

Town of Farmington  
Board of Selectmen Public Meeting Minutes  
Monday, June 14, 2021

**Board Members Present:**

Paula Proulx, Chairman  
Neil Johnson, Vice Chairman  
Gerry Vachon  
Ken Dickie  
Doug Staples

**Others Present:**

Arthur Capello, Town Administrator  
John Drury, Police Chief  
Becky Dickie, Town Clerk

**1). Call to Order:**

Chairman Proulx called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3). Public Input:**

Mr. Capello asked Mr. Vachon to follow up with Brian Boisvert about restringing the flag pole.

**4). Review of Minutes:**

June 7, 2021 – Non-Public Sessions A & B – No errors or omissions

**Motion:** (Johnson, second Staples) to approve the minutes as written passed 3-0-2 (Vachon, Dickie abstained).

**5). Review of AVITAR Software Agreement Proposal:**

Mr. Capello said they are looking to switch the utility billing, Town Clerk and Tax Collector software over to AVITAR software which they currently have for building permit and assessing applications. He said if approved, when they make the switch all four systems will be able to talk with each other and for any future software switches they would try to make sure they can communicate with AVITAR. He asked Town Clerk/Tax Collector Becky Dickie to talk about the ins and outs of what the software can and can't do.

Mrs. Dickie said she called around to a few places and the TC/TC's that she spoke with that have AVITAR are very happy with it and very happy with the support they get. She said she spoke with the Franklin TC and she has the collection, clerk and water/sewer software and she does the utility billing and tax billing is done by the Assessing Dept. When the billing is ready the TC chooses the date to receive the warrant and the billing date which is a little different than how it is currently done here she said.

She said the utility billing is very similar other than the way we handle the water meter charges. She said right now we have a separate warrant for water, sewer and water meter charges. The water meter charges would be handled like a fee, if they have water only it would go into the

water warrant, if they have sewer only it would go into the sewer warrant and if they have both it would go into the water warrant. We still would be able to run a report at the end of the month so you know how much of the water fees have been paid so the Finance Dept. can still send that money over and keep track of that water meter information. It's a little different than how we do it but she moves it monthly so it's not different on the tail end she said.

Mrs. Dickie said anything they've already warranted if we go with this the conversion would bring all of those current warrants over and it also brings about 6 years of history of everything. She said their current system VADAR has a point of sale that they do all of the collecting in and everything is done according to what it is but the reports at the end of the day have everything on it. AVITAR is separate where the collect system does taxes, tax liens, water and sewer and clerk system does motor vehicles, boats, vital records and dogs. She said those 2 systems don't talk to each other so you have 2 closeouts at the end of the day but she has played with generating an Excel spreadsheet that has the totals for each of the office staff and they would add together so they could do 1 deposit so it would be similar to what we do now instead of 1 payment report that matches up to the checks, cash, credit cards and online payments.

Mrs. Dickie said the other piece that she is excited about is that AVITAR also works with a third party called **Invoice Cloud** and it gives you the ability to have taxes, tax liens, water and sewer online for payments that a lot of residents have been asking for and they get phone calls from closing companies and real estate agents asking for information on what is owed on properties, what their taxes are and whether they've been paid or not and that information would be available out there for them to see and residents can pay their bills online. It also does the dogs, motor vehicles and vital records which they already have online through Peabody Gov. but when they download something from Peabody Gov. they have a log with up to 5 pages of transactions and they have to put in each one individually. With this system you download the I-Cloud, you run a pre-check, it checks the registrations database and if everything is good to go it tells you how many double stickers you need, how many single stickers, you give it a starting number and it gives you the ending number and you hit go and it assigns it all, you print them out and then you staple them on and mail them out she said.

She said she sees many ways this would remove opportunities for human errors. She said when you go into the collect system and bring up a person's name it shows all the properties they own and if you choose the most recent and hit total it will show if they have just that 1 bill due, all their tax liens and depending on what they want to pay you take away the check marks from what they are not paying and it matches up to what the check is and you apply the payment. She said VADAR has a drop down menu with real estate, motor vehicles, tax liens, etc. and you have to do them individually and for each tax lien you have to pull it up and apply the check. There are some differences and there will be a big learning curve she said.

Chairman Proulx said it sounds like once they get it moving and understand it, it would be a lot simpler to have somebody trained on.

Mrs. Dickie said she spoke with the AVITAR customer service rep and she is the one who helps get everything set up. She said all of the miscellaneous tasks such as the money coming in from the Police Dept., Rec. Dept., landfill, building and codes all have to be built into the system but they will do that for us up front. She said the customer service rep. used to be a TC/TC and has been with AVITAR for about 14 years.

