

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

March 7, 2005

Selectmen present: Mark Johnson, Vahrij Manoukian, Richard Walker, Ray Lindsay and Peter Band

Staff present: Cath Hallsworth, Administrative Assistant; Cathy Hoffman, Secretary

COMMUNITY ROOM (6:00 PM)

Annual Cost of Living Adjustment: Finance Officer Paul Calabria informed the Board that the annual cost of living adjustment for non-union employees must be set by April 1st. M. Johnson noted that the CPI (Consumer Price Index) is set by the government and is the rate of inflation. This year's rate is 2.7%, which is lower than what the Town budgeted for increases. P. Calabria stated that the union cost of living adjustment is set by contract at the percentage determined by the government. The Selectmen determine the rate for non-union employees. M. Johnson polled Board members. R. Walker felt that the union and non-union rate should be the same. P. Band stated that the Board should be careful about setting a precedent. V. Manoukian would like the non-union increase set at 3.5%. He commented that the union and non-union employees are not in competition with each other. In other years the union's adjustment has been as much as 6%. R. Lindsay felt that a compromise of 3% was justified. He added that a 3.5% increase sends the wrong message to the union employees. M. Johnson agreed that a 3% increase was appropriate.

MOVED by Raymond Lindsay, seconded by Richard Walker, that the Selectmen approve a 3% cost of living increase for non-union employees to take effect on April 1, 2005. Voting in favor of the motion were Johnson, Walker, Lindsay and Band. Manoukian was opposed. The motion PASSED 4-1-0.

DAVID UDELSMAN, AIA, UDELSMAN ASSOCIATES

M. Johnson asked Dave Udelsman to present his design concepts for the expansion and renovation to the Fire and Police Station buildings at the Wednesday, March 8th Town Meeting. Since the meeting will be held in the HBHS gymnasium, a power point presentation would be the best way to represent the plans to the public. V. Manoukian suggested that D. Udelsman separate the budgets so that voters will know exactly what they are voting on for each facility. M. Johnson stated that the moderator anticipates that the entire evening will be dedicated to this article (article #2). Thirty minutes has been allotted to the presentation, and thirty minutes for the discussion. The Selectmen and the department heads will also speak to the article.

C. Hallsworth informed the Board that she has learned that this article might be amended to \$3.350 Million Dollars to include additional police security, police station furnishings and the police station sprinkler system. Also, she explained that the rewiring for the new communications location was not included in the original estimate. She suggested amending the article to bond up to \$3.5 Million Dollars. D. Udelsman stated that, except for the police sprinkler system, he was not aware of these items that the Police and Communications departments were adding. He commented that there is a built in 10% contingency for Fire and Police construction costs. This amounts to approximately \$170,000. It is possible that these items could be absorbed. M. Johnson commented that he was also not aware of these additional items. He stated that this new evidence should be considered, and the article amended from the floor. V. Manoukian stressed the importance of having the department heads explain their needs to the public. He stated that the sprinkler system is a vital item to include in the budget. Asking the voters to approve additional funds may jeopardize approval of the entire article.

M. Johnson recommended that D. Udelsman prepare a ten-minute presentation on each of the two projects (Fire and Police). Director of Public Works Arthur LeBlanc will present the DPW project. A. LeBlanc expects that the DPW project will stay within the budget.

M. Johnson thanked D. Udelsman for his assistance and time in developing the Fire and Police Department plans for the Town.

GERRY GARTNER, ROGER SAUNDERS, PETER BAKER, DAVID GILMOUR AND MORT GOULDER, MEMBERS OF THE LAND PROTECTION STUDY COMMITTEE (LPSC)

G. Gartner informed the Board that the closing deadline for the Woodmont Orchard is March 15th. This closing date falls prior to the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program grant application submittal date. In order to qualify for the grant money, the land must be privately owned. The Town would be ineligible for the grant funding if the municipality owns the land. He added that the Woodmont property meets all the requirements for the grant, and indications are that the chances of the Town receiving some grant money are good. Funding from the grant could be as much as \$1.4 Million Dollars. The Lievens Brothers have been very cooperative, but need a cash flow.

