

**BRATTLEBORO SELECTBOARD
TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2014
EXECUTIVE SESSION – 5:45PM
SPECIAL MEETING – 6:15PM
MINUTES**

Selectboard members present: David Gartenstein, Kate O'Connor, David Schoales, John Allen, and Donna Macomber.

Staff present: Interim Town Manager Patrick Moreland, Finance Director John O'Connor, Fire Chief Mike Bucossi, Assistant Fire Chief Peter Lynch, Public Works Director Steve Barrett, Town Assessor Russell Rice, Recreation & Parks Director Carol Lolatte, Planning Services Director Rod Francis, Town Clerk Annette Cappy, Library Director Jerry Carbone, Police Chief Gene Wrinn, Police Captain Mike Fitzgerald, Police Sgt. Mark Carignan, and Executive Secretary Jan Anderson.

Media present: Howard Weiss-Tisman representing the Brattleboro Reformer, Olga Peters representing The Commons, and Tim Johnson representing WTSA.

Others present: Bradley Hamilton, George Reed-Savory, Terry A. Carter, Lee Stookey, Diane Leardi, Valerie Barry, Victorine Sheppard, Carolyn Conrad, Laura Derocher, Susan M. Kelly, Susan Bellville, Anne Sargent, Takako Ueda, Robin Sweetapple, Stephen Phillips, Kathy Dowd, Jane Southworth, Adrasteia Andrews, Elizabeth Wohl, Lynn Russell, Diana Mazzuchi, Mary Cain, Dora Bouboulis, Spoon Agave, Ann Guion, Leon E. Boyd, Jr., E. Paul Love, John Wilmerding, Peter Cooper, David Emery, Sr., Steve Horton, Philip Chapman, Tony Farnum, and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

Chair Gartenstein called the meeting to order at 5:45pm in the Selectboard meeting room. He confirmed that the meeting was officially warned.

MOTION BY DAVID GARTENSTEIN TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL, CONTRACT, LITIGATION, AND APPOINTMENT MATTERS WHERE THE SELECTBOARD HAS CONCLUDED THAT PREMATURE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND DISCLOSURE WOULD PLACE THE MUNICIPALITY AT A SUBSTANTIAL DISADVANTAGE. THE INTERIM TOWN MANAGER WAS INVITED TO ATTEND A LATER PORTION OF THE SESSION. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Gartenstein reconvened the meeting at 6:20pm.

At this time, the Board agreed to adjust the agenda so that the first topic would be a report from the Police-Fire Facilities Building Committee, followed by a discussion about the FY15 budget, then Pay-As-You-Throw, and followed by public participation.

POLICE-FIRE FACILITIES BUILDING COMMITTEE – Members from the Police-Fire Facilities Building Committee were present, including Chair Robin Sweetapple, Co-Chair Steve Phillips, Philip Chapman, Kathy Dowd, Tony Farnum, David Emery, and others. Also present was Project Manager Steve Horton. Philips said that the Police-Fire Facilities Building Committee had just met and discussed various options regarding the police-fire improvement project. He said that the Committee voted unanimously to recommend to the Selectboard not to adopt a “band aid approach”, meaning not to invest on a short-term basis on existing facilities. Philips said that the Committee also voted unanimously “to proceed to substantially improve our fire station facilities and to improve the existing police facility or build a new police facility consistent with the spirit of the project, that is long-term investment, which has already been approved by the voters, approved by the Selectboard and by the Police-Fire Committee, aiming at the same time to substantially reduce the total project cost, and to explore the possibility of a combined fire-police facility to be located at the Elliot/Church Street location.” He said that combining the fire and police facilities was a new idea that needed more thought and exploration. Sweetapple stressed that the Committee was strongly opposed to the short-term “band aid” approach. Steve Horton reviewed and discussed options A – F listed on the document he presented to the Committee and the Selectboard entitled “Brattleboro Police and Fire Station Project Options.” Gartenstein said that the State Fire