She said she is a little nervous about AVITAR has done clerk and collect conversions but they have never converted utility bills over from VADAR. She said she talked to someone in Sunapee who was one of the original designers of the VADAR program and her town switched to AVITAR and the software paid for itself in a year.

Mrs. Dickie said one of the other big changes is in VADAR you choose whether to collect interest first or the pay-by method where you pay the partial principle and partial interest for each partial payment people send in. She said they had a problem when they switched the percentage rate when the state dropped the percentages and ours weren't being applied correctly which created some issues but it has been rectified at this time. She said with AVITAR you always pay all the interest up front and then all the money gets dumped into the principle so that very little interest is accruing once that initial amount paid is for or if they start paying on a lien right away they accrue less interest because they start paying down the principle. Chairman Proulx said the proposal has 1 year, 2 years and 3 years across the board pricing options.

Mr. Capello said he wanted them to have options so they took the 1 year plus the 2 years of the software support and divided it by three.

Mrs. Dickie said the year that you purchase it the software support is included.

Mr. Capello said this is not a cheap thing but it should pay for itself within a few years. He said whatever option the board chooses it will have to be budgeted for in 2022 and he didn't know if he could find the money to pay for even the 3 year option this year.

He said there is some thought that some of the American Recovery Act money can be used to pay for the utility piece of it but it hasn't been confirmed or denied at this point.

Mrs. Dickie said the software pricing options don't include the I-Cloud piece of it and that is one-time fee of \$750.

Mr. Johnson added and then \$50 a month.

Mrs. Dickie said one of them (tax collect) is \$50 a month and the other one (clerk) is \$100 a month after the \$750 set up fee. She said the other piece is that she is not looking to do up front is that some of the people she spoke with do their own tax bills and we send ours out and if this saves us time that might be something they could do in-house to help us save money. She said I-Cloud is \$250 a year but you can use them for online paperless billing and it knows whether or not to print the bill and you can just print the remainder for the ones to be mailed out. That is also what allows the PDF invoices to be up there so people can download their own tax bills she said.

Mr. Johnson said the PDF portion is an additional module.

Mrs. Dickie said that is the paperless notification and it also allows you to set up automatic e-mail reminders if they don't pay by certain dates. But that is not something that has to be done right away she said.

Mr. Dickie said she stated they do approx. 9,400 registrations a year and asked how much time it takes to enter that back in for the second time.

Mrs. Dickie said that depends on if they have customers or not and if they do a fleet typically one person uses a separate window and it takes them all day to put the registrations through and then put them through a second time.

Mr. Dickie said he was trying to get the average time to do that because if they only have to do it once there is a savings.

Chairman Proulx said they may be looking at saving half a day.

Mr. Dickie said they may not have to have any part timers which is also a savings and the savings could help offset the cost.

Mr. Johnson said if they saved 1 minute per transaction that's 160 hours and that's 4 weeks' worth of time just duplicating it.

Chairman Proulx said if you have to go back after human error that's hard to track down.

Mrs. Dickie said she asked about year-end and month-end and tried to go through their day and how they do their end of day. She said the end of day is much quicker with this system and they have a monthly process you run through and it does the MS-61 at the end of the year if they have been doing it right along and you push the button and it sends it to the NH Dept. of **Revenue Administration**.

She said she asked how often the software is upgraded and they said definitely once a year and sometimes twice a year. She said she asked how they determine what they are going to upgrade and they said if they get a request to add a function they will ask their users and if they get enough people that say they would do this they will include it in their next update.

Mr. Capello said based on his experience with AVITAR assessing and building once or twice a year they send out a disc to update everybody and it's usually based on feedback they received from customers. They're usually pretty responsive to that he said.

Mr. Johnson asked Mrs. Dickie if she has been to any of the towns that use the AVITAR system.

Mrs. Dickie said she went to Franklin and spent a few hours walking through things and asking about the things they have to do and how they handle them. She said their TC gave her some sample reports and showed her their spreadsheet they do at the end of the day that is similar to what we do. They do their office differently where we do everything alphabetically and they do everything by the day so they can pull the day's work and find something they're looking for. I haven't changed anything yet but it gave me food for thought she said.

Mr. Johnson said what she is proposing with these 3 modules doesn't include the I-Cloud.

Mrs. Dickie said it doesn't include the Cloud and the Cloud is not really a module but is a third

party they can operate AVITAR without but it's an add-on that gives you more efficiency.

Mr. Johnson asked if that is something she would be looking to do.

Mrs. Dickie said she'd like to do it eventually and it doesn't have to be done at the same time.

She said it gives them more efficiency and the ability to pay online and people have been asking to be able to pay taxes, tax liens and water/sewer bills online. We take a lot of payments over the phone because people call them in and give us their debt or credit card because they don't want to mail in a check. This way they can do it themselves and store the information she said.

