

2017 JAN 25 P 12:42

*Linda Paradise*  
TOWN CLERK / ASST.

**Special Selectmen's Meeting Minutes**  
**Merrill Seney Community Room/Town Hall**

January 25, 2017

9:00 AM

- I. Call to order at 9:05 AM
- II. Roll call  
Ken Beausoleil, Steve Herbert, Shaina Smith, Orla McKiernan-Raftery
- III. Planning and Community Development, presented by Mary Ann Chinatti  
Reduced the salary and increased books by \$278 as the CT land use book went up in price. The increase being proposed is just under 3% for salary increase, according to Orla, when asked by Steve what that number was. Steve asked Mary Ann why she selected that number. Mary Ann responded by saying she feels it is fair. Steve discussed inflation and salary increases across the board.
- IV. Zoning Board of Appeals, presented by Mary Ann Chinatti  
P&Z and ZBA supplies should be equal, according to Mary Ann. Steve asked if the advertising line item was going to be less than what had been spent in previous years. Orla noted that the estimated dollar amount should read \$1600 and not \$1800; Mary Ann stated the advertising dollar amount to be spent is based on the amount of applications. Steve asked if the line item should remain at the \$1800 to be realistic. Mary Ann stated that to have it at \$1800 would be safe. Ken agreed to have advertising at \$1800.
- V. Economic Development Commission, presented by Mary Ann Chinatti  
Mary Ann noted the only budgetary difference is the recording secretary salary that has been bumped significantly due to the EDC branding identity committee project. Currently there are no funds for that project's recording secretary. The total dollar amount proposed for recording secretary salary is \$1,649, a \$3,000 increase. Steve noted that he would like to study this more and Ken agreed as we are still discussing what to utilize the EDC funds for.
- VI. Tax Collector, presented by Rene Morin  
Prior to the budget presentation, Rene explained he was notified that the meeting would begin at 9:45 AM for his department and he was surprised to see someone else was presenting at the time. Orla said when she went up to the tax office and requested he

come down early (9:38AM) she did not see a customer to which Rene stated there was and he was prepared and here to present at his given time of 9:45 AM as was confirmed through an email that came from the selectmen's office. Shaina requested that the office notify department heads that the slot times are tentative and there is some flexibility. Rene said the request is slightly less than the budget working with this year on the salary expenses side. Reasons are that able to move down slightly the travel and meetings for staff as the one employee taking state certification class has completed that. It was noted that the travel will be reimbursed by \$.53 which is an increase of \$.13 cents. Office supplies are up slightly due to the quote request from Quality concerning the tech support in that department.

VII. Animal Control, presented by Merry Bennett

The presented budget remains flat, with no anticipated increases expected in the line items, according to Merry. Orla recommended increasing the telephone line from \$200 to \$500. Steve commended Merry's work as he has heard of her accomplishments from others in the town. Steve noted the town pays for 22 hours per week, although she is working several hours outside of that 22 hour threshold; Merry stated she was comfortable with the pay as it relates to hours. Steve asked how she felt about NECCOG's performance to which Merry stated Diane is great at what she does but volunteers are not all aware of laws and may be doing some things illegally. While Merry was out due to injury, she had some dogs transported there and they weren't fed correctly, the pitbull (Chop) was in possession of a woman. Merry asked to meet with this woman twice and the second time the woman, who lives in RI, stated vouchers were forged to get her vetted in CT so she could be placed out of state. Merry noted that in that circumstance the paperwork was completed incorrectly with falsified information. Steve noted the reason he asked about NECCOG is because they have a fantastic facility (\$600K improvement) and their cost to us would be less than cost for us to have our own, which is why it brings a question to my mind. Merry stated she doesn't believe that is accurate and asked Diane the price which would be \$3 per capita, which is about \$29K. Steve said he thinks it is something to think about and is no reflection on Merry as everyone thinks very highly of her. Steve went on to say we only pay you for 22 hours per week, which in some ways is sad and to which NECCOG provides an extended service.

Ken noted that the 22 hours within the budget and said if you look at 3 hours per day, if you have some dogs up there in the pound, within those hours per day can you attend and take care of what you have up there? Merry stated no, unless there are one or two animals and that does not include the calls from Troop D in the middle of the night. Overall, Merry said 22 hours is unacceptable. Merry said phone or field complaints equates to about 2-3 hours per day. The board of selectmen discussed the necessary

hours to carry out the work at the pound and in the field with Merry, who explained she would never put in any less than 8 hours per day prior to her injury.

VIII. Northeast Probate Court, presented by Leah Schad

The budget per capita went down due to population change down to 9,290 residents, which equates to a contribution from Thompson of \$1.16 per capita (\$10,810.00). The town supports the facility, phones, equipment, etc. according to Leah. Steve asked the mission of the probate court. Leah explained will and estate, which is about 40% of the work that the clerks do. Another portion is the safety services such as adoptions, termination of parental rights, conservatorships (elderly person is unable to handle affairs), guardianship, psyche work with involuntary commitments. Leah said it has become a family court with 5 children's courts throughout the state, including the one in Putnam which is space shared with Northeast Probate court. The 7 towns support the probate court, but the children's court covers about 30 towns. The population figures come from the Department of Health.

IX. Thames Valley Council for Community Actions (TVCCA), presented by Marylou Underwood, Chief of Operations Officer.

Marylou provided a brief history of the program. The increase cost of doing the service and decreasing cost what receiving in federal funds has had an impact. Marylou noted prior to the last few years, the system in place worked well. As we receive the reduced federal and state funds, we've tried to have that not impact those we serve. We cannot compete with our own state when you look at Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, etc. We have tried to not touch staffing out in the field and meals out in the field. Three years ago, there was a big dip in funding and we reduced the number of delivery days to seniors (from 5 to 2 days). The questions are how do we want the programs in each town for meals on wheels and the congregate?

Marylou said we can't support the staff and the food and it may be one or the other. Even though populations go down, we are getting greyer in those towns. For seniors, it is getting difficult with social security not going up.

Marylou recommended the concept of volunteers for providing the meal delivery service to bring the deliver from 2 to 5 again. Shaina asked how TVCCA would offset the added meals with the decrease in federal dollars. Marylou responded that if the program does not have to worry about the salary and fringes, TVCCA can provide 5 days worth of meals with volunteers.

Marylou said there is a separate program for Northeast corridor, windham side, etc. 3 congregate and 3 delivered. Marylou said what the senior resources does is if awarding us (and they have), they take 3 costs and come up with an average of what they will reimburse us.

Shaina asked if there was a volunteer program in place to which Marylou responded they would work with each town as each one is different. Steve noted there isn't an increase

this year. Marylou replied that the decision is up to the town in terms of additional contributions and how the town envisions the program.

X. Budget Discussion Review

Steve said we should let the departments know about the travel reimbursement rates. Ken added he agreed and the board will vote on that at its next meeting. Steve asked about salary increases based on union increases and Orla said she will put in an average.

XI. Adjourn

Motion was made by Shaina Smith and seconded by Ken Beausoleil to adjourn the meeting.

Ken-Yes

Shaina-Yes

Steve-Yes

Motion carried

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 AM.