

## Selectmen's Working Meeting

March 2, 2021 at 4PM

Jon McKeon Meeting Room & Via Zoom

Jeanny Aldrich opened the meeting at 4:08PM. In attendance in person were Gary Winn, Fran Shippee, Alissa Thompson, and Jim Barey. Jeanny Aldrich attended via Zoom.

The board met to discuss the 2021 Town Meeting and Budget comments from the public and how they should be addressed at the next Town Informational Session on March 03, 2021. Aldrich passed Chair responsibilities to Winn as she has been out of commission recently.

Winn opened discussion, stating that Brad Roscoe had attempted to respond to some of Karen Denzler's submitted comments.

Aldrich suggested consolidating comment topics. Winn stated all that mentioned the Wastewater ordinance were in favor of passing it. Winn stated he had four comments speaking in favor of the Health Officer funding. Winn noted the Rzasa's commented in favor of all the Board of Selectmen's Budget recommendations. Winn noted there were two comments from the Schoolwerth's in favor of the full cost of the Wastewater regulation. Aldrich noted in Karen Denzler's letter, she stated she agrees with preserving those fund allotments.

Winn noted that at the first informational meeting, there were two verbal comments in favor of the Board of Selectmen budget recommendations. Aldrich noted she did not see any comments that were against the regulation.

Shippee asked about Judy Idelkope's comments that were submitted to her and Winn. Winn stated that Idelkope did not want to make a statement, but she had some personal views she would like to express to the Selectmen.

Aldrich stated she had gone over the monetary differences between the Board of Selectmen budget proposal and the Budget Committee budget proposal and there were not many differences without proper explanations. Shippee noted there were four things cut and asked if they should be added back in. Aldrich agreed and stated she feels this is the budget the board agreed on and they should move forward with it. Winn stated the overwhelming opinion is the Budget Committee takes issue with the Wastewater regulation overall and some members felt that the Board of Selectmen were not fully prepared to make the assessment. Winn stated this is where the two bodies differ in thought. Winn noted that Shippee had gone back and recalculated and had arrived at a nearly identical number that Aldrich originally had in estimating funds for the regulation. Winn noted that one issue was the Budget Committee was working with no year end for what was spent last year for the Health department. Shippee stated the Budget Committee left \$7,500 for the Health Officer salary. Shippee calculated \$13,000 for salary and supplies. Aldrich

responded that the Budget Committee did not have a sound reason for cutting the amount by such a large margin. Winn stated the board should re-instate the Wastewater costs but clarified that the full \$20,000 is not for Wastewater exclusively. Aldrich agreed and suggested there be discussion on this tomorrow night. Winn stated he thought the committee had undercut the bottom line. Aldrich stated that was not allowed.

Winn asked if Shippee had calculated the number according to Dumont performing all the work. Winn continued, stating there are certain clerical tasks that Dumont should not be required to focus on during this project. Winn and Aldrich discussed the management of the project and the priorities of where funds should be allotted. Winn and Thompson noted there are a lot of options within the Avitar programming that have not yet been explored and will benefit implementing the Wastewater project.

Aldrich stated the current Avitar should be upgraded to interact with the Code Enforcement Officer and Health Officer Avitar.

Winn opened discussion on the town employee cell phone stipend. Thompson read Karen Denzler's comment on the topic. Aldrich noted that upkeep for radios as well as licensing would be included in the costs. Aldrich also noted that the \$6,000 estimate was made years ago and part of the reason the use was discontinued was there were technical problems with the equipment. Thompson noted that Parks&Rec wanted to keep the work phone but Lachenal and Beauregard wanted to use their personal cell phones. The board discussed reducing and increasing the cell phone stipend. Aldrich noted her surprise in having to discuss the amount again after already explaining the details to the Budget Committee.

Winn noted that the biggest comment that came up was the number of people not being reimbursed for using their personal cell phones, as well as internet and electricity. Winn stated if they back off Tricia Lachenal and Matt Beauregard's phones that would bring them in line with Denzler's request. The board discussed the addition of requiring employees to uphold responsibility for maintenance of their personal cell phones and releasing the board of liability in repair or replacement should the phone be damaged. Aldrich noted a comparison between the proposed cell phone stipend and other companies' mileage policy for personal vehicles. Shippee noted that 50 seems to be the going rate. Aldrich agreed from her discussion groups and believed the board is right on target. Thompson relayed from Lord that the radios must be re-evaluated every 15 years and the current \$6,000 quote is not accurate. Winn noted that the portable radios alone are more than \$1,000 per radio for the fire department and the \$6,000 might be a lot lower than today's estimate. Winn stated the one advantage he sees to the phones is if the employees are doing something outside of their vehicles, a text can be sent and leave a message whereas the radio is immediate communication and may be inconsistent in some areas of town. Thompson noted that if there is not any service with a radio, you cannot make a phone call, but you can send a text. Winn agreed. Winn also noted advantages in explaining problems and sending media messages. Thompson noted that during the Police department water situation, she was able to

view video and photo messages that allowed for a more efficient assessment of the situation. Shippee asked if the Police Department had their phones paid for by the town. Thompson stated yes, they have their own plan, but their phones are all paid in full by the Town. The board agreed to endorse the recommendation on cell phones. Winn stated no votes are being taken at this time as that will be done at the meeting on March 03, 2021.

