

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 16, 2021

Board Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Arthur Capello, Town Administrator
James Reinert, Fire Chief
Erica Rogers, Rec. Dept. Director

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: None

4). Review of Minutes:

August 2, 2021 – Public Session – No errors or omissions

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0-1 (Vachon abstained).

August 2, 2021- Non-Public Sessions A & B – No errors or omissions

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0-1 (Vachon abstained).

5). Recreation Dept. Winter Scheduling:

Rec. Dept. Director Erica Rogers said the last time she met with the board they discussed some of the things people were questioning about childcare on snow days, staff development days and the extra holidays the school district has. She said she looked at it with her staff and they did not see any reason not to be open on those days though generally they never did before.

Mrs. Rogers said on snow days, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and the week of Christmas break the Rec. Dept. staff is in the building and working so she didn't have a good argument to not be open those days and those seem to be problem days for parents.

Chairman Proulx said if they gave this a try and there was no participation they could say this is no big deal and then go back to what they've been doing forever. She then asked if the board had any disagreements with Mrs. Rogers's proposal.

Mr. Johnson said for the most part he was okay with it but was concerned about the 5 scholarships and where that came from.

Mrs. Rogers said they have done that in the past and they have been asked about it a few times

for the summer camp but she felt they weren't ready to dive into that yet.

Chairman Proulx said they used to put away about \$3,000 every year for that.

Mr. Johnson said that would be a \$12,000 expense.

Chairman Proulx said that would depend on how much the scholarships are and asked if they would be full or partial scholarships.

Mr. Johnson said he assumed it would be the full rate and at a minimum that would be \$12,000.

Mrs. Rogers said she planned to do it based on income and it would depend on if a family qualified for a full scholarship or if they could afford to pay something.

Chairman Proulx said last year they put \$1 in the budget as a placeholder because they didn't do it because the Rec. Dept. wasn't open.

Mr. Capello said this is something where they could wait and look at it more for next year.

Chairman Proulx said it could be done during budget season so they can put it in the budget again.

Mr. Johnson asked where that was listed in the budget.

Chairman Proulx said it was listed under Recreation Grant (line 01-4520-10-832).

Mr. Capello said he wouldn't budget for it and would just absorb it in the Rec. Revolving Fund.

Mr. Johnson he didn't think they could do that with the Rec. Revolving Fund. He asked how many seats were planned for this.

Mrs. Rogers said she was planning for 30 seats. She said originally she told the board they were planning for 25 but the last week they ran about 32-33 during the week and it seemed to be okay with the current staff they had so they felt comfortable going up to 30 spots after school.

Mr. Johnson said they would look at it for next year and the discussion then would be if they are only looking at 30 seats he would reduce the number because this was funded when they had 50-60 seats with 5 scholarships and the income to support it would be reduced by 60%.

He said the additional charge for staff development days and holidays can be mapped out and predicted but not so much for snow days and asked if that would be voluntary.

Mrs. Rogers said yes and if a parent is keeping their kids they shouldn't have to pay for that.

Mr. Johnson said he was thinking of snow days where maybe only 2 kids show up.

Mrs. Rogers said the additional charge (\$30 per snow day, staff development day and holidays) is to cover the cost of staffing and materials and they wouldn't need all 4 staff members if only 2 kids showed up.

Mr. Johnson said snow days are going to be rough. He said they call off school at 5 a.m. and the Town may not call it until noon and then they have to worry about getting kids home at noon and their parents are expecting us to watch them until 4:30 p.m.

Chairman Proulx suggested if they want to do this that it is written up in a policy they agree to with an emergency number so if there is an emergency and everybody goes home these people can be reached. She said that would be part of a process which they would need to establish so

the parents realize that.

Mr. Vachon said on all those days parents still have to work and the snow days might be a logistical nightmare but it would be appreciated by parents even if they only got a half day in at work as not everyone gets paid time off.

Mr. Johnson asked Mrs. Rogers if she predicts the school district's after school program to have much of an impact on the Rec. Dept. after school program.

Mrs. Rogers said yes.

Mr. Johnson asked then why they would bother.

Mrs. Rogers said she didn't know what the school is planning for snow days, staff development days and vacation days and if their program would be running on those days. She said they can't beat the \$30 a week they are offering.

Mr. Johnson said that will be another issue for budget season as to where that subsidy is coming from.

Chairman Proulx said she was hoping the proposed \$60 subsidy per child was not coming from tax dollars.

Mr. Capello said based on the School Board meeting he watched they would be taking it from the federal stimulus money.

Mrs. Rogers said she didn't know what that will do to their numbers and if the 30 spots will be filled.

Mr. Johnson asked if they are planning on doing it this coming school year.

Mrs. Rogers said her information is per the School Board meeting she watched and she hasn't spoken to anyone at the school district. I don't know how far they are in the process and if it will start at the beginning of Sept. she said.

Mr. Capello said the school is running the program through the YMCA who knows what they are doing with this stuff and from what he saw at the meeting they are looking at sign-ups soon. They signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the YMCA to run it he said.

Chairman Proulx said they have an air purifier at the Rec. Dept. so they don't have run around wearing masks. She suggested they purchase a small unit for the lower level of the building using some of the federal funds available.

Mr. Capello said he didn't know what the "Y's" policy is but the school is not mandating masks although that could change because the Dept. of Education and Center for Disease Control have come out with new recommendations.

Mr. Dickie said he thought the Y is limited in how many spots they will offer.

Mrs. Rogers said she heard they are offering 50 spots at each location but those details haven't come out yet.

Chairman Proulx said they shouldn't base what the Town does on what the school does.

Mr. Johnson said they need to be prepared for the possibility that only a dozen people sign up and then they would have to look whether the program is going to be viable and if they are

going to keep it. We have to be prepared to move onto to something if that occurs he said.

Mr. Capello asked if Mrs. Rogers has received any sign-ups yet.

Mrs. Rogers said they have 5 full time kids signed up who have paid and 4 which would take two spots for part time. She said she planned to push it more after this meeting to make sure they put out the right information based on whatever they agreed on tonight.

Mr. Staples asked how the part time spots would work on a snow day.

Mrs. Rogers said she didn't think they would have enough part-timers for it to be an issue and 2 extra kids wouldn't throw off their numbers because there will be 4 staff members on site. She said 2 staff members are both Para's but in different districts so one may have a snow day where the other does not which puts them down 1 staff member and on professional development days they would not be available until the after school program so it would be just herself and the Assistant Director in the building during the day.

Mr. Johnson said it may not be worth it to worry about the snow days as it sounds like a major hassle.

Chairman Proulx said they could always do it first come, first served. If it's two staff people in the building and you're limited 10-15 kids that's all you can take she said.

Mrs. Rogers said when they looked at the 30 spots, the Para's will follow the snow days so there could be 3 staffers for 30 kids and that would be 10 kids per staff member and there would still be enough staff to assist the younger kids with whatever they're doing.

Mr. Johnson said they may need to feel their way around on this.

Mrs. Rogers said once school starts she's hoping to get this out to the high school and hire some high school students so that they would have some extra help.

Mr. Capello said this aspect is going to be trial and error and to his knowledge during his 6 years here they have never offered care on snow days or during half days. He said they also have other activities there now instead of just daycare that they need to make sure they can still do too for the residents.

