

FINAL



WEARE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
November 16, 2020

PRESENT: JOHN (JACK) MEANEY, CHAIRMAN; FREDERICK W. HIPPLER, VICE CHAIRMAN; JONATHAN H. OSBORNE, SELECTMAN; SHERRY M. BURDICK, SELECTMAN; JOHN VAN LOENDERSLOOT, SELECTMAN

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR: Naomi L. Bolton

GUESTS: Finance Administrator Beth Rouse, Police Chief Chris Moore, Fire Chief Robert Vezina, Assistant Fire Chief Robert Richards, CIP Chairman Jack Dearborn, Police Sergeant Ryan Frisbie, Police Sergeant Austin Maguire, Finance Committee Member Tom Clow, Finance Committee Member James Dury, R & R Communications President Jeff Barden, Frank Campana

Chairman Meaney opened the meeting at 6:30 pm., welcomed those present to the November 16, 2020 meeting of the Weare Board of Selectmen and proceeded with the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Frank Campana stated at the last meeting Town Moderator Eileen Meaney missed thanking some people, himself, the people manning the check in books, Supervisors of the Checklist, Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk and another worker.

Next, Mr. Campana asked the Board to look out for tax payers in setting the tax rate. The school portion will be giving back quite a sum. He is interested to see how much will be given back to reduce taxes and what will be used of the General Fund Surplus to offset an article or two. He will be back to see if the Board does, let the people decide how they want to spend their money.

R & R Radio Discussion w/ Jeff Barden:

Chairman Meaney asked Jeff Barden to comment on First Net, Inc. Can R & R offer a similar system? Jeff Barden explained his system operates on the AT&T Network and the T-Mobile Network, with their own servers which they maintain. One in New Jersey and a redundant server in Toronto, Canada.

If AT&T or T-Mobile goes down, they would switch back and forth to each other. Similar to First Net, they also have Push-To-Talk over cellular. A voice system with GPS dispatching consoles letting you know where an officer is and how fast he is going in a car. If you have coverage anywhere in the world these units will work.

Selectman Van asked a series of questions, Jeff Barden replied:

1. First Net, in a major disaster, can supply portable cell towers into our infrastructure. Can R & R's system? No.

2. Does R & R's system offer priority on the cell network in an emergency? No.

3. How is R & R's system better than First Net? I am not saying it is, AT&T controls the towers. They can prioritize the data. R & R cannot prioritize data for public safety.

4. How does R & R integrate with LMR, land mobile radios? R & R has an interface unit, a baby repeater. What goes out on the Push-to-Talk would also go out on the LMR.

5. What software does R & R use on the cell phones? Walky Fleet, runs on Android or Apple.

Chairman Meaney asked what is the price per month. Jeff Barden answered, having worked in Weare for forty years, at his cost, \$8.00/unit/month. He can supply 10 mobiles, 10 portables and take care of the town.

Vice Chairman Hippler asked if R & R would be supplying AT&T phones, Push-To-Talk over the phone to the gateway module to put on LMRs. Portable radios that would switch from LMR, LTE, etc., not just a cell phone. Jeff Barden responded, he offers a professional grade portable radio with a speaker mic or any accessory you would want. Any Sonium XP8 or more robust, anything going out on the LMR and vice versa.

Vice Chairman Hippler clarified the data is LTE cell phone. Jeff Barden replied exactly. Vice Chairman Hippler then asked, how long has R & R offered this system. Jeff Barden responded about two years with 125 units on it.

Selectman Van asked if this system is exclusive to R & R. Jeff Barden answered yes, and other companies offer it at a rate of \$25.00 to \$45.00/month.

Vice Chairman Hippler asked, considering R & R's familiarity with our current system, how would First Net, LTE over cell phone system benefit the town. Jeff Barden replied, short term there would be a big benefit, because of the historic dead areas, particularly for the Police Department, as the town's analog system is getting old. Long term he would prefer radio communication systems be controlled by the town, with no reliance on any cell phone company or cloud server. He stated the Push-to-Talk over cellular solution is good as a backup, but not as a primary communication.

