

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 28, 2021

Board Members Present:

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

Board Members Absent:

Ken Dickie

Others Present:

Arthur Capello, Town Administrator
John Drury, Police Chief
Matt Embrey, Police Lieutenant
Pam Merrill, Finance Administrator
Chuck Tiffany, Water Dept. Supervisor
Resident Ron Gagnon

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 Hearing:

Chairman Proulx said the purpose of the public hearing is for the board to accept up to \$700,000 from the American Rescue Plan.

Mr. Capello said this is the bill that was passed in March to help offset the cost to communities and the Town of Farmington is eligible and will be receiving approx. \$696,000. He said the final number has not been set and that is why the notice says up to \$700,000 and it is based on a formula developed by the federal government.

He said there are restrictions on its use and he was looking for the board to accept the funds but he couldn't tell them what they can spend it on because that changes almost weekly.

He said he has gone through the **Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery** account process because the money will be distributed through GOFERR and that part is all set.

Mr. Johnson said the Town doesn't get the full amount.

Mr. Capello said the Town will get half of the money this year and half next year and it all has to be spent by 2024.

Mr. Johnson said if we don't have legitimate covered expenses we can't keep the money.

Mr. Capello said that is correct.

Mr. Johnson said if they only come up with \$10,000 of legitimate expenses that is all we get we don't get the full \$700,000.

Mr. Capello said that is correct. He emphasized that the way the bill was written this cannot be used to lower taxes. The federal government wrote directly into the bill that it can't be used for taxes so we are still deciphering what it can be used for he said.

Chairman Proulx opened the public hearing to public comments or questions at 6:03 p.m. She

then asked the board for their thoughts on the matter.

Mr. Johnson said they gave us a bucket of money and told us what we can't spend it on but we have no clue about what we can spend it on. Your federal government at work he said.

Mr. Capello said it appears most of the money could be spent on water/sewer improvements.

Chairman Proulx asked if they have come up with a definition of what "infrastructure" is yet.

Mr. Capello said no. He said in order to use it on a water/sewer project it has to be a federally approved water/sewer project and that he gave the board a list of federally approved water/sewer projects to review.

Chairman Proulx said they have another infrastructure "black cloud" hanging over their heads with the levee. I'd like to see if that would fall under it for water or wastewater and we do have that problem coming up soon she said.

Mr. Capello said the only thing he could say for sure was it cannot be used for the bridges.

Chairman Proulx said that doesn't make sense as it is infrastructure. She said that could be state funded but it hasn't been for a long time and she didn't know where they will go with that.

Mr. Johnson said they put \$5 million in the state budget for bridges which is enough for 4 small bridges.

Chairman Proulx said most of that money goes to the big towns and cities and we never get it.

Mr. Capello said he wished he could give the board more information but he doesn't have it.

Mr. Staples asked if there would be any penalties if they accept the funds, can't use it and have to give it back.

Mr. Capello said they would just have to return it. He said they would have to do reports to show what they spent it on qualifies.

Chairman Proulx asked once they figure what they want to do with it if there is anybody that can double check it so that half way through the project they won't have someone say that doesn't ring true.

Mr. Capello said he can try to get clarity but no one is going to sign their name to it saying this is what the feds are talking about. They're going to give us their interpretation he said.

Chairman Proulx once this comes in and they figure out what they think they can do with it the board will probably have to have another discussion about it.

She said she would leave the public hearing open for public comments for 30 minutes and moved on to other business.

4). Public Input:

Dick Dame Lane resident Ron Gagnon said he came to talk about the Fireworks Ordinance and there is a lot of confusion about how to go about getting a permit. He said he has tried to apply for one and that day he was unable to get one for the second time.

He said the first time he called the Fire Dept. and they said to come down and fill one out and when he got there it turned into it (display date) was too close to the time for the board to sign the permit. He said this time the Fire Chief was not there because he is on vacation right now.

Mr. Gagnon said he read the paperwork and it states you must have your application submitted 7 days prior to the day of the fireworks display and the Fire Dept. told him its 7 days prior to the Monday before the next Selectmen's meeting. He said tried to get them to come and check his site and there were 3 guys sitting in the air conditioning telling him they were too busy to come take a look and approve or deny him. They said the Fire Chief was not there, he didn't appoint a designee but the paperwork says "or designee". I feel like a lot of other people in town are having the same issue he said.

Mr. Capello said Mr. Gagnon came into the office earlier that day and they discussed this but he did not have a chance to follow up with the Fire Dept. on what the breakdown was with this. He said he will follow up with them and call Mr. Gagnon once he has more information.

Chairman Proulx asked if they could give Mr. Capello the power to sign on behalf of the board.

Mr. Capello said not yet. He said if it continues to be an issue and they have been documented then yes but this is the first issue they have seen and there have been several permits issued with the process. Based on the way the town residents wrote the ordinance until we can document several cases of it being an issue with getting a permit because of the Selectmen's meetings we have to follow the way the ordinance was written. Once we can document several cases then we can vary from that as far as the permit goes he said.

