

Town of Royalton
Special Budget Meeting
December 1, 2009

Knight's Opera House

Selectboard present – Peg Trombly, Larry Trottier, Joan Goldstein, Ernie Amsden, Peggy Ainsworth

Public Present – Assistant Town Clerk Leanna Stickney, and Administrative Assistant Nathan Cleveland.

Chairwoman Trombly called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

General Fund Budget

Members discussed the Town Clerk's budget with Assistant Town Clerk Ms. Stickney. Discussion was focused on hours of operation, employee benefits and wages. The possibility of moving the wages from a salary to hourly rate for both the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk was discussed and the consensus was a salary wage would eliminate questions of staying within the given budget.

Following the discussion on the proposed Town Clerk's budget the Selectboard developed questions to present to the Town Treasurer for clarification on the revenue that is received from that state for the PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) and current land use. Other questions concerning the revenue included what taxes the railroad pays (buildings, or tracks, or both?), and what should be budgeted for delinquent taxes.

The Selectboard also discussed increasing the hours for the Police Department to allow for increased patrol in the next fiscal year. It was noted that the income received for patrolling the Town of Sharon would help pay for this increase.

Discussion ensued on the street cleaning in the village of South Royalton. It was noted that the work has not been meeting the Town's expectations. Concerns were raised that included the ability of the employee to provide the needed service for both street cleaning and snow removal. The Selectboard noted that these concerns have been brought to the employee's attention in the past and the service has not improved. This position is supervised by the Selectboard's Administrative Assistant. Administrative Assistant Cleveland noted that he has received two applications from individuals over the summer who wanted to be contacted in the event that a job opened.

J. Goldstein made a motion to terminate employment of the Street Cleaning employee, effective immediately and to authorize Administrative Assistant to conduct initial

interviews with the applicant's. L. Trottier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Selectboard asked Administrative Assistant Cleveland to post a notice of the job opening throughout the Town.

Highway Budget

The Selectboard reviewed the proposed highway budget for fiscal year 2010/2011. Upon discussion the board asked Administrative Assistant Cleveland to review the equipment rental line item with the Road Foreman.

Royalton Academy Building Budget

The Selectboard reviewed the proposed budget for the Academy Building and asked that the Treasurer clarify questions on the capital improvement fund balance. Changes were made to reflect the potential electrical rate increase. With the changes a potential net income of \$1,900.00 would be placed in the capital improvement fund. The Selectboard asked that the Treasurer clarify questions with the capital improvement fund.

Pollution Abatement Facility (PAF) Budget

The Selectboard reviewed the proposed PAF budget and discussed the usage fees line item that currently includes a meter fee. Upon discussion it was noted that this "meter fee" has remained at the same rate of \$25.00 per since the sewer system became operational in the 1970's. The Selectboard noted that the meter fee would be changed to a service fee to be used to fund the capital improvement fund. The board also asked that local sewer rates be collected to compare with the Town's current rates. Discussion ensued on how to keep rates equitable for all users, and it was noted that the majority of users on the system are rental or commercial buildings, and that any rate increase would be particularly difficult for single family owner occupied buildings.

Railroad Crossings

Administrative Assistant Cleveland presented a maintenance agreement with the State of Vermont for the Gee Hill road and Lyon road railroad crossings. The State of Vermont is proposing to install new warning lights at both of the crossings on Lyon road and Gee Hill road. The State of Vermont is applying for federal funds to complete the upgrades at both crossings, and it is required to show that the Town is in support of the project. The agreement would not increase the Town's responsibility in maintaining the proposed warning signals. **A motion was made by J. Goldstein to sign the maintenance agreement with the State of Vermont for the Gee Hill rd. and Lyon rd. railroad crossing. P. Ainsworth seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Follow Up

The Selectboard asked that Town Agent be contacted for an update on legal questions relating to storm water drainage, equipment turnarounds, and the removal of a storage container within the Town's right of way.

J. Goldstein made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss personnel issues. The motion was seconded by E. Amsden. The motion passed unanimously.

The Selectboard entered executive session at 10:25 p.m.

The Selectboard exited executive session at 10:58 p.m. with no action taken.

J. Goldstein made a motion to offer a \$.25 per hour raise for all current Highway Department staff for the next budget year. The motion was seconded by E. Amsden. The motion passed unanimously.

J. Goldstein made a motion to present two health insurance plans to employees. If the employee's choose the current plan, they will contribute half of the rate increase or they can pick the new Value plan with no employee contribution. The Town will contribute \$1,125.00 to each employee's health savings account. The motion was seconded by E. Amsden. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Peggy Ainsworth, Selectboard Clerk and Nathan P. Cleveland