Mr. Johnson asked how they will get the kids to the Rec. Center.

Mrs. Rogers said when the weather permits they will walk and stop and let them play on the playground so they can get some energy out between school and Rec. time. She said she is able to drive the smaller van so they at least have that.

Consensus of the board was to allow Mrs. Rogers to move forward as proposed.

Chairman Proulx asked Mrs. Rogers to update Mr. Capello and the board on how things are going as the program moves forward.

6). Discussion with Chief Reinert:

a). New Engine – Fire Chief James Reinert said that last week the new engine they ordered was delivered and on Wednesday they will take official delivery of it as they are coming back to mount all the tools and the hose will be delivered on Wednesday. He said it will probably take a week or two to get some in-service training to make sure everybody is familiar with the new

technology and how it operates.

b). Fire Dept. Wage Study – Chief Reinert said the last time he spoke with the board they decided to go with the certification based pay scale and asked how they wanted to attack the items.

Chairman Proulx suggested they look at the incentives for the increases the Chief built into this first to make sure they are in agreement with that before going forward.

Chief Reinert said he was looking at moving the pay scale from the Firefighter starting wage of \$15 an hour capping out at \$24 an hour and building upon that based on the certifications they have when they come on or they currently have. He said there's a ton of different certifications they can get within the fire service that are all important and can have a benefit to the dept. and he keyed on the ones he feels the basic Firefighter/EMT should have. For the level 1 and level 2 that's an increase of 25 cents each for a total of 50 cents more if they have both he said. He said the next would be the EMS certifications and the EMR would be entry level at 25 cents, if you are an EMT that's an additional 50 cents and an EMTA that would be \$1.

Mr. Dickie asked if the other surrounding communities do the same thing they are looking to do where if they get more certifications they increase their pay.

Chief Reinert said some of them do and other ones might not build upon it but have a wage rate with what they are expected to have for that rate.

Mr. Dickie said Milton's low is \$15.09.

Chief Reinert said that is \$15.09 walking through the door without any certifications and that is their base rate. He said the \$15 minimum he is proposing is comparable and noted that Alton starts at \$15.10 and they build on that for certifications.

Mr. Dickie asked if the Chief feels at \$15 he will be able to get candidates to hire.

Chief Reinert said he does and they are getting sporadic applicants now but it's another story as to if they accept what the current wage is after they go through the interview process. He said if they are at \$15 an hour they are in the same ballpark as \$15.09 or \$15.10 and the majority of the applicants have some sort of certification already and that would bump them up from the \$15 to begin with and they could be up in the \$17-\$18 range to start if they have their FF2, EMT and instructor certifications.

Chairman Proulx what is the first thing they have to do if they come in with no certifications.

Chief Reinert said when he gives them a conditional letter of employment they have 6 months to enroll in FF1 and 6 months after that to enroll in wherever they're going in their career dependent on the availability of the courses being offered. We have to be a little lenient because there might not be a level 1 in the area for 8 months so they might go for their EMS certification first but when they come in they do have an expectation of what they need to do with a timeframe and they have to agree to that he said.

The Chief said a CDL license is next on the list but it is not mandatory as Firefighters are exempt from having to have a CDL. He said he finds it important to have more knowledge about driving

the big apparatus so that would be a 25 cent increase.

He said Inspector I and II are each 25 cents. He said they do a lot of inspections in town and they try to get a lot of people involved in those so it doesn't fall on just a few as that is the "bread and butter" of life safety and if they get into businesses and multi-family apartment buildings everybody has extended knowledge of what to look for.

The Chief said Officer I and II are a quarter each and this is not only important for the company officer but there are times when no officer is on duty and these people have the understanding of filling that role without actually being a Lieutenant or a Captain and then prepping them for advancement.

He said Instructor I is 15 cents and Instructor II is another 15 cents and it falls on all of them as a team to help train new or returning people. He said they cannot remain stagnant in the fire service and these are the certifications most people go after first. They are specialty ones like technician, rope rescue, etc. though important are not must haves for Farmington he said.

Mr. Capello asked if he was somebody walking in off the street how long it would take to get to EMTA where he would be getting a total of \$2.25 in increases.

Chief Reinert said with no certifications for a Firefighter II with an EMTA a conservative number would be at least 2 years because you have to wait for the classes and get accepted to them. He said a Firefighter I class is typically about 6 months, the FF II is about 3 months after that, the basic EMT is 8-9 months and then the advanced class is another 6 months after that so it a lengthy period of time to get up to that range.

Mr. Staples said we are paying to get them trained and asked if they are locked in a contract.

Chief Reinert said they have to sign an agreement saying the dept. will pay for their training and they expect "x" amount of time from the employee. He said for the most part everybody that they have paid for their training has worked out their agreement. There have been a few times where they didn't and I was successful in getting the reimbursement for their training he said.

He said if they were going to move the pay scale to attract new people how were they going to retain people who have been dedicated and he came up with 20 cents a year for time served so someone new is not making the same or more than someone who has been here for 10 years.

Chairman Proulx asked about the minimum wage for the rest of the positions on the page.

Chief Reinert said the range for Lieutenants would go from a minimum of \$17 to \$26 an hour, for Captains it would be a minimum of \$19 an hour to \$28 an hour and the Deputy or Asst.

Chief would go from \$22 an hour up to \$31.50 an hour. He said looking at the wage study he took the average of what those depts. were paying and tried to be competitive with that though we couldn't touch towns like Gilford that has the tax base to pay higher wages.

Mr. Johnson said it has been the policy of this board through contract negotiations with the Police and DPW that they don't do time served as suggested by Chief Reinert. He said there is Town policy to pay for longevity and 20 cents doesn't sound like much but for the rest of this it's a \$14,000 expense and for next year its almost \$30,000. He said they are going to give them

a comparable increase to what other places are paying and giving them incentive increases and he was okay with that and some of it is probably overdue but not so much on the time served. He said they have specifically refused to negotiate that point with the two unions and that the Town policy for longevity was changed last year to cover part time employees.

Mr. Capello said this was just a way to make sure they didn't bump people up that just started to making the same amount as people who have been here longer but if they are going to look at everybody and move people up that will be a moot point.

Mr. Johnson said there are no names associated with the increases shown but he didn't see any of them being in conflict with the new rates based on longevity. He said he sees conflicts with the current rates but the new rates seem to resolve that.

He said there are a couple of them that have more qualifications therefore are getting more of the incentives but their base pay seems to be in line with what they are looking for. He said the problem he has with time served is the only people that get that longevity pay are government employees and unions. People out in the workforce do not get longevity pay and they get a set percentage every year from their company he said.

Chief Reinert said if they adjust the wage scale that someone has been working under for 10 years and are bumping up the minimum wage scale they could have someone come in tomorrow with the same certifications and asked what would be their incentive to stay when he has given 10 years to the town and a new hire is making virtually the same amount.

Mr. Johnson said they would be eligible for the longevity pay through the Town policy.

Chief Reinert said that kicks in at 7 years served and is \$250 for the first tier.

Chairman Proulx said she liked consistency and in the past they've had to negotiate the two for the DPW and the Police Dept. and asked if their longevity kicks in the same way as everybody else.

Mr. Capello said theirs is the same as the Town policy.