Chairman Proulx said the board can give Mr. Capello the authority to sign contracts on their behalf but they can't give him the authority to sign a permit.

Mr. Capello said that is because of the way that the residents that brought it forward wrote it. He said this had nothing to do with the Board of Selectmen and it was a warrant article that was brought forth by the residents not by the Selectmen and they have to follow it exactly how it was written until they can document several cases of it being an issue as far as issuing the permit before they can vary from that.

He said earlier the board wanted to appoint his as their designee but they weren't allowed to.

Mr. Vachon said they also tried to change how it took but they couldn't do anything to it.

Mr. Gagnon said they handed him a paper but they are not abiding by what it says on it.

Nowhere on the paperwork does it say it has to be passed in 7 days prior to the Monday before the board has a meeting. It just says 7days prior to the display he said.

Mr. Capello said he couldn't answer that because he hasn't had a chance to talk to anybody at the Fire Dept. to hear both sides of the issue.

Mr. Vachon asked with the 4th of July this weekend if they had any permits to approve tonight.

Mr. Capello said yes. He said until he has an opportunity to speak to everybody involved he didn't want to make assumptions.

Mr. Gagnon said he was also trying to figure out what the exact consequences are and how far they go.

Mr. Vachon said without a permit it's a \$25 fine and with a permit it's a \$500 fine. It's cheaper if the Chief comes up and gives you a ticket for firing fireworks off but if you have a permit and

violate the permit its more expensive he said.

Mr. Staples said it is a \$50 fine for the first offense.

Mr. Gagnon asked how far the fine can get taken and if they pass it on the state to pull their driver's licenses.

Mr. Vachon said that would be a simple violation not a moving violation so it wouldn't have anything to do with their licenses.

Mr. Gagnon asked if they don't pay the fine if it would turn into a suit between them and the Town.

Chief Drury said that is correct and they would be summoned to court like if you didn't pay a speeding ticket and then the court would make a determination as to whether you're guilty or not guilty like any other crime.

Mr. Vachon said it could be an arrestable offense if he didn't go to court and pay the fine.

Mr. Johnson asked if the initial ordinance allowed for the Fire Chief to appoint a designee.

Mr. Capello said he didn't recall and he would have to review the ordinance again.

Mr. Vachon recalled that it allowed for a designee for both the Police and Fire Chiefs.

Chief Drury said just the Fire Chief signs off on it and the Police are just on the enforcement end of it.

Mr. Staples said hopefully someone will come up with a petition to get rid of this.

Chairman Proulx asked how many cases need to be stymied because they have to do something.

Mr. Capello agreed but it has to be more than one case. He asked Mr. Gagnon if he knew anyone else who has run into this issue to ask them to put something in writing so they have the documentation to support their ability to make it easier for the residents.

Mr. Gagnon said he didn't know how to do that and asked to come to the Town office and get a quick walk through on how to do that. He said there about 50 or 60 people who understand there should be an ordinance for the downtown area but this ordinance involves everybody and there are quite a few people on the same page as he is.

Mr. Capello asked him to stop down tomorrow and he would give him some guidance.

Mr. Gagnon said he didn't even know about this until 2 months after it was approved.

Mr. Capello said encouraged everybody to attend the March Town Meeting. That's where this stuff is voted on and the residents that are there make the decisions for everybody he said.

Mr. Vachon asked Chief Drury if there have been any violations for not having a permit.

Chief Drury said to the best of his knowledge there have not been any violations yet and that the Fire Dept. has issued 5 permits.

Mr. Capello said there are two permit applications for the board to sign tonight. It is a very burdensome process he said.

Mr. Staples said the people that are trying to do things right are the ones they don't have to worry about. It's the ones downtown that are going to let them off on the 4th that don't care

about that permit he said.

Mr. Vachon said the Police Chief and his officers are going to be busy this weekend if they only have 4 permits and 2 of them are for this weekend.

5). Review of Minutes:

June 14, 2021- Public Session Minutes – No errors or omissions

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to accept the minutes as written;

Discussion: Mr. Vachon asked if they ever found out what the \$132 expense for screws and washers was for as mentioned in these minutes.

Mr. Capello said he planned to bring that up tonight because the board needs to sign the purchase order. He said it was for the washers and screws to attach the speed bumps (at the Hornetown Road Bridge).

Vote: The motion passed 4-0.

June 14, 2021- Non-Public Sessions A & B Minutes – No errors or omissions

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0.

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to unseal Non-Public sessions A & B passed 4-0.

June 16, 2021- Selectmen/School Board Joint Public Session Minutes –No errors or omissions

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0.