Inspector recently inspected the Municipal Center, and following the inspection sent a letter stating that the State Department of Life Safety required work to be performed to the building to bring it up to code. Gartenstein said that the work was required regardless of whether any improvements were made to the Police Station, and that the preliminary estimate to perform the required safety work was approximately \$420,000. Horton said that the Town had thirty days from the date of the letter to reply to the State with a plan for the improvements. There was some discussion by the Board about the Police-Fire project and the required improvements to the Municipal Center. It was decided that further discussions about the Police-Fire improvement project would take place after the FY15 budget was approved.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

FY15 BUDGET – Gartenstein said that after the budget referendum, the Board considered a wide range of changes to the budget and also asked Administration to present scenarios that included a 1% budget reduction in each Department. There was some discussion by the Board about the process to arrive at a reduced budget for presentation at Special Representative Town Meeting on June 2, and it was decided to address several items by separate motions.

Gartenstein suggested excluding the interest payment on the \$9 million bond that had been budgeted but not yet taken out for renovations to the Police-Fire renovation project. He said that the Police-Fire Committee and Selectboard may in the future discuss revisions to the scope of the project, and substantial revisions would have to be presented to Town Meeting Members at a special representative town meeting, but those discussions would take place after June 2 when the budget went before Representative Town Meeting. John Wilmerding inquired whether a second bond or loan would be taken out. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY DAVID GARTENSTEIN TO STRIKE \$261,473 FROM THE BOND INTEREST SECTION OF THE BUDGET REFLECTING THE FIRST YEAR'S INTEREST PAYMENT ON THE ANTICIPATED \$9,000,000 BOND. MOTION CARRIED 4-1 (SCHOALES OPPOSED).

Gartenstein said that a cut of \$50,000 in capital sidewalks expense was proposed. Public Works Director Barrett confirmed that \$50,000 in grant money had been received for reconstruction and improvements to the sidewalks on the east side of Main Street with the work likely to be performed in the Spring, 2015. There was a brief discussion about utilizing the grant money and removing an additional \$50,000 that was previously proposed.

MOTION BY DAVID SCHOALES TO CUT \$50,000 THAT HAD BEEN ALLOCATED FOR THIS YEAR'S CAPITAL SIDEWALKS. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Gartenstein said that removing the purchase of one police cruiser from the FY15 budget was proposed. Police Chief Wrinn said that cruisers were replaced on a five year cycle and that maintenance costs would increase if vehicles were not replaced according to the cycle. He spoke against taking the cruiser out of the budget and referred to an incident the previous evening where a cruiser broke down on the way to investigate a bicycle accident. There was a brief discussion.

MOTION BY JOHN ALLEN TO TAKE \$40,927 OUT OF THE FY15 BUDGET CORRESPONDING WITH THE PURCHASE OF ONE POLICE CRUISER. MOTION CARRIED 4-1 (MACOMBER OPPOSED).

Gartenstein said that eliminating the position of Animal Control Officer (ACO) or reducing the hours to thirty per week was proposed. Police Chief Wrinn spoke in favor of keeping the position of Animal Control Officer and said that he would rather the hours be reduced to thirty hours per week instead of eliminating the position. He said that the ACO deals with animal complaints thereby freeing up time for the other officers to deal with criminal activity, that the ACO was the liaison between the Town, citizens and Humane Society, and he said that revenue was generated by the ACO. Several people in the audience showed support and spoke in favor of keeping the ACO position. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY DONNA MACOMBER TO REDUCE THE HOURS OF THE ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER FROM 40 TO 30 PER WEEK WITH THE CORRESPONDING REDUCTION OF COSTS BEING REFLECTED IN THE BUDGET. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Gartenstein suggested that the items on the May 9 memo from Interim Town Manager Moreland identifying reductions of 1% in each department be addressed individually. The first item was from the Town Manager's office reducing the salary of the Assistant Town Manager by \$2,052. Moreland said that the Town Manager's budget was very small and he spoke against any cuts. There was some public comment. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY KATE O'CONNOR TO REMOVE \$2,052 FROM THE TOWN MANAGER'S BUDGET REPRESENTING A 1% REDUCTION IN PAY FOR AN EMPLOYEE. MOTION FAILED 2-3 (GARTENSTEIN, SCHOALES, AND MACOMBER OPPOSED).

