

Town of Oakham

Board of Selectmen

Regular Session

Minutes of November 1, 2022

Present: Don Haapakoski-Chairman, Brad Taylor-Vice Chairman, Lucy Tessnau-Clerk

In attendance: Maribel LaRange-BOS admin asst., Tom Hughes, Sue Adamski, Kevin & Cindy Currier, Priscilla Johnson, Diane Peterson, Amanda Carroll, Paul Rochette, Stephen Dollinger, Lisa Taylor

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

Approve Warrant: Lucy made motion to approve WR23-09, Brad 2nd, Don all in favor.

Approve Minutes: Lucy made a motion to approve executive minutes for 10/17/2022, Brad 2nd, Don all in favor.

Public Session: No Public Session.

Oakham Center School-Date for walkthrough: The board decided on November 15th at 10:00am for a walk-through meeting for repairs at the Oakham Center School per the request of the Quabbin Regional School District.

Fire Chief, Tim Howe- fire station floor decision/bid award:

Highway Department:

- **Snow plow drivers:** Kevin informed the board that he has no seasonal / part-time snow plow drivers. Kevin said that many surrounding towns are in the same situation. Kevin needs two more drivers. Kevin suggested to increase the hourly rate. Current rate for part-time snow plow driver's is \$17.05, Kevin's recommendation was \$21.00/hr., overtime after 8 hours in a day. Kevin said if no drivers apply with the proper credentials the Town will need to resource to private subcontractor which is a lot more costly. Kevin said that if subcontracting is the way they need to proceed it would be wise to create line item under snow and ice to be able to deficit spend.

Lucy said she would prefer not to have to subcontract and agrees to raise hourly rate to entice workers.

Brad made a motion to raise the hourly rate for snow plow drivers to \$21/hr. with overtime after 8 hours in a day, Lucy 2nd, Don all in favor.

- **HVAC system update:** No update, Kevin will follow up with Pioneer Valley.

- **Carport update:** Kevin informed the board that the company will not put the carport on the current concrete pad that the fuel pumps are on. They will only do it setting it outside the pad. Kevin said he will try to see if the company can do on the pad like initially decided. Brad asked if the carport can be built? Don asked if built with the cost lumber would it be enough funds, Kevin said he believes so with the help of Tim and Highway department.

Kevin informed the board that he made a call for the water pump as the one in the safety complex is making noises.

- **Salary:** Kevin addressed the BOS in regards to his salary. Kevin requested a 10% increase in his salary for FY23. Kevin stated that based on the wage study his hourly rate for 3 years or more of service should be \$42/hr. and the minimum according to the study should be \$36.39. Kevin has been the Highway Superintendent for 29 years and his salary broken down to an hourly rate is \$34.38. Cindy pointed out that the Highway Department is not considered a safety department and expressed that Kevin and the department have gone above and beyond to keep the roads safe. She reminded the board that Kevin has gotten several large grants, with one of them being for one million dollars. Kevin said he will be retiring the following year and retirement goes based off the 3 highest years. Kevin thinks he has earned a decent raise for the years of service to Oakham.

Brad said he thought 80% of the wage study was a joke but does think that the job descriptions provided from it were good. Brad said that with fuel and electricity going up raises can be given when they can. He also said that the board is doing the best they can for all Town employees. Don said the board will further discuss Kevin's longevity.

Board of Assessors- Job description: Diane Peterson member of the Board of Assessors came before the Board of Selectmen in regards to job description for the Principal Assessor and the clerk. Diane notified the board that the current job description for the clerk is truly a job description for an administrative assessor. Diane said that the BOA should have three job descriptions.

1. Principal Assessor
2. Administrative Assessor
3. Clerk

Diane informed the board that the BOA will be putting in an additional line item request to be funded for FY24 budget for an administrative assessor. Current budget is funded for Principal Assessor and a Clerk. Brad said it's necessary. Don agreed and had no issue adding a 3rd job description. Lucy said it will protect the BOA's office.

Email System: The current email system the Town is using is free but does not archive. By state law all emails in municipal government need to be backed up. Steve Dollinger said that the

state has Microsoft for government emails. There will be an article on warrant for the STM for the cost of the conversion for an email system to be state compliant.

Town Audit: The Town currently has \$25,000 in an article line item for audit services. The cost of the audit would be \$15,000 per year. There will be an article on warrant for the STM for \$5,000 to add to the \$25,000 to be able to do two years of audit, years 2021 & 2022. The DOR recommends to stay with the same audit firm for at least 5 years as they would have history on the Town. Maribel will call Tony Roselli from Roselli, Clark & Associates, to proceed with the Town audit.

Treasurer/Collector, Lisa Taylor: Lisa came before the board in regards to the wage study for employee raises. Lisa informed the board she saw a list of employees and their possible raises. Lisa said that only two people are not getting raises and she is one of them. Lisa said that she did her own research on the rates the wage study has for Treasurer/Collectors for Town's that are being compared to and some are incorrect. She said the rates for Paxton & Rutland is \$44.00/hr. which is less than her hourly rate if broken down from salary to hourly. Don said they will investigate it. Lisa stated that on the study she is listed as being employed as Treasurer/Collector for seven years, when in fact it is eleven years. Don said that would be corrected and an appropriate raise will be calculated.

New Business: No new business

Old Business: Capital Strategic Solutions informed the Town of a grant for cyber security. CSS did a zoom with IT/Paul from CMGeeks in regards to the grant.

Don made a motion to be the signatory for the cyber security grant, Brad 2nd, Lucy abstained.

Don informed the Treasurer/Collector that the bridge between the accountant's software (Springbrook) and her software (QDS) is complete.

Correspondence: Lucy informed the board of a letter from DCR in regards to Ware River Watershed and prison camps. The public meeting will provide an overview of the draft of Ware River Public Access Management Plan.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:26 PM: Brad made a motion to adjourn, Lucy 2nd, Don all in favor.

Next Regular Meeting: November 14, 2022 at 6:00 PM.