Mr. Capello said he pulled up the Fireworks Ordinance on his computer and verified that it is a \$50 fine if you light off fireworks and get a ticket without a permit and the second offense is a \$100 fine. He said it does only state that it has to be 7 days prior to the display and he would get some clarity on what that was all about.

June 16, 2021 – BOS/School Board Joint Session Non-Public Session A-tabled to the next meeting to allow the board time to read them.

6). Dog Warrant:

Chief Drury came forward and gave a copy of the dog warrant he received from the Town Clerk earlier that day to the board. He said by state statute they have to have the Selectmen sign off on it this evening because it's one of those 20 days before/20 days after situations and then they will start making phone calls to remind people that haven't paid to license their dogs and 20 days after that usually on August 1 they start to fine people.

Mr. Vachon said he just signed one of these not that long ago.

Mr. Capello said the Chief brought it to the board two weeks ago in case he wasn't going to be here but they couldn't sign it at that meeting.

Mr. Johnson suggested that maybe he signed it because he wasn't going to be here for the meeting.

Mr. Vachon said the Town Clerk asked him about a month ago to sign something about dogs.

Chairman Proulx asked how many dogs are unlicensed in town.

Chief Drury said it is much better this year and there are about 250 unlicensed dogs. He said it

has been as high as well over 400.

Mr. Vachon asked for the total number of dogs in town.

Mr. Johnson said there are over 700 dogs that are licensed.

Chief Drury estimated there are over 1,000 dogs in town. He said once the warrant is signed he can make a copy of it for the Town Clerk and then he has to do a return before August 31 with statistics for the board.

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to approve signing the warrant for unlicensed dogs passed 4-0.

7). COVID-19 Update:

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds - Mr. Capello said he gave the board the latest question and answer document dated June 17 and there is now one dated June 27 and he will give that to them in their next meeting packet.

TV Update- Mr. Capello pointed out the stack of boxes under Cable TV Coordinator Robert Hall's desk containing the equipment needed to live stream the meetings on the internet. He said the installer will coordinate with Mr. Hall next week after the July 4th holiday to set a date for the installation which should take about a day to complete.

Mr. Vachon asked if there will be a link to the live streaming site on the Town's website.

Mr. Capello said once they get everything set up they will do a link, an e-mail blast and put the information on Face book.

Chairman Proulx said that it will also give them more reach if an emergency should occur.

Mr. Capello said it will give those residents that don't have cable or satellite TV because of the cost an opportunity to see the meetings live. He said in some cases some people come down because they see something on there they don't necessarily understand or agree with so it gives them an opportunity for more resident participation.

8). Close Public Hearing:

Chairman Proulx asked if there was any further discussion on the public hearing. Hearing none she closed the public comment portion of the hearing at 6:30 p.m.

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to accept up to \$700,000 from the American Recovery Plan passed 4-0.

9). Town Administrator's Business:

a). Sewer Rates- Mr. Capello said as the board has seen on the weekly cash flow sheet the sewer is running in the negative and they are here to talk about it understanding there is going to be a broader discussion of the sewer and water rates. He said there has been talk about what to do with the depreciation fund, what should and shouldn't be in the budget and that is a very valid, broad discussion the board needs to have but that's a discussion better suited for September when they start the budgeting process.

He said they're looking for the board to make a short term fix and they're not looking to go up \$1.66 as they understand that's not even feasible especially since they haven't had that discussion yet as a dept. and a board on what should and shouldn't be in there. He said they are looking for an increase of maybe 25 cents now to help offset the budget and when they have that broader discussion they can discuss what they need to do for next year.

Water/Sewer Dept. Supervisor Chuck Tiffany said they brought the sewer rate up by a quarter from \$7.19 to \$7.44 (per 100 cubic ft.) in 2019.

Chairman Proulx said she didn't see that as unreasonable with the bigger picture come budget time. She said in the memo to the board Mr. Tiffany gave the household size and cost increase and asked if they did that for the 25 cents increase so they could give viewers an idea of what the extra might cost them.

Mr. Tiffany said he didn't do that for 25 cent increase and just did it for the \$1.66 increase from \$7.44 to \$9.10 per 100 cubic ft. of water and that averages out to about 97 cents per day per person. He said with 4 people in a household that would be a cost increase of \$258 per year. Chairman Proulx said a 25 cent increase would be under that and asked if that would get them closer to what they have to do as far as closing the gap.

Mr. Tiffany said yes for this year but not overall.

Mr. Capello said it will get us closer and give them the time to look at the bigger picture and the opportunity to look at increasing it which will help us with the grant processes. It gives us an opportunity to at least start this process he said.

Chairman Proulx said she didn't see any way around it at this point. She said what the final number will shake down to once they have that discussion she didn't know. That gives people a heads up that this is moving a bit and people are made aware this is a moving target she said.

Mr. Vachon said at 25 cents with Mr. Tiffany's numbers they are looking at \$40 a year for a 4 person house. He said it's \$30.87 for a 3 person house and \$19.50 for a two person house per Mr. Tiffany's calculations per the standard water use.