Mr. Johnson said the pricing shown here assumes we are going to do it this year.

Mr. Capello said he asked if they would hold the price for next year and they said yes.

Mrs. Dickie said the clerk system is a stand-alone and can go by itself but utility and collect must go at the same time because they need to work together.

Mr. Johnson said it didn't make sense to maintain two different systems and they would have to pay for both systems anyway.

Mrs. Dickie said the Sunapee TC recommended that that they keep their current software maintenance agreement until they get through their first audit with the new software just in case they need their support.

Mr. Johnson asked if they decide to go with the Cloud if that would do away with the Gov site.

Mr. Capello asked how much the Town pays to use the Gov website.

Mrs. Dickie said it would do away with the Gov site and the Town pays \$300 a year to use it.

Mr. Johnson said the service cost for AVITAR is about \$5,800 and VADAR is \$5,700 so it's a \$100 difference and they would be purchasing a whole new software suite for approx. \$28,000 but they would split that out over 3 years.

Mr. Capello said for all 3 sites and the software support it would be \$15,363.

Mr. Johnson asked about the legacy data and that Mrs. Dickie said it would bring over 6 years and asked if they have backup records beyond that point and if it's required by state statute.

Mrs. Dickie said they keep 6 years of the daily records upstairs in this building plus the year they are working in so they have up to 7 years of records. She said she spoke with the Town's IT tech and VADAR is access based so he can back up what they have and continue to have access to the historical information.

Mr. Dickie asked if even with the new system they would still have the paper backups.

Mrs. Dickie said they always have to have 6 years of records and it's a rolling system where they do the shredding every year. She said with the new system the reports will be different but they will still have the daily reports they will keep for 6 years as mandated.

Mr. Capello said AVITAR is looking for a commitment from the board knowing they won't be able to do this potentially until next year because of funding and budgetary purposes. He said they are willing to hold the price until next year also because they do all our assessing and building permits so we are a good client to them.

Chairman Proulx asked for the total amount in the technology fund.

Mr. Capello said there is about \$7,000 in that fund. He said they weren't able to put any money in the fund this year because the DRA didn't like the way the warrant article was written. Next year we will be able to put something in and it is strictly funded by the TDS franchise fees of about \$5,000 - \$6,000 a year he said.

Mrs. Dickie said the other piece she likes about the AVITAR system is when assessing does the 2<sup>nd</sup> half tax bills they have to be within 0.5% and it doesn't allow you to do the warrant until you put in the numbers DRA gave you and it does the 0.5% calculation to make sure it matches.

Mr. Johnson asked if the tax collector kiosk with Cloud pay was one of the things she was looking to add on and if she would want the expanded or comprehensive version.

Mrs. Dickie said that piece would be needed if they wanted to do their own billing and they could get the I-Cloud and do that later. People could go online and see their balances but they wouldn't have a PDF of their actual tax bill she said.

Mr. Johnson said most people would probably want to download their tax information.

Mr. Staples said if they are going to do it they might as well as do it right now.

Mrs. Dickie said it is an initial \$750 (set up fee), \$250 a year (software support for downloadable PDF invoices, paperless notification) plus the \$50 a month (access fee for I-Cloud) for the Tax Collect Internet Tax Kiosk with the comprehensive configuration.

Mrs. Dickie said the Sunapee TC said when they switched from VADAR they charged \$2,000 to get a conversion file over to AVITAR and they only converted the taxes in collect and she didn't know if there would be a charge to convert each module or one charge to convert everything.

Mr. Dickie asked if there is any advantage if they were able to come up with the money to start this year over next year.

Mrs. Dickie said when they say they are ready to go it could be up to a 2 week window when they can't put anything into VADAR or the new software but they can deposit every day. She said they would have to keep a picture of all of the checks, keep all of the receipts, enter them all manually and run reports from VADAR, convert everything over to AVITAR and run reports and when those two match to the penny they put all of the new stuff in.

Chairman Proulx said then they need a window of time for that.

Mr. Dickie said he was asking if it was better and easier to create that window from now to the end of this year versus next year.

Mrs. Dickie said there is an election in March, September and November of next year.

Mr. Capello said the answer to Mr. Dickie's question is we don't have the money to do it this year.

Mr. Johnson asked if this would require any additional hardware because it will be running here and not on a remote server.

Mr. Capello said that VADAR is running here and the IT tech said it should be fine.

Mr. Johnson asked if AVITAR would be able to fit in and cohabitate with VADAR because both will have to be running for a time.

Mr. Capello said it will fit but he didn't know if they would cohabitate well.

Mr. Johnson asked if they need to upgrade the server or the network.

