

approved: September 16, 2013

**Townshend Select Board
Minutes
September 3, 2013**

Present: Select Board: Kit Martin; Hedy Harris; David Dezendorf; Chad Greenwood; Scott Chase

In Attendance: Joe Daigneault; Cynthia Davis; Janet Stowell; Atty Richard Coutant; Brian Schmidt; Craig Hunt

1. Call to Order: Martin called the Meeting to Order at 6:04 P.M.

2. Executive Session: Harris made a motion: **To enter into Executive Session at 6:05 with Atty Coutant to discuss legal matters**, seconded by Dezendorf and carried by those present.

Dezendorf made a motion: **For the Select Board to return from Executive Session at 7:08**, seconded by Harris and carried by those present.

As a result of Executive Session, Dezendorf made a motion: **To continue to employ Salmon & Nostrand as municipal legal counsel**, seconded by Harris and carried by those present.

3. Members of the Public: None at this time.

4. Tax Rates: Dezendorf made a motion: **For the Select Board to set the FY 2013-14 combined municipal and education Homestead Tax Rate at 2.1016 and the Non-Resident Tax Rate at \$2.0645**, seconded by Greenwood.

Lengthy discussion ensued about the spending cuts necessary to achieve the tax rate proposed with Harris arguing that planned municipal projects and the scheduled replacement of equipment shouldn't be canceled when it was education spending that was driving the tax rates up.

Dezendorf agreed in principal, reiterating that while the voters approved what would amount to \$0.63 in Town and Highway spending, education taxes were set at \$1.61 with \$0.53 of that tax rate going to fund school spending in excess of the State allowance. But, Dezendorf also argued, a tax rate of \$2.25 was going to prove un-affordable to many this year and it was necessary, regardless of how painful, for the Select Board to reduce that rate anyway it could.

To achieve a combined tax rate reduced to 2.1016, the Select Board would have to postpone purchasing a new plow truck, reduce the amount of gravel to be crushed by half, not paint fog lines on the roads, not install guardrails on Route 35, not begin the State-mandated campaign to upgrade all road signs in the next five years, and credit the Treasury with an anticipated \$100,000 expected, but not yet received, from FEMA.

Dezendorf noted that the savings realized would reduce the tax rate only by \$0.15, or about exactly what our new C.L.A. of 91.26%, after reappraisal, cost the Town as a tax penalty.

Discussion continued about the need to maintain scheduled replacement of vehicles, as opposed to undertaking needed projects and Dezendorf offered an amendment: **To set the combined municipal and education Homestead Tax Rate at \$2.1468 and Non-Resident Tax Rate at \$2.1097, by crediting \$100,000 of anticipated FEMA money to the Treasury and not buying a new truck,** seconded by Greenwood. When called, the amendment failed to carry by those present.

Harris offered an amendment: **To set the combined municipal and education Homestead Tax Rate at \$2.2522 and Non-Resident Tax Rate at \$2.2151,** a figure approved by the voters at Town Meeting and at the annual meetings of Townshend Elementary School and Leland & Gray High Schools. The amendment failed for lack of a second.

Harris then offered an amendment: **To set the combined municipal and education Homestead Tax Rate at \$2.1409 and Non-Resident Tax Rate at \$2.1068,** rates that reflected credit of \$100,000 in anticipated money from FEMA and spending cuts in fog-line painting and the purchase of a new truck, only. The amendment failed for lack of a second.

After further discussion, the main motion was called and carried by those present, setting the Homestead Tax Rate at 2.1016 and the Non-Resident Tax Rate at 2.0645.

The Tax Collector was then instructed to proceed with getting the tax bills printed and mailed out.

5. Members of the Public: Brian Schmidt, clerk of the Townshend Elementary School Board, was welcomed and explained that the school would be unable to meet its financial obligations early in October. Martin explained that everyone was being hit hard by the delays in reappraisal and that while the town would be seeking to establish its own line of credit, he did not believe that the Select Board would be in a position to provide funds to

the school before taxes were collected. He asked Schmidt to have Frank Rucker, the CFO of Windham Central Supervisory Union, call him to explore options.

6. Approval of the Minutes: Dezendorf made a motion: **To approve the Minutes of August 19, 2013, and the Special Meeting Minutes of August 22nd, as corrected**, seconded by Chase and carried by those present.

7. Additions and Deletions: Dezendorf asked to have Emergency Management and Law Enforcement Reports removed from the Agenda.

8. Warrants: Dezendorf made motions to approve the following Warrants:

WARRANT 0903-1 Payroll \$9,683.84, seconded by Greenwood and carried by those present.

WARRANT 0903-2 Payroll Tax \$3,524.02, seconded by Greenwood and carried by those present.

WARRANT 0903-3 General Fund \$1,121.21, seconded by Greenwood and carried by those present.

WARRANT 0903-4 Highway Fund \$111.52, seconded by Chase and carried by those present.

WARRANT 0903-5 Equipment Fund \$11,124.23, seconded by Greenwood. Discussion ensued and Dezendorf amended the motion: **To withhold payment on the mowing machine rental until the roadside mowing was completed, reducing WARRANT 0903-5 to \$4,124.23**, seconded by Greenwood and carried by those present. The amendment now becoming the main motion, it was called, and carried by those present.

9. Reports: Highway: Dezendorf informed the Board that a pre-bid conference for culvert work on Ellen Ware Road would be held on September 4th at 9:00 A.M. Because of an October 1st deadline for activating the grant from the Agency of Natural Resources, receiving bids and making a contractor selection will have to be done with some haste. Lengthy discussion ensued about the notification process and Dezendorf assured the Board that Bostrom had assumed responsibility for calling contractors.

Dezendorf also informed the Board that gravel crushing bids would be prepared soon.

Harris complained that a culvert has needed attending on the road to Acton Hill Cemetery and that though Bostrom knows about it, nothing has been done. Dezendorf and Greenwood said that an investigation would be made this week.

Town Clerk's Report: None at this time.

Bookkeeper's / Treasurer's Report: Daigneault reported that there was approximately \$165,000 in the General Fund checking and Sweep account.

10. Correspondence: Nothing at this time.

11. Old Business: Personnel Policy: Following lengthy discussion, Dezendorf made a motion: **To adopt the changes to Townshend's Personnel Policy, as presented**, seconded by Harris and carried by those present. Martin then signed the revised policy and Hunt was instructed to distribute copies.

R.O.W. at Leland & Gray: No action at this time.

Ancient Roads: Nothing at this time.

Healthcare Provision Mandates: To be discussed at the meeting on September 16th.

12. New Business: Auditors & Town Report: It was noted that the Auditors have set an October 15th deadline for the submission of various reports to be included in the 2014 Annual Town Report and the Board will discuss a schedule for budget workshops and the drafting of reports at the next meeting.

13. Other Business: The Select Board scheduled its next regular meeting for Tuesday, September 3rd, because of the Labor Day holiday.

14. Executive Session: Dezendorf made a motion: **To enter into Executive Session at 8:50 P.M. to discuss legal and personnel matters**, seconded by Greenwood and carried by those present.

Harris made a motion: **To return from Executive Session at 9:18 P.M.**, and, as a result of Executive Session, no action was taken.

15. Meeting Schedules:

R.E.D. Informational Meeting September 9th
at 7:00 P.M. at Townshend Elementary School
Regular Meeting: September 16th at 6:00 P.M.

16. Adjournment: Harris made a motion: **To adjourn at 9:20 P.M.**, carried by those present.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig K. Hunt, assistant