Chairman Proulx said that's not too bad generally and that's \$10 a quarter for a 4 person house using the standard number so that gives them an idea that things are moving a bit. It's a reasonable way to go and as long as the rate payers are treated as fairly as possible I won't jump up and down about it she said.

Mr. Johnson said it has to go up as the cost of chemicals is gone through the roof. He said many pool owners can't get chlorine and asked if they could get chlorine.

Mr. Tiffany said he could get liquid chlorine but not the tablets.

Mr. Vachon said he is in this field and the prices have gone up quite a bit in the last year.

Mr. Tiffany said he would provide an update on the chemical costs to the board.

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to increase the sewer rates by 25 cents effective the next billing cycle passed 4-0.

Mr. Johnson said when this comes at budget season there are two corrections needed: page 2,

chart, sewer use in million gallons per year row- we didn't use 56,000 million gallons. He said it should 56.048.

He said they are quoting the sewer rate which is \$7.19 for 100 cubic ft. but they give the usage in gallons.

Mr. Capello said it should be one or the other.

Mr. Johnson said that way he could verify that the numbers are right. He said there are 7.48 gallons in 100 cubic ft. of water.

Chairman Proulx asked to have it all done in gallons as that is easier and then they don't have to convert it.

Mr. Vachon said they charge by 100 cubic ft. not by the gallon. He said if they convert to the gallon that's not going to make the sewer rates right and they would off by cubic ft. because that's what they charge by.

Chairman Proulx said she could do one conversion at the end but didn't want to convert it back and forth.

Mr. Johnson he would rather go with 100 cubic ft. because the residents know that they're getting charged \$7.19 for 100 cubic ft. and they talk about 100 cubic ft. units.

Chairman Proulx said as long as the units stay the same throughout she has no problem with it.

Mr. Vachon said it's easy enough to convert it but what's on the bill is easier for the taxpayers.

b). Proposed IT Policies – Mr. Capello asked the board to turn to the proposed IT policies required by the auditors and written by the Town's IT contractor. He said if there were no changes to be made he will put them on Town letterhead and bring them to the board to sign. Mr. Capello said they have been working on them since last year and there are still more they are doing. He then asked the board for a motion to approve the policies that were submitted.

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to approve C9018 User Access Rights, C9013 Information Security Policy, C9014 & C9017 User Creation, Alteration and Suspension Procedures, C9012 System Incident Reporting & Resolution, C9003 & C9004 Local Backup & Data Retention Policy, C9005 Server & Application Recovery Procedure and Testing and C9011 Environmental Controls for IT Equipment passed 4-0.

c). Resignation – Mr. Capello said he received a letter of resignation from Cody Guile.

Motion: (Vachon, second Johnson) to accept the resignation of Firefighter/AEMT Cody Guile passed 4-0.

d). Hornetown Road Bridge – Mr. Capello asked the board for a motion to withdraw \$14,521.51 from the Bridges and Road Design Capital Reserve Fund.

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to withdraw \$14, 521.51 from the Bridges and Road Design Capital Reserve Fund passed 4-0.

Mr. Capello said there is currently \$25,839 in this CRF.

Mr. Johnson said there would be a \$100,000 deposit going in there at the end of the year if that is available in the undesignated fund balance.

Mr. Capello said they haven't made any deposits in any of CRF's and it must be done by Dec. 15.

e). Annual Report for School Resource Officer Program – Chief Drury said the board received copies of the report required by Memorandum of Agreement for the SRO Program in their meeting packets. He said they tried to provide statistics and to do better reporting to make it easier for everybody to pull the numbers when needed on a semi-annual basis.

He thanked Superintendent Ruth Ellen Vaughn for preparing the report with the dept.'s input. She did a very professional job and I appreciate the assistance she gave in formulating the final report for the Selectmen and the School Board he said.

Mr. Capello complimented the Chief and Mrs. Vaughn on a very well written and informative report. He said it has a lot of the information the Chief included in his draft report and now that the two of them had an opportunity to collaborate it is presented very well.

Chairman Proulx asked if this data collection spreadsheet is what the School Board was looking for when they spoke with them the other day.

Chief Drury said yes and they can provide those numbers this way and this is going to be a working document. He said they will have to tweak it a little as they get closer to the school year and they want to make this document something that it only takes a minute to fill out. He said they can corroborate those numbers with the reports they see here like the records analysis reports that follow so they know they haven't missed anything or left anything out. The SRO doesn't have to run these reports and that's something we can do in-house he said.

The Chief said there will only be 2 people allowed to populate the spreadsheet one being the SRO and other likely being the Capt. He said for everybody else it will be a read only document so they can check it whenever they want to and see the statistics for each school.