Gartenstein said that the next item on the May 9 memo was to cut \$3,192 from the Finance Department budget, including a wage freeze and various other reductions. Finance Director O'Connor spoke in opposition to decreasing the Finance Department budget. There was no discussion.

MOTION BY JOHN ALLEN TO REMOVE 1% (\$3,192) FROM THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT BUDGET AS SET FORTH IN THE MAY 9 MEMO. MOTION FAILED 2-3 (GARTENSTEIN, SCHOALES, AND MACOMBER OPPOSED).

Gartenstein said that the next item on the May 9 memo was from the Town Clerk offering to reduce \$1,805 in computer land records costs. Town Clerk Cappy said that the recording of documents was down and that the proposed reduction may reflect actual costs. There was a brief discussion.

MOTION BY DAVID SCHOALES TO REMOVE \$1,805 FROM THE TOWN CLERK'S COMPUTER LAND RECORDS LINE ITEM. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Gartenstein said that the next item on the May 9 memo was from the Town Manager's office offering a reduction of 1% in General Services by reducing it \$2,177. Interim Town Manager Moreland said that the proposed 1% cut included reducing the cost of the Town Report by \$1,500 and, in order to meet the 1% cut, reduce professional services by \$677 which would affect the amount budgeted for ASL interpreters by \$677. There was a brief discussion.

MOTION BY KATE O'CONNOR TO REDUCE THE GENERAL SERVICES BUDGET BY 1% WHICH WOULD EQUAL \$2,177.

Schoales offered a friendly amendment to leave the \$677 for ASL Interpreters in the budget, reducing the General Services budget by a total amount of \$1,500. O'Connor accepted the friendly amendment.

AMENDED MOTION BY KATE O'CONNOR TO REDUCE THE GENERAL SERVICES BUDGET BY \$1,500. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Gartenstein said that the next item on the May 9 memo was from Planning Services offering a reduction of \$2,250. Planning Services Director Francis said that the reductions would affect the budgets for legal notices, professional services, and postage. He said that the cut in professional services (\$1,000) would be problematic. Gartenstein supported leaving the \$1,000 in the budget. There was a brief discussion.

MOTION BY DAVID GARTENSTEIN TO CUT \$1,250 FROM PLANNING SERVICES IN LEGAL NOTICES AND POSTAGE EXPENSE. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Gartenstein said that the next item on the May 9 memo was from the Library offering a reduction of \$6,185. Library Director Jerry Carbone spoke about a Federal program recently implemented that would reduce the phone bill and he spoke about other various cuts. There was some public comment regarding cutting the Library budget. There was some discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY KATE O’CONNOR TO CUT 1% FROM THE LIBRARY BUDGET WHICH EQUALS \$6,185. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Gartenstein said that the next item on the May 9 memo was from the Assessor's Office offering a reduction of \$1,550. Town Assessor Rice said that the cuts would affect salaries. There was a discussion by the Board about the previous wage cuts that were made to the Assessor's Office. The Board was in agreement that no further cuts would be made to Assessor's Department.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

Gartenstein said that the next item on the May 9 memo was from the Fire Department offering to cut \$18,311. Fire Chief Bucossi spoke about the proposed cuts to vacation buy backs, incentive pay and holiday pay. He said that several changes were anticipated that affected each of the categories so that the cuts would more reflect actual costs. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY JOHN ALLEN TO REDUCE THE BUDGET ON FIRE DEPARTMENT IN THE VACATION BUY BACK, INCENTIVE PAY, AND HOLIDAY PAY LINE ITEMS AS PRESENTED BY A TOTAL OF \$18,311. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Gartenstein said that the next item on the May 9 memo was from the Police Department offering to cut \$19,308. Police Chief Wrinn spoke about anticipated changes in the department and said that the proposed reductions better reflected actual costs. He also spoke about the ongoing need for training for dispatchers in order to maintain proficiency. There was some public comment regarding the matter. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY DAVID GARTENSTEIN TO CUT \$19,308 FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

There was further discussion by the Board about the cuts that were made to the Police Department budget earlier in the meeting, including the reduction in hours for the Animal Control Officer. Spoon Agave suggested that the Board members reduce their stipend by 1%. There was also discussion by the Board about the Central Dispatch budget. No motion was offered to cut the Central Dispatch budget.

