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APPROVED
TOWN OF PELHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN - MEETING MINUTES
September 24, 2019
APPROVED – October 8, 2019

CALL TO ORDER - approximately 6:30PM

PRESENT: Mr. William McDevitt, Ms. Heather Forde, Mr. Kevin Cote, Town Administrator
Brian McCarthy

ABSENT: Mr. Doug Viger, Mr. Hal Lynde

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES REVIEW:

September 10, 2019:

MOTION: (Forde/Cote) To approve the September 10, 2019 meeting minutes as amended.

VOTE: (3-0-0) The motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. McDevitt summarized a recent press release that was a follow up to the August 27th press release. The most recent test batches show no additional mosquitos have tested positive for EEE or West Nile Virus in Pelham. Citizens are recommended to limit their outside activities at or after dusk. For full press release see: www.pelhamweb.com

OPEN FORUM:

No one came forward.

APPOINTMENTS

Marc Abatiell of Consolidated Communications regarding phone service proposal

Mr. Marc Abatiell, Senior Account Manager of Consolidated Communications came forward and discussed his experience and career in the telephone industry. His focus has been with supporting municipalities and schools. He worked with Mr. McCarthy and IT Administrator Brian Demers during the last few months to evaluate the Town's network and services.

Mr. McCarthy explained the Town currently had three phone vendors that managed the phone system; Consolidated Communications, New Horizons and Windstream. He spoke about the inefficiencies of the current structure and told the Board he would like the Town to have one phone company that could handle all phone and internet needs. He believed they were currently spending too much money on their phone services and provided the Board with a breakdown of costs from 2018. Mr. McCarthy informed Consolidated could provide the same services (and add internet) at a savings of approximately

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45 \$6,000/year savings (without long-distance charges). If they enter into an agreement there will be a
46 one-time cost of \$4,063 to install internal wiring into the Police Department and Municipal Building
47 server rooms that house all IT infrastructure. He spoke about the efficiency of entering an agreement
48 with Consolidated; contracts have been sent to Town Counsel for review. He stated it would be
49 imperative when they transition from the current system to the new system that the Town's service is
50 not interrupted. He felt confident in Mr. Abatiell and Consolidate to make a seamless transition.

51
52 Mr. Demers discussed the technical aspects of making a transition from using copper lines to fiber
53 optics. In the event of an outage and/or emergency Pelham would have access to a dashboard giving
54 the ability to re-route calls to another line or cell phone. Consolidated provides a 365 day/24hour
55 service to ensure phones remain on-line. Mr. Demers pointed out Consolidated would give Pelham
56 priority service in the event of a repair/restore situation because it was a municipality.

57
58 Mr. Cote questioned if they offered cell phone service. Mr. Abatiell replied not directly; although they
59 support the various carriers. Mr. Cote understood Comcast offered cell service that was inexpensive
60 and thought they might be able to incorporate it. He asked what cell service the Town used. Mr.
61 McCarthy replied they used Verizon and could look into it.

62
63 Mr. McDevitt asked what process would occur in the event of an emergency. Mr. Demers described
64 how the telephones could be transitioned to alternate phone numbers. Mr. McCarthy pointed out the
65 Consolidated system would allow for a tremendous amount of redundancy. He's stressed to Mr.
66 Abatiell if the Town has an issue it would have to be resolved immediately with priority. Mr. Abatiell
67 told the Board he handled police and fire and built dispatch networks across the State. He noted as part
68 of the service there was an in-field service manager that would work directly with the Town in the event
69 of a major catastrophe.

70
71 Ms. Forde inquired if Consolidated did the fiberoptic work themselves or subcontracted the work out.
72 Mr. Abatiell replied they did it directly.

73
74 Mr. Cote wanted to know if there would be any cancellation fees (of current contracts). Mr. McCarthy
75 answered no. He stated the current contracts were forwarded to Town Counsel for review and informed
76 there were terms that allowed termination with notification of such. He said they had been looking at
77 the situation for some time and felt in the end it would save money, be more efficient and provide better
78 internet. Mr. Demers stated currently (with Comcast) they had a shared service, meaning if more than
79 the average were on-line at the same time, the internet speed could decrease. He spoke about the
80 comparison of the services and the benefits of working with Consolidated. He noted it would also
81 support the new requested equipment by the Police.