Mr. Johnson asked for the estimated manpower required per month to fill out all these forms. Chief Drury said he didn't think it will be very much. He said on page 2, SRO/FPD Responses to Calls for Service in Farmington Schools they tried to make it a document you could roll down with and the date would be next to it for whatever she does. He suggested they fill them out on a weekly basis and there would be one spreadsheet for each school and they were trying to make it as easy as possible for everybody.

Mr. Johnson said he wanted to make sure the scope of it doesn't expand over time as these things tend to take on a life of their own. He said he didn't have an issue with giving the required information but he didn't want to see the SRO, Chief or the Capt. spending 4 hours a week compiling it.

Chief Drury said he wanted to keep it to a minute a day.

Lt. Embrey said if they make it part of the daily routine it should only take seconds to complete.

Mr. Johnson suggested the dept. spend no more than 2 hours a month on the reports and that more than covers it and gives some leeway. Anything more than 2 hours we want to know about he said.

Chief Drury agreed.

Consensus of the board was to agree with Mr. Johnson's suggestion.

Chairman Proulx asked if the School Board has seen the annual report.

Chief Drury said they are seeing it tonight just as the Selectmen are for the first time and they will wait for their feedback.

f). Proposed Police Dept. Wage Increases – Chief Drury said he appreciated the board giving them time to discuss the pay for Police officers. He said the Finance Administrator ran the numbers and they will have to keep the discussion general as they try to follow the rules from two weeks ago and discussion of individual officers will have to be done in non-public session. He said Mrs. Merrill gave him 2 e-mails that day one on the current status of his budget at the mid-point of the year. He said his budget is approx. \$117,000 in the black because they haven't had 2 officers for the last 6 months.

The Chief said the board was given a proposal and trying to budget for the worst case scenario for the rest of the year is \$52,927 giving his dept. a surplus of \$64,072 if they were to implement the goals they are trying to achieve.

He said he feels comfortable this year and he knows that there are a lot of other moving parts to this with the other depts. He said he is a little concerned about doing this next year because they will be looking at an increase to cover the whole year next year. In my opinion next year's budget will probably be about \$100,000 higher if all of this went through he said.

Mr. Capello asked if the \$60,000 surplus includes the 2 vacancies filled. He said the original spreadsheet didn't have the vacancies filled and he carried the numbers across.

Chief Drury said yes and if they filled the vacancies tonight that would be it. He said he was invited to sit in on Milton's oral boards on Wednesday and they are looking for applicants and he is hoping somebody will be interested in the Town of Farmington in that process.

Mr. Johnson asked if he understood correctly that the \$117,000 projected surplus includes if those 2 vacant positions were filled today.

Chief Drury said yes.

Mr. Johnson said since they know they are not going to be filled today it's probably going to be a little more than \$117,000.

Chief Drury agreed and said the absolute soonest they could fill a position would be August 1 and try to get them into the Sept. Policy Academy.

Chairman Proulx asked what that would do to the bottom line of the budget. She said the Chief hasn't been able to spend some of his money but they've had to spend in other areas so she was looking at the total budget bottom line.

Mr. Capello said if you look at the total budget bottom line and go with the Chief's plan for his surplus they would be at even which is very tight and not having hired for the Executive Secretary and Land Use Asst. positions we don't know what we have to deal with for salaries for those positions. If you implement the entire plan right now it would be very scary. We're about \$50,000 in the hole right now salary-wise based on the employees they already hired he said.

Mr. Johnson asked if there were candidates for those positions.

Mr. Capello said yes for the Executive Secretary position but there are no candidates for the Land Use Asst. position.

Mr. Johnson said it would be a minimum of a couple of weeks to bring the Secretary on board and at least a month for the Land Use Asst. He asked the Chief for the proposed effective date for the increases.

Chief Drury said based on the calculations it would take effect July 1 or whenever the next pay period is. We're willing to work to make sure the Town stays in the black he said.

Chairman Proulx said the Police Dept. is in the black but the Town is not in the black.

Mr. Capello said based on the overall savings the bottom line of the budget would be but if they implement the plan completely he couldn't promise them that. He said they also spent more on paving because the price of paving went up.

Mr. Johnson asked how they could pay more when they had a bid.

Mr. Capello said there was language that said it would be current market price when the work was done.

Mr. Johnson said he didn't remember seeing that and they only got the bids a month ago.

Mr. Capello said it is very unpredictable with the way the cost of everything is going up. He said he got a quote for oil and it's about \$1 more a gallon next year than what we are paying now.

Chairman Proulx said she was more worried about getting through this year than next year because they can budget for next year.

Mr. Capello said of the items will affect this year's budget such as the oil and propane costs will go into effect in October of this year. He said they could look at implementing something but he wouldn't feel comfortable implementing the Chief's entire plan this year.

The Chief said one of the things they have to do is to get the starting pay increased as they had discussed as well as for the couple of officers that affects. Then I think we would be able to possibly do something to work with the Town whether that was 75% in July or August and 25% in November or December to make up the difference on the proposal he said.