Mr. Johnson said what he would be more amenable to is if he is looking to address some of his situations which he doesn't see them, because if you're bringing somebody in at \$15 now and somebody is being bumped to \$15 because they haven't gotten any of their certifications whether they've been here 10 years or 2 years they haven't progressed any so they deserve what they get. He said he would consider bumping up the pay from \$15 to something else and having a starting pay with nobody at \$15 and with no qualifications the starting pay at \$15 and then after some amount of time bumping them up to the next step giving those who are already here acknowledgement for the fact that they've been here for a time and giving them a little more than \$15.

Chairman Proulx said based on what the Chief is saying in about 6 months they would probably have to have their Firefighter I and EMS certifications which would give them 50 cents anyway.

Mr. Johnson said depending on what they signed up for and it could take them another 6 months after they sign up to get them.

Chief Reinert said it depends on availability and if they successfully pass the certification class. He said the EMS testing is difficult and it sometimes takes 2 or 3 tries at it and they are very specific with the timeframe in between test 1 and test 2 and you can't just take it the next day. Potentially it could be another 12 weeks for the applicant to pass the EMS certification he said. Mr. Johnson said they could say the Firefighters currently on staff that have been here for more than 6 months the minimum they will get is \$15.50 or \$15.75 and anybody new coming in will get \$15 to make that differentiation.

He said another way is to bump the Firefighters currently getting \$15 to \$15.50 and anybody new coming in gets \$14.50. He then added but that kind of defeats the purpose of why they are undertaking this if Alton and other places are paying \$15.09 to start.

Chairman Proulx said she was looking at the new wage with current wage and incentives and if you extract the time served portion of it she only saw one or two that that would really affect.

Mr. Johnson said he is seeing one at \$15 and two at \$15.50.

Chairman Proulx said if he wanted to bring up those guys it wouldn't really hurt anything.

Mr. Johnson said then the problem is they bump into the ones that are making \$16 and have 2 certifications. He said Firefighter #3 is \$15.75 without the time served amount, Firefighter #10 is \$15.50 and Firefighter #13 who hasn't been here for a year yet is \$15.

Chairman Proulx asked if FF#13 has been enrolled in classes and just not been able to...

Chief Reinert said FF #13 is their current live-in student and that (\$12.50) was the wage for the students.

Chairman Proulx said everybody except for the student is where the Chief was talking about and he/she is probably getting credit, etc. for it.

Mr. Johnson said he/she is getting an increase of at least \$2.50.

Chairman Proulx asked if \$15.50 is enough to have the separation because that's where the lowest individuals are at this point if they bring them up to where the Chief has suggested.

Mr. Johnson asked how many students the dept. has.

Chief Reinert said their second student just arrived so they now have 2 students and this student is not involved in this and has no certifications and starts school next week.

Chairman Proulx asked if they have not been applying longevity to the Firefighters.

Chief Reinert said they started that 3 or 4 years ago and hadn't done it before that. Some of them are receiving something for their time and it starts at 7 years and is \$250 but they have to average 24 hours a week over the course of a year in order to earn their longevity. He said this year they budgeted \$3600 for everybody's longevity that would have earned it and 2 of those people are no longer with the dept. saving about \$1,000 for that line item for this year.

Chairman Proulx said there are 7 individuals over the 7 year mark and one will be next year and then there are several who don't have as much experience with the dept. She asked if 7 years for longevity is what most towns do.

Mr. Capello said most towns do 5 years for longevity.

Chairman Proulx asked if this is something they should look at during budget season.

Mr. Capello said he is bringing the entire personnel policy manual with some proposed changes to the board for review and that is one of them.

Chairman Proulx said they should look at that before budget season because that could change a lot of budgets.

Mr. Dickie said he appreciated the time and effort the Chief put into this. He asked if they are going to go down this path to try to attract candidates if there is a reason why they are settling at \$15 and not looking at \$15.10 or \$15.25 an hour. He said even Pittsfield which is much smaller than us is at \$15.72, we're at \$12.50, Milton is \$15.09 and Alton is \$15.10. He asked what we offer to attract the Firefighters to come to us making 10 or 12 cents less an hour.

Chief Reinert said it wasn't such a huge gap either way and is still in the same ballpark. The majority of our applicants are already certified Firefighters so they would be able to build upon the \$15 base rate and we do get some applicants that are not certified looking for experience but I was trying to stay within the middle average rate he said.

Mr. Dickie asked if they are going to go through this process why they would do it so they are starting off behind right out of the gate.

Mr. Johnson said because they are not looking to match other places and they are looking at an average. He said he wouldn't argue about 9 cents if they wanted to increase it to \$15.09.

Mr. Capello said they wouldn't need to have an argument about that if they give the Chief a range whether it's \$13 to \$18 for a starting Firefighter.

Mr. Dickie said the reason they're in the boat they're in now is because they fell behind.

Mr. Capello said that's correct and they have never had a starting wage range.

Chairman Proulx said it is the result of this whole mess with the salary increases everywhere and they have looked at this at various times and bumped everybody up. She said the Chief is trying to get us to where they can attract people based on where everybody else is at and this is the first time they've looked at incentivizing the different steps.

Mr. Capello said the incentivizing also keeps up with what they've done with the other depts. where as you get certifications you get an increase.

Mr. Johnson asked if they are looking to increase the \$15 to \$15.10 which is a \$1,500 impact for a year.

Chairman Proulx said they could look at this in different towns tomorrow and go to \$16 an hour. She said she understood what he did about the 10 cents and for her it is not an issue either way because this is a moving target always.

Mr. Capello said going back to Mr. Dickie's question about what is an incentive to come to Farmington it's our call volume. He said people come to Farmington because they want action and we get as much action as most full time depts. We lose a lot of people because they get all the training and go on to other depts. One of the draws for both the Fire and Police is the action they get he said.

Mr. Dickie said there is a group of young Firefighters coming out of school and when they come looking for a job 9 times out of 10 they are looking at the pay. He said as they grow, they start looking at pay and benefits because they start having kids and want all these toys and as they get older it becomes more about benefits because our health deteriorates.

Mr. Vachon asked if the populations shown are for full time residents.

Chief Reinert said it's based on their census populations and he took the numbers from Chief Drury's spreadsheet and then did some to research to see if they were still relatively close to the census figures and the numbers are for year round not seasonal.

Mr. Johnson said his only "heartache" was with the longevity issue and he didn't have any issues with any of the other numbers the Chief put in there. I think it's reasonable and even going to the Firefighters at \$15.10 I don't have a problem doing that either he said.

Mr. Capello said if the board goes with everything the Chief proposed including going to the \$15.10 an hour they would be looking at \$23,990.28.

Mr. Johnson said he didn't have any issues with the numbers there it's the implementation. He said he would duplicate what they did with the Police- that the Firefighters themselves would get the increases as indicated here, that the officers Lieutenant, Captain and Asst. Chief will get the incentives and 33% of the proposed increase until October until they get a tighter look at the budget same as they patented for the Police.

He said it puts the burden on the senior staff just like it does with the Police and he doesn't like it but until the budget settles down he is not sure how much money they will have at the end of the year. If we do that for the remainder of this year we're looking at a budget impact of \$20,895 for the Fire Dept.

Mr. Vachon asked if the Fire Dept. budget can handle that.

