

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
March 17, 2008
MINUTES**

Call to Order:

6:00pm Chairman Barry called the Meeting to Order.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag:

Chairman Barry asked all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call:

Present: Stephen R. Barry, Chairman; R. Andrew Robertson, Vice Chairman; John Reagan,
Walter C. Hooker and Alan O'Neal, Selectmen

Also Present: Cynthia Heon, Town Administrator

Point of Order:

Chairman Barry welcomed Selectman Alan O'Neal as the newest member of the Board of Selectmen.

Report of Appropriations Actually Voted (MS-2)

2008 Town Operating Budget/Default Budget/Approved Warrant Articles

Chairman Barry opened the discussion by noting the 2008 Operating Budget, as presented to the voters was not approved and the Town will be operating under the Default Budget. The numbers on the Default Budget have been transferred to the MS-2 Form, Report of Appropriations Actually Voted.

The budget, as presented, with the Default Budget numbers is 18% expended. For mid-March that is a good spot to be in. Chairman Barry suggested that while decisions were not necessary this evening, on what to spend or not spend, the Board of Selectmen should look for trends and make decisions following a review process on how to work with the shortfall.

Vice Chairman Robertson pointed out the shortfall was approximately \$179,000.

A memo to Department Heads was suggested by Chairman Barry. It should be pointed out that budget expenditures are to be fine tuned and Department Heads should hold off on any unnecessary spending. There is no Town Budget that is safe, even those that are fully funded. Department Heads should sharpen their pencils and hold back on spending.

Chairman Barry further suggested bringing any purchase of \$500, or more, to the Board. This keeps the Selectmen aware of what is being spent.

Vice Chairman Robertson remarked that after looking at the budget, money could be taken from the Highway Department and Police Department to make up the difference within the budget. Two things that stood out were the road reconstruction under the Highway Department for approximately \$170,000 as there had been debate on how the money would be used and on what roads. It is a starting point. There is a Police Officer leaving which, if not replaced, would leave some funding in the Police Department Budget.

Selectman Hooker thought the suggestion to come to the Board for anything over \$500 was reasonable provided there was a written note. He stated the Default Budget is what it is, the numbers are what they are, and there is no way the Board can change, or adjust, the numbers to go forward to the MS-2. The Board can, however, change the budget numbers at the detail account level within each budget. A department may be allowed, with permission, to spend while others could be restricted because the Board doesn't approve anything, or certain items, to prevent an overrun.

Chairman Barry gave two examples of items the Board might have to vote on that occurred just this past week; \$500 for repairs to a police cruiser and a \$6,000 repair to the Highway Department Backhoe.

Continuing, Chairman Barry reiterated the Department Head brings items forward, as the budget goes forward, the Board finds the priorities and makes the decisions.

Selectman Reagan suggested sending the information through the Town Administrator rather than have Department Heads coming before the Board with \$500 purchase requests.

Chairman Barry summarized; (1) The Department Head should submit a written note for expenditures of \$500 or more. (2) A running tally of the budgets should be maintained. (3) The written note and budget information should go to the Administrator to bring to the Board.

Vice Chairman Robertson agreed with the process and thought it should begin before the money is gone.

Selectman Hooker requested the Board of Selectmen be part of the approval process.

Chairman Barry clarified the requests and notes would be given to the Administrator who will bring them to the Selectmen. The decision to pay, or not, rests with the Board of Selectmen.

MOTION: Vice Chairman R. Andrew Robertson made a motion the Board of Selectmen sign the MS-2 Form which has the Default Budget numbers transferred to it. Seconded by Selectman John Reagan.

Discussion: Selectman Hooker requested a breakdown of how numbers were arrived at using the 2007 Budget but not tonight. Chairman Barry recognized Donna Cisewski who worked with the documents. Mrs. Cisewski indicated the information was in the packet of documents provided to the Board this evening. It was suggested Selectman Hooker meet with Mrs. Cisewski to go over the information.

VOTE: Chairman Barry called for the Vote. It was a Unanimous Vote in Favor.

Signatures:

- Appointment/Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector
~Kelly Ann Roberts

Chairman Barry read Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Kevin Barry's request to have Kelly Ann Roberts appointed as Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

MOTION: Selectman John Reagan made a motion to appoint Kelly Ann Roberts as Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector. Seconded by Vice Chairman R. Andrew Robertson.

VOTE: Chairman Barry called for the Vote. It was a Unanimous Vote in Favor.
The appointment form was signed.

- Letter of Appreciation/Kelly Ann Roberts

Chairman Barry read a letter of appreciation written to Kelly Ann Roberts. The Board was in agreement Miss Roberts had done an admirable job filling the position of Town Clerk/Tax Collector for the past few months. The letter was signed.

- Letter/Department of Safety/Municipal Agent

The Board signed a letter to the State Department of Safety naming Kevin J. Barry, Town Clerk/Tax Collector as Municipal Agent for the Town of Deerfield. Kelly Ann Roberts, Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector and Jeanette Foisy, Office Assistant were listed as certified clerks.