Selectman Van asked does R & R have interoperability with other departments like First Net, for example, Derry and Bedford, both on First Net/AT&T, could they interact with one another. Jeff Barden responded no.

Fire Chief Vezina asked, how would it interface with how they use their mutual aid radios now. Could they interface with Capital Area, specifically, if they come into our town could we talk to them? Jeff Barden answered yes, by hooking the LMR integration product to a radio set on Capital, or whatever, you would be able to talk to them on your hand held device.

Jeff Bardon shared, they have been working with Motorola Engineering who is generating, free of charge to the town of Weare, real live coverage maps. These maps will reflect digital data at zero cost to the town. They are needed for 95% coverage, 95% of the time.

Selectman Van asked when will this be available, clarifying digital coverage, digital radio coverage, digital cell phone coverage. Jeff Barden answered in two weeks, digital radio coverage using infrastructure that is currently existing.

Selectman Van asked, specifically, what frequency bands? The frequency Fire and Police are using, VHF? Jeff Barden replied, yes, high band, this town needs a simulcast system. (Which means multiple base stations transmitting the same voice/data signal on the same frequency at the same time.) He continued, the problem has not been getting to Mine Hill, it is getting back. River Road, Clough Park are bad areas that historically struggle.

Selectman Van pointed out the struggle can be right here in front of the Town Hall, it doesn't matter where they are at. The system is failing, it needs to be addressed as it has been going on way too long.

Jeff Barden reiterated the maps, done by Motorola Engineering, are guaranteed. He would like to present as soon as he has them. This would save the town \$20,000.00 to \$30,000.00.

Fire Chief Vezina asked, from those coverage maps could we extrapolate a cost to build the infrastructure. Jeff Barden answered in the affirmative, Motorola Engineering will create a simulcast system involving, perhaps, three transmitters to effectively cover the town of Weare.

Vice Chairman Hippler asked roughly what would be the cost, in addition to, adding two full size repeater masts like Mine Hill, on top of, what the town already has. Jeff Barden responded they are looking at cell towers that are currently existing. Running tests off of them at certain heights. He can almost guarantee something in the 50 or 60 foot range at the Sugar Hill station, though he is not comfortable giving a price right now.

Selectman Van asked for a ball park price. Jeff Barden answered high end would be \$500,000.00. It all depends on how many simulcasts, how the sites are integrated with each other, via microwave or an IP solution. Motorola Engineers will guarantee and handle it all.

Vice Chairman Hippler asked if the current Voter Sites they have substantial money invested in, though not working, will be used. Jeff Barden responded it is not fair to say they are not working because, for example, Fire have vehicular repeaters without much of an issue. The sites can still be utilized, however, you have to start to think in a digital realm, get out of the analog realm. In 2012, they were running 25 killer hurts band width with great coverage until the Federal mandate of 12.5 killer hurts and 10 – 12% coverage was lost.

Selectman Van asked what is the advantage having Police on digital and Fire on analog. Jeff Barden replied going digital recaptures the 10% lost during narrow banding, transmitting and receiving.

Jeff Barden continued, with the previous Police Chief they did put a Motorola Digital Quantar up on Mine Hill. Tests were run, portable coverage was the struggle.

Selectmen Van and Vice Chairman Hippler disagreed, it is not just the portable coverage. It is the mobiles, too. Vice Chairman Hippler added, as a user and a listener, it is both.

Vice Chairman Hippler appreciated the ball park figure cost, and asked would the existing Fire department mobiles, a few revisions behind, be able to be programmed to work with a digital field. Jeff Barden replied yes, all the Fire and Police are digital capable. Everything, except the HT750's, but the Astro Spectra will take it.

