

CANAAN BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Wednesday, April 8, 2009

The meeting was brought to order at 8:00 AM by Chairman Reagan at the Fire Department. Selectman Borthwick, Selectman Lewis and Town Administrator Michael Capone were also in attendance. Others present: Larry Brabant, David Heath, Nelson Therriault, Glenn Carey, Bob Scott, Vicky McAlister, Bill Wilson, Chief Bellion and Chief Frank.

Budget

Chairman Reagan noted that Michael had prepared copies of the year to date budget vs. actual report for those in attendance to review. Michael took some questions from those in attendance with regard to specific budget lines explaining that some of the expenditures that appear out of line with expectations were a result of up front payments that had to be made to honor contracts. These would include items like the Grafton County prosecutor and some of the software support contracts that require full payment at the beginning of the year. Also, most of the heating expenses would be higher during the winter months, but will drop off when it warms up. Michael did note that the Human Services budget lines for Rental Assistance and Utilities were running ahead of last years pace.

Update on State Budget Process

Chairman Reagan presented an update on the State Budget process. There are still a number of different options under consideration. It appears the final details of the budget will not be worked out until some time in June of this year. At present, the rooms and meals tax has been put back in, but shared revenues has not. If that remains unchanged, we would lose out on \$40,000 of State revenue we had projected to be in our budget. If the rooms and meals tax money comes out as well, we could lose an additional \$160,000 in revenue that would have to be offset somehow. It is because of the uncertainty surrounding these funds that the Board sent out the request to limit spending.

Health Insurance

Michael mentioned that he was going to schedule one or two informational sessions for employees with our new health insurance provider to explain the options available to employees. The sessions will be on April 22 and possibly April 23. This will allow time for employees to select a new plan that would most likely go into effect on June 1, 2009. Michael explained that one of the plans would be an HMO that would be paid for by the Town. The other plan would be a POS style plan that employees could select and pay the difference between the POS plan and the HMO plan offered by the Town. Vicky asked if we knew what the potential savings to the Town would be. Michael estimated that depending on the plan selection we might save up \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year in premiums.

Questions and Comments from Departments

Bob Scott asked for an update on what we were going to do about uniforms. Michael informed him that our current provider, Crown Uniform, was preparing some one year programs for the Town to consider. Michael was also going to get some other quotes from additional companies for consideration.

David Heath asked about staffing for the Cemetery Maintenance season. Chairman Reagan mentioned that the Board was considering some options to provide a worker to assist David. Chairman Reagan noted that the Board would have more information on this subject within the next week.

Selectman Borthwick commented that he thought the work order process was going well and providing everyone with very useful information. Chief Frank asked Larry when he was going to be back to work. Larry commented that he would be back on Friday. Bob Scott mentioned that mechanic services were still available as he and other members of the Highway crew had been performing Mechanics duties in Larry's absence.

Chief Frank had a number of topics to discuss with the Board, but did not want to tie up everyone else at the meeting. Other attendees left and the meeting continued with Chief Frank remaining along with Michael and the Board.

Chief Frank submitted a purchase requisition in the amount of \$2,600.00 for dues toward membership in the Central New Hampshire Special Operations Unit (CNHSOU) for the period from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010. Chief Frank commented that the money was in the operating budget approved by the voters. He also noted that the voters had defeated the warrant article to study the involvement of the Canaan Police Department in the CNHSOU. To him that meant that the voters did not have an issue with the Town being part of the SOU.

Selectman Borthwick commented that he was not going to sign the requisition. He also mentioned that he did not see the vote on the warrant article meaning the same thing as the Chief. Selectman Lewis said that he wanted to think about the issue further before deciding if he was going to sign the requisition. Chief Frank did not see why Selectman Lewis would need more time to reach his decision and Selectman Lewis told Chief Frank that he would make his decision when he was ready and not to push the issue.

Chairman Reagan asked about the statewide study as he still had questions regarding liability and how the SOU's would be regulated. The Chief mentioned that the State would be studying the issue and if changes had to be made they would be made.

The Chief also expressed his concerns with cuts to the budget. He was not sure as to how they would get by. Selectman Lewis commented that we will have to look at levels of service.

The Board and the Chief then discussed staffing levels and how to make better use of available manpower. Among the items reviewed were utilization of part time employees, changes to the role of the School Resource Officer, eliminating some of the services now provided such as opening locked cars and responding to dog complaints and drafting ordinances and regulations that would allow the Town to keep some of the money collected in fines as well as charge for services they currently provide for free.

The Chief and the Board spoke at length regarding staffing and levels of service within the department. Chairman Reagan noted that it might be useful to have a planning session dedicated specifically to reviewing these issues so everyone could better understand what changes it would be possible to make to maximize the level of service possible without burning out employees. At 9:30AM Selectman Borthwick left for an appointment.

Chief Frank commented that he felt the Board and the Town Administrator did not communicate effectively with employees. He noted that the departments were told to limit spending but not told why. Michael reminded the Chief that the memo distributed to departments included an explanation as to why the request had been made. The Chief also commented that he had to get a Town Report from the convenience store next door when he felt one should have been placed in his mailbox at the Town Office. He also was concerned that he received no formal notification of the Town deliberative session. Chairman Reagan commented all meeting notices are posted. Also, Selectmen's meeting agendas and minutes are posted. Meetings are open to the public and employees and any one who wants to can attend.

Chairman Reagan asked Chief Frank if he had anything else he wished to discuss at this time. The Chief replied that he was all set for now.

Having no other business to be brought before the Board, Chairman Reagan made a motion to adjourn the meeting that was seconded by Selectman Lewis. The Board voted 2-0 in favor of adjournment at 9:59 AM.

Robert Reagan

Scott Borthwick

Tim Lewis
Canaan Board of Selectmen

