

Meeting Minutes of a Special Meeting of Hanover Board of Selectmen held at Town Hall on Monday, January 13th, 2020 @ 2:00P.M.

Present were Chairman John Tuzik, Vice-Chairman, Emmanuel Dockter, and Selectman John Barry. Selectwoman Keegan and Selectman Delaney were unable to attend. Also present: Town Manager (TM) Joe Colangelo and Administrative Assistant Janet Tierney, Advisory Committee Chairman Ted Hickey, and Advisory Committee Members: Joan Port-Farwell, Gavin Littlegill and Steve Freedman, Finance Director, Lincoln Heineman, Town Accountant Chelsea Stevens, Director of Public Works, Victor Diniak, Police Chief Walter Sweeney, Fire Chief Jeffrey Blanchard, Superintendent of Schools Matthew Ferron, School Business Manager Thomas Raab, Community Services Director Tammy Murray, and Library Director Virginia Johnson.

At 2:00 p.m. Chairman Tuzik called the special meeting to order.

TM stepped through the supplemental materials he had provided for the meeting, attached. TM clarified that if the proposed sticker fee, which requires a Town Meeting vote, does not pass, the expenditure budget would not change. The sticker fee is how we would fund the expenditures.

The Chair handed the floor over to the Chair of the Advisory Committee (AdCom), Ted Hickey, who gave a brief overview of AdCom's process, and mentioned that AdCom has seen a dramatic increase in pension costs, concluding that if the Town is going to continue to keep the same level of service the budget is going to increase. AdCom is looking to the transfer station for savings. It was disclosed that the handling of the Town's recyclables is a third party expense to the Town, the only way to control it is to reduce the amount of garbage we are taking in. One way the Town can address this is to start charging a sticker fee and enforce sticker policy.

AdCom, TM, and the Finance and DPW Directors are looking at the question of what services aren't essential for the town to provide, and does it make sense to keep doing it or reduce staff and the costs associated with that.

The Chair commented that we need to focus on what is the actual cost of services, what revenue are we receiving for those services and what level do we want it to be usage driven.

TM expressed that overall the Town is in strong financial position.

The Chair opened the subject of Free Cash up for discussion and requested AdCom's opinion on the use of free cash. AdCom's Chair explained that DOR cautions against Towns becoming reliant upon free cash in their operating budgets because a recession where property values drop could result in free cash disappearing in one year.

AdCom is comfortable with using the same amount of free cash as last year but cautioned against using more than last year. There is a desire to save free cash to address issues next year.

The Board is comfortable with the use of the same amount of free cash or more to bridge the gap right now and expressed a desire to form a policy on how to address this issue in the future based on things that the Town can control.

APPROVED
1/21/20

AdCom advised that they are strongly in favor of cutting capital expenditures and leaving the same amount on the table as last year.

The Director of Public Works, Victor Diniak spoke on the topic of sticker fees, noting that in years past it did not cost the Town any money to dispose of recyclables but now it costs the town money to haul them away and dispose of them. He mentioned the possibility that performing in house hauling would lessen the cost.

Selectman Barry suggested that the option of closing the Transfer Station, as most communities have done, and suggested that outsourcing be looked at. This measure would decrease the number of full time employees and the costs associated with that. He discussed the possibility of selling off part of the land as commercial real estate and putting solar panels on the other section.

Fire Chief Blanchard asked what the average cost would be for residents in order to keep the transfer station open and asked if people would be will to pay that amount. It was estimated that that the cost would be \$370.00.

AdCom feels it is predictable that the costs of the transfer station will go up. Advising that the Town should continue to look into privatization options without the benefit of bulk which the Town could then negotiate.

The Board requested to see the total transfer station costs including OPEB.

Victor Diniak discussed sticker fees saying that the costs associated with this program are included in the fee. He cautioned that without strong policy support and enforcement, the sticker fee will not change anything.

TM clarified that a sticker fee will change where the revenue is coming from but will not change the cost to operate the transfer station.

All were in agreement on getting rid of c&d and this measure is already factored into the draft budget.

Police Chief Sweeney commented that if the sticker program is put in place there will be a need for the development of a significant illegal dumping fee as the occurrences of such would most definitely increase.

AdCom advised that the reduction of the CPC surcharge is a lever to stay away from. If the Town is at less than the maximum amount on the surcharge we will receive a disproportionately greater reduction in matching funds.

The Chair opened the topic of having different levels of taxes for business and residential properties for discussion.

The rates are set in November so for the time being the rates are set where they are at.

APPROVED
1/21/20

The Board expressed an interest in having a rebalancing of valuations. The Finance Director gave an overview of the valuation process. The Director of Assessing, Elaine Boidi stated that all valuations are reviewed by the DOR. Fire Chief Blanchard mentioned that given the nature of the businesses along route 53 where the renters may have changed but the property owners have remained the same there is a lack of sales history which leads to undervaluation.

The Director of Assessing said that the DOR has approved the valuations. The only way to address problems with them would be to go out and look at the properties but this would require more staff. She cautioned against using outside contractors who are not invested in the Town to conduct the valuations, as in the past when outside contractors were hired, they performed “drive by” valuations.

The idea of using CPC funds as opposed to free cash in order to repair the Town Hall elevator was discussed. John Goldthwait , a member of CPC, informed the Board that such a project would not fit the criteria for the use of CPC funds.

The meeting ended and adjourned at 3:39 PM. with no executive session held.