Mr. Capello said they don't need to update the server and the network is fine.

Mr. Johnson asked if they have a backup scenario for everything.

Mr. Capello said they have double backups, one here and one offsite. He said when a municipal office up north burned down he authorized putting in a double backup system.

Mr. Staples asked if they had any pricing from competitors.

Mr. Capello said no and this is unique software and they would not be able to get quotes from other companies on this.

Mrs. Dickie said if they went with different software that did everything other than what they own for AVITAR they would be in the same boat they were in with VADAR when they had to have a special bridge built to get the assessing software over to the new software package.

Mr. Vachon said if they already have it in place they would just be standardizing all the depts.

Mrs. Dickie said she asked if AVITAR is able to speak to general ledger systems and they generate an export file that be exported in but it doesn't talk to the MSI (Microsoft Installer). She said there is talk of updating it at a later date.

Mr. Vachon asked if any of the financial things this will communicate with is something the new finance administrator is familiar with.

Mr. Capello said he did not know as he hasn't gotten to that point with her yet. He said she may know of others and that will be one of their projects when she starts work.

Chairman Proulx said it would be nice to have the whole system be able to communicate.

Mrs. Dickie said another piece of this she finds interesting is when we overpay something it's overpaid on whatever warrant it gets paid on and then they do a transfer in and a transfer out and they do it just for taxes. She said with AVITAR when you do an overpayment you put the words "water", "sewer" or "taxes" in front of it and it stays as an unassigned credit off to the side so that your lines are never affected so that at month end when you run the amounts you don't have to look at what are the possible refunds and subtract them to see what you actually have in the line to collect. When you create a new warrant, you request the possible credits and it pops up all the possible credits and you choose the ones you want to apply and it applies them before you print your bills they go out with the credit already applied. At the end of the year we have to be at zero so that every credit is refunded. A lot of towns allow 1 year and 2 years of overpayments and some people like to overpay on their taxes or pay monthly or weekly so when their next tax bill comes out it is either paid or close to being paid.

Mr. Johnson asked for AVITAR's estimated conversion time table.

Mrs. Dickie said clerk would take a day or two and collect can take up to 2 weeks.

Mr. Johnson asked if this would be something they would do mid-week or during the weekend.

Mrs. Dickie said she didn't know if that matters.

Mr. Capello said it is a timing issue that he and Mrs. Dickie have talked about but they still have



to figure it out as they go through this and he didn't know if there was any good time to do it. Mr. Johnson said if there is no additional cost involved the weekend would be the perfect time to do it as he assumed they would have to shut down during the conversion.

Mrs. Dickie said they could take stuff in but they couldn't put it in the new system.

Mr. Johnson asked if she sees this as saving them a lot of time and effort.

Mrs. Dickie said she thought it will once they learn it and have gotten up to speed and there's going to be some growing pains and some ramp up time but it all works together.

She said the water meter charges threw the company for a loop but they said to give them a couple of days and then they had a Zoom meeting with them and they came up with a possible solution to how to handle it to make it work for us. She said she talked to the auditors and the Finance Administrator about not having separate warrants for them and the way they would be deposited and they were all okay with it.

Mr. Capello said he looks at this conversion as being similar to what they had before AVITAR for assessing and it was a lot of money but it gave a lot more services to the residents and has paid for itself with the conversion.

Mr. Johnson said with the online stuff they make a payment, it's entered into the system and they don't have to manually put it into the system and the I-Cloud dumps it into AVITAR.

Mrs. Dickie said it gives you the opportunity to double check everything first then you just hit the button.

Mr. Capello said when you work with the amount of numbers these ladies work with you are going to have human error so the more human error you can take out of it the better you are and the more revenue you're going to collect. He said now if they collect too much revenue there is a cost in returning it to the residents in time and money.

Mr. Capello asked the board for a motion to move forward with the conversion and to do it over 3 years starting next year with the budget process.

Mr. Johnson asked if they would include the I-Cloud in this.

Mr. Capello said they might as do it all at once and they weren't talking a whole lot more money for I-Cloud and the monthly fee would become a budgetary item.

**Motion:** (Johnson, second Proulx) to proceed with the purchase of the AVITAR Tax Collect, Clerk and Utility Billing software as well as the Invoice Cloud online paperless kiosk with the stipulation that it's going to depend on what happens in next year's budget;

**Discussion:** Mr. Capello asked if the stipulation was just for the I-Cloud kiosk.

Mr. Johnson said the stipulation applies to the whole thing and if they don't budget for it "you ain't getting it".

**Vote:** The motion passed 5-0.

## **6) COVID-19 Update:**

**a). American Recovery Act Update** – Mr. Capello said he gave the board a bunch of COVID-19 documents (to help them sleep) and as he gets more information he will pass it on to the board.



