

TO: Selectboard January 2, 2014

FROM: Patrick Moreland, Interim Town Manager

SUBJECT: Administrative Report

The following will summarize the proposed motions for those items on the Agenda for the Tuesday, January 7, 2014 Selectboard Meeting. It is anticipated that the Board will meet in executive session beginning at 5:15pm to discuss a contract matter, personnel matter and potential litigation, and the regular meeting will begin at 6:15pm.

7. **LIQUOR COMMISSIONERS**

- A. Approve First Class Liquor License – Blue Moose LLC The Board is asked to approve a transfer of a first class liquor license for Paul Faust and Ken Flutie for the Blue Moose Cafe, to be relocated to 39 Main Street. Mr. Faust and Mr. Flutie have operated the Café at 29 High Street for several years without incident. There are no outstanding fees or taxes, and they possess a current business license. The application has been reviewed and approved by Brattleboro Police and is under review by Brattleboro Fire.

POTENTIAL MOTION: TO TRANSFER A FIRST CLASS LIQUOR LICENSE FOR THE BLUE MOOSE CAFÉ, LLC TO 39 MAIN STREET.

8. **WATER AND SEWER COMMISSIONERS - NONE**

9. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. Energy Committee – Energy Use in Town Buildings (tabled from December 3, 2013 meeting: “**MOTION BY DAVID SCHOALES TO DIRECT THE INTERIM TOWN MANAGER TO IMMEDIATELY ENGAGE AN AUDITING FIRM TO CONDUCT THE PROPOSED AUDITS FROM THE ENERGY COMMITTEE AND COME BACK WITH THE PROJECTED COST SAVINGS, REBATE AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES THAT THE AUDIT WILL PROVIDE AND THAT THE FUNDING COME FROM THE MONEY THE TOWN IS NOT CURRENTLY SPENDING ON THE TOWN MANAGER, NOT TO EXCEED \$3,400.**”)

The administration was asked to investigate and report back to the board on the likelihood of closing the year with a surplus, in light of the actual savings resulting from Barb Sondag’s departure. It is far too early in the year to be able to speak meaningfully on where the budget will end up. Typically, a realistic answer to this inquiry is not possible until mid to late May. With that said, there are some factors that the board should be aware of, and at least some reason to expect that we will complete the year in the black. Sondag’s departure should yield a savings of \$30,000. The Town’s liability coverage has been restructured and will yield a further \$60,000 in savings. In addition, in FY 14 the Town budgeted for the complete \$14.1 million bond, when we only bonded for \$5 million, the savings is expected to be \$200,000. Street lights should deliver a savings of \$50,000, and bus service \$15,000 from their respective budgeted values.

However, property taxes are now expected to be roughly \$150,000 less than anticipated, and revenue from Town Ordinances should come in \$15,000 less as well. The costs of unanticipated damages from the storm in September will cost us \$92,500, and of course these costs were not budgeted. With half a year in front of us, it’s difficult to what other unforeseen expenses might arise.

10. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Communications Tower – Brattleboro Fire & Brattleboro Police. In September of 2013, the administration notified the board that the owner of the radio tower on Wantastiquet Mountain was significantly raising the costs of the tower rent, from \$10 per year to \$12,000, escalating annually at 3%, plus the cost of utilities. The resulting overall cost of their proposed 5 year lease, with utilities and rent escalations included, would be \$82,000. With that much of a cost increase, the emergency services departments quickly got to work exploring some alternative locations. Thankfully, a number of Brattleboro institutions reached out to help us.

The Brattleboro Memorial Hospital offered to allow Brattleboro access to the smokestack at their facility, free of charge, and even offered to cover the cost of the electricity to operate our equipment. This was a very generous offer, but we had a good deal of work ahead of us to determine if such a location would serve as a suitable replacement. Relying heavily on our communications vendor, Beliveau Communications, we tested the site, first with software and eventually with an actual on site broadcast. The early findings revealed that the site was perfect for Brattleboro Fire, but not for Brattleboro Police. The two departments have different equipment, and are structured differently, with BFD on 3 towers and BPD only on 2. Due to the lower elevation, BPD would need to join BFD on a 3 site configuration.

A second challenge emerged as BPD applied in early November for a grant to upgrade its radio equipment, with the resulting system mimicking and even complimenting the BFD radio system. With the owner of the tower looking for us to sign a long term lease, we wanted to move forward with a plan to relocate our equipment in an effort to avoid a costly long term liability for the town, but it had to work for both departments. So in an effort to move ahead as quickly as possible, we have developed two plans for BPD, one to incorporate getting the grant, and one to accommodate our existing equipment. Again, our vendor was critical in making this project successful, even acquiring used equipment for Brattleboro from the Town of Greenfield, MA for use in the event that the grant application is declined. If the grant is received, BPD will join BFD at the hospital. If the grant is declined, BPD will make use of their equipment at Harris Hill. Harris Hill Inc generously allowed us access to their structure at the top of Harris Hill.

At this point, we have a quote from Beliveau for the relocation of our radio equipment from Wantastiquet that works both for BFD and for BPD, whether or not the grant funds are awarded. We have agreements in place with the other tower locations. I am asking for authorization from the board to spend an amount up to \$57,500 to relocate and set up our radio equipment, and to authorize that the relocation work be performed with Beliveau Communications.

POTENTIAL MOTION: TO AUTHORIZE THE INTERIM TOWN MANAGER TO CONTRACT WITH BELEIVEAU COMMUNICATIONS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$57,500 TO RELOCATE BRATTLEBORO FIRE AND BRATTLEBORO POLICE RADIO EQUIPMENT OFF OF WANTASTIQUET MOUNTAIN.

POTENTIAL MOTION: TO ADD THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE TO THE 2014 REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING WARNING, "TO SEE IF THE TOWN WILL VOTE TO APPROPRIATE UP TO \$57,500 FROM THE UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE TO DEFRAY THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH RELOCATION OF

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT OFF OF WANTASTIQUET MOUNTAIN”.

- B. Appoint Representative – Connecticut River Transit. At the 12-3-13 Selectboard meeting, a public announcement was made for an appointment to the CRT board. At the time of the writing of this administrative report, no applications have been submitted.

POTENTIAL MOTION: TBD

- C. Accept and Appropriate Grant – VDEMHS Technical Rescue Grant, Fire Department. The board is asked to accept and appropriate a grant in the amount of \$30,067.54 from the Vermont Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security for support of technical rescues.

POTENTIAL MOTION: TO ACCEPT AND APPROPRIATE A GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$30,067.54 FROM VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY FOR TECHNICAL RESCUE TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT.

- D. Accept and Appropriate Grant – GHS Equipment Incentive Grant, Police Department. The Board is asked to accept and appropriate a grant in the amount of \$5,000 from the Vermont Department of Public Safety for the purchase of approved public safety equipment. The department intends to purchase portable radar equipment.

POTENTIAL MOTION: TO ACCEPT AND APPROPRIATE A GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,000 FROM VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY FOR APPROVED PUBLIC SAFETY EQUIPMENT.

- E. FY 15 Budget – Discussion