

**CANAAN BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
MINUTES  
Wednesday, October 7, 2009**

The meeting was brought to order at 8:01 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, Glenn Carey, Bob Scott, Vicky Mc Alister, Police Chief Sam Frank and Fire Chief Bill Bellion. Chairman Reagan led those in attendance in reciting our pledge of allegiance.

**Employee Health Fair**

Michael spoke briefly about the free health screenings and the flu shots that would be available to all employees and their spouses on October 28, 2009 between 11AM and 2PM in the Fire Department meeting room. He encouraged Department Heads to schedule time for their employees to stop by for testing and shots.

**Update of 2009 Budget vs. Actual**

Michael had prepared copies of the latest 2009 year to date expenses combined with the 2010 budget submissions for those present to review. He noted that currently spending was below average year to date. This is necessary because of the anticipated drop in revenues for the year which will require a reduction in spending to avoid having to raise taxes.

Michael noted that the Human Services budget was now completely exhausted and would require a transfer of funds from another part of the budget to cover an anticipated shortfall of \$20,000 for the balance of the year.

**Questions and Answers on 2010 Proposed Budgets**

Michael noted that the Board was still in the process of reviewing 2010 budgets and planned to have their first draft available for review and discussion at the October 29, 2009 Budget Committee Meeting.

Vicky asked about the reduction to the Health Insurance line in the 2010 Budget. Michael replied that the decrease reflected the adjustment to the premium based on the change to the new plan plus a contingency for possible enrollment changes during the second half of 2010.

Chief Frank asked about the figures that were in the Selectmen's column for the Police Department. Michael noted that those represent some of Gloria's calculations for salary and wage lines and since there was a discrepancy with her numbers and those submitted by the Chief, they were included on the worksheet so they could be reviewed and discussed.

Larry asked about wage increases for employees this year. Selectman Borthwick responded that there were no increases planned due to current economic conditions.

Bob Scott mentioned that he would like to discuss his Budget with the Board after they have completed their review, but prior to going to the Budget Committee for his second budget session.

### **Other business**

Bob Scott had a concern with the parking near the Church at the intersection of Blackwater Road and Route 4. The Church was allowing students from the High School to park in their lot, but the parking was now going down both sides of Blackwater Road creating problems for plowing during the winter months. Bob suggested that the Board authorize the posting of no parking signs on both sides of the road. There was some discussion among those present as to the best way to address the issue. It was agreed that signs should be posted.

There was some additional discussion with regard to ordinances and fines that could be imposed for violating no parking bans and other infractions. Chief Frank commented that he was working on some ordinances for the Board to review.

Chief Frank asked if he could review his budget submission with the Board. Michael noted that he had not scheduled any discussion for this meeting because the Chief had informed him earlier that he would have to leave at 9:45. Chief Frank mentioned that his schedule had changed and he was available to discuss the matter at the Board's earliest convenience. The Board members agreed that they would discuss the Police Budget after the other agenda items had been completed so as to not keep the other Department heads unnecessarily.

Larry mentioned that he had been released to return to work for light duty. He noted that he had some limitations with his left arm and shoulder, but his right arm and shoulder were fine.

Glenn asked if the Board had reached any decision with regard to the storage building that the Transfer Station would need if they were to continue baling cardboard. Michael noted that the discussion of the Transfer Station was on the agenda for Tuesday, October.

Chief Bellion outlined some of the options being discussed for H1N1 vaccinations and the potential logistics issues that might arise. He did not have any specifics with regard to a schedule at this time.

At this point, the Board excused anyone who wished to leave and continued the meeting to review the Police Department Budget with Chief Frank. The Chief wanted to explain some of his budget submissions to the Board.

Selectman Lewis asked the Chief about the status of the search for part time officers. The Chief replied that he had 19 applicants for the positions. Fitness testing was scheduled for October 24, 2009. Applicants who pass the fitness tests will undergo oral boards. After that the remaining applicants will undergo a background check prior to making a conditional offer of employment. The goal is to hire two of the candidates who can work a minimum of twenty hours per week.

The Chief went through his budget and explained some of his submissions to the Board. His full time salary line reflects removal of funding for a sixth officer. He made no change to his on call line. Michael noted that the on call will be increased on April 1, 2010 per the contract by 50 cents an hour. The Chief did not think that was the case. The Chief also adjusted his part time patrol and overtime lines to reflect his anticipated requirements.

The Chief explained why he submitted a 27% increase in his salary from \$54,133.00 to \$69,000.00. He noted that this year one of his Sergeants would be making more than he would and he did not think it was fair for subordinates to make more than he did. He said when he originally took the position of Chief, it was his understanding that he would receive regular pay increases and he had not. He also mentioned that his request was based on an average salary for Chiefs from surrounding Towns. He said the Board could decide to do whatever they felt was appropriate, but he felt he should be paid more. He also said that, he did not want to throw anyone under the bus, but there were other employees who had been employed by the Town for less time than he had and were paid more.

Selectman Borthwick commented that it is very hard to justify increases to Town employees when residents are losing their jobs and having difficulty making ends meet. Chairman Reagan noted that more and more people were finding it hard to keep up with their taxes and the Board had a responsibility to look out for all of the residents by controlling expenses.

The Chief noted that it costs the Town money to replace employees when they leave and one way to avoid those costs was to keep your present employees satisfied so they do not leave. He also noted that the tax rate in Canaan was one of the lowest in the County. Michael asked if the Chief was comparing equalized rates when making that statement. The Chief replied that he did not know. Michael commented that he was pretty certain that Canaan had the eighth highest equalized tax rate in Grafton County and that the Chief was probably looking at unequalized rates which would make for an unfair comparison.

Selectman Lewis commented that he could support a bottom line budget figure for the Police Department of \$490,000 and suggested that the Chief work towards that number. He noted that this was only his opinion and not that of the other Board members.

Selectmen Borthwick noted that if current spending continued at the year to date average, the Chief would have about \$96,000 left in his budget. He did not share Selectman Lewis's view and thought the Chief should work to lower expenses to the 10% level as suggested by Chairman Reagan at an earlier meeting.

The Chief commented that he would work to meet Selectman Lewis' request to have his the bottom line of his budget not exceed \$490,000. With no other comments on the budget, the Chief left the meeting.

Michael mentioned that Chairman Reagan had received a request from a resident for an abatement to his water bill due to a problem with a broken fixture in his basement that caused him to use more water than usual. Chairman Reagan had spoken with Terri, who mentioned that in the past an abatement would be granted for a portion of the sewer bill since the water did not go to the sewer plant. The Board discussed the matter and agreed to abate \$28.50 of the bill for that portion of the water that went into the sewer.

With no further business before the Board, at 10:45 AM Selectman Borthwick made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Selectman Lewis and voted 3-0 by the Board.

---

Robert Reagan

---

Scott Borthwick

---

Tim Lewis  
Canaan Board of Selectmen