

Minutes

Selectmen's Meeting

February 18, 2020

Opening:

Meeting opened at 6:30p.m.

People present were:

Selectmen: Daniel McCormick, Tony Avila, Penny Picard Sampson

Employee: Kari Hunt

Guest: Sharon Picard, Lori Nason, Tyler Curtis, Rachael Weaver Michael Berry, Tara Berry, Emily Rochford, Callie Knudson, Amy Dull, Reilly Winters, Star Schaeffer, Christian Smith

Public Feedback: NONE

Minutes: Minutes from February 4th were reviewed and accepted.

Treasurer:

- Warrants were reviewed and signed.
- A Bill from Chase Toy's was received, it was for a power broom purchased in September, Invoice was never sent to the town office. Dan and Tony believed that we already paid for it. Kari is to check into it. If it was not paid, Selectmen grant permission to pay the bill. Josh did say they were having a few issues with the billing system, but also didn't have the correct email address on file.
- Proseal sent a bill for \$4300. These funds should have come out of last year's budget. The bill that was sent had an agreement on it that was not what was agreed upon. Dan will follow up with Proseal.
- Humane Society is sending bills quarterly now and had asked for 1st Quarter payment for 2020, in December. These funds should come from the new budget, which has not been appropriated yet. Kari did speak with the Humane Society and they are okay with receiving the 1st Quarter after town meeting. 1st and 2nd Quarter will be going out at the same time.

Old Business:

- The Budget Committee, Fire Department and members of the EDC will be meeting with February 27, 2020 at 6:30pm at the Fire House to discuss truck options.

New Business:

- Penny made a motion to approve the same roads for ATV access as granted in the past. Dan 2nd the motion. Motion carried.
- Appeal Request is moved to discuss at the end of the meeting.
- Citizen Petition is moved to discuss at the end of the meeting.
- A resident asked if a Impaired Hearing Sign could be installed on School Street. It is a DOT road. Kari made the request with DOT and was told that DOT will supply the sign, however, the town is responsible for installing, maintaining it and removing it when the resident moves. Penny motioned to install the sign. Dan seconded the motion. Motion carried. Sign will be installed in spring.

Pothole on Depot St. Selectmen will contact DOT to see if it can be fixed.

- Tony was reviewing bills. Reliance fixed Tanker 3, on their bill it says that they guarantee all their work, if they did the work on Tanker 3, wouldn't they need to guarantee their work? Fire Chief was not present to answer the question. There is no paperwork at the town office about the warranty for the tank on tanker 3.
- Blaine has been unsuccessful finding the warranty paperwork for tanker 3.

- The Fire Chief turned in a petition to the Selectmen for an article at the town meeting. Penny read the petition aloud. *“To see if the town will vote to grant full authority and authorization of town approved and voted maintenance and operations budget to include fire firefighter’s payroll, and full operations to the Unity Fire Department, to the Position of Town of Unity, Fire Chief.”*

Selectmen are going to look into further to make sure it is a legal request before making a decision.

Resident stated they were approached by Blaine to sign the Petition. When the resident asked what the petition was for Blaine stated that it was to give him permission to speak at the town meeting.

Blaine is a registered voter in Unity and doesn’t need to be permission to speak. If a non-resident were to attend the town meeting they would need $\frac{2}{3}$ vote in order to speak, but that is not what the petition was for. Resident asked how Blaine is a resident of Unity if he lives in Unity Plantation. Blaine’s name was on the voter registration list as a Unity resident and has not provided any evidence to Kari that would otherwise question his voter eligibility. Doesn’t the Fire Chief for Unity have to be a resident? As for the Town Fire Chief, no, it doesn’t matter what town he or she resides in. As for the Association it has been noted in their By-Laws that the Fire Chief does need to be a resident. The Registrar of Voters cannot just remove a name for the voter registration list. If Blaine’s residency is being questioned there is a hearing process, which if the answer is not satisfactory he could appeal to the Municipal Officers, and still not satisfied could end up to Superior Court. There has been concerned residents have come to the Selectmen concerned about how Blaine moves debate at Town Meeting and don’t feel it is right because they see that Blaine is not a resident.