Mr. Johnson said currently it can. He said the impact for next year's budget which everybody has to realize will go in front of the voters is an impact of around \$85,000.

Mr. Vachon asked what that is on the tax rate.

Mr. Johnson said 17 cents.

Mr. Capello said that Mr. Johnson was proposing doing all the Firefighters and from Lieutenant up waiting until October.

Mr. Johnson said no and what he is proposing is the all the Firefighters go as the Chief recommended except at \$15.10 an hour minimum and the Lieutenant, Captain and Asst. Chiefs will get 33% of their proposed minimum wage increase plus they'll get the full incentives and that would be around a \$21,000 budget impact for the remainder of this year.

He apologized to the guys and said that money is tight this year unfortunately and this is the only way they can address it this year so far. We'll look at the budget and see if we can address it more in October and if not we'll have to put it in front of the voters in March he said.

Chief Reinert asked if they were good with the other proposed shifting the wage scale for the other positions in the future.

Mr. Johnson said he was fine with it and for example a Lieutenant is going from \$16 to \$17 and that's a \$1 increase and they will give him 33% of that \$1 plus the incentives.

Chief Reinert asked if that is with the removal of the time served increases.

Mr. Johnson said yes.

Mr. Capello asked the board to make it effective at the next pay week so they don't have to do any back dating and figuring that all out.

Motion: (Johnson, second Dickie) to make the wage adjustments to the Fire Dept. salary as proposed by the Chief with the exception that the minimum wage for new hire Firefighter be increased from his proposal of \$15 to \$15.10 an hour and that all Firefighters be given the recommended increase as proposed in the Chief's spreadsheet and that the Lieutenant, Captain and Deputy/Assistant Chiefs be given 33.3% of the Chief's recommended increase plus the incentives which would have an impact of approximately \$21,000 on his budget for the remainder of this year and that these increases become effective at the next pay period;

Discussion: Mr. Vachon said he understood they have to pay employees to keep employees but it sucks that we're being compared to the surrounding towns with a much higher tax base and trying to compete with them. So in the long run we're going to keep Firefighters and tax everybody out of Farmington. It's going to continue to happen if we keep giving raises like this but we have to give raises and its one hell of a hard spot he said.

He asked how many of the towns on the wage study list have a body of water.

Mr. Capello said he wasn't aware of any lakes or ponds in Pittsfield or Barnstead and the biggest ones would be in Wakefield and Alton.

Mr. Vachon said this is only two depts. and they have 2 more to go-office staff and the DPW.

Mr. Capello said they have the dept. heads, Town Clerk/Tax Collector and Public Works. He said they are somewhat limited with what they can do with the DPW because of the union contract.

Mr. Johnson said that's why they are being so cautious about limiting the amount they're doling out at this point because they have other people they have to compensate because of the hellacious increases everybody has incurred over the last year.

Mr. Vachon asked what the tax increase is from the Police Dept. for next year.

Mr. Johnson said it about 30 cents.

Mr. Vachon said using rough numbers they are looking at 47 or 50 cents just for two depts.

Mr. Johnson said either that or they don't have the depts. He said the problem with some of the other towns is they don't provide the services- they don't have a full time Police Dept. or 30 people on the Fire Dept. and 5 vehicles.

Mr. Capello said most communities don't staff 24/7 like we do unless they have a full time force. We're fortunate that we can afford to do that he said.

Mr. Vachon said that helps on their budgets when they're only paying guys to sit there 12 hours a day and they can pay more because they're not paying them for 24 hours.

Mr. Staples added that we have to cover them.

Mr. Johnson said that's why they are so defensive about mutual aid agreements because a number of communities in the past have used us knowing we are manned 24 hours to supplement their departmental coverage.

Mr. Vachon said he sits on both sides of the table on this issue as he was on this dept. before and they volunteer to go towards dangerous situations. If we don't increase the pay they're going to go elsewhere and then we're not going to have a Fire Dept. and then the response time will be 3 times as long because they will be waiting for Milton, Rochester or New Durham to pull a crew together he said.

Chairman Proulx said they (Police and Fire) are the 2 most important pieces this town has to make sure that somebody is there when they need help.

Mr. Vachon said he would vote aye and wanted to express his views and frustrations.

Vote: The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Johnson said he wanted the Chief to be aware that the dept. heads are scheduled to be addressed and are not being excluded.

Chief Reinert said he understood and that this is the first step.

Mr. Johnson said he will send a copy of the spreadsheet he did to the Chief and the board.

Chief Reinert asked if the board was okay with the proposal for holidays, the weekend differential and vacation time. He said he and Mr. Capello came up with a different plan to tackle that so it's fair across the board for all employees and asked if they wanted to discuss that tonight.

Chairman Proulx asked if it follows the employee handbook at this point.

Mr. Capello said the holidays will follow the handbook, the vacations would start next year because there wouldn't be enough time to accrue any time going by the handbook and it would take effect in next year's budget.

Chief Reinert said for the vacation time they were unable to find what the equation is because the handbook says if you are a part time employee you have to work a minimum average 20 hours a week to get a pro-rated rate but it doesn't specify the percentage or if you work more than 20 hours if you earn more vacation time.

Mr. Johnson recalled that if an individual averaged 20 hours a week over the year they would get 50% of their vacation allotment and if they worked 30 of the 40 hours they would get 75% and it is based on what their average hours were per week for the year.

Chief Reinert said he wanted to model it after the longevity policy where you have to work 24 hours and that you would have to average 24 hours a week over the course of the year to earn 24 hours of vacation time which would basically be a week off. He said if they started it on the first of the year to have time for them to accrue then find out towards December if they meet that accrual and then financial impact wouldn't affect them until the 2023 budget.

Mr. Johnson said he is okay with the rest of this as long as it's following what's specified in the handbook.

Chief Reinert said the only other thing was the week end differential. He said they added the \$2 differential 2-3 years ago and he was having difficulty filling the coverage sometimes at the last minute so his proposal was to increase it to \$4 an hour for the weekend differential which for this year would another \$7,500. He asked if these items were included in Mr. Johnson's motion. Chairman Proulx suggested they make it clearer by making a separate motion to include this as well.

Motion: (Johnson, second Dickie) to adjust the compensation for the Fire Dept. to account for differences between the current wages and to match the employee handbook for things such as holiday pay, the weekend differential increase from \$2 to \$4, vacation accrual and other benefits as specified in the handbook passed 5-0.

c). Fireworks Permit – Chief Reinert said the 500 Club is planning a celebration at the Paulson Road fields and he went there today to make sure everything was compliant with where they are going to set it up. He said everything is good and they just need the Selectmen's approval for the fireworks display to be held on Thursday, August 19.

Mr. Capello said the Town Attorney has authorized the board to appoint him as the designee signee based on the issues they have had with timeliness.

Motion: (Johnson, second Staples) to approval the fireworks display application for the 500 Club for August 19;

Discussion: Chairman Proulx asked if they are able to man everything that's still open there in case of fire because it is wooded there and it can be dry.

Chief Reinert said it met all the setbacks and where they're launching is from a gravel road between the soccer field and an island. He said it has setbacks from the buildings and there's no overhead and he met with Dan Woodman today and everything was good to go.

Mr. Vachon asked if it was scheduled for the 19th or the 20th.

