

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
DECEMBER 18, 2013**

Present: First Selectman Edward G. McAnaney, Joanne Sullivan, Brian Fitzgerald, Mel Chafetz and Timothy Reynolds. John Cloonan, Director of Public Works, Katherine Christopher, Director of Human Resources and Ted Flanders, Building Official were also in attendance. First Selectman McAnaney called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes: Selectman Reynolds made a motion to accept the December 4, 2013 minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen as presented. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Public Comment:

Kerry White of Newgate Road sorts books at Bridge Street School. She said that last year the former's teacher room had roof leaks explained as due to the heavy load of snow but that it occurred again this year after heavy rains. She emphasized that the repairs need to be done right. She also noted that last week it was so cold that there was ice on the inside of the doors and urged that the heat be implemented soon. John Cloonan, Director of Public Works, said the temporary heating will be ready by the end of the year.

Beth Chafetz of Mapleton Avenue began by thanking the Board for voting in favor of heating the Bridge Street School. She encouraged the Board of Selectmen to develop a specific plan for Bridge Street School. She noted the Suffield Speaks event some months ago where the consensus was for the Town to retain ownership of the school and to renovate the school for Town use.

Bob White of Newgate Road mentioned that seven months ago the Town hired a facilitator for the Suffield Speaks forum. It was well advertised, well attended and well run. After being given 10 options nearly 90% of the attendees chose the same option which was don't sell the building, renovate it for Town use and take action soon. Mr. White said he is pleased to that something is happening to the building and that we need to first do work to prevent further deterioration but then to plan and budget for the task of the renovation itself. He noted that the Town paid for a consultant and it shouldn't have if it was not going to listen to the outcome.

Introduction of Human Resource Director Katherine Christopher

The First Selectman introduced Katherine Christopher as the new Town Human Resource Director. The Board welcomed Ms. Christopher and look forward to working with her.

Approval of a transfer of \$18,000 from contingency to Bridge Street School capital fund for Roof Repairs

John Cloonan, Director of Public Works (DPW) was in attendance to request a transfer from Contingency to repair roof leaks and gutters at Bridge Street School. Mr. Cloonan stated that the roof at Bridge Street School is leaking. The DPW had an assessment done by a local roofing contractor to repair valleys, broken slate and gutters. The current estimate to complete the roofing tasks are \$15,000 + 20% contingency (\$3000) for a total of \$18,000. First Selectman McAnaney noted that the Town had received \$66,000 from an insurance claim when the furnace broke at Bridge Street School. That money was received into the General fund. A specific request was recently approved by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance to provide temporary heat at Bridge Street School. A lengthy discussion followed whether the Board should approve a “stop-gap” vs. a permanent solution. It was noted that the Board of Finance is not in favor of spending money on the Bridge Street School especially without a plan for viable use. The Selectmen discussed the need for development of a plan and then to send the plan to a referendum for a vote by the residents. Discussion followed about using a consultant or forming a committee to develop the plan. The Board agreed that now is the appropriate time for a plan as budgets are being developed for the next fiscal year and that amount budgeted for Bridge Street School would impact other planned projects as well. The First Selectman said he believes that the Board of Selectmen should create the plan and will schedule a special meeting to discuss the matter in early January. Selectman Sullivan suggested that John Cloonan and Patrick McMahon be invited to the special meeting.

Selectman Sullivan made a motion to approve the transfer of \$18,000 from the contingency fund (0195011-50920) to the Bridge Street School capital fund (1088102-59185). Vote 5-0 in favor.

Appointment of Virginia Bromage as an alternate member of Zoning & Planning Commission.

Selectman Fitzgerald made a motion to appoint Virginia Bromage as an alternate member of Zoning & Planning Commission through November, 2015. The vacancy was created when Mark O’Hara left the alternate position when he was elected a full member. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Selectman Chafetz also asked about the status of the Library Commission vacancies and asked why there was a delay. The First Selectman replied that the Town Committees were meeting with the candidates recommended by the Library Commission along with any candidates they have recruited. Selectman Chafetz notes that the charter doesn’t require that the Town Committees be involved. Selectman Fitzgerald said that it was the normal protocol. Selectman Chafetz noted that the process was slow.

Motion to approve 2% salary increase (retroactive to July 1, 2013) for non-union employees who did not receive salary increases during this fiscal year.

First Selectman McAnaney stated that there is money in the budget for the increases. The increase is comparable to tentative agreements with the WPCA Union. The salary

increase was held due to Union negotiations. Selectman Fitzgerald made a motion to approve a 2% salary increase (retroactive to July 1, 2013) for non-union employees. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Selectman's Update

The Accounting Assistant position has been filled by Marie Bourque who will start on January 6th. Ms. Bourque is currently the full-time Administrative Assistant in Park & Recreations Dept.

The Library Director position has been re-noticed. There have been interviews but no satisfactory candidates.

The Youth Service Director position has been posted and an interview process has been developed. Selectman Chafetz recommended that the School Resource Officer, Terry Antrum, be included in the process as those two positions work closely together.

The Administrative Secretary for Parks & Recreation Department has been posted internally. No one applied internally so the position can be re-evaluated.

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving has approved a grant of \$200,000 to support construction of the handicapped accessible addition at Kent memorial Library. The First Selectman signed the letter to accept the grant on December 13th.

In light of the tragedy in Newtown the State offered a grant to support school security initiatives. Suffield (through the Board of Education) applied for the grant and was awarded \$1.338 million. Prior to this grant there was a roundtable discussion between the Police, Board of Selectmen and Board of Education to determine budget needs to fund security related projects. We have expended nearly \$111,000 for school security which was included in the ACCE budget. Subsequently the School Security Grant was offered and the BOE made an application. The concerns are that before the town can be reimbursed for any money it must spend 25% of the grant (or \$334,697). The Town would need to spend \$223,000 more to get reimbursed. This is a matching fund grant so the Town would get reimbursed 52% or \$150,000. Should we move forward to make more security improvements, we would need to budget for them in the capital plan. There is about \$3,000,000 available in ACCE for capital projects which would include Bridge Street School, school security and already planned projects, including the town hall and the library. We need to have a discussion to see if there are more bona fide needs for additional school security. It was noted that there are currently no existing statewide standards relative to school security. The First Selectman will keep the Board updated on the grant.

First Selectman McAnaney noted that the department heads have been asked to submit their budgets by the end of the calendar year and he has received packages from the Assessor, Senior Center, Tax Department and Library.

The Financial Audit is expected to be available by Christmas and will be completed earlier next year.

Also, the Town received notice from CEFIA that Suffield was not chosen to participate in the Energy Efficiency Thermal Imaging Program.

Selectman Fitzgerald moved that the board enter executive session to discuss Litigation and Union Negotiation. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Executive session convened at 8:03 pm and ended at 8:38 pm. There being no further business, Meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Next Board of Selectmen Meeting will be Wednesday, January 8, 2014.

Lisa Trase
Recording Secretary