

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
JOINT MEETING
GREAT BARRINGTON SELECTBOARD &
FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2015
6:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL**

Selectboard present: ED ABRAHAMS
DANIEL BAILLY
STEPHEN BANNON
DEB PHILLIPS
SEAN STANTON

Finance Committee present: BUD ATWOOD
TOM BLAUVELT
LEIGH DAVIS
SHARON GREGORY
MICHAEL WISE

I. CALL TO ORDER

The joint meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

II. SB – Signing of Bond Anticipation Note (BAN)

All Selectboard members signed the BAN presented by Lauren Sartori.

Sharon Gregory handed out a local receipts document that she created to show progression over 5 years.

III. FY16 Budget

a. Police

Chief Walsh said that the union contract being settled was a great accomplishment.

Chief said that he has looked at staff inefficiencies to avoid Overtime.

He continues to work on the accreditation process and training programs.

Chief Walsh said that the building requires general maintenance; the boiler is set to be replaced and a new rug will be put in this spring.

There is currently a full police staff. Many tasks have been dispersed among officers with the retirement of Sharon Nourse. The Animal Control Officer and Kim Shaw have also moved on.

Chief explained that the Main Street Reconstruction project will require a detail which will not be paid by the Police Department; it will be paid through outside funds.

Bud Atwood asked about the license plate reader that is being requested.

Chief Walsh said that this item is on his 'wish list' and would be a cost to the town. It is similar to a radar and would run automatic background checks. The cost is approximately \$12,000 per unit and the software to go with it is costly. Grants for this type of item are hard to get.

Bud Atwood said that this seems like an important item to have.

Sean Stanton said that he is concerned about civil liberties issues. He said that there should be a specific policy about how it is used, how long the information is kept etc.

Deb Phillips suggested that this be an agenda item in anticipation of this item being used.

Jennifer Tabakin said that many grants have been applied for with great success. Jennifer said that she will continue to talk about sharing services regarding dispatch with other towns. If dispatch is combined, we would become eligible for regional grant funds.

Chief Walsh explained that getting even just one additional town would make them eligible for 4 times the grant money.

Chief Walsh said that he has applied for a \$5000 grant for an electronic fingerprint scanner. He is waiting to hear the result.

Leigh Davis asked about the low parking enforcement number.

The Town Manager explained that the Parking Enforcement Officer retired, therefore there was a low number of tickets issued in this area. She explained that it was more important to get a full time Executive Administrative Assistant. A full time position has been created for this by combining other areas.

Parking Enforcement is currently an open position.

Deb Philips spoke about metered parking to alleviate the need for a Parking Enforcement Officer. Jennifer Tabakin said that this should be discussed after the Main Street Reconstruction is complete.

Leigh Davis suggested a police presence in the schools and asked if the Police Department ever goes to the schools to talk to the children.

Chief Walsh said that they would love to, but have not been invited.

Sharon Gregory spoke about the drug trade problem in the surrounding areas and asked if there are any programs to increase surveillance.

Chief Walsh said that there is on-going effort. Great Barrington is part of a drug task force in which we receive \$32,000 back for working with them.

Jennifer Tabakin replied that there are regular meetings with the superintendent to collaborate with the principals regarding this.

Chief Walsh said that 3 officers work with the task force and will go to other towns and make arrests which affects drug flow to Great Barrington; it is all a help.

Michael Wise asked if any officers will be retiring.

Chief Walsh responded that there may be 1 or 2 retirements in a year or so.

There was discussion about using an SUV versus a sedan.

Chief Walsh explained that SUV's are preferred; sedans are too small for bigger guys. He always considers the best mileage option and gets the best package available.

Chief Walsh introduced the new Animal Control Officer, Karen Jo Sicotte.

b. Fire

Chief Burger said that the stipend system started last year for volunteers.

2 more firefighters earned their Firefighter I and II certification and 4 earned their EMT certification.

Chief Burger announced that he is the first Fire Chief to earn accreditation. He has also been appointed to the Massachusetts Fire Training Council. Chief Burger hopes that he will be able to get more training out this way; which has proven to be difficult in the past.

Jennifer Tabakin said that they are anticipating a 15% increase from Housatonic water for hydrant rentals. A grant will be applied for.

Leigh Davis asked if there is still a concern about the number of volunteers.

Chief Burger responded that the total production is what is important, not the numbers. The average attendance is up per call and raising awareness is his focus.

Dan Bailly asked who services the fire hydrants.

Chief Burger responded that the Fire District plows out their hydrants and maintains them.

Housatonic volunteers shovel out their hydrants. Chief added that there isn't a contract regarding maintenance in Housatonic, but one is needed.
Deb Phillips asked if maintenance agreements can be looked at to make sure things are working. The Town Manager replied yes.

c. Building Inspector

The Town Manager explained that the online Building permit system has been implemented. The Assistant Building Inspector has been hired and the department is working more efficiently. Sean Stanton asked about the \$13,000 under 'property and safety'. He asked why these structures haven't been taken down.

Jennifer Tabakin responded that foreclosure is planned for these 2 properties which will then be put up for sale; giving the purchaser the cost of demolition.

Sean Stanton said that this is not preferable to the neighbors. He asked that we give the potential buyers a time-line for demolition or else the town will have to demolish them. Sean said it seems faster to foreclose and demo versus foreclosure, sell and then demo.

Sean Stanton asked for a report on other properties that are vacant, should be demolished or foreclosed and the tax status.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Steve Bannon, seconded by Sean Stanton, the Selectboard adjourned its meeting at 8:20 P.M.

On a motion by Tom Blauvelt, seconded by Bud Atwood, the Finance Committee adjourned its meeting at 8:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Cara Becker
Recording Secretary