Chief Reinert said the application says the 19th which is a Thursday.

Mr. Vachon said according to Face book the event is on Friday, August 20.

Amendment: by Mr. Johnson to change the date to August 20.

Mr. Staples accepted the amendment.

Vote: The motion passed 5-0.

Motion: (Johnson, second Dickie) that in the future that all fireworks applications since they have met the requirements according to legal that the Town Administrator be authorized to sign and approve future applications in our stead passed 5-0.

Motion: (Vachon, second Staples) to authorize Neil Johnson to sign the fireworks permit for the 500 Club on August 20 passed 5-0.

7). COVID-19 Update:

a).Possible Uses of Funds- Mr. Capello said he sent a list of possible projects to someone who works with GOFERR on the state funds and that he took that list from what the board discussed at the last meeting and also threw some stuff in there. He said pretty much everything on the

list is approved so we can do it. He asked the board about prioritizing because he did not want to get pricing prior to them making their priorities and that he has a couple of ideas.

Mr. Capello said he is a proponent of doing more projects rather than fewer projects to get a lot of the smaller projects they haven't been able to do done while they have this money. He suggested they postpone the water/sewer projects until next year when another \$365,000 will be coming in and work on the smaller projects such as the replacement of the shed and concession stand at the Rec. Dept., upgrade the furnace systems at the old Town Hall and the Municipal Office Building and install fencing around the water tower.

He said part of the discussion about the water/sewer projects was about what to do with depreciation fund and possibly moving it to a sewer repair type enterprise/capital reserve fund to use it for major repairs of the sewer system. He asked the board for guidance on what he should start getting prices for.

Mr. Dickie asked if it is a sure thing the Town is getting another \$365,000 next year.

Mr. Capello said yes based on what we have been told but the feds can do whatever they want. He said they could come back and say sorry we don't have the money and we already have the money for this year. He said he was not anticipating spending all of it and he wanted to ensure there was enough time to get the quotes per the Town policy.

Mr. Dickie asked if it is "use it or lose it" regarding the federal funds.

Mr. Capello said no and they have to it all committed by 2024 and spent by 2026.

Mr. Johnson recommended that they use it were it is going to impact the most residents in town and the water/sewer projects are going to relieve some of the pressure on the users and exclude the rural residents who will see no benefit to it.

Chairman Proulx said if they decide to get rid of the sewer treatment plant it affects the whole town.

Mr. Johnson said he was not suggesting that but was suggesting they spend the money on things that are going to affect the greatest number of town residents first and they can use the depreciation fund to fund some of the water/sewer projects if needed.

Mr. Capello said the depreciation fund is a bigger discussion and that's why he would like to postpone the big water/sewer projects until next year.

Mr. Johnson said they know they have to replace the shed and concession stand at Fernald Park sooner or later and that would have to come from general taxation.

Mr. Capello said they have been trying to do that for the last 3 years and it's always been cut.

Mr. Johnson asked about the installation of security cameras included on the list.

Mr. Capello said there was an incident at the Municipal Office Building where the Police were looking for some video footage and he was not able to provide it and they would be looking to purchase 2 cameras at a cost of about \$1,000. He said he would put one camera outside the building so there would be complete coverage of the parking lot and one in the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office so there would be coverage of the windows.

Mr. Johnson then asked what is wrong with the firewalls (computer security device that blocks unauthorized access while permitting outward communication).

Mr. Capello said he was looking to upgrade it and he would check to see if there's need for it.

Mr. Vachon asked if that included upgrading the firewalls at the Water and Sewer Depts.

Mr. Capello said they have one but he didn't know if it needs to be upgraded.

Mr. Vachon said he mentioned it because of the cyber attacks that continue to happen on water treatment facilities through the **Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition** systems (software program that collects and analyzes data and helps monitor and manage equipment).

Mr. Johnson said he would look to replace the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning systems at the Municipal Office Building and the Town Hall. He said they fixed the air conditioning but the heating systems still need to be addressed.

Mr. Capello said it is an electric heat pump but it hardly works in the winter. He said then they could stop funding the **Capital Reserve Fund** that was started a few years ago for this purpose.

Mr. Johnson asked if there was any money needed to rehab the new senior center that could come from these funds.

Mr. Capello said they didn't think of that previously and he would say yes because it is promoting community involvement based on COVID.

Mr. Johnson said the same could be said for upgrading Fernald Park. He said he wouldn't re-pave it until they have a plan for what it's going to look like.

Mr. Capello said they are also applying for a grant to upgrade Fernald Park so they will have to see what happens with that.

Mr. Staples suggested getting more air purifiers for use at the Rec. Dept.

Mr. Capello said that would come under heating and ventilation.

Mr. Johnson asked if the big unit was still at the Rec. Center.

Mr. Capello said that is used upstairs at the Rec. Center and they need one for the downstairs portion of the building.

Mr. Capello said he would like to have fencing done around the water tower.

Chairman Proulx said that is something that should be up in the priority list and asked if he knew the cost to do that.

Mr. Capello said he didn't recall and it is something they should do security-wise. He said it has been requested previously by Water/Sewer Dept. Supervisor Chuck Tiffany but it was one of the things that were cut when they needed to cut the budget.

Mr. Vachon said about a year ago they did 200' x 100' in 6' tall sections of standard galvanized fencing with a bunch of gates for \$15,000 in Somersworth. We got prices up to \$40,000 he said.

Mr. Johnson said he would not be opposed to including that and asked to make sure that when they design the fence line that there's enough clearance and footage so that they're not wrapping it around the tower itself.

Mr. Vachon said some of the other items in Mr. Tiffany's memo to the board are not that

expensive and that he has priced most of the items.

Mr. Capello asked the board which items on Mr. Tiffany's list they would like him to get prices for. He said he didn't think they have \$365,000 worth of expenditures so far but he hasn't gotten any prices yet and the price for stuff is out of control.

Discussion then included the approx. cost of the other water dept. items on Mr. Tiffany's list (backhoe, utility trailer, plate compactor, air compressor and paint the water tower).

Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Capello to have Mr. Tiffany get prices for the items on his list.

Mr. Dickie said he would like to see the prices first and then they could prioritize it.

Mr. Capello suggested that he tell Mr. Tiffany to get prices for items 2 through 6 (utility trailer, plate compactor, air compressor with jackhammer, fence for water tower and paint the water tower) and to put number 1 (backhoe) off until next year. I would rather do multiple projects than spend \$200,000 on 1-3 and leave \$100,000 to do the rest of them he said.

Mr. Johnson asked about the items on the list for the sewer dept. and then asked to have Mr. Tiffany get prices on those items too.

Mr. Capello said he would move forward with starting to get pricing on some of this stuff.

Mr. Vachon asked him to get prices for everything including the backhoe and he would e-mail Mr. Tiffany and ask him why he wants a backhoe when it is becoming a relic.

8). Town Administrator's Business:

a). GW Brooks Payment- Mr. Capello said this is the final payment for the bridge (Hornetown Road Bridge over the Mad River).

Mr. Johnson asked if this is for the release of the escrow funds.

Mr. Capello said this is the final payment not the escrow and we owe them \$9,624.74.

Mr. Johnson asked if this would be coming out of the operating budget.