Chairman Meaney stated he would like to see R & R's report. He asked Jeff Barden to contact Town Administrator Bolton when it is ready to present to the Board. Chairman Meaney stated he would greatly appreciate it. Jeff Barden responded absolutely and he will bring a representative from Motorola Engineering as well.

DEPARTMENT HEAD/COMMITTEE ITEMS: none

2021 Fire Department Budget Presentation – Chief Vezina stated the voters were very kind to the Fire Department last year. He had two experienced full time hires, FF/AEMT James Sylvain and FF/PM Trevor Anderson. Additionally, part time hires: Administrative Assistant Jen Lundgren, Medic Andy Wheeler, Medic Bonnie Reilly and EMT Brittney Marcotte.

Years of service recognition goes to Ray Eaton with 65 years, Scott Dinsmore with 35 years, Dave Askham with 10 years, Adam Baker, Amanda Charest, Wayne Meattley, Cherie Smith with 5 years each.

Training included:

- two AEMT, Advanced Emergency Medical Technician certifications
- 36 hours of EMT Continuing Education via Zoom
- 2 day Difficult Air class for Medics
- 5 day Hands On refresher class at Concord Hospital for a Medic and an AEMT.

Outreach included:

- Safe and Active Community Grant through CHAD, receiving 50 multisport helmets. Distributed at the fire station as a drive through, along with take home activities, met the requirements for the grant.
- Fire Prevention digital packets were dispersed to the 2nd grade students, along with a group photo
- Driver's Education participation
- Halloween Event, drive through, was attended by over 300 kids

Permits:

- 248, slightly less than last year
- approximately 446 inspectional trips, more commercial work
- Revenue at \$11,830.00

Incidents:

- 34% Fire
- 59% EMS
- 7% Motor Vehicle Accidents
- 56% of the time apparatus is responding under a minute

- 74% of the time apparatus is responding at the 2 minute or less mark

EMS

- 11% Basic Life Support
- 50% Advance Life Support
- 13 Mutual Aid calls, primarily Deering, but also to Goffstown, Dunbarton and New Boston

Notable:

- EMS involved in many serious life threatening incidents
- 2 separate tree felling incidents in one day, within an hour of each other
- 3 gunshot wounds
- several technical rescues/carry out situations

COVID-19:

- navigated through the pandemic with zero positive cases in the department, few on quarantine
- AFG-S Grant for COVID response awarded \$2824.00 for PPE
- GOFER & FEMA funded a washer/dryer, rehab supplies, UV Light for decontamination, and a Video Laryngoscope that sped up intubation
- virtual meetings attended weekly for DOS & NHEOC
- Department wide N95 fit testing
- integrated with the schools to review back to school plans
- exploring FROST, First Responder Optional Surveillance Testing, allows for rapid testing department wide

2020 Operating:

- met or exceeded goals and objectives
- recruited/hired 2 FT employees
- acquired all Capital Budget items, at or under budget
- exceeded Revenue projections in all categories

2021 Operating:

- maintain momentum meeting the needs of the community
- nearly all budget lines reflecting an increase are voter approved spending
- Proposed Operating Budget is equal to Default Budget level of funding

Future:

- Recruitment and Retention, still struggle with having enough responders
- hired 3, 1 EMT, 2 Medic, lost 2, 1 AEMT, 1 Medic
- training demands, response time & availability, hard business to casually enter into
- commitment level, EMS requires ALS, Advanced Life Support skills
- fragile call force, per deim personnel, most have a full time job elsewhere
- continue to hire FT personnel to provide 24/7 ALS coverage

The telephone line item has a \$2700.00 increase because of the 2019 new phone system, separate from Police. Selectman Van asked for an explanation. Fire could no longer share the internet connection/data

with the Police. Chief Vezina continued, with regards to the finite details of their phone and mobile connections.

All budget increases were covered by moving wages out of the Call Force line.

