

Town of Oakham

Board of Selectmen

Regular Session

Minutes of October 17, 2022

Present: Don Haapakoski-Chairman, Brad Taylor-Vice Chairman (via phone), Lucy Tessnau-Clerk

In attendance: Maribel LaRange-BOS admin asst., Police Chief-Fred Gehring, Christopher Adams, Library Director-Samantha Bodine, Fire Chief-Timothy Howe, Susanne Shays, Alan Flagg, Paul Rochette, Denise Collette

Meeting opened at 6:00 PM by Chairman, Don Haapakoski

Approve Warrant WR23-08: Lucy made motion to approve WR23-08, Don 2nd, Brad abstained.

Approve Minutes: No minutes to be approved.

Public Session: Paul Rochette brought to the attention of the board a safety issue in regards to a tree stump that impairs the vision of drivers. The tree stump is on Rutland Road & Route 148 on the left-hand side if coming from Route 122. Lucy added that she has received complaints from seniors with the same concerns. Kevin, Highway Superintendent will look into it.

Samantha Bodine/Salary discussion: The board has reviewed the wages based on the wage study and what the town can afford for Samantha Bodine, Library Director. The board has agreed to increase the Library Director's hourly rate from her current \$22.25 to \$25.00 an hour. Samantha inquired about possibly becoming salaried as she's a department head. Don informed her that in order to become salaried there are some criteria's that need to be met. One, you have to supervise workers, which Samantha does and meets. Second, the hourly rate when calculated has to be a minimum of \$28 an hour, which she does not meet. Samantha stated she just wants her position to be equitable to her peers that are department heads. Don said to put together exactly what she is looking for and it can then be discussed at the next BOS's meeting.

Samantha informed the board that the Library Trustees have a replacement for the trustee that had resigned. The replacement is Emily Glidden and she will finish the remaining of the term which is a year and a half. Samantha will contact the Town Clerk for the official steps for Emily to be sworn in.

QDrug- Quabbin Resistance Unification Group: QDrug was not able to attend meeting.

Police Department Appointment: Police Chief, Fred Gehring presented the board with a part time police officer candidate, Christopher Adams. Chief Gehring said Mr. Adams would be a great asset to the Oakham Police Department. Mr. Adams has had a lengthy career in law enforcement, has retired as a Detective from the Town of Ware. Mr. Adams stated that a part

time position in our small community would be a perfect fit. Lucy was part of the interview process for Mr. Adams and she was very pleased with his credentials and how he interviewed.

Lucy made motion to appoint Christopher Adams as a part time officer to the Oakham Police Department contingent successful completion of all the requirements needed, Brad 2nd, Don all in favor.

Chief Gehring informed the board that he has been working with Capital Strategic Solutions for a grant reimbursement for the bridge academy. Chief Gehring signed for the reimbursements for the first 7 officers that have gone through the academy. The next group will be around 5 officers, and the last group 2 or 3 officers.

Highway Department: Snow plow driver: Kevin informed the board that he has no part-time drivers. Kevin said if he cannot get any drivers the only other option would be to go through a private contractor which would be around \$75-\$100/hr. Alan asked Kevin how many hours would he need for part time drivers based on prior years, Kevin said it all depends on mother nature. Lucy said they would need to go into the emergency fund to pay for drivers at a higher rate. Paul also suggested that it can be deficient spending and then it would come of the top of free cash.

Salt Shed & HVAC system update: Kevin told the board that the salt shed roof is leaking. Lucy said he needs to get estimates on the cost for the repairs. Kevin also, updated the board with the status of the HVAC system, that when the system was installed, it was up to code, but since then it has changed and no longer up to code. The system needs duct work for the return and proper circulation of air. Lucy and Don both agreed that Kevin needs to get quotes for the duct work to be done and submitted as an article for the STM.

Carport: At the 2022 ATM Kevin had an article for \$5,000 for carport/canopy for the fuel tanks which was voted. Since then, the prices have gone up and would now need another \$4,000. In order to lock in the latest rate which is \$8,995.00, 15% of the invoice needs to be paid. Kevin will get that invoice to move forward with it.