Mr. Capello said he would like the board to motion to take it out of the Bridge and Road Design CRF which has \$125,848 in it. He said the board spent \$20,000 out of the CRF 2 weeks ago for GW Swett.

Mr. Johnson said that is not reflected in the Trustees of Trust Funds Report so the CRF has a balance of \$105,000.

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to make the final payment to G.W. Brooks for final payment for the temporary bridge on Hornetown of \$9,624.74 with the funds to come out of the Bridge and Road Design Capital Reserve Fund which currently has a balance of approx. \$105,000 passed 5-0.

b). Hornetown Road Bridge – Mr. Capello said this brings up another discussion about the bridge and the "burn-outs" and "peel-outs" people are doing on the bridge.

Mr. Vachon said to shut it down and barricade it off. If they want to act like children treat them like children he said.

Mr. Staples said after what just happened to that graveyard they are absolutely not going to tolerate that.

Mr. Capello said that is up to the board.

Mr. Vachon said it is going to cause more damage by doing that and going to affect the residents up there and cost the taxpayers more money-shut it down.

Motion: (Vachon, second Staples) to shut the Hornetown Road Bridge down;

Discussion: Mr. Johnson said he agrees with them but as much as he shares their anger they can't punish everyone for the acts of 1 or 2 individuals. He said he knew one of the individuals because they started to peel out at the corner of Ridge and Hornetown Roads, went 500 feet up Hornetown and continued burning rubber all the way up Hornetown before they hit the bridge. It was 11:15 p.m. when they did it and by the time I could get to the phone they were gone he said.

Mr. Dickie said he saw a red Camaro and a black similar model car coming out of a blue cloud of smoke at the bridge and there were no other cars coming or going so he knew it was from those two cars. He said there were 2 people in each car but he couldn't see who it was or get their license plate numbers. They sat on the speed bump and they were burning out he said. Mr. Capello said it sounds like it happened on two different occasions because Mr. Johnson said it happened at 11:15 p.m. and Mr. Dickie said he saw this in the afternoon.

Chairman Proulx said they try to do what is right for the whole town and they try to put signs that ask you to reduce your speed and then that doesn't happen so then they put in speed bumps hoping that will deter some of these individuals and they still get jokers out there that are trying to do that type of thing. She said she didn't know why people can't understand that they are trying to save the town money with this temporary bridge and to keep it good.

Mr. Staples said they are trying to protect the investment of the whole town.

Mr. Dickie said he didn't support the motion and he wants the bridge as he uses that road every day.

Chairman Proulx said she was worried about the emergency services because it's a shorter route.

Mr. Vachon asked Chief Reinert if there was much of a difference in response time.

Chief Reinert said he couldn't recall the exact amount of time difference.

Mr. Johnson recalled that it was minor maybe about a minute and there was one section with a couple of homes that it was increase in response time going up Meetinghouse Hill Road but for most of the homes it would be faster going up Meetinghouse Hill Road.

Chief Reinert said it depends on what section they're going to.

Mr. Vachon said if they keep doing this kind of stuff they're going to destroy that bridge and then they will have no choice but to shut it down.

Mr. Capello suggested they put speed bumps on the other side of the bridge so they can't sit there and peel out on the bridge because then they will hit the other speed bump.

Mr. Vachon said he thought it was the plan to put them on both sides.

Mr. Capello said they have speed bumps on one side and the board has not approved a plan to

put them on both sides. He said they had them on both sides and then people went around them so then they put them together.

Mr. Johnson said then they wanted the speed survey that proved people were zooming over the bridge.

Mr. Staples they took the speed bumps out and gave them a chance (during the speed survey).

Mr. Johnson said the speeds increased over 20% once the speed bumps were taken down.

Some people were doing 65 mph over the bridge he said.

Chairman Proulx said maybe that is one more thing they should try because it is always a possibility they can come back to that (closing the bridge).

Mr. Dickie asked what they are going to do in the winter when the planks freeze, the bridge freezes and the speed bumps can't be there because of the plows.

Mr. Vachon said they can be there they just have to mark them and make sure the operator knows they are there and picks his plow up. They can be in place all year because they don't move railroad tracks in the winter in New England and it's the same plowing operation he said.

Mr. Staples said there are permanent speed bumps that are paved right into the road and they plow over them all winter long.

Discussion also included asking residents to police the area and start reporting license plates of offenders and putting up security cameras to get video evidence of the acts and the offenders.

Mr. Capello said the speed bumps would help protect the decking on the bridge and that's his concern.

Hearing no further discussion Chairman Proulx called for the vote.

Vote: The motion failed 2-3 (Vachon, Staples-aye; Proulx, Johnson, Dickie-opposed).

Chairman Proulx asked the board if they wanted to look at Mr. Capello's suggestion to put speed bumps on the other side of the bridge.

Mr. Vachon said absolutely the taller the better and in the shape of Jersey barrier.

Mr. Johnson asked if the current speed bumps were damaged.

Mr. Capello said there was some melting but he didn't know if it was enough to make them useless but he may tell the DPW Director to order an extra set.

Mr. Staples said there are permanent paved speed bumps in the Peaceful Pines Mobile Home Park.

Mr. Vachon said a company can also put speed bumps in permanently by milling down a few inches and dropping the speed bump into the hot top and then they can just plow over them.

Mr. Capello said he will plan on leaving them down year round and make sure that they're marked so whoever does that route can pick them out.

Consensus of the board was to have a second set of speed bumps put in on the other side of the bridge.

Mr. Vachon asked Mr. Capello if he knew or could find out for the general public if the speed trailer only gathers speeds when the vehicle is going in the direction towards the machine

because it does read when you are driving away from it. He asked if somebody came over the bridge and then sped up to 75 mph is that what it is calculating or can it tell if the vehicle is coming or going.

He asked if the survey sheets they get are public information so the public can see them.

Mr. Capello said yes. He said Chief Drury texted the machine gathers speeds in both directions coming and going.

Mr. Vachon said that means some of the max speeds could have been when they came over the bridge and then sped up and they were not going 75 mph over the bridge because the machine can't decipher coming or going. He then added either way they are doing burnouts and he didn't care if they were doing 20 mph over the bridge and as soon as something else happens he will motion to close the bridge again. Hopefully the people that live near that bridge that hear it and see it will start "diming them out" he said.

He asked Mr. Capello to get a price for permanent speed bumps that are paved in.

Mr. Capello said he would work on it. He said in answer to Mr. Vachon's question about speeding after going over the bridge the Chief said it depends on what direction they go because once they pass the trailer it doesn't see them.

c). Letter of Resignation – Mr. Capello said although he is already gone the board still has to accept his resignation.

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to accept the resignation of Matthew Morrissey as a Firefighter effective July 27 passed 5-0.

d). Withdrawal from Landfill Closure Fund- Mr. Capello asked the board to motion to withdraw \$1,953.87 from the Landfill Closure CRF in response to a bill they received from CMA.

Chairman Proulx asked what the bill was for.

Mr. Capello said it was for work they had to do for the landfill closure because the state is requiring new forms they had to fill out for us. He said there is \$61,334.98 in the fund. He said we are going to have to start contributing to this fund and we haven't been contributing to it because it was originally funded through a grant.