Mr. Capello said he agreed with the Chief on what they need to do with those 2-4 officers and that he would reevaluate it as they get closer to the end of the year and see where they are financially. He said they still don't have concrete numbers from the state on the revenue they will be getting from the Highway Block Grant and the Rooms and Meals Tax.

Chief Drury said his biggest fear is he doesn't show some progress for the agency instead of being down 2 he will be down 4 officers. He said there are several that are out of contract and unfortunately it's a very unusual time.

Chairman Proulx said she was not saying no but it's a matter of making sure our finances are where they need to be for what we absolutely need. She suggested they could do the increases in sections starting with a higher starting pay to try to get individuals to come in, review the budget in a few months and then maybe do the next section of officers so that by the end of

the year they would get it but it may not be a 75% chunk when we don't know where we're at. Mr. Johnson asked if she was looking to do some officers now and some later.

Chairman Proulx said she was looking at taking the Chief's priority which is to try to get officers in at a higher base salary and those few that are right in that area and then in a couple of months take a look at the budget and where we fall and maybe try to do the next section. We're still going forward but we don't try to do 75% and put ourselves in a bigger debt where we don't know what the future holds she said.

Mr. Johnson said for the moment to take the new hires and the 2 lower positions out of the discussion and make the assumption that the board would probably go along with something for that at this point. He said he is concerned about the rest of the officers and asked if she was envisioning just doing a salary increase for certain individual officers outside of the new hires and the lower paid officers.

Chairman Proulx said it would be the next group that would be affected by the bump from the lower end

Mr. Johnson said he couldn't agree to that because that would put the burden of supporting the dept. without increasing the wages on select officers. He said for example if they have 4 sergeants and they give increases to the 2 lowest paid sergeants.

Chairman Proulx said she would do all the sergeants together if you are going to do sergeants.

Mr. Johnson said if they were going to do that, then they should do everyone because it's not fair to those remaining to give up money while their partners get the extra money. He said he was suggesting they give an increase effective on whatever date of 25% of what they are considering across the board and that would be roughly \$17,000-\$18,000 based on his \$52,000 increase. That still leaves \$100,000 in his unspent budget he said.

Chairman Proulx said she asked for the bottom line and Mr. Capello said we are \$50,000 in the negative. She said he was telling her that with all the ups and downs of all the depts. they are \$50,000 shy of where they should be at this point.

Mr. Capello said that was his misunderstanding of her question.

Chairman Proulx then asked where they are.

Mr. Capello said that is a number he couldn't give them right now because he would have to have Mrs. Merrill run that number for him.

Chairman Proulx said when she looks at money at the end of the year with the total budget they have to be in the black. She said she was glad Chief Drury's budget is \$117,000 up but if they are down anyplace else and they have to make up for that somewhere this is what she is talking about. I don't have anything in front of me that tells me where we're at she said.

Mr. Capello said the \$50,000 was a raw number based on the new hires and he took the increase off the bottom line for just the new hires not for the whole Town budget. He said for example for the finance person he took what they budgeted for that position and with the new hire what that line is going to be and they have to find the money to cover that cost.

Mr. Staples said they are also down staff in the highway garage so they should be saving there. Mr. Johnson said they should be and that is what they have to confirm. He said he understood the \$50,000 was based on you know what you budgeted for those 2 positions and you know about the extra expenses that account for the \$50,000 and there's a few other things in there besides salaries.

Lt. Embrey said even if you account for that \$50,000 shortfall (from the Chief's surplus) it still leaves the Town's bottom line at least \$64,000 in the black.

Chairman Proulx said unless they are under in other depts. they are not aware of or if their revenue comes in short.

Mr. Staples said he has a hard time telling the Chief he has done a great job budgeting but we can't take care of his officers or get him more officers because we're short in other depts. too. We're punishing him for being good he said.

Mr. Vachon asked if he saves money and they have a horrible winter and go \$1 million in debt on salt the bottom line budget is going to put the whole town \$750,000 over budget just because we had a bad winter but we're going to hire more officers and pay them more. He said he saved \$60,000 on salt last year and they took it out of his budget and gave it to the Police Dept. (in Somersworth). He said it doesn't matter how much you save it's a bottom line budget with every dept. within a municipality. If one does good and one does bad because of circumstances it doesn't matter it all has to balance out. We can't go into debt as a community he said.

Chairman Proulx said with all of the COVID stuff that's happened it's been a problem and a situation and not just for this town. She said it's everywhere and some of them are worse off than we are. We've done fairly well and we've been able to recoup some money through various efforts she said.