82
83 Mr. McDevitt questioned if the residents would see any difference with their interaction with the Town.
84 Mr. Demers believed it would be the same, other than the elimination of static on the phone lines. Mr.
85 Abatiell told the Board they had a vice president that was meeting with towns to discuss an expansion
86 of their service. Mr. McCarthy understood the Town wouldn't remove their existing copper lines so
87 they could potentially be used as a back-up if needed.

88
89 Mr. McDevitt asked what action by the Board was being requested. Mr. McCarthy replied Town
90 Counsel was reviewing the agreement. He asked the Board to look at the information provided and let
91 him know if they had any questions.

92 93 **DISCUSSION**

94 95 **Willow Street Bridge opening ceremony**

Mr. McDevitt asked if the completion date was still projected for the end of October. Mr. McCarthy answered yes; although there was a chance it would be done early. Mr. McDevitt questioned if the Board was interested in having an opening ceremony. Mr. McCarthy offered to look into doing something. Mr. McDevitt asked the Board to consider if they wanted to do something.

Mr. McCarthy informed the Board that (solar powered) electronic speed signs had been purchased and would be installed along Willow Street based on the recommendation of the Road Agent and Police Chief.

Drinking Water and Ground Water Trust Fund Application

Mr. McCarthy reminded the Board he applied (on behalf of the Town) for a loan last March but was turned down. In scanning the State website, he learned there was another program available and filled out an application. He noted the application was more detailed than the previous and include both a loan and a grant. He said he forwarded the application to the Board for review prior to submission and will let them know if/when he hears something. A copy of the application will also be forwarded to the Water Commission, so they are aware it had been submitted.

Appointing a Board of Selectmen alternate to the Planning Board

Mr. Cote told the Board he attended a recent Planning Board meeting and saw that Mr. Lynde was absent. He said if the Planning Board voted, the Selectmen wouldn't have had a vote on that board. He wanted to know if the Selectmen had a process to appoint an alternate.

Mr. McDevitt believed in the past the Statute prohibited them from appointing an alternate; however, the current Statute gives them ability to do so. He personally felt they should discuss when a full board is present. Mr. Cote asked if the RSA was specific as to how to appoint an alternate. Mr. McDevitt believed the Selectmen could simply appoint someone, similar to what they do for the Budget Committee. He wanted to wait until a full Board was present.

Proposed 2020 Warrant Articles

Mr. McCarthy provided the Board with an initial draft of the 2020 Warrant Articles. He spoke with the Planning Director who believed there would likely be two Zoning amendments. He left a spot for the operating budget (pending final numbers). The Fire Department contract is in final negotiations. The Highway Block Grant will be listed. After speaking with the Building Inspector and understanding increased building costs, Mr. McCarthy included the Highway Building Capital Reserve. He wanted to get a stronger number and make sure they were going to be okay. Once they review the quotes they can decide if the article can be removed.

Mr. Cote suggested having information on-line regarding the process for a citizen to submit a petition article. Mr. McCarthy explained typically a citizen petition is initially submitted to the Selectmen's office, date stamped and brought to the Town Clerk's office. The Town Clerk verifies the signatures to ensure they are of Town residents and registered to vote. Typically, it's sent to Town Counsel to ensure the article isn't illegal or interfere with governmental operation. Once that is done the Selectmen don't have the ability to modify petition articles. Mr. Cote asked for the deadline for petition articles. Mr. McCarthy believed it was in January. Mr. McDevitt reiterate the Selectmen don't have the legal ability to make any changes; however, it could be changed at Deliberative Session, just not the subject of it.

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Mr. McCarthy continued to discuss proposed warrant articles. He noted the Forestry Committee will have their forest management article. The Conservation Commission has two articles pertaining to re-designating prime wetlands from 1997 and 2000.

Mr. McDevitt recalled the Board possibly speaking with the Assessor to review the Elderly Exemption numbers to see if they still make sense. He asked if there was anything else, they should be worried about.

