

SUNDERLAND SELECTBOARD MINUTES

Place: Town Offices, 12 School Street

March 7, 2023

Attending: T. Fydenkevez, C. Drake-Tremblay, N. Waring, G. Kravitz

Others: J. Elias, S. Smiarowski,

Meeting: Hybrid: in person with portions recorded by FCAT

Meeting called to order at 7:36PM

MINUTES

Ms. Drake-Tremblay motion to accept regular Selectboard meeting MINUTES of 02/27/2023, and Executive Session Minutes of 06/13/22 and 02/6/2023, Mr. Waring second, vote 3-0. The Executive Session Minutes of 06/20/2022 and 02/26/2023 may be released per Mr. Fydenkevez

BUSINESS

- **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING (ATM) and ELECTION DATES:** ATM Articles due by 03/17/2023. Last Selectboard meeting to vote for ballot questions is 03/27/2023. Last day to register to vote for ATM and Annual Town Election is 04/18/2023. Selectboard and Finance Committee will continue to meet until the warrant is posted. Warrant must be signed before 04/21/2023. Resident mailing notification will be sent by 04/19/2023. Warrant for Election and ATM will be posted 04/21/2023. Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for 04/28/2023. Annual Town Election is 05/06/2023 at the Sunderland Library. There was a request to consider ATM begin at 6PM. The Chair recommends consideration of a 6:30PM as a start time for ATM. Mr. Elias spoke about town meeting procedures for those not as familiar with process and how to get the younger population involved in the town caucus and annual meeting. In the past, child care was offered by the PTO for ATM. For Town Caucus, which falls under the Town Clerk's per view, but does not want to speak on behalf of the Town Clerk. The issue with paper signature submissions for all nominations is it is not known until late if there will be individuals to run for a position. There is not a quorum for ATM but we do have that requirement for Caucus.
- **ACCOUNTING SERVICES:** Mr. Kravitz briefly discussed this matter and stated his opinion that the town has outgrown the services of the FRCOG Accounting Program. We do not have certified Free Cash at this time. It has been submitted but returned multiple times by DOR with questions. Certified Free Cash was not approved until March last year. The FRCOG is not offering support and we will need to hire an accounting person or firm with municipal experience to help the FRCOG accounting position. Mr. Fydenkevez noted that would be fine as long as the FRCOG reduces their assessment which is not believed they would noting we have not seen an assessment. Mr. Kravitz stated our long-term plan should be to move away from their accounting services, sooner rather than later. Ms. Drake-Tremblay noted this was a conversation last night at the Personnel Committee meeting where the FRCOG cannot provide support to the accountant and we need matters addressed. Mr. Kravitz was asked to come up with a plan to address this situation. Current accounting services are assessed at \$55,000 for the position, \$16,000 for software, as well additional expenses due to software performance issues. The FRCOG refuses to work from the cloud-based system which would allow the system to work more efficiently and not experience the connection issues but the FRCOG was not interested in entertaining that option and there would still be additional expenses to the town.
- **CAPITAL STABILIZATION OVERRIDE:** A \$250,000-\$300,000 override would be needed to address the item requests right now. This amount may not cover all of the expenses noted on the Capital
- **Plan.** Costs of items noted are at today's estimates. Mr. Waring noted they do have the next 5-7 yrs. capital expense requests. This year, Capital request expenses total \$784,000. FY Year 2025 is \$250,000; Year 2026 \$840,000; 2027 is \$158,000; 2028 \$454,000; 2029 \$300,000; and 2030 is \$700,000. The committee also proposes increasing the Capital Stabilization Account. Discussion regarding how to educate the public regarding capital and other town needs and how to attract a wider

range of community members to participate. Mr. Kravitz noted the Capital memo for the elementary school line was only \$20,000 and because we appropriated around about \$400,000 from ARPA funds. The other item while discussing an override, would be the need to decide on that within the next two meetings in order to get it on the ballot and prepare an article. Mr. Elias expressed the status of the Finance Committee as they do not have a quorum due to one member not being available to participate at this time. Valerie Voorheis is interested in joining the Finance Committee however, she cannot be appointed because they do not have enough members to vote. A unanimous vote is needed by the Finance Committee in order to appoint a new member. This is because Ms. Voorheis is already on an elected board. Mr. Kravitz was recruiting Ms. Voorheis for the Finance Committee, however she has a lot of experience with finance and personnel and could be appointed to the Personnel Committee. If Ms. Voorheis was not a Library Trustee member, the appointment could be made by then have been made by the Moderator. There has not been contact with the third Finance Committee member. Mr. Kravitz requested the Selectboard entertain appointing Ms. Voorheis to the Personnel Committee as a member-at-large and not a Finance representative. Ms. Drake-Tremblay motion to appoint Valerie Voorheis to the Personnel Committee as an at-large member, Mr. Waring second, vote 3-0.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES

- Estimate to survey Plumtree Rd from Rt. 116 to South Plain Rd would be approximately \$3,000. Ms. Drake-Tremblay motion to appropriate \$3,000 from ARPA funds to survey Plumtree Rd for sidewalks from Rt. 116 to South Plain Road, Mr. Waring second, vote 3-0.
- Elementary School has received an estimate of \$30,000 to engineer the oil tank replacement project. This is in addition to the \$195,000 appropriated from ARPA previously for the tank, etc. it is unknown if the original amount includes installation and old tank removal. The engineering cost was expected to be different. Ordering a steel tank would take about 16 weeks vs. a fiberglass tank which would take 60 weeks. Difference in cost is \$2,000. Tighe & Bond engineers report the steel tanks have a fiberglass coating. Fire Inspector reports that when they have removed tanks in Sunderland, some up to 20 yrs. old, the soils are intact with stickers still in place and no deterioration. Before any additional funds are approved, the school needs to provide the total cost of the project. Town originally approved \$10,000 from ARPA. The above-ground oil tank study was \$5,000 with the original budget of \$10,000. During the original engineering study, they were advised the above-ground tank would require more costs for additional property safeguards, etc. and determined not to be feasible for the property. The board feels more funds should be allocated from ARPA until the total cost to finalize the complete tank replacement project is known.

Next Selectboard meetings is scheduled for March 13 and 14, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT: Ms. Drake-Tremblay motion to adjourn, Mr. Waring second, vote 3-0 at 8:38PM

Respectfully submitted,



Geoff Kravitz,
Town Administrator