

A regular meeting of the Hardwick Select Board was held on Thursday, November 18, 2004 at 6:00 P.M. in the 3rd floor meeting room of the Hardwick Memorial Building.

Members Present: Others Present:

Patricia Coultas Daniel Hill, Lynda Brochu
Charles Volk Roger LeCours, Nathan Meunier,
M. Tod Delaricheliere Mike Bergeron, Gail LeBlanc,
Kristina Michelsen Neil Renaud, Alberta Miller,

Tom Fadden, Ronald Bellavance
Anne Batten

6:00 P.M. M. Tod Delaricheliere called the meeting called to order.

6:00 P.M. Patricia Coultas moved to approve the regular Select Board minutes of November 4, 2004.

Charles Volk - seconded
Motion passed unanimously

COMMUNICATIONS FROM AUDIENCE: Gail LeBlanc spoke about her concerns regarding the Wolcott Street sidewalk that goes from Elm Street to Bond Auto. She handed the Board a letter signed by many parents of children in her day care on Elm Street. She had three specific concerns: the height of one section of the sidewalk, the broken cement on one section and lack of signage on the street, warning of a school zone. Dan said that he already has plans to repair the damaged sidewalk and will look into additional signs for the school zone. The difficult part is the section of highway, which is elevated. Dan said this would not be an easy fix, but he would look into a solution next spring.

Anne Batten was present to discuss the idea of eliminating the 3% discount for early tax payers. Anne told the Board that she was against eliminating this early payment incentive. Dan told Anne that this issue would be discussed on December 2nd with other budget items. Anne asked the Board to consider monthly automatic payments for taxes. Dan recommended she speak with the Town Treasurer.

MANAGERS REPORT

Presentation of County Budget

Judge Roy Vance from Caledonia County Court and Sheriff Mike Bergeron from the Caledonia County Sheriffs department were present to discuss the county budget for next year. Judge Vance explained that personnel cost were going up. The tax rate will be set in January and Judge Vance will contact Mr. Hill's office with the exact figure. Judge Vance did not expect much of an increase, if any, to the Town of Hardwick. Kristina asked both gentlemen to provide more budget information, as the revenues were not included in the budget sheets that were provided to the Board. M. Tod asked Judge Vance to get the budget request to the Select Board prior to the meeting, so that they could review it before discussing it next year.

Discussion of Penalty Assessment by Town Clerk

Alberta Miller was present to discuss whether or not to assess a penalty of 1% for late filing of form HS 131. Alberta had come to a previous meeting, where the Select Board had authorized her to change the Grand List to accommodate several people late filing their form HS 131, which declares their property to be a homestead. The State of Vermont has included a provision in making those changes that allows the Town to assess a 1% penalty of the person's property taxes for not filing that form on time. This is to offset the extra work and costs involved in the late filing. Because of a planned public hearing this item was set aside to go into the public hearing.

6:45 P.M. Kristina moved to recess the Select Board meeting and open a public hearing to take testimony on the proposed changes to our Traffic Ordinances.

Patti seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Public Hearing for Changes in Traffic Ordinance

This Public hearing was to address the parking situation on South Main St. A copy of the proposed change was included in the Select Board packets. If the changes are adopted, the changes become effective in 60 days.

No testimony

6:48 P.M. Public hearing closed - Select Board meeting resumed

6:48 P.M. Kristina moved to adopt the new Traffic Ordinance changes.

Charles seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Alberta Miller, Town Clerk, and the Board continued their discussion of the 1% penalty for late filings of form HS 131. The Board supported the extra charge because of the amount of work involved for the Town Clerk's office for each late filing.

Audit Agreement with Sullivan & Powers

Dan presented the Board with a contract with for auditing services with Sullivan, Powers for next year. The Sullivan, Powers cost will be \$9,300.00. This includes the audit for all of our funds - water, sewer and general. This is an increase of \$1,000.00 over last year. Complying with GASB would cost an additional \$1,000.00.

6:54 P.M. Patti moved to moved to sign the audit contract with Sullivan, Powers & Company for next years audit.

Charles seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Resolution for the Soy Project

Dan advised the Board there is one more form to sign for the soy project. The Board needs to resolve to appoint NVDA as a public agency to do administrative work on the planning grant for the soy project.

6:56 P.M. Kristina moved to resolve to appoint NVDA as the public agency to do the administrative work on the soy project planning grant.

Patti seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Letters of Commendation

Dan reminded the Board that enclosed in their Board packets is a copy of one of the letters of commendation that Chief Dziobek wrote to several officers for their work in resolving the armed robbery last week. The officers cited are Jim Wells, Cory Bingham, Wade Cochran, Aaron Cochran and Sgt. Phil Brooks. They did an excellent job of handling the situation.

Hardwick Electric Report

Also enclosed was the latest report from Eric Werner to the electric commissioners.

Dan told the Board that in the sewer ordinance, it states that the Select Board needs to approve any new sewer connection. Sally Anstey and Rob Alcusky have asked to be connected to Hardwick's sewer system. This is for their business on Highland Avenue.

6:58 P.M. Patti moved to allow Sally Anstey and Rob Alcusky to hook on to the Town of Hardwick Sewer system.

Kristina seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Dan handed the Board the October 2004 police report and told them that we will be meeting in December on December 2nd and December 16th.

7:00 P.M. Kristina moved to recess the Select Board meeting and open a public hearing for changes in the Sewer Ordinance.

Patti seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Public Hearing for Changes in the Sewer Ordinance

This public hearing to take testimony on the proposed changes to our Sewer Ordinance. These changes include making all references to the Select Board gender neutral and adding a new article do deal with allocations and reserves. A copy of the proposed changes was included in the Select Board packets.

No public testimony

7:04 P.M. Public hearing closed and Select Board meeting reconvened

7:04 P.M. Patti moved to accept the changes to the Sewer Ordinance.

Kristina seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Discussion of Downtown Improvement Funds

Dan told the Board that included in their packets was a summary of the downtown funds of \$75,000 and how the Board and Dan have discussed using them. The Board needs to finalize what projects they want completed. Dan recommended repairing the retaining wall. The Board agreed. The Board discussed and decided they would like more new street lights and really wanted Lucien Avery and Jack Corley to complete the new fence along the river. They asked Dan to invite both gentlemen to the December 16th meeting to talk seriously about a design and a final cost.

Budget Workshop

Dan started the budget discussion with the office expenses proposed. He also reviewed the Memorial Building budget. Dan reviewed the Fire Department budget and then the highway budget. Dan asked for some guidance on whether the Board would like to hire out brush cutting and road side mowing again or purchase a tractor with a brush hog and road side mower. The Board discussed and decided to include an article at town meeting, leaving the decision to the voters.

Ronald Bellavance, Fire Chief and Tom Fadden were present to discuss purchasing a Quint truck. The estimate for a new aerial ladder truck was \$386,000. The Board discussed the new truck with both men. The Board asked them to look into purchasing a used truck. The Board felt that \$225,000 should be enough money for the used truck.

8:15 P.M. Kristina moved to adjourn the meeting.

Patti seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Minutes approved by:

Todd Deuso, Chair

Minutes taken by: Lynda N. Brochu