Mr. Johnson suggested they increase the Police new hire rates for the open positions and the 2 lowest positions that those new rates would affect immediately so they can start looking for people at this new salary range and then wait for Mrs. Merrill's final number taking into account all of the dept.'s overages and shortages and see where they stand currently or at whatever date they want to pick. Then we can decide what we're going to do and whether it's going to be 25% now and look at it again in Oct. with another potential increase depending on the budget or it could be nothing and they may have to wait until next year. I think we have to do a token sometime this year so they know we are sincere about adjusting it he said.

Chairman Proulx asked what other depts. they need to look at.

Mr. Capello said they are down 2 people in the DPW and their salaries are union controlled. Chairman Proulx said if they are going to look at salaries she wasn't just going to look at one dept. and ignore everybody else at this point.

Mr. Johnson asked the Chief and the Lt. what they thought the reaction would be knowing how bad the budget is if they gave a token increase to show they're sincere about it and if that

would have an impact.

Chief Drury said it would have an impact and would be a step in the right direction. He said he was nervous and they could discuss some of his concerns in non-public session because there may be some leap-frogging they may have to try to adjust for. He said they want to work with the Town to achieve all their goals and these are unprecedented times but he is nervous about what the next 6 months holds for the agency.

Chairman Proulx said she was worried about the whole town and she was trying to look out for everything and give everybody something to hope for.

Chief Drury said if they were to lose 2 more officers they would have to put an officer on call.

Lt. Embrey said if they lose 2 more they will lose 4 more after that immediately and he was not sure how much longer he will be here. He said the challenges the board is looking at are difficult but he needs to let the board know how critical the issue they're facing is and he can't say some things right now because it involves individual people.

He said the dept. is already stretched to the absolute max so if they go down again they're going to lose almost everybody and it's not because the people don't like working here. We're one of the busiest towns that work the hardest and we're paid the least. It's not hard for an officer to leave especially when they are younger and earlier in their career. I can leave and make more money in my home town as patrolman than I do as a Lieutenant here he said.

Mr. Johnson said if we don't have the money to pay for it, it doesn't matter who's here.

Chairman Proulx said the Chief could make more money elsewhere too and they know that and it's not that they don't appreciate it and everybody in town appreciates it.

Chief Drury said many officers have given decades here and they appreciate it and the Town has always been very understanding. He said they just want to make sure they understand where they are, the struggles they are having and we have to try and figure this out.

Chairman Proulx said they would put this on hold for now, do the rest of the business and then go into non-public session to continue this discussion.

g). Committee Application – Mr. Capello said they received an application today from Bruce Bridges requesting to be appointed to the Budget Committee for a 1 year term.

Mr. Johnson said Bud Com appointments don't come before the Selectmen.

Chairman Proulx said the Bud Com appoints the people to fill their vacancies.

Mr. Capello said he would forward the request to Bud Com Chair Jodi Connolly.

h). Fireworks Permit Approvals – Mr. Capello said he received permit applications from Richard Sullivan and Gregory Cummings and all the inspections have been done for both sites and the Fire Chief and the Fire Inspector have signed off on the applications.

Mr. Vachon asked for the addresses where the displays are planned.

Mr. Johnson said 119 Ten Rod Road (Greg Cummings) and 171 Ten Rod Road (Robin Sullivan).

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to approve the fireworks permit for Gregory Cummings for the display on July 3 and to authorize Chairman Proulx to sign it passed 4-0.

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to approve the fireworks permit for Robin Sullivan, 171 Ten Rod Road for the display date of July 2 and to authorize Chairman Proulx to sign it passed 3-0-1 (Vachon abstained).

i). Settlement Agreement with Consolidated Communications – Mr. Capello said this is dealing with the tax abatements for their poles, etc. He recommended the board sign the agreement as it is a very good deal and allows the Town to make 2 payments of \$49,034.88 over the next 2 years. It's a substantial savings based on what the potential loss could have been if the Town had lost the case and it gets us out of a legal case and saves us legal fees he said.

Mr. Johnson said the first payment is due Dec. 31, 2021.

Mr. Capello said he would have this included in the cash analysis.

Mr. Johnson said they bumped up the overlay to cover this potential but he didn't know how much and that would be something they would have to look into. He said he did not know how much impact this would have on the budget if any.

Mr. Capello said he would find out.

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to agree to and sign the Settlement Agreement with Consolidated Communications present owner of Fairpoint for their tax appeal cases that were settled for the amount of \$98,070 to be paid over two years passed 4-0.

Mr. Vachon asked about the deadline to have all 5 Selectmen sign the agreement and return it and how that would work with Mr. Dickie out of state.

Mr. Capello said he will talk to the Town Attorney and that theoretically there is a majority of the board's signatures there and it shouldn't matter if it's 3 or 5 signatures.

j). Conservation Land Transfer – Mr. Capello said he talked to the Town Attorney about the Town owned conservation land (Tax Map R3, Lot 17-3, Rte. 11) the board wants to give to the Conservation Commission and she said because it's from one Town entity to another Town entity they don't have to hold a public hearing. He said he asked her to draw up the deed to make sure all the easements, etc. were included in the deed. She is on vacation this week so it will probably be a few weeks before they receive it he said.