Resident questions who keeps track of firefighter call logs, who holds the time per call, who is responsible to report the hours. According to Tyler it is the responsibility of the Fire Department Officers.

A resident wanted to know how Blaine was appointed for Unity Fire Chief. Historically the Selectmen have always appointed the Fire Chief recommended by the Association. Tyler speaks on behalf of Blaine, commenting he has been the best fire chief he has had.

Penny explained that there are niceties and necessities. It is important to get the trucks repaired, vs having the washer/extractor which should not come before fixing the truck. Tyler stated he doesn’t care about the ladder truck and rather have the washer/extractor. Selectmen understand that it is important to have the gear clean and understand that health and safety is important. There are two other towns that have extractors that gear could be washed at. Tyler stated that the Fire Department has brought their gear there to wash it. Tyler was asked how many times a year is it required to wash the turnout gear. By NFPA standards, 1 time per year, but should be washed after responding to a fire call.

U/L ladder test was raised last year in their budget. Resident wanted to know where that money was and if it was getting turned back to the town. Because the Fire Department is not line item the funds were spent on other items. This year the Selectmen will be making a line item for the U/L test. What will the town do with the current ladder truck if it deemed unusable? Scrap it?

- Based on legal advice to protect the municipality, the town attorney advised that the Administrative Assistant to the Fire Chief position be eliminated. 4 year ago, the previous Fire Chief asked for temporary help to bring in an Admin. Assistant to help catch up on the compliance paperwork.. The position was originally \$2,500, it was reduced to \$500 when the Selectmen were told that the compliance paperwork was completed. The stipend was not for the extra stuff Melissa did, but only to get caught up on compliance paperwork.

Resident wanted to know who got paid in the fire department. The Fire Chief, the two Assistant Fire Chiefs received a stipend from the town, in addition all officers and firefighters do receive an hourly wage when they respond to calls. Tyler was asked when he started getting paid. Tyler said he didn’t get paid until he went through Basic Fire School. It is required by BLS. This year he also took F1 and F2. Dan made a motion to eliminate the Administrative Assistant to the Fire Chief position per legal advice.. Tony seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- Resident asked what the Fire Department's maintenance plan was. Late summer Dan suggested the Fire Department do an oil analysis, establish a maintenance plan and Dan and Tony offered to help. There has been no further mention or discussion about it.
- Tony is concerned about how much the Fire Department is spending, especially when they are asking for \$12,000 worth of SCBA gear with no way of charging them in our town and the Selectmen just learned a couple weeks prior that the fire department will need a cascade system to charge the tanks. This system can cost up to \$50,000 or more. Then a petition is brought forward asking that the Fire Chief be given full control of the department when proper maintenance on equipment is not getting done. They are not planning or budgeting properly. Tyler commented that the county has a cascade system on a trailer that comes to the scene to fill the tanks. Tony added that last year at town meeting the Chief stood up and said they wanted to buy gear, but during the year when asked about fixing the fire truck said they didn't have the money in their budget, but turned around and handed a bill in for washer/extractor. The fire department needs accountability to their budget.

Previous Selectmen have not paid attention to the fire department and the current Board is. They are looking at the Fire Department just as they would any town department. The Fire Department is part of the Town. The Fire Department wants to be separate but hold equal authority.

- Selectmen sign the Order of Municipal Law. This gives permission for the CEO to enforce State Nuisance law, Maine Junkyard laws.
- Penny made a motion to nominate Michael Berry, Alic Albright and Sharon Picard to be a member of the Budget Committee. Dan seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Penny made a motion to move into executive session pursuant 22 MRSA subsection 4306 to discuss the appeal request. Dan seconded the motion. Motion carried. Penny made a motion to end the executive session. Dan seconded the motion. Motion carried. Selectmen will send the appeal request to the town attorney.

Other Business: None

Meeting Adjourned: 9:00 p.m.