NO ACTION TAKEN ON CENTRAL DISPATCH BUDGET.

Gartenstein said that the next item on the May 9 memo was from Town Manager's office pertaining to the Municipal Center proposed budget cut of \$1,873. Interim Town Manager Moreland said that the proposed cuts were strictly in response to reducing the budget by 1% and that due to past budget considerations it was already underfunded. There was no discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY DAVID SCHOALES TO CUT \$1,873 FROM THE MUNICIPAL CENTER BUDGET. MOTION FAILED 2-3 (GARTENSTEIN, SCHOALES, AND MACOMBER OPPOSED).

Gartenstein said that the next item on the May 9 memo was from Department of Public Works offering to cut \$15,500. Public Works Director Barrett spoke about the proposed cuts. He also noted that some line items this year would come in over budget due to the severity of the winter. There was some public comment about the matter. There was some discussion by the Board.

MOTION BY JOHN ALLEN TO CUT \$15,500 FROM PUBLIC WORKS BUDGET. MOTION FAILED 2-2 (GARTENSTEIN AND MACOMBER OPPOSED; SCHOALES WAS NOT PRESENT AT THE TIME OF THE VOTE).

Gartenstein said that the next item on the May 9 memo was from Recreation & Parks Department offering to cut \$8,000. Recreation & Parks Director Lolatte spoke about the proposed cuts, including a cut of \$1,000 for propane at the skating rink that reflected actual costs.

MOTION BY DAVID GARTENSTEIN TO CUT \$1,000 IN PROPANE COSTS FROM THE RECREATION & PARKS BUDGET.

Macomber offered a friendly amendment to also cut \$1,000 for cemetery maintenance, for a total cut of \$2,000 from the department's budget. Gartenstein accepted the friendly amendment. Allen offered an amendment to increase the cut to \$8,000 as set forth in the memo. There was a brief discussion about procedure and it was determined that Allen's amendment would be voted on before voting on the original amended motion.

MOTION BY JOHN ALLEN TO AMEND THE MOTION TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF THE CUT TO RECREATION AND PARKS FROM \$2,000 TO \$8,000 TO INCLUDE THE DAMAGED FIRE DOORS. MOTION FAILED 2-3 (GARTENSTEIN, SCHOALES, AND MACOMBER OPPOSED).

There was a discussion about future overall budget considerations and that user fees for out-of-town program participants should not be subsidized by Brattleboro residents.

AMENDED MOTION BY DAVID GARTENSTEIN TO CUT \$2,000 IN PROPANE COSTS AND CEMETERY MAINTENANCE FROM THE RECREATION & PARKS BUDGET. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Gartenstein asked the Board if any further budget items should be discussed at this time. There was further discussion about the budget cuts made at this meeting and presentation of a final budget to Representative Town Meeting. There was public comment about budget considerations. There was discussion by the Board about scheduling an informational meeting. There was a public comment in support of an informational meeting.

PAY-AS-YOU-THROW (PAYT) – Including Advisory Committee Mission Statement.

The matter was passed over and the Board agreed to add it to the agenda for the next meeting.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Lynn Russell spoke about the budgets for Colchester and Keene, the Police-Fire improvement project, increased parking fees and fines, and accessing creative ideas from the public. Susan Bellville suggested that the Board be openly involved in attracting new business into Town. Terry Carter acknowledged the hard work of the Board. Leon Boyd spoke about his appointment as Town Service Officer and various other topics.

There was no further business by the Board.

MOTION BY DONNA MACOMBER AT 8:45PM TO ADJOURN. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

David Schoales, Clerk