He said there is Zoom meeting he asked the Finance Administrator to attend for local information and there is also a Zoom meeting at the state level in 2 weeks that he plans to attend to get more information.

He said the documents clarify some of the stuff he has read and concentrates on possibly using these funds on the different aspects of water and sewer and he would ask if they are eligible to use the funds for broadband infrastructure upgrades.

He said last week he talked about how water projects have to be on the federal list of potential funding projects so he included the packet from the federal government on what could be potentially funded as federal water projects with a list of what we can/can't use it for.

Mr. Johnson asked if the Town's consultants are still actively involved in this entire project.

Mr. Capello said yes and that he would have a brief conversation with them because this is a possibility to look at the expansion of another well or to be shovel-ready for a new well that the board has been working on for several years. He said they are starting to have color issues with well #5 and there is nothing wrong with the water and it's safe but the color that was in well #4 is seeping into the aquifer which is seeping into well #5. He said the water is tested weekly and it's some of the best water in the state as far as drinking water goes. I'm not sure we're going to be able to correct it because it's in the aquifer from the peat moss he said.

He said the consultants said we are looking at \$250,000-\$300,000 to get shovel-ready for a new well and that includes the permitting process but does not include the land acquisition.

Mr. Johnson asked if there are additional funds outside of the \$690,000 they're allocating to the Town for this purpose.

Mr. Capello said not at this point since the infrastructure bill failed at the federal level.

Chairman Proulx said if they could define it that might help. It's wait and see I guess she said.

## **7).Town Administrator's Business:**

**a). Hornetown Road Bridge Update-** Mr. Capello asked the board for a motion to withdraw \$14,521.51 from the Bridge and Road Design Fund. He said the Finance Administrator has been paying the bills for bridge repairs but has been putting it under the trial balance and wants to reimburse us.

Mr. Vachon asked about the \$132.79 for screws and washers.

Chairman Proulx said they were to lag down the boards.

Mr. Vachon asked if that wasn't included in the repair project price.

Mr. Capello said that goes back to the original bridge replacement and was probably for the guardrails.

Chairman Proulx said she would have to go with Mr. Vachon and asked if that wasn't included in the original price. She asked if they didn't think they needed that to put them together.

Mr. Vachon said they are not talking about a 1 pound box of 3" drywall screws for \$132.

Mr. Johnson suggested they could have been used for the speed bumps at the bridge.

Mr. Vachon said maybe but asked for the cost of those (\$941) they didn't come with anchors.

Mr. Capello said he would find out. He said everything at the bridge has been anchored down and he has been over it a few times and it is noticeably quieter. He said he has a meeting there this week with DPW Director Gary Rogers and Hoyle Tanner & Assoc. Engineer Josif Bicja and there are several questions that need to be answered before he pays the \$20,000 bill.

**b). Resignations-** Mr. Capello said the board received 3 written resignations in their packets.

**Motion:** (Johnson, second Proulx) to accept the resignation of Micah Wonyetye from the Farmington Fire Dept. passed 5-0.

**Motion:** (Vachon, second Staples) to accept the resignation of Eric Howarth from the Farmington Fire Dept. passed 5-0.

**Motion:** (Johnson, second Vachon) to accept the resignation of Megan Taylor-Fetter with regret;

**Discussion:** Mr. Capello said he wanted to thank Mrs. Taylor-Fetter for being a loyal soldier to this town for 15 years. She's been here through thick and thin and she will be deeply missed by everyone from staff to residents. We wish her nothing but the best for going on and doing what's best for her and her family but I want her to know and in the record that she will be deeply missed he said.

Chairman Proulx echoed Mr. Capello's statements.

**Vote:** The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Capello said Eric Elliott submitted his 2 week notice of resignation that morning and he has not yet received the written copy from the DPW. He said Mr. Elliott has been offered a job with another town making more money.

Mr. Johnson asked what position he held.

Mr. Capello said he was a truck driver/laborer.

**Motion:** (Johnson, second Staples) to accept the resignation of Eric Elliott from the DPW passed 5-0.

**c). Conservation Land** – Mr. Capello said the board previously asked him to ask the Conservation Commission about the 12 acres of land off of Route 11(Tax Map R3, Lot 17-3) that was intended for conservation and the Con Com would love to have the opportunity to accept this land from the Selectmen if they so choose to give it to them. He asked the board for a motion or consensus on whether to move this process along to give it to the Con Com.

Mr. Johnson asked if they can sell the property.

Mr. Capello said yes.

Mr. Vachon said the land is owned by the Town and they can do whatever they want with it.

Mr. Capello said they would just have to make sure that the restriction for it to remain in conservation goes with the deed.

