

1 **SELECTBOARD MEETING**

2 December 1, 2021

3 Attending the meeting in person; Merrily Lovell, Maggie Gordon, Phil Pouech, Todd Odit, Joy Dubin
4 Grossman, Eric Spivak, Fire Chief Nick Baker, Police Chief Anthony Cambridge, Police Sergeant Caleb
5 Casco, Chuck Reiss.

6 Attending remotely; Mike Loner, Catherine Ryan, Carl Bohlen, Katie Charbonneau, Diane Barber,
7 Natacha Liuzzi.

8 Absent; Dennis Place.

9 Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.

10 Additions or Deletions

11 None

12 Public Comment

13 None

14 Selectboard Forum

15 Phil said he felt last night's meeting went well and everyone was respectful of others opinions.

16 Merrily agreed and thanked Todd and Joy for attending as well as Frank Twarog and Missy Ross.

17 Approve Minutes of 11/17/21

18 Phil moved to approve the minutes of 11/14/21 with any agreed upon changes. Seconded by Maggie
19 and approved with 4 yes votes.

20 Review of Proposed Fire Department Budget

21 Chief Baker reviewed the proposed budget. He said generally across the board there are some
22 additional expenses for things like turn out gear, hoses, and rescue equipment. Larger increases are for
23 the following:

- 24 • call reimbursable – increased to better reflect actual cost
- 25 • chief pay – this now includes part time and full time salaries
- 26 • full time/part time salaries – this includes the two full time salaried positions and a part time
27 chief
- 28 • new line for wellness and fitness
- 29 • added equipment specific to fighting grass or wood fires, they have been using equipment
30 geared toward structural fires
- 31 • communication equipment and maintenance moved back to the FD from the ambulance
- 32 • station repair reduced as the work on the building for sleeping quarters is completed

33 EMS

- call reimbursable increase of \$15,000. This is a combination of more hours and increased hourly pay

There was discussion on the fact that people are calling EMS for health issues as they do not have a primary doctor. Nick said this is a national trend not just in Hinesburg.

Merrily said as she understands it, the Fire and EMS will be one budget. Nick said yes, it is one department. It has been separated so the tax payers could look at the cost of the EMS / ambulance service but it is one department. The total increase looking at both is \$74,000.

Mike asked when we vote will it be two separate budgets or FD with EMS included? Phil said the decision on how it will be warned has not been made.

Continued Police Department Budget Discussion

Phil said he appreciates the data regarding call volume provided. He was looking for information regarding Charlotte having contracted coverage with the State Police too. Todd reminded Phil that was information the Board was going to get.

Todd said he found out the Town can terminate the COPS Grant; he has not found anything in writing stating if there would be any repercussions.

Maggie said she looked at a comparison with Richmond which has a population of 500 people less than Hinesburg. When fully staffed they have 4 full time officers with someone on site for 17 hours. They have one officer on shift with some overlap at which time paperwork can be done. For overnight coverage; each officer is on call for 3 hours before and after their shift. Beyond that time, they rely on the State Police. Maggie asked about feedback from people on the nighttime coverage and she said the Chief said he has not heard any comments regarding coverage.

Chief Cambridge said the officers are paid for the 3 hours before and after a shift. If Hinesburg followed that model, it would drastically increase the overtime budget. Personnel is 4 officers and a Chief. If we reduce to one person shifts service is reduced as well as compromising the safety of the officer. He said the community votes on the level of service they want when they voted to have a 6th officer. Anthony addressed the fact that if the number of officers is low it affects the level of enforcement.

Phil asked how the ordinance requiring registration of alarms and charges for false alarms is working? Anthony said the goal was to get the program running and be sure everyone was aware and following the ordinance. Throughout the years there have been a number of nuisance alarms. This has decreased since.

Mike commented on the revenue generation. He appreciates looking for funding but feels a Police Department looking for revenue through traffic stops is a slippery slope. Anthony said Mike is correct and that is not done in the Department. They do not count on that money. Mike said he firmly believes Hinesburg Police are not doing that.

Caleb said we signed an agreement for the COPS Grant, to him it is an ethical question even if there is a legal way to get out of it. Caleb also addressed the safety of officers on call, he said this past year was the worst in all his time in Hinesburg answering dangerous calls. The sixth position is needed for safety for the department.

Phil said his questions on the grant were mostly answered. Caleb brought up a good point stating the Board voted to apply for the grant. With the data the department provided he feels more confident with moving forward with the budget the way it is presented.

Mike said at the time the Board approved the grant there was a lot of second guessing waiting for the budget vote. The vote supported the budget knowing it included a 6th officer. As a matter of integrity, the Board accepted the grant and should see it through. The voters have another opportunity in March of 2022 to decide on the budget.

Maggie feels the integrity of the decision made is important, she does not want to come in now and second guess decisions made by a different Board. Maggie noted Anthony stated with 6 officers we should be good for another 10 years and does not know if there is any way to hold us to that but would like that to inform the decisions going forward as the population has not grown in the past decade. Anthony said we are going to see growth that will more than double the Village population. He intends to keep the Board informed going forward, potentially quarterly, on what is going on and what increases they may be seeing in different areas.