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to pay the invoice for CMA for preparing state required documents concerning the landfill in the amount of \$1,953.37 with the funds to come from the Landfill Closure Capital Reserve Fund which currently has \$61,000 in it passed 5-0.

e). Finance Software – Mr. Capello said one of the tasks for the new Finance Administrator was to look at software for finance. He said he sat in on part of the demonstration by Business Management Systems Inc. who is our current software provider and they now offer a web based software that will meet all of their needs plus. He asked the board to authorize the withdrawal of \$2,275 from the Future Technology CRF. He said the annual subscription is budgeted for now in the operating budget and this will be the upgrade they need. He said with web based systems if the Wi-Fi went down here they could go anywhere where there is Wi-Fi and work on it and the current BMSI system will stay and they will have access to it for history.

This will do everything we need and streamline a lot of stuff he said.

Mr. Dickie asked if it is compatible with the Town Clerk's system.

Mr. Capello said yes and it will talk to the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's software.

Mr. Vachon said obviously the Finance Administrator is okay with this.

Mr. Capello said she went through the demo and she was thrilled with what it will do.

He said there is currently \$13,374 in the Future Technology CRF.

Mr. Johnson asked if the old DOS based system will only be used for previous budgets.

Mr. Capello said that is correct.

Mr. Johnson said the software requires a Windows server but it doesn't say what the minimum requirements are, how much space will be required on the hard drive and if the memory will be sufficient to support it along with everything else and asked if that has all been looked at.

Mr. Capello said they talked about that during the demo and there are no upgrades required.

Mr. Johnson asked if they (BMSI) are down how the Town would process the financials.

Mr. Capello said they wouldn't be able to and they would have to until they were back up.

Mr. Johnson said so they have no stand alone system that takes over if they're down.

Mr. Capello said that's correct.

Mr. Johnson asked what guarantees of up time they have provided.

Mr. Capello said he did not know.

Mr. Vachon read from the proposal that it may not be possible to get a specific printer to work properly and asked if they know what we have for printers and they will hook up.

Mr. Capello said yes.

Chairman Proulx asked Mr. Johnson if he was worried about the stand-alone system.

Mr. Johnson said he liked stand-alone systems though they're a pain and the only benefit to the web based system is that they don't have to worry about backups. He said the proposal doesn't address the kind of backups that are available and how often they're done.

Mr. Capello said he asked that question and they back it up daily on site and also with a duplicate backup offsite.

Mr. Johnson said if they are down we have no stand alone system to process our finances. He asked if this is a Cloud system.

Mr. Capello asked if that is the same as a web based system.

Mr. Johnson said not technically but they are interchangeable at times. He said a Cloud system is more susceptible to hacking than a stand-alone system and there have been instances where entire companies have been shut down because of it. It's a concern he said.

Chairman Proulx asked what would be an alternate to this proposal.

Mr. Capello said it would be to look for a system they can download on their server and he noted that Avitar is a Cloud based system also that they upgrading the Town Clerk to.

Mr. Johnson said they would have the same issues and questions with that. He said everybody is going to Cloud based systems and as long as they are aware of the inherent flaws in the

system and the dangers with it. He said if the finance system was down for a week it would be disastrous for the Town but not so much for the Tax Collector. We couldn't pay invoices or employees he said.

Mr. Capello said they could cut checks manually and the employees would still get paid because that is a different system.

Mr. Johnson said it is accounted for though BMSI.

Mr. Capello said no and the payroll would stay with Harper's who does the Town's payroll.

Mr. Vachon said the payroll accounting has to be put into BSMI and if it's down they can't.

Chairman Proulx said that wouldn't be as critical as it's reporting as opposed to actually paying people. She asked if they knew what their efficiency rate was as far as up time or down time.

Mr. Capello said he didn't ask that question.

Mr. Johnson said these are usually things that they guarantee. He asked if they have a commercial server or their own server.

Mr. Capello said he didn't know but they said the server is in a server room in a vault with a bunch of other servers.

Mr. Johnson said then it is probably not their server and they are probably leasing time from a server farm.

Mr. Capello said it is a server farm and he researched it on Google because he was curious as to what a server farm is.

Mr. Johnson said other than the conversion charge of \$2,275 it's the same annual subscription.

Mr. Capello said there is slight difference as the current annual subscription is \$3,857 and it would bump up to \$3,985.

Mr. Johnson said the other issue the Finance Administrator mentioned during her interview was our current DOS based system is journal entries and asked if this system is journal entries.

Mr. Capello said based on her feedback he would say yes. He said she went into this looking to eliminate as much human error as possible. Right now we are doing duplicate journal entries and this would eliminate that he said.

Mr. Vachon asked if this would be electronic **Purchase Orders** instead of paper PO's and if each dept. head would have access to put in PO requests.

Mr. Capello said each dept. would have access to review their budgets but he didn't want a lot of people being able to enter things because that's how mistakes happen and it will still go through the Finance Administrator for invoices. We can give people as much access as we want but I think the less hands you have in things the better he said.

Mr. Vachon said he was asking if they can put in a request for a PO so they are not doing paper PO's and carbon copies and join the 20th Century.

Mr. Capello said he didn't know and they said if there is something we need they would figure out how to do it.

Mr. Johnson he thought the conversion and migration to a new system would be easier going

this route through the same vendor as it will have some similarities and it would be easier to convert the old data to the new system. He said a new system would probably be a minimum of about \$30,000 or \$40,000 if they were to replace the entire system.

Motion: (Johnson, second Dickie) to authorize the Finance Administrator to convert the BMSI software to the WebLedger Conversion with a one-time charge of \$2,275 which includes three hours of training with the funds to come out of the Future Technology Capital Reserve Fund which currently has over \$13,000 and to authorize the Town Administrator to sign any agreements or contracts that may be required to accomplish this conversion passed 5-0.

f). Letter of Representation – Mr. Capello said they received the Management Representation Letter from Plodzik & Sanderson, P.A. which is the standard letter they do every year with their auditors.

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to accept the Representation Letter to Plodzik & Sanderson our accountants and to authorize the Chairman and the Town Administrator to sign the letter passed 5-0.

Mr. Capello said the auditors would be here on the 30th to go over the audit with the board.

g). Town Policies – Mr. Capello said he brought some policies to the board for review and some of them have no changes, some have minor changes and one he is looking to rescind as follows:

Merit Increase Policy – Procedures: item #1 – Mr. Capello said he added “may be” before “set aside” to read “and may be set aside within the budget annually...” and in item #6 he put a hyphen between “one” and “time” to read “a one-time bonus”.

Mr. Johnson said in item #4 it says “merit eligibility dates are a common date” and he didn’t understand what that means.

Mr. Capello said it the common date that everybody will get it based on what the Selectmen decide and historically it’s been retroactive back to the March Town Meeting.

Mr. Johnson said he would change it to “Merit eligibility dates are determined by the Selectmen”. He said there was some discussion about whether they want to call it a one-time bonus or a one-time payment.

Chairman Proulx said they didn’t know what to call it because it is not really a bonus it’s a payment.

Mr. Dickie suggested they use “lump sum”.

Mr. Capello said he would change it from bonus to one-time lump sum payment.

Motion: (Johnson, second Proulx) to accept the Merit Increase Policy as amended passed 5-0.

Mr. Capello said he would have the amended policy for the board to sign at the next meeting.

