Article 28: lake invasive species warrant article. Winn noted that this would go to the town as an up or down vote and the Board of Selectmen see no reason to take any action on it.

Winn opened discussion of Article 32. Winn stated that the Board of Selectmen agree that there is no use for the roadbed and the request is perfectly legitimate. The board is not taking a stand on this. Shippee and Aldrich agreed with Winn.

Roscoe stated the last item is to go over input on the Steep Slopes Ordinance. Roscoe noted that zoning articles are not to be a part of this meeting, but it is up to board whether they would like to proceed. Aldrich stated there was quite a bit of input the other night, and both sides were heard. Shippee stated the input received in writing is not different from what was said at the meeting. Roscoe stated in a normal year, the way zoning items are heard is in public hearings with the Planning board; Roscoe wanted to bring it up so that the public was aware of it. Winn agreed with Roscoe that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the warrant and the Steep Slopes issue is not up to actual discussion at Town meeting; normally it would not be on the floor. Winn stated he believes the public is aware of what the amendment applies to. Roscoe clarified there were no questions but statements of individuals standing on the ordinance.

Gary Winn moved to forgo discussion on the steep slopes ordinance. The motion was seconded by Jeanny Aldrich and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Fran Shippee moved to adjourn at 8:17PM. The motion was seconded by Jeanny Aldrich and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Barey
Board of Selectmen Secretary

Approved by:

Jeanny Aldrich, Chairman

Date

Fran Shippee

Date

Gary Winn

Date