The LPSC and the Lievens have been discussing options to keep the land eligible for the grant money while giving the Lievens the cash flow that they need. The first option that the LPSC investigated was to make a deposit on the purchase. Attorney Drescher advised the LPSC that prepayment of any amount of money prior to closing puts the Town's money at risk and is illegal.

Steve Lievens proposed the second option. He suggested that the Town purchase a 9.3 parcel of land from the Woodmont Corporation for \$180,000. This purchase would give the Lievens cash and, in turn, they would agree to extend the closing date for the remaining 171 acres to June 30th. This would allow the LPSC to apply for the grant. Attorney Drescher has approved this proposal. A disadvantage is that this option makes the 9.3-acre parcel ineligible as a part of the grant, reducing the amount of potential grant money by approximately \$75,000.

There are two other alternatives. One is that a private individual steps in and funds the \$180,000. This would allow the 9.3-acre parcel to be included in the grant. At closing, the Town would reimburse this individual for his/her costs. The other alternative would be for a NGO (non-governmental organization), such as a land trust to step in and hold the land until the June closing date. R. Saunders stated that he has been in contact with the Trust for Public Land, based in Vermont. He will have an answer shortly, if this is a viable option. He noted that this organization would hold a conservation easement on and be the stewards of the land. The Town would retain ownership of the land.

C. Hallsworth noted that if this 9.3-acre parcel were sold, the change in ownership, and the fact that the land is less than ten acres, would invoke a 10% current use penalty. The Board and members of the LPSC discussed the possibility of waiving the current use penalty. The Board suggested that the LPSC consult Attorney Drescher regarding this issue.

D. Gilmour questioned if another Special Town Meeting would have to be called if one of these options was accepted. M. Johnson stated that the warrant article covers these stipulations with the statement "charges associated with the acquisition". The Board authorized the LPSC to proceed with the option that would be most agreeable to all parties.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

M. Johnson announced that the election of Town, School District and Co-op officials would take place on Tuesday, March 8th from 7 AM-7 PM at the HBHS gymnasium. Voters will also be asked to vote on the zoning ordinance amendments proposed by the Planning Board.

The 2005 Annual Town Meeting will be called to order at 7 PM on Wednesday, March 9th for discussion and vote on article #2. On Thursday, March 10th at 7 PM the meeting will be continued for discussion and vote on article #3. Articles #4-#24 will be discussed and voted on beginning on Saturday, March 12th at 9 AM. Subject to voter discretion, there might be all day voting on the bond articles.

ABATEMENTS

- Map 9/Lot 61-1, \$2,670. NOTE: This motion overrides the action taken at the 2/28/05 meeting with the same net effect.

MOVED by Vahrij Manoukian, seconded by Raymond Lindsay, that the Board approve

abatement of the current use penalty tax in the amount of \$2,670 for Map 9/Lot 61-1, as presented. Voting in favor of the motion were Johnson, Manoukian, Walker, Lindsay and Band. None were opposed. The motion PASSED 5-0-0.

SIGNATURES

The Selectmen signed the following:

- A cease and desist order for an ongoing timber harvest that has encroached into a wetland area near Flints Pond. This order was issued after the Department of Revenue Administration, the Hollis Building Inspector and the Town Construction Engineer inspected the forestry activity on the property.

MOVED by Vahrij Manoukian, seconded by Richard Walker, that the Board sign the cease and desist order for Map 26/Lot 5, as presented. Voting in favor of the motion were Johnson, Manoukian, Walker, Lindsay and Band. None were opposed. The motion PASSED 5-0-0.

- The contract with Melanson, Heath and Company P.C. for auditing services in the amount of \$12,000.

MOVED by Vahrij Manoukian, seconded by Raymond Lindsay, that the Board approve and sign the contract with Melanson, Heath and Company P.C. in the amount of \$12,000, as presented. Voting in favor of the motion were Johnson, Manoukian, Walker, Lindsay and Band. None were opposed. The motion PASSED 5-0-0.

- The cable franchise amendment with Charter Communications, as agreed upon at the 2/28/05 Board meeting
- The contract with Crafts Appraisal for a revised appraisal of the Woodmont property in the amount of \$1,200. This appraisal is a requirement of the Farm and Ranch Land Protection grant application process.