- Refund Request/Lucy Meyers

MOTION: Vice Chairman R. Andrew Robertson made a motion to refund the overpayment of the municipal portion of motor vehicle fees. Seconded by Selectman Walter C. Hooker.

VOTE: Chairman Barry called for the Vote. It was a Unanimous Vote in Favor.

Voucher

- Accounts Payable Manifest \$41,406.76

MOTION: Vice Chairman R. Andrew Robertson made a motion to approve the Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$41, 406.76. Seconded by Selectman Walter Hooker.

VOTE: Chairman Barry called for the Vote. It was a Unanimous Vote in Favor.

Review of Correspondence:

- Resignation/Officer Joel Hughes and Request to Advertise the Vacancy

The Board received a resignation from Police Officer, Joel Hughes. Chief of Police, Michael Greeley requested to advertise the position.

Chairman Barry indicated Chief of Police, Michael Greeley approached him this evening and indicated he would be willing to wait until July 1st before filling the vacancy because it would save money in the Police Department Budget.

Selectman Hooker commented it might be after July 1st because a cruiser could be needed. Chairman Barry pointed out the Town could not buy a cruiser as the Warrant Article failed. The Police Department would have to maintain the cruisers currently in use.

Selectman O'Neal questioned if there was a plan for coverage, and more overtime, once Officer Hughes leaves. Vice Chairman Robertson explained the Police Department could maintain close to full time coverage with the remaining Police Officers. Selectman Hooker mentioned the cost of a certified Police Officer being \$40,000 and more than that for a non-certified officer. The Board was in agreement the budget did not contain money for non-certified officers. Chairman Barry believed there were certified officers out there and available.

Selectman Reagan stated the Police Department is run out of convenience and not for the citizens of Deerfield. He suggested returning to 8-hour shifts as there would be more than enough coverage even if a second Officer were to leave. Selectman Reagan opposed the 10-hour shifts and wanted to see the Police Department return to a five-day week. Selectman Reagan saw no advantage, to the Town, for the Police Department to be on 10-hour shifts and he could live with the Police Officers being a little unhappy. He suggested filling the vacancy with the current staff and not the Chief of Police who should be unavailable as he should be on duty, at the Police Department, to conduct business during normal business hours.

Chairman Barry asked for input from fellow Board members as to whether or not they wanted the ad placed for the vacancy in the Police Department. Vice Chairman Robertson replied hold off. Chairman Barry thought the ad would afford an opportunity to see what candidates might be out there. Selectman Reagan did not see the need for a new Officer. It was Selectman Reagan's opinion the Board will tell the Chief of Police when he can hire another Officer. Selectman Hooker found the hiring process to be premature due to budget constraints.

The Town Administrator was asked to relay the message to Chief Greeley.

- Letter of Thanks/Officer Amber Marchio

Paul Spinozza wrote thanking Officer Amber Marchio for the number of ways she assisted him. A copy of the letter will be placed in Officer Marchio's file. A letter from the Board of Selectmen will also be signed.

- Town Hall Rental Request/Senior Luncheons

A request to waive the fee for renting the Town Hall for the senior luncheon was before the Board. The Board discussed being under a Default Budget and heating and electrical costs are not being covered.

MOTION: Vice Chairman R. Andrew Robertson made a motion to waive the rental fees for the Senior Luncheon to be held at the Town Hall. Seconded by Selectman Alan O'Neal.

Discussion: It was noted the fees for the senior luncheons have been waived in the past, volunteers provide this service and attendees are from all walks of life. Chairman Barry agreed with the waiver but wanted an awareness of the heating costs.

VOTE: Chairman Barry called for the Vote. It was a Unanimous Vote in Favor.

Follow-up Discussion: Selectman Hooker asked if the cleaning fee was assessed. Chairman Barry stated yes, but would most likely be refunded.

Unfinished Business:

There was no Unfinished Business.

Other Business:

There was no Other Business.

New Business:

- Property Tax Assessment/Sears Property-South Road

Vice Chairman Robertson had a conversation with Mr. Sears who purchased the former Dodge property. Mr. Sears had concerns with taxation on his 25 acres of property being high since there was a conservation restriction in place. Mr. Sears mentioned retaining an attorney to hear his story which is why Vice Chairman Robertson brought the matter to the Board's attention thinking it would be best to look into this instead of spending money on Town Counsel. An Avitar Representative might have some knowledge of this property as well.

Selectman Hooker pointed out abatements were due March 1st and Mr. Sears would have to wait for tax relief until next year.

Vice Chairman Robertson wanted to encourage Mr. Sears to talk to the Board first.

Chairman Barry commented it could be a simple problem, a glaring error or a piece of missed information.

Selectman Hooker stated if there are errors on the property card they can be corrected at any time.

Selectman O'Neal questioned if Mr. Sears spoke with a representative from Avitar. Vice Chairman Robertson believed Mr. Sears did speak with someone from Avitar.

The Board discussed the parcel, the deed restriction, current use and the value of the land. The landowner believes there should be a reduction because the restriction keeps the land from being developed. The thought was this matter should be researched. Vice Chairman Robertson offered an appointment with the Board to Mr. Sears.