Mr. Johnson said he would prefer that they sell it and get the income from the sale as long as it's in the deed that it has to remain in conservation.

Chairman Proulx said there has to be a 50 ft. easement as far as the right-of-way goes.

Mr. Johnson said that is on Lot 17-2 not the one they are selling.

Chairman Proulx asked the board to turn to page 2 of the Oct. 13, 1998 Planning Board minutes and read that one of the conditions of approval was there is to be a 50 ft. easement to Lot 17-3 to allow for possible future construction of an access road.

Mr. Johnson said the easement is to Lot 17-3 and pointed out the “goose neck” easement on the map.

Mr. Capello said he would ask the attorney to write up the deed if the board chooses to sell the land to make sure everything they need to have in the deed is in the deed to protect the Town.

Mr. Staples said it was his understanding that when they talked about this the last time when the land was given to the Town it was set for conservation, Charlie King offered to buy it and then they decided to see if the Con Com wanted it before they sold it. So we asked the Con Com and they said yes and now we are going to tell them to go to hell we’re going to sell it anyway he said.

Mr. Johnson said yes.

Chairman Proulx and Mr. Staples said they wouldn’t vote for that.

Mr. Staples said if they wanted to sell it they should have sold it before they asked the Con Com if they wanted it.

**Motion:** (Johnson, second Vachon) to put it up for auction with any restrictions required by the original gifter with the restriction that it be restricted by conservation failed 2-3 (Johnson, Vachon –in favor; Dickie, Proulx, Staples –opposed).

**Motion:** (Staples, second Proulx) to give Map R3, Lot 17-3 to the Conservation Commission and all deed restrictions go along with it and it is to be used for conservation land passed 3-2 (Proulx, Dickie, Staples – in favor; Johnson, Vachon –opposed).

**d). School Resource Officer** – Mr. Capello said he sent the board a memo he received from School Board Chairman Charlie King in regards to the SRO position. He said the School Board would like to meet with the Selectmen to discuss that position and they are having a meeting on June 28 and they’re going to make a decision on whether or not to keep that position. Mr. Dickie asked him to find out if they would move that meeting until later in July because he is going to be in Florida on June 28.

Mr. Capello said the School Board wanted to meet with the Selectmen prior to June 28.

Chairman Proulx read from Mr. King’s memo that the School Board will be meeting in non-public session on June 28 to discuss concerns regarding the SRO program and the potential termination of the district’s participation in that program. The School Board is offering the Selectmen an opportunity to meet with them in non-public session prior to that date and vote to see if a resolution to the issues can be reached she said.

Mr. Johnson asked why that meeting is in non-public session.

Chairman Proulx said she didn’t think it should be.

Mr. Dickie said he is leaving on Friday and planned to be out of state for 2 weeks.

Mr. Capello said then the meeting would have to be this week before Friday.

Mr. Johnson said before they agree to it he would like to know how they justify meeting in non-public session to discuss this.

Chairman Proulx said it wouldn't need to be in non-public session unless they are discussing personnel.

Mr. Capello said from what was in the memo it would be to discuss processes and policies not personnel.

Mr. Johnson said that would not be eligible for non-public session.

Chairman Proulx said they received a draft memo from Chief Drury and there was a meeting set up between the Chief and SAU Superintendent to see if they could put together a memo for both boards. She said there was an attempt to do that, there was some intervention on a draft memo from a School Board member and then we get this where they might possibly get rid of the program and asked what that was based on.

Mr. Staples said they know what was in the draft memo but they don't know why they want to get rid of the program.

Chairman Proulx said unless she missed something they haven't had any kind of a direct memo from the Chief and the Superintendent saying there are problems that can't be rectified because they haven't met yet.

Chief Drury said they met on Monday and they were supposed to meet on Tuesday and the Superintendent canceled that meeting. He said if he read her e-mail correctly she will get back in touch with him to reschedule it.

Mr. Capello said the meeting the Chief had with the Superintendent was just supposed to be between those two to work on the final memo for both boards. He said a School Board member came to that meeting and intervened and it became the Superintendent and the board member going at the Chief rather than a conversation to decide on a final memo.

Chairman Proulx said they have not received anything that details or outlines a conversation where the Chief and the Superintendent have actually met to see the progress or lack thereof.

Mr. Staples asked if the meeting would be to discuss the draft they have seen from the Chief.

Mr. Johnson apparently (that is what the meeting is about).

Mr. Staples said the School Board is threatening to pull out of the program and asked what are going to pull out over as there was nothing in there that was bad.

Mr. Johnson suggested they meet with them and find out. He said he didn't see how they could address issues that haven't been formally put together in a memo and sent to them. I don't see how they can have it non-public unless they are going to talk about specific issues he said.