Selectman Van asked if the goal was a 365/24/7 staffed Firehouse. Chief Vezina stated yes, they are almost there, halfway for FT, with people in the station nearly 24 hrs/day.

Selectman Van asked what are the hours the Call Force cover. Currently, available to respond to any call any time of day, replied Chief Vezina. They will always be needed, specifically, from 10:00pm to 7:00am, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The other three days he is looking to hire per diem, to put someone in the Fire Station Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 24 hrs/day. In addition to the FT staff. Most of his hires are at the Paramedic level.

Vice Chairman Hippler asked if the bottom line is what was anticipated when the voters walked into the booth in March. Chief Vezina answered correct.

Selectman Van asked if full-timers are required to be CDL licensed. Chief Vezina answered any vehicle over 26,000 GVW has to have a CDL licensed driver. Not required by the State, fire apparatus is not considered a commercial vehicle.

Selectman Van asked if Mark Bluteau is still putting on a CDL training class. Chief Vezina stated late last year eleven people came through the training, two State Troopers were hired to do the driving test.

Warrant Articles:

- in year 3 of 4
- full time, retirement and health insurance costs are up
- very successful in hiring high quality, qualified personnel
- two of the four full-timers live in Weare, available to respond

2021 Emergency Management Budget Worksheet – no changes

2021 CIP Presentation w/ Chairman Jack Dearborn – Chairman Dearborn thanked the CIP Subcommittee members along with Town Administrator Bolton and Finance Administrator Rouse. A handout was presented depicting the next two year department requests along with a six year projection. He explained, the request type by department, priority dollar wise, how paid, impact to taxes, any offsetting to the Capital Reserve, urgent requirements, bonds for long-term debt and when they are done. Short term lease on the ambulance and grader are exhausted.

Notable expenses as follows:

Fire Department: 2023 - a new ambulance, 2025 - \$500,000.00 for a new fire engine, to come out of the Revolving Equipment Fund. 2021 - \$20,000.00 from the Special Revenue Fund for seals and rebuilding components.

Police Department: \$61,000.00 for a new Tahoe this year

DPW: a new 10 wheel dump truck, \$115,000.00 trash trailer, bridge improvements and abutments, road reconstruction

Library: AC Units for \$29,000.00

Multi-Department: radio communication system upgrade study at \$29,500.00

Chairman Dearborn stated R & R's capabilities did exactly what the town of Weare had for funds at the time, doing as much as they could for the money. The town of Weare only had certain sites available incrementally done in the 1990's, early 2000's, two stations in Chase Park the rest on solar panels on cisterns. Most of the money came from grants, not a huge impact on the town over the years. The system upgrade need is coming from the Police Chief, citing NH RSA 281-A:64 Safety Provisions; Administrative Penalty. Documenting radio deficiencies with the current Public Safety Radio Communications System. The town might have enough repeater stations, but they are not in the right spot or high enough.

Chairman Dearborn described the town of Weare Radio System Evolution, starting with a transmitter on a mast on the top of Mine Hill for the Fire department. Over time, the Police department and DPW added radio frequency channels. Acquiring the grants, implemented the start of a radio repeater system to improve geographical coverage. However, ten repeaters were placed conveniently on town owned land rather than the most optimal location. Most were solar panel/battery powered. This required the transmit power to be cut to one quarter output to extend the battery power, resulting in a lower signal. In 2010, several systems upgrades were implemented. Eventually, AC power was installed to all seven solar battery repeater sites, making all ten full power. These upgrades were more reliable, but not adequate for the town of Weare's radio coverage for Fire, Police and DPW mission needs.

The discussion continues centered on a map, provided by Assessing Assistant Wendy Rice and Chief Vezina, of the current Radio Frequency Antenna Locations in the town of Weare. Future parameters in selecting optimal locations need to include better terrain, foliage considerations, and soil type.