Temporary Alternative Duty Policy - Mr. Capello said he just removed the Board of Selectmen names for the signature lines at the bottom of the page. He said the policy was reviewed by NH Primex and this is one of the things they have to help the Town get a discount on insurance.

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to accept the updated Temporary Alternative Duty Policy passed 5-0.

Town Office Closure Policy – Mr. Johnson said in the first line the word “whether” should be changed to “weather”. He said throughout the document “travelling” should only have one L. He said in Section A, third line he would change Board of Selectmen to the “Chair of the Board of Selectmen...”

He suggested they make the same change in Section C and then asked why the word “folks” in the second line was in there.

Mr. Dickie suggested changing it to “Town employees”.

Mr. Capello said he would put a period after Town Administrator and start another sentence with “If staff feels uncomfortable...”

Mr. Johnson said he would like to see this policy again before approving it.

COVID-19 Policy – Mr. Capello said he was looking for the board to rescind this policy. He said there are no travel restrictions in NH anymore.

Mr. Johnson said but the policy isn’t just about travel.

Mr. Capello said they have been following the state of NH guidelines and he calls Chief Reinert for updates.

Mr. Johnson said that is what he recommended initially- that they don’t have a policy or it should just state we will follow the state guidelines and then they don’t have to go through this every three weeks.

Mr. Capello said he would change the policy to just state they will follow the NH guidelines.

h). Revenue Increases- Mr. Capello said he gave the board a memo with where he is looking at potential increases in revenue based on actual numbers. He cautioned the board that these are just estimates and they have not received anything other than the letter they received on the Highway Subsidy. He said they are looking at a potential increase of \$243,710 more than what they budgeted and one of the benefits of being conservative is when it comes time to set the tax rate the impact will not be as severe as they initially thought.

Mr. Johnson said it comes to about a 45 cent reduction on the tax rate in November.

Mr. Capello said that number can only go up if they sell any of the properties they listed.

Mr. Johnson asked if there has been any interest in any of the properties.

Mr. Capello said there was one person interested in the former appliance store property.

Mr. Vachon asked if they ever confirmed if there are tanks in the ground at that site.

Mr. Capello said it has not been confirmed or denied.

i). Budget Report – Mr. Capello said the board received a report from the Finance Administrator with the anticipated budget and she will do this again in a couple of months. Mr. Vachon asked how it compares with the 8% of the budget they’d like to see saved. Mr. Capello said it’s okay but if they were to fill every staff position that would be a different discussion. He said they usually end the year with \$200,000 to \$300,000 left in the operating budget and they are at that number now.

Mr. Vachon asked if that is around the 8% they like to see.

Mr. Capello said that is for the undesignated fund balance which is different than this and this plays into it because this money goes into the undesignated fund balance.

Mr. Johnson said they started the year with \$1.3 million in the undesignated fund balance so this would add to it but they did spend some of that money.

Mr. Capello said based on the auditor's report the undesignated fund balance which can be used to buy down the tax rate or fund CRF's if the board so chooses next year is \$1.5 million. He said that is not cash and is not money they have sitting in a bank account and a lot of it is paper money. He said he will give the Town Clerk a lot of credit for being able to convert a lot of the paper money into cash.

Mr. Vachon asked if the \$1.5 million is the 8% they like to have.

Mr. Capello said that's higher than the 8% and they use down to the 8% to do other things.

Mr. Johnson said the information here is more accurate than what they usually get but for instance there is a listing for sidewalks which has a \$20,000 balance remaining and they know they are going to spend that.

Chairman Proulx said there are still some things they know they are going to spend out of that money.

Mr. Capello said some of them he changed knowing that they spent it but the receipts just haven't hit the office.

Mr. Johnson said it is much better than the \$100,000 number they got about a month ago.

Mr. Capello said the nice thing about this report is it goes line by line and if there's nothing for projected expenses that means they are right on budget.

Mr. Johnson said by October when they start looking at potential increases for staffing that have not been addressed at this point this should be more accurate and give them a much warmer, fuzzy feeling.

j). Can You Meet for a Non-Meeting? – Mr. Capello asked if the board could meet for a non-meeting at 5:30 p.m. on August 30 to discuss the information they received regarding the solar energy project with the Town Attorney.

Consensus of the board was to meet with Att. Roman at that date and time.

9). Additional Board Business:

a). Certificate of Municipality- Mr. Johnson asked if they would address this form they just received tonight.

Mr. Capello said the library sent him an e-mail that he forwarded to the board asking to have it put on the Aug. 30 agenda and he is not very familiar with this topic.

Mr. Johnson said according to the e-mail this has to be signed and submitted by Aug. 31. He said he didn't know why they would sign this form they want them to sign because they would be entering into a contract with the state who provided money to the library for some purpose but they want them to sign it. He asked why they would ever do that.

Mr. Capello said Goodwin Library Director Tami LaRock came to see him last week and asked

him to sign this form because they are going after money from the American Rescue Plan Act. He said after reading the first line he told Mrs. LaRock he couldn't sign it because he is not an elected official and she took back the form. He said his next correspondence with her was today when she e-mailed him asking to be put on the agenda for the Aug. 30 meeting.

Mr. Johnson said he didn't know what they would be committing themselves to if they were to sign it. He said they are applying for ARPA money and asked why they would sign an agreement as a municipality for a contract with the state to provide funds to a private entity and what that open the Town to if they don't meet the contract requirements. He asked if the state or the feds are going to come looking to the Town to be paid back if the money is not spent according to the grant.

Chairman Proulx said hopefully they will provide answers to this on the 30th.

Mr. Johnson said they need legal advice on this matter and if they wait until the 30th and then send it to legal counsel the library will miss the submission deadline.

Chairman Proulx asked to have Att. Christine Fillmore take a look at the form.

Mr. Capello said he was e-mailing the Attorney as they were speaking.

b). Health Trust Refund- Mr. Vachon asked about the letter the board received from HealthTrust.

Mr. Capello said the healthcare coverage provider had a surplus so the Town will receive approx. \$46,000 which is not counted in the revenue figure he gave the board today because he received this letter after that. He said they did this last year too and they didn't budget anything for it because it is a year to year determination.

Mr. Vachon asked if that all goes back to the Town or if they have to give some of it back to the employees to pay a percentage of their coverage.

Mr. Capello said they will give the employees a percentage of whatever they paid into health insurance that they get reimbursed for. He said he thought the Town would end up with over \$40,000 after the reimbursements. He said this is an approx. figure because the HealthTrust Board of Directors doesn't vote on it until October.

10). Non-Public Session A:

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c)Reputation passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Proulx, Johnson, Dickie, Staples, Vachon-aye) at 8:49 p.m.

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

11). Non-Public Session B:

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) 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, Dickie, Staples, Vachon-aye) at 9 p.m.

Motion: (Vachon, second Johnson) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 9:06 p.m.

Motion: (Johnson, second Vachon) to give Jason and Jonathan Forbes a 25 cents an hour wage increase for obtaining their solid waste operator and weigh scale operator licenses passed 5-0.

12). Next Meeting: Monday, August 30, 2021

13). Adjournment:

Motion: (Vachon, second Staples) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 9:07 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Paula Proulx, Chairman

Neil Johnson, Vice Chairman

Ken Dickie

Douglas Staples

Gerry Vachon