Merrily said she has been in touch with Dennis and asked him how he felt about this issue. She said he is very motivated to reduce the budget and reduce taxes. He sees the numbers just going up. He would like us to have 4 officers. Merrily added if he were at the meeting tonight, she thinks he would have been swayed by the arguments presented.

Merrily said she was part of the decision about the grant and was persuaded by talk about the safety of the officers. We are going to have a larger population and the population has changed. She appreciates the work the police do as it makes her feel safer, she is happy to have someone on call at night.

Energy Committee Budget and Charging Station Discussion

Phil asked about the energy audit for Town Hall building. Chuck said it has not been done yet due to COVID shut down. The money in the current budget will be used to completed the audit for Town Hall in this fiscal year. They are requesting \$1,000 each for an audit of the Fire House and Police Department buildings.

Merrily asked Chuck if he has discussed this with Todd. Todd said he does question which building should be done first particularly given the recent information regarding the problems with the roof on Town Hall.

Mike asked about the proposal for the charging station. Have we checked out more than one vendor for quotes? And, has the committee looked for other grants that may be available? Merrily said on the VLCT website there was information on the infrastructure investment and jobs act mentioning funds to build a network of EV chargers. She feels we should wait till that is implemented before the Town uses funds to build a charging station.

Phil said he feels the \$7,000 proposed for the charging station can be used better elsewhere. The Town has no electric vehicles to use the station. There is some work and cost associated with having this. Phil recognized Cathy Ryan's letter supporting the station and recommends people in her situation go to

110 their HOA and make the request for a station. It is not the responsibility of the Town to provide
111 chargers for people in the Town. This is something we need to do but not sure this is the best approach.

112 Merrily said we have Town water and sewer. She feels this is going to be a basic necessity and it not
113 opposed to the Town providing it by installing a charging station.

114 Cathy Ryan said the situation at Lyman Meadow is difficult as they do not have carports so would need
115 to run an extension cord which is not feasible. Having a charging station locally would open up electric
116 car ownership to anyone who works in the Village or lives within walking distance to Town Hall. Cathy
117 also noted the funds from the bill Merrily noted is for interstate chargers and does believe it would be
118 available to towns.

119 Todd asked if there an opportunity to just rent a piece of land to a company who would install and be
120 responsible for the charging station.

121 Mike agrees with Phil and also said he is not sure enough research has been done on the proposal other
122 than to say we want to provide a charging station for those who want it. Has anyone reached out to a
123 Hinesburg business to see if they would sponsor a charging station?

124 Maggie said she feels privatization is not a wise way to go. She feels this reflects our values as a Town if
125 the Town takes ownership of the project. It opens up the discussion of only people who own their
126 homes and have garages being able to have electric vehicles.

127 Todd said the decision tonight is if money is to be put in the budget for the project not looking for
128 approval on a project. He sees this as a capital budget project.

129 Chuck said the Energy Committee is seeing this as a way for the Town to speak to the fact that we need
130 electric vehicles. The Town's responsibility is just to write a check each month to be connected to the
131 internet. They have been looking at this for three years.

132 Chuck did mention the energy audit on the Fire House which is a building that may not be there much
133 longer. He did consider the fact that the analysis could provide information on if the building is worth
134 salvaging or can even get to net zero energy.

135 Discuss Legislation Regarding Local Mask Mandates

136 Several Board members visited local businesses and none were looking to have a Town wide mask
137 mandate. Customers are being respectful and complying with those who are requesting masks.

138 Continue Discussion of Selectboard Goals

139 Merrily said another goal discussed at the retreat was communication and suggests including that. Phil
140 said the Board needs to find ways for community engagement and participation. He said the meeting
141 last night reinforced his feelings on this.

142 Maggie has a list of ideas. Todd said he has some ideas and will get together with Maggie and Merrily
143 on that.

144 Approve Engineering Agreement Amendment for WWTF Upgrade

145 Todd said this is to cover the cost of monitoring work of the settlement over a 10 month period.

146 Maggie moved to approve Engineering Amendment #6. Seconded by Phil. Phil asked if this is for
147 increased frequency of testing and Todd said it is. Motion voted and approved with 4 yes votes.

148 Approve Delinquent Tax Warrant

149 Phil moved to approve the Delinquent Tax dated for tax year 2021. Seconded by Maggie and approved
150 with 4 yes votes.

151 Town Manager Update

- 152 • the speed study is completed and resulted in a recommendation to change to lower the speed
153 limit on the South and North ends of the Village. VTrans will be making the recommendation for
154 the reduced speeds to the traffic committee
- 155 • creating a document to show the budget drivers and summary of major changes to put on the
156 website
- 157 • Town Hall roof engineer report received. Based on the engineering recommendation the main
158 hall on the second floor will not be used because of structural concerns. There is a two phase
159 approach to remedy this. The first thing would be to shore up the areas of concern and fix the
160 roof leaks. Phase two would be roof and structure replacement.

161

162 Consider Approving Warrants

163 Phil moved to approve the warrants signed by Merrily and Maggie, including payroll, as submitted by
164 the Town Treasurer. Seconded by Maggie and approved with 4 yes votes.

165 Adjourn

166 Phil moved to adjourn at 9:05 p.m., seconded by Maggie and approved with 4 yes votes.

167 Respectfully submitted,

168 Valerie Spadaccini, clerk of the Board

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