Salt prices: Kevin informed the board that salt prices have gone up about \$16,000 more for the year. Last year it was \$62.78 a ton, now \$75.34 a ton, an increase of \$12.56 a ton.

Salaries: Kevin inquired in regards to salary increases and was provided with a list of potential increases for the employees that the board has been reviewing based on the wage study and what the town can afford.

Non-Emergency Oakham phone number: Maribel informed the board that Oakham's non-emergency number, 508-882-3347 was not able to be exported from Verizon (current carrier) and imported to Mitel phone system which is what the town uses to then be automatically directed to the Rutland Regional Dispatch System. Currently in Rutland there is a separate phone not part of the dispatch system for the Oakham non-emergency line. Michael Moriarty, Director of Communications suggested to get rid of that line and provide Oakham residents

with the Rutland Regional Non-Emergency number, 508-86-4033 ext. 0. The services will remain exactly the same. The board is ok with the change and have agreed for the change to be effective December 1, 2022. Flyers will be posted on social media, town website, town electronic sign and Michael Moriarty will be sending out a Smart911 alert to reach as many of the Oakham residents as possible to notify them of the change.

FY2024 Budget Process: Alan Flagg, chairman of Fincom, communicated with the board on the FY2024 process. Alan provided the board with a schedule of events for the budget season. Alan also asked if it's the accountant who is responsible for sending out the memo for the budget season and budget reports to the departments, boards & committees. The goal is for things to go as smooth as possible with all involved during the budget process.

Paul asked who pays the police details for the elections. The board informed him that the Town Clerk pays for them from her budget.

Town Audit: Alan Flagg, chairman of Fincom, inquired if there will be a full audit done as the last one the Town had done was in 2018. Alan also stated that he had been doing research and it's probably best to go with the same company to build consistency and history but ultimately, it's up to the board. There is \$25,000 already for an audit that was allocated at an annual town meeting 2 years ago. The board would possibly like to do an audit for years 2019, 2020, & 2021 depending on the cost. Maribel will contact Roselli, Clark & Associates, CPAs, which was the company that did the last audit and get back to the board with information.

Date for STM/Date to open Warrant: The BOS have decided that the STM will be on Monday, November 28, 2022 at 7:00pm at the Oakham Fire Station. The warrant will open on Tuesday, October 18, 2022 and close on Friday, November 4, 2022 at 12:00 p.m.

New Business: Fire Chief, Tim Howe gave an update on the progress of the fire station repairs. The roof has been repaired and done. Tim is getting 3 quotes for the floor repairs and will give to the board. Fire engine #3 has been repaired and the bill was approximately \$2,800.00. Tim also informed the board that the lights at the fire/highway building are wired and cannot just turn switch off.

Old Business: Maribel informed the board that Republic Services no longer does residential tote containers (which was what was at the town hall. 1 trash container, 2 recycle containers) but will be delivering 2- 2yard dumpsters (1-trash, 1-recycle) with monthly pick ups for the same price the town has been paying, including the 4yard dumpster located on Barre Rd for police, fire and highway.

Lucy discussed the quotes received for the gutter repairs. Brad suggested to check with Kevin whether cutting into the pavement might be needed to install the gutters.

Don updated the board on the bridge for the software between the accountant and the treasurer/collector software's and was informed that the bridge will be complete by the grant's deadline of October 28, 2022.

Maribel informed the board that she has sent two emails to Mr. Nutter in regards to scheduling a date for a walk through for Oakham Center School for repairs which was requested by Mr. Nutter and Quabbin. Maribel has not received a reply.

Correspondence: State Ethics Commission emailed Town Clerk with two options for employees to complete conflict of interest law education requirements: using their LMS (learning management system) or hosting the program on the town's own LMS or intranet site. The board agreed to use the state's LMS.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:03 PM: Don made motion to adjourn, Lucy 2nd, Brad all in favor.

Next Regular Meeting: November 1, 2022 at 6:00 PM.