MOVED by Vahrij Manoukian, seconded by Raymond Lindsay, that the Selectmen approve and sign the contract with Crafts Appraisal in the amount of \$1,200, as presented. Voting in favor of the motion were Johnson, Manoukian, Walker, Lindsay and Band. None were opposed. The motion PASSED 5-0-0.

- A letter and check in the amount of \$11 thanking and reimbursing Mr. Joerg for the 1909 Town Hall postcard he sent to the Town.
- A letter to Dr. Geller, a resident of Emerson Lane, concerning the drainage easement on his property. The letter states that after researching the subdivision plans and the property deed, the Board has determined that it is not appropriate to make any alterations to the drainage. P. Band will contact Dr. Geller regarding the Selectmen's decision.

OTHER BUSINESS

Acceptance of Funds on Behalf of the Heritage Commission: The Heritage Commission has received donations totaling \$3,360.

MOVED by Vahrij Manoukian, seconded by Peter Band, that the Selectmen accept funds on behalf of the Heritage Commission in the amount of \$3,360. Voting in favor of the motion were Johnson, Manoukian, Walker, Lindsay and Band. None were opposed. The motion PASSED 5-0-0.

Town Meeting Warrant Article Presentations: The Selectmen will present the individual warrant articles at Town Meeting as follows:

- 2. Bond for Safety Complexes-\$3.2 Million Dollars:** This article will be amended to \$3.3 Million Dollars. V. Manoukian
- 3. Bond for Land Acquisition-\$2.5 Million Dollars:** M. Johnson

4. **Authorization to Acquire Map 38/Lot 1 with Article 3 Bond Proceeds:** R. Lindsay
5. **Rescind the Land Use Change Tax to the Conservation Fund:** M. Johnson
6. **Property Tax Equity Committee Appropriation-\$5,000:** Dr. James Squires, P. Band
7. **Establishment of the Employee Health Insurance Expendable Trust Fund-\$450,000:** Finance Officer P. Calabria and a representative of the Minuteman Group
8. **One New Position in the Department of Public Works-\$35,700 (2006-\$50,900):** R. Walker
9. **One New Position of Firefighter-\$10,159 (2006-\$65,200):** M. Johnson
10. **Position of Permanent Part-Time Police Employee-\$12,500:** R. Lindsay
11. **Public Works Loader Purchase-\$100,000:** R. Walker
12. **Public Works Heavy Duty Pick Up Truck-\$25,000:** R. Walker
13. **Lawrence Barn Construction-\$230,000:** V. Manoukian
14. **Major Public Improvements Capital Reserve-\$50,000:** R. Walker
15. **Major Fire Equipment Capital Reserve-\$125,000:** M. Johnson
16. **Compensated Absences Payable Trust Fund-\$15,000:** P. Calabria
17. **Ambulance Fee Fund Appropriation-\$160,000:** P. Calabria
18. **Old Home Day Appropriation-\$35,000:** P. Calabria
19. **Police Private Details Fund Appropriation-\$100,000:** P. Calabria
20. **Establishment of Map 43/Lot 67 and Map 31/ Lot 46 as Town Forest Property of the Town of Hollis:** R. Lindsay
21. **BY PETITION: Paving of Wood Lane-\$70,000:** DPW Director Arthur LeBlanc
22. **BY PETITION: Modification of the Optional Veteran's Tax Credit-\$500:** P. Band
23. **BY PETITION: Groundwater Protection:** Petitioner Madeline Williams will speak to this article
24. **Operating Budget: \$6,009,352:** P. Calabria. C. Hallsworth stated that the operating budget would be amended to include the school resource officer (\$30,000), and the veteran's tax credit (\$80,000). Because the yearly cost of living increases for both union (2.7%) and non-union employees (3%) will be less than budgeted, these adjustments will decrease the operating budget. P. Calabria will determine the final number at Town Meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the public minutes of Thursday, January 20, 2005, Monday, February 14, 2005, and Monday, February 28, 2005 was tabled to the next meeting.

Approval of the non-public minutes of Monday, February 14, 2005 was tabled to the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Vahrij Manoukian, seconded by Raymond Lindsay, that the Board adjourn. Voting in favor of the motion were Johnson, Manoukian, Walker, Lindsay and Band. None were opposed. The motion PASSED 5-0-0.

The Board adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman, Secretary