Chairman Proulx said they could go into non-public session to discuss the personnel issues and then they have to come back into public session and they can't stay in non-public session.

Mr. Staples said he wasn't involved in negotiating this whole thing and asked if the contract is until November.

Mr. Capello said each side can get out of it with 60 days written notice and he gave the board copies of the contract in their packets.

Mr. Staples asked who would cover the cost of the grants that are part of the program.

Mr. Capello said if the federal government wanted their money back it would end up in legal and the school district would have to pay the federal grants because they're the ones wanting to get out of the contract.

Mr. Johnson said it is the Town's grant but he didn't think the feds would worry about it because by the time the 60 day notice is up it will be 30 days until the end of the contract. Or we could just pay for the SRO for those 30 days and be done with it I don't think it's a major issue he said.

Chief Drury said if the school district does not want the SRO they can fulfill the obligation for her with the feds until Oct. 31.

Consensus of the board was to ask to have a public meeting with the School Board on Wed., June 16 in the Selectmen's Chambers at 6 p.m.

Mr. Capello read his e-mail to the Superintendent/Mr. King which was as follows: "Based on Mr. King's memo the Board of Selectmen can meet this Wednesday, June 16 anytime after 4 p.m. at the Municipal Offices. Please let me know ASAP so I can post for the Board of Selectmen".

Selectmen then discussed who should be in attendance at the meeting-just the 2 boards or to ask the Superintendent, Mr. Capello and Chief Drury to also attend.

Chairman Proulx said there may be other information they may need from them.

Mr. Johnson said to have them all here and if they decide that a non-public session is needed they can determine who would participate in it at that time.

**e). Timeline to Live Broadcasts-** Mr. Capello said he received the timeline for live streaming of the meetings from Cable TV Coordinator Robert Hall. He said the equipment has been ordered and they expect to receive it in about 4 weeks and once everything arrives, it will take about 2 days to get it installed and they would be off air about 30 minutes during that time.

Mr. Johnson estimated it would be around Aug. 1 when everything should be up and running.

**f). Dog Licenses** – Chief Drury said Mrs. Dickie e-mailed the warrant for unlicensed dogs to him and it has to be signed within 20 days after June 20 and that would be at the board's June 28 meeting. He gave the warrant to Mr. Capello for inclusion on the June 28 agenda.

Mr. Capello congratulated the Chief and his dept. on the dog warrant being down from last year as to the number of unlicensed dogs that was due to the hard work of the dept. following up making phone calls and getting people in to license their dogs.

Chief Drury said until the warrant is official the Office Manager will continue to make phone calls. I'd much rather get people to license their dogs than give them a \$25 fine he said.

**g). Police Dept. Wages** - Chief Drury said the board received copies of his proposed staff wage increases and he figured this would be a good starting point and he tried to stay consistent with the information they talked about last time so the board could see where they're at.

He said he was confident this year these numbers can be absorbed into the current year's budget and even if they hired 2 people tomorrow they would still be under those numbers. Obviously next year there would be a significant change he said.

Mr. Capello said in running some numbers from the Town-wide perspective with the new hires and potential new hires there is about \$40,000-\$50,000 they would have to find with the new increases in wages.

Chief Drury said with the 2 open positions they've had all year including the benefits his numbers show around \$50,000-\$70,000 to the good. He said their overtime is on track right now but at the current rate they will probably over spend it but he didn't see it being "horribly" over spent. He gave the officers and supervisors credit for trying to use it when it has to be used but not being flagrant with it or wasting it. July will be a pretty big spending month for overtime because of the vacations he said.

Mr. Dickie asked if even with the overtime if they would still be \$50,000-\$70,000 to the good by the year end.

Chief Drury said yes and as of May 27 there was 47% left in his overtime line and at the current rate it would probably be about 38% to 40% left by the end of June. He said the line would be overspent by looking at the trend but that he has 66% left in the health insurance line and that's a \$248,000 line. There is 63% left in the personnel line as of the end of May and those lines alone will make-up any difference in the increases as well as the over spending of the overtime line he said.

Mr. Dickie asked if these numbers were based on the current labor rates.

The Chief said yes and they will see on the spreadsheet the person's current pay and the line to the right of that are the proposed hourly rates and the percentage increases.

Chairman Proulx asked given the overall budget and the ups and downs in all the depts. if the Finance Administrator ran these numbers.

Mr. Capello said with the 2 positions that were replaced with one going to part time which is a savings they are looking at roughly a \$39,000 or \$40,000 deficit in what was budgeted. He said some of that will be absorbed through the Building Inspector's Special Revenue Fund and that brings the deficit down to about \$20,000 but there are other positions they need to fill where they may be in the same boat they were in with the 2 positions they did fill.