Winn opened discussion on the Zoning Board consultant budget. Winn stated this was done as the budget was not being used. Shippee noted last year was the first year utilizing that amount. Winn stated there was confusion over legal advice versus consultations. Winn asked if this were paying for someone else to do research for the Zoning Board. Aldrich stated no, it is technical advice given on how to approach each application that comes in. Shippee stated that these funds were not used last year. Winn noted that the Zoning board have had opportunities to utilize this fund but have not taken advantage. Aldrich asked if it should stay in the budget for one more year and see if it is used or take it off. Aldrich continued stating that many applicants were utilizing technical assistance that the town was not. Winn suggested giving it another year and see if the Zoning board can take further advantage of it. The board decided to continue with their initial recommendation.

The board opened discussion on the deputy town clerk pay. Winn noted the issue may be the lack of year end figures. Winn noted the budget was to increase the position to 20 hours per week. Shippee asked what the deputy town clerk's pay was. Thompson responded \$15.50. Aldrich asked what the need for the increase in the pay was. Winn responded: so that the Town Clerk did not need to go to a full-time position as well as the credit card paperwork and a new MTV software was increasing time in processing applications. Shippee noted it would be another 8 hours' worth of work per week. Aldrich stated having the Interware program installed should have reduced the time to consolidate and reconcile payments. The board discussed that the town clerk's office should be meeting the states requirement for record retention, including filing records within the town offices. Aldrich clarified that the board state that four hours per week should be dedicated to records retention. Shippee asked what else was required for records retention. Aldrich stated the deputy town clerk should keep track of the hours dedicated to records retention and keep the dollar value at the same amount and at the year end, the board should discuss whether to keep or take those hours. Shippee asked if the town should hire someone specifically for the records retention. Aldrich noted there were a lot of privacy laws that would complicate a new hire. Winn suggested staying at the figure they have, and the Board of Selectmen need to manage the deputy clerk's time so that the records retention project is completed.

Shippee asked how the Budget Committee would react to the board reinstating the cuts made from their original proposal. Aldrich stated she is more concerned with running the town properly and the Board of Selectmen has worked with the Budget Committee to cut unneeded costs throughout budget season. Aldrich noted that the town is taking a hit right now because many updates that should have happened did not, such as increase in wages for town employees.

Winn stated the paperwork he had showed the tax rate as \$5.13 from last year which shows an increase of 10%. That does not reflect an equal amount down from the year before. Aldrich stated Winn was making one of her points about transparency and the lack of hiding things needing to be readjusted come September.

Winn opened discussion on the Spofford lake fund which would get moved up or down by the town. The board made no changes.

Winn stated there was a question on Sandy Cormier's letter asking that a road be discontinued. Aldrich stated she wrote to Roscoe on that as it is the moderator's position rather than the Board of Selectmen.

Winn asked Thompson about the Police Department copier machine. Thompson stated Canon had come in and quoted a new purchase as well as a lease and the Chief is asking how the board would like him to proceed. Winn summarized and clarified the situation for Aldrich about the decline of the Police Department copier and the need to replace it. The board discussed a lease option for 60 months at \$108 per month. Thompson noted the advantage of Canon is that the sales representative lives in town and is readily available for assistance. Winn noted Chief Chickering did not want to purchase a new machine outright this early in the year when it was not budgeted. Winn continued stating that leasing might be the better option. Aldrich agreed with Winn depending on the cost per paper.

*Gary Winn moved to give Chief Chickering and Alissa Thompson permission to enter into a lease arrangement on a new copier for the Police Department in finding the best offer. The motion was seconded by Fran Shippee and passed unanimously by roll call vote.*

*Gary Winn moved to adjourn at 6:13 PM. The motion was seconded by Fran Shippee and passed unanimously by roll call vote.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Barey  
Board of Selectmen Secretary


Approved by:

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Jeanny Aldrich, Chairman

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*Fran Shippee*  
Fran Shippee

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Date

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*3.13.2021*  
Date

  
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Gary Winn

3/11/2021  
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Date