CIP Requests Impact to Taxes for Actual, Proposed and Future Requests

The town only has long term debt, short term leases were done in 2019. A Garage bond goes out to 2026, Road Reconstruction bond out till 2029. The Grader and Ambulance leases are up. The In-year Capital Requests culminates in 2021 to \$1,034,500.00 and the Total Debt plus Capital Requests for 2021 \$1,497,290.00. Amount funded by property taxes for 2021 is \$1,201,140.00.

2021 Tax Impact \$1.35/\$1000.00

2020 Tax Impact \$1.39/\$1000.00

Tax Rate Setting Discussion – Finance Administrator Rouse handed out 2020 Tax Rate Setting Projection worksheets. Based on the voter approved 2020 Warrant Articles the Proposed Budget is \$7,955,192.00 with Offsetting Revenues of \$3,565,269.00 which leaves \$4,617,373.00 to be raised by taxation. The town portion is \$5.19.

Our 2019 Fund Balance was \$1,594,972.00. This is the amount of money the Board of Selectman have to offset taxes. The 2019 tax rate: Town portion was \$4.43, School \$15.97, State/School \$2.13 and the County \$1.18, totaling \$23.71.

The discussion evolves around multiple scenarios with various tax rates with and without Offsetting Revenues. According to the appropriations that the voters approved in March the tax rate would be \$5.19 which brings the total tax rate to \$24.35.

<u>Applying from the Fund Balance</u>	<u>Town Portion</u>	<u>Tax Rate</u>
\$150,000.00	\$5.02	\$24.18
\$350,000.00*	\$4.79	\$23.95
\$450,000.00	\$4.68	\$23.84
\$565,000.00	\$4.55	\$23.71

*represents the DRA recommendation of leaving a 5% minimum balance

Selectman Van asked what was the percentage left last year. Finance Administrator Rouse answered 4.67%, she continued, 2020 had her nervous about our cash flow with low revenues surviving on a low fund balance. Expenses were cut down, department heads were finally given the green light to start purchasing again.

Vice Chairman Hippler added, we do not know where we will end up with reduction in room and meals tax and roads. Finance Rouse shared surprisingly our revenues for room and meals increased from our estimated revenues, but the highway did go down a little. Town Administrator Bolton stated the Shared Revenues from the State spanned over the last two years was lost, a loss of over \$200,000. All and all, Finance Administrator Rouse was very proud of this town.

To bring our tax rate close to last year would take \$565,000.00 of the Fund Balance leaving 4.13% retainage. Weare School District graciously returned \$789,307.00 making up 5.05% of their Net Assessment and John Stark Regional returned \$418,175.00 making up 3.09% of their Net Assessment. Applying \$450,000.00 of the Fund Balance gives back 10.25% of our Net Assessment. With the schools budget at 16 million, their return of \$700,000.00 does not equate to a huge savings. The Town Offices have to raise all their money, when short on cash we still owe the schools their portion. It is all about cash flow. The schools don't collect taxes the town does, the money has to be in our account to cover their bills as well as ours.

Vice Chairman Hippler stated with the pandemic, restrictions put in place, department heads have done very well managing their budgets, conservatively, only buying what they need.

Vice Chairman Hippler moved to use Column B (5.80% retainage, \$150,000.00 Offset, Tax Rate of \$24.18). Chairman Meaney asked for a second, there was none.

Selectman Van clarified the minimum DRA recommendation is 5%. Chairman Meaney responded yes.

Selectman Van moved to use Column C (5.00% retainage, \$350,000.00 Offset, Tax Rate of \$23.95). Chairman Meaney asked for a second, **Selectman Burdick seconded for discussion.**

Selectman Burdick stated she is concerned for the people that are not working, families without two incomes having a hard time paying their taxes.

Selectman Van stated he is concerned about taxes coming in, less people commuting, schools going remote, and more people on unemployment it could get worse.

Chairman Meaney stated without money from fuel taxes, combined with people are not working like they had been. People may not be able to afford a raise in taxes.