Chief Drury said as of May 27 there was 65% of his total budget left so it is 15% to the good. He said if you split that and say he went very busy on the pay last month and knocked that number down to 7%, 7% of a \$1.5 million budget is still a pretty decent number.

Chairman Proulx said anything they do right now would add to the deficit even though the Chief has done exceptionally well with his dept.

Chief Drury said if you split the difference and say he spent 7% in June he would be \$109,000 to the good right now.

Chairman Proulx said she gets what he is saying and he has done an exceptional job with

everything he had to do but she would like to feel more warm and fuzzy about the bottom line because they have some areas where they haven't done so well and had revenue shortfalls.

Mr. Capello said the deficit has nothing to do with revenues and is strictly salary and benefits.

Chairman Proulx said if they have a revenue shortfall it could be worse than that.

Mr. Capello said that is correct. He said if what they projected to receive from the state revenues is less than what they projected they would have a bigger issue.

Chairman Proulx asked him what his recommendation would be at this time.

Mr. Capello said they need to do something and it's a Town wide thing. He said the board needs to make some decisions about the budget for next year. He said he didn't think it would be a lot of heartache to increase the academy officer line so it at least gives the Chief a fighting chance to get some recruits in here. We're not talking huge dollars there and we can look at this again as we get further into the year and maybe do something this year. I don't have warm and fuzzies around doing a whole lot this year knowing we still have other positions to hire he said.

Chairman Proulx asked if they could look at this in phases so they are able to get the Chief's new hires' rates up where he has a fighting chance and then maybe in a few months look at another section people at the bottom of the wage scale as a show of good faith.

Mr. Johnson said he would recommend that the 2 open positions and the 2 new hires that are the 2 lowest paid should be increased to \$20-\$21 an hour range.

Chief Drury said he understood the hesitancy of the board and they want to work with them to make this happen. He said he is fearful that if he loses another officer or two he would be pleading as opposed to trying to work this out. If it is something that could be done in two steps say in July and Sept. I think would be a really good show of faith on everyone's part that we're working with the board and trying to take steps in the right direction he said.

He said he liked the idea of bringing the bottom 2 or 3 people up and do the other ones at 50/50 and he would like to get it done before the Finance Administrator leaves.

The Chief then said he knows next year will be painful.

Chairman Proulx said she was more worried about this year because they can budget for next year and if the deficit is just in salaries any shortfall in revenue will make it more severe.

Mr. Johnson asked to go into non-public session shortly to discuss some of the individual increases and determine what they think is going to be acceptable potential future increases.

He said then they could see what the impact would be if they did one increase in July and one in Sept. or something like that. He said in Sept. they would have a better look at the overall standing of the budget and he didn't have an issue with splitting it however they decide and doing a partial increase to show they are serious about addressing this.

Mr. Capello said he would need to have that for them to run the numbers and tell what the impact would be. He said with retirement changes every year and that is almost as big a number as the health insurance.

Chief Drury said there is a \$5,000 difference between his health insurance and retirement lines.



He added he hasn't been paying retirement for 2 officers so he has 71% left over in that line. Mr. Capello said what he would like to get out of tonight's non-public session is what they want for potential rates for the employees, have the Finance Administrator run the numbers, give them the cost for the rest of the year and then decide if they want to divide it in half but until they have those numbers they don't really know.

**8). Non-Public Session A:**

**Motion:** (Johnson, second Staples) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (a) Compensation of Public Employees passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Proulx, Johnson, Vachon, Dickie, Staples-aye) at 7:55 p.m.

**Motion:** (Vachon, second Staples) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 8:43 p.m.

**Motion:** (Johnson, second Staples) to seal the minutes as disclosure would adversely affect the reputation of a person other than a member of the board and would render the proposed action ineffective passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Proulx, Johnson, Vachon, Dickie, Staples-aye).

**9). Non-Public Session B:**

**Motion:** (Johnson, second Dickie) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (e, I) Litigation, Consideration of Legal Advice passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Proulx, Johnson, Vachon, Dickie, Staples-aye) at 8:43 p.m.

**Motion:** (Staples, second Vachon) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 9:05 p.m.

**Motion:** (Johnson, second Vachon) to seal the minutes as disclosure would render the proposed action ineffective passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Proulx, Johnson, Vachon, Dickie, Staples-aye).

**10). Next Meeting:** Monday, June 28, 2021

Mr. Capello said there is no meeting next week (June 21).

**11). Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (Staples, second Vachon) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 9:05 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon, Recording Secretary

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Paula Proulx, Chairman

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Neil Johnson, Vice Chairman

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Gerry Vachon

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Ken Dickie

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Douglas Staples