He said there was some question from a resident about whether they have to follow RSA 41:14 which they do not because they are not selling the property it's going from one Town entity to another.

10). Additional Board Business:

a). Solar Power Update- Mr. Johnson asked for an update on the landfill solar power project. Mr. Capello said the Town Attorney has drawn up an addendum based on the feedback from the last meeting which has gone over to Blue Planet and they haven't responded yet.

b).Credit Card Use – Mr. Johnson asked about the credit card readers for the Transfer Station. Mr. Capello said they are up and running there and also in the Planning and Recreation Depts. He said the credit card company did a training session for the staff and its all set.

c). Property Liens- Mr. Vachon asked about the spreadsheet with property owner's names and

the amounts collected and why some liens were not collected after the property was sold. Mr. Capello said the property may not have been sold for enough to pay the lien and he would have to ask the Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

d). DPW Monthly Report- Mr. Vachon asked for the following information:

Work Orders- to include the mileage on the trucks and number of hours on the backhoe

Culvert Invoice for Juniper Lane- clarify if the quantity was 10 loads or 10 yards of $\frac{3}{4}$ gravel at \$311.50. He said if that is what it costs the Town to have it made that's not what we should charge for it and we should be charging face value because we have replenish our stock.

No Call Log- He said the log was not provided and it's the 4th board meeting of the month.

Storage of Materials in Town Pit – Custom Crushing was supposed to leave the Town pit by 5/14 but didn't leave until after 5/28. He asked if there was anything in contract requiring them to pay the Town for storage of their equipment for 2 weeks.

Downtown Trash Barrels – He asked the Chief if they find household trash in the trash cans downtown if they go through it to find addresses so the Police can get them for illegal dumping. Chief Drury said occasionally they do and they have contacted the dept. if they find anything.

Pine Knoll Resident Complaint – He said the line of sight of people coming off of Rt. 11 down Central Street is obstructed by 3 large trees right by the STOP sign at Pine Knoll Drive and asked to have DPW look into it.

Dirt Road Conditions- Mr. Vachon asked if they could send the loader out to address some of the rough spots if they can't get the whole grading crew out there. He said they are not in horrible shape but there are sections that could benefit from a loader bucket doing some back dragging, cutting and filling in some ruts and potholes.

Missing Boot- Chairman Proulx said the DPW Director has reported the hanging wire and missing boot on Ten Rod Road to the telephone company.

Mr. Capello said the company said they will do it when they can get to it.

e). Hornetown Road Bridge – Mr. Capello said the board saw the recommendations from the architect and Chief Drury on the speed bumps there and he was looking for guidance from the board. He said after the work on noise issue was done they told the residents they would talk about it again and asked what they wanted to do.

Chief Drury said it is a slalom course right now and he would like to see either the 2 speed bumps put together to make one on either side of bridge or put two more out there so each lane would have its own set. He said they are slowing down but they are zigzagging around the bumps.

Mr. Vachon asked if there are signs stating speed bump ahead up there.

Chief Drury said yes.

Mr. Capello said they need to keep them there and it will help the integrity of what they just spent \$20,000 to do but that is a board decision.

Mr. Vachon said the angle iron on the side was bent by the boards coming up and slapping

them because motorists were not slowing down. He said speed kills everything- dirt roads, bridges, asphalt and that's what happens to the dirt roads they're nice and smooth and then people do 50 or 60 mph down them.

Mr. Staples said we're never going to get the money to fix that bridge if we keep putting money into this temporary bridge. He asked how they could ask taxpayers to put money aside for a new bridge and then we take out of that fund to fix this temporary bridge. That doesn't make sense he said.

Mr. Johnson suggested they join the bumps on each side and if funds become available they can purchase a second set.

Consensus of the board was to put the speed bumps together.

Mr. Staples asked if they will have to spend another \$132 for washers and lags.

Mr. Capello said they should be able to use the existing ones.

11). Non-Public Session A:

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (a, c) Compensation of Public Employees, Reputation passed 4-0 by a roll call vote (Proulx, Johnson, Vachon, Staples-aye) at 7:51 p.m.

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 at 8:42 p.m.

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to follow Chief Drury's recommendations for the new hires' pay rate increase and for the individual officers affected below the new hire rate and to give 33% of Chief Drury's recommended increases to the Sergeants, the Lieutenant and the Captain effective July 11 passed 4-0.

Consensus of the board was if additional funds become available to revisit the pay rates.

12). Next Meeting: Monday, July 12, 2021

No meeting on Monday, July 5 due to the Independence Day holiday.

13). Adjournment:

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to adjourn the meeting passed 4-0 at 8:43 p. m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon, Recording Secretary

Paula Proulx, Chairman

Neil Johnson, Vice Chairman

Gerry Vachon

Douglas Staples