Mr. Cote questioned if any articles would be submitted by the Water Commission. Mr. McCarthy didn't believe they would have any articles; they were in the process of organizing their board. He noted that he applied for a water grant/loan. He commented if they had something it would be placed on the ballot. Mr. Cote was shocked they hadn't voted on officials. Mr. McCarthy stated they were meeting once a month; their first meeting was July 3rd, they held one meeting in August and were due to hold their next meeting. He discussed the commission's task and pointed out they needed money to do what they've set out to do.

Mr. Cote inquired if an article coming from the Agricultural Commission would be considered a citizen's petition. Mr. McDevitt said the Selectmen could initiate it; however, if that doesn't happen, citizens could initiate it. He recommended formulating an article for discussion by the Selectmen and noted the first resort would be to convince your peers because if they aren't convinced, they may speak against it at the Deliberative Session.

Discussion - 2020 budget year has 53 weeks / possible operating budget adjustment

Mr. McCarthy informed it had been discovered there were 53 pay periods in 2020 and the Town had only submitted a budget for 52 weeks. They were currently in a deficit of approximately \$170,211. He asked the Board how they wanted to proceed. Town Accountant Jean Olsen noted that figure was based off gross wages of the current payroll. It didn't take into account any raises occurring after April 1, 2020.

The Board discussed how to proceed. Mr. McCarthy wanted to have the Board re-vote on each budget individually. He will speak to the Budget Committee and explain the situation. The Selectmen had no objection to opening the salary portion of the budget and re-voting at their next meeting given that the Budget Committee would vote on the Town budgets October 10th. Ms. Olsen pointed out the Retirement budget would also need to be adjusted.

Mr. Cote questioned if the situation had occurred in the past. Mr. McCarthy learned it occurs every seven years. Mr. McDevitt recalled it occurring in the past and the Town had a problem because they hadn't budgeted for it. Mr. McCarthy commended Ms. Olsen and Human Resources Director Diane Hurd for recognizing the situation.

The new figures will be submitted for the Selectmen to review/vote at their next meeting.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR / SELECTMEN REPORTS

Mr. McDevitt read an article that indicated a new law had been passed in New Hampshire that advised, a town could enter into an agreement (with town meeting approval) for a town-wide electric rate. He hasn't read the RSA and couldn't find the State law on an internet search. He understood individuals had a right to opt out; however, a town could negotiate for lower rates. He said he would get the information for the Board.

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Mr. Cote updated the Board on the progress for the Town to have solar power. A small group has formed and was looking at having something for all Town buildings and the school buildings. He said the Conservation Commission had identified some parcels of land where they could build a 5-acre solar field. He said it was an interesting process and will provide additional information to the Board as they move forward.

Mr. McCarthy questioned if they needed to have panels on the municipal building roof. Mr. Cote replied they didn't drill holes anymore and instead had a 'floating' system for roofs that can't handle a load. All options will be presented, including an electric car battery charge station in front of Town Hall.

Ms. Forde reported she and Mr. Cote attended the New Hampshire Municipal Association budget seminar along with a large constituency of the Budget Committee. She then reported Dr. Holden spoke to the Elementary School's PTA to encourage households to have their wells tested through Dartmouth University. She hoped to have her attend other Town and School events to inform people about testing their wells. She ended by telling the Board she took a group of children to the Muscular Dystrophy Muscle Walk over the weekend and was proud to announce they raised nearly \$4,000 for research.

Mr. McDevitt attended the unveiling of the dedication stone for Paul Gagnon on the Village Green. He said the ceremony was very nice and well attended.

REQUEST FOR NON-PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: (Cote/Forde) Request for a non-public session per RSA 91-A:3,II,a,d, (Personnel; Consideration of acquisition, sale or lease of property)

VOTE: (3-0-0) The motion carried. (Mr. Lynde and Mr. Viger were absent)

It was noted that when the Board returned, after the non-public session, the Board would not take any other action publicly, except to possibly seal the minutes of the non-public session and to adjourn the meeting. The Board entered into a non-public session at approximately 7:34pm.

MOTION: (Forde/Cote) To leave non-public session.

VOTE: (3-0-0) The motion carried.

The Board returned to public session at approximately 8:40pm.

MOTION: (Forde/Cote) To indefinitely seal the non-public meeting minutes.

VOTE: (3-0-0) The motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Charity A. Landry
Recording Secretary