- Organizational Meeting/March 24, 2008

Chairman Barry indicated next week the Board would hold their organizational meeting for the year.

One thing Chairman Barry asked Board members to think about is doing away with liaisons to various departments. The Department Heads have the ability to talk to any member of the Board and often seek out several members of the Board. With a Town Administrator in place, the day-to-day questions can be fielded and there is still the opportunity to meet with the Board.

- Servicing Vehicles/Oil Changes

Selectman O'Neal thought about the new budget situation and wanted to know if the Highway Department was changing oil in the Town owned vehicles. He wondered if it would be more economical to put all the vehicle repair and service items out to bid. There are a number of garages in the area that if a contract was entered into with one of them, a discount rate might be established for labor, inspections and so on.

Chairman Barry indicated there was a plan in place to have the Highway Department take over inspecting vehicles but it hinged on being able to hire the additional employee. Right now an outside vendor handles vehicle maintenance and repairs.

Selectman Reagan asked what the insurance liability would be if the Town did their own vehicle maintenance and inspections.

Citizen's Comments:

- Kathy Bailey/The Union Leader

Ms. Bailey requested clarification on the \$80,000 hole in the Government Buildings Budget. Chairman Barry indicated it was the one-time expenditures in 2007 for roof repairs and paving.

- Maureen Mann, The Forum

Ms. Mann asked for the dollar amount for backhoe repairs. Chairman Barry indicated it was estimated at \$6,000.

- Harriet Cady

Mrs. Cady mentioned being on the Agenda for this evening at 6pm. The appointment for Mrs. Cady was scheduled for March 24, 2008 at 6pm. Mrs. Cady stated she would say what she had to say this evening.

The Default Budget was something Mrs. Cady wanted understood. She didn't believe things listed such as increased maintenance or existing upgrades were appropriate. Under SB2, pre-existing increases in wages aren't to be included either. The Default Budget is what was in 2007 except for Warrant Articles that passed. As Selectmen, it bothered Mrs. Cady the Board would be funding a paid Fire Chief and wondered if the position was advertised. Chairman Barry stated the Board did not advertise the position and it was not in the Default Budget.

Mrs. Cady continued explaining the Fire Chief is an appointed volunteer Fire Chief. Chairman Barry pointed out the position is non-existent. Mrs. Cady stated the Town provides the Fire Department with money and the Fire Department appoints or elects their Chief. Chairman Barry reiterated the funds for the position are not in the Default Budget, they were removed. Mrs. Cady did not understand why she was not told of the change. Chairman Barry said the Default Budget was amended after the Deliberative Session and he apologized for an incorrect statement at a Selectmen's Meeting following the Deliberative Session.

Mrs. Cady drew everyone's attention to page 52 of the Town Report and noted that increases are amounts that should be taken out. She questioned what on-going certification was but did understand how elections would be Federal and State mandated. Existing contracts is a correct term. Chairman Barry explained the form used is a State Form and is not in detail.

Mrs. Cady spoke to an increase in dues as being something that did not count on a Default Budget. She understood how electrical rates go up. There were other items in question such as fees for The Local Government Center which are not mandated as compared to the Assessing Association fees which are mandated.

Mrs. Cady brought up having been told by Chairman Barry at the Deliberative Session that the Default Budget was looked at by the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) but it never was. She continued saying she was to be told of the answer to the question, but never was, leaving her feeling like she is getting a run around and is getting the same run around with the dues for The Local Government Center.

Chairman Barry stated that everything was brought up at a Selectmen's Meeting after the Deliberative Session. He made it clear that he had made an incorrect statement as to how the DRA reviewed the Default Budget. The DRA has no control over the Default Budget. Chairman Barry stated the answers were brought forward in a public meeting and he didn't know what else the Board could do.

- Tom Dillon

Mr. Dillon asked who rents the Town Hall, and pays, since most fees are waived. Selectman Reagan pointed out the Town Hall costs \$1,000 a month in expenses whether it is used or not. Vice Chairman Robertson added half of those renting the Town Hall pay and they were made up of private functions such as weddings, business and private groups. The civic groups have not been charged fees.

- Alice French

Ms. French brought to the Board's attention water running across Meetinghouse Hill Road and Old Centre Road near the old Chase place was causing problems with the roadway. A patch of asphalt is missing; it is slippery if the temperatures are cold. She spoke with the Highway Agent and he said she shouldn't worry about it. However, since the new residents moved in, the water has changed course and is draining into the road. Selectman Reagan recalled an agreement with the prior owner to fix the drainage issue. The Town Administrator will advise the Highway Agent and Rick Pelletier, Code Enforcement Officer to look at the problem area and when there is an answer the Board will make sure Ms. French receives the information.

Adjournment:

6:39pm

On the motion of Selectman John Reagan to Adjourn, seconded by Selectman Alan O'Neal, Chairman Barry called for the Vote. It was a Unanimous Vote in Favor. The March 17, 2008 meeting of the Board of Selectmen is adjourned.