Vice Chairman Hippler commented Column C at 7.80% is giving back too much.

Selectman Van responded the town has too many variables with COVID, less fuel taxes and a new presidency. This could drastically affect the economy.

Selectman Osborne asked if there was a scenario half way between Column B & C, \$200,000.00 or \$225,000.00.

Town Administrator Bolton stated the Board can set the Tax Rate at whatever they want.

Vice Chairman Hippler stated with a .23 cent difference, if someone cannot pay their taxes they cannot pay their taxes, period.

Selectman Van countered, now you would be potentially reducing the amount of those that can or cannot pay.

Vice Chairman Hippler reiterated Column C has a very low retainage.

Selectman Van stated he is sticking with his motion of Column C.

Finance Administrator Rouse was asked to calculate using \$225,000.00 and \$250,000.00 from the Fund Balance.

Town Administrator Bolton stated Column C is a \$60.00 increase over 2019 tax rate on a \$250,000.00 home. Column B is a \$117.50 increase over the 2019 tax rate, almost double.

Selectman Van tables his motion until Finance Administrator Rouse returns with the calculations.

MANIFEST:

To order the Treasurer to sign the payroll and accounts payables checks dated November 19, 2020 as included in the following manifests:

<i>Payroll Manifest</i>	\$ 67,384.90 (Weekly payroll)
<i>Accounts Payable Manifest</i>	\$ 31,000.28
<i>Total</i>	\$ 98,385.18

Chairman Meaney moved, Vice Chairman Hippler seconded to accept the manifest as follows, which passed. Passed 5-0-0

MINUTES:

November 9, 2020 Minutes: tabled

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:

General Items:

1. R & R Communications, Swanzey, N.H., presented this evening
2. PARC – Public Hearing scheduled for 11/30

3. Tax Rate – set tonight
4. Budget Presentations: DPW- highway, transfer, water and sewer (11/23), PARC, Library, etc (11/30)
5. Assistant Fire Chief Richards to discuss Fireward Budget and his appointment (11/23)
6. CIP Presentation Schedule: Finance (11/18)

Building & Maintenance Items:

1. Gazebo & Shmid/Banks Property – signs to be ready soon

Finance Administrator Rouse returns, using \$225,000.00 from the Fund Balance, 5.5% Retainage, Tax Rate of \$24.09 and at \$250,000.00, 5.4% Retainage, Tax Rate is \$24.06.

Selectman Van reinstated his motion, Selectman Burdick seconded for Column C (5.00% retainage, \$350,000.00 Offset, Tax Rate of \$23.95). Passed 3-2-0, Vice Chairman Hippler & Selectman Osborne voted no

2020 Veteran's tax credit was \$196,450.00.

Finance Administrator Rouse continued, the Board usually sets the diesel and unleaded fuel rates. Department heads have estimated their usage and according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration 2021 retail prices including taxes, diesel \$2.55 and regular gas at \$2.23. On diesel subtract tax at .56 cents/gal. equals \$1.99, and gasoline subtract tax at .49 cents/gal. equals \$1.74.

Selectman Van questioned Police vehicles being high performance vehicles at \$1.74 what is the octane rating. Vice Chairman Hippler replied 87, but they run with an octane booster suggested by the dealer. Mid-grade and High grade wasn't available.

Selectman Van asked how much is spent on additives. Vice Chairman Hippler responded it comes from Amazon, maybe \$6.00/bottle.

Selectman Van moved, Vice Chairman Hippler seconded to set the gasoline rate at \$2.00/gallon and diesel at \$2.15/gallon. Passed 5-0-0

CORRESPONDENCE & OTHER BUSINESS:

- Department of Labor, complaint, Inspector's Report, fines TBD
2 violations: a.) employee submitted their hours late, they were added to next week's timesheet
b.) callbacks, actual hours worked needs to be documented
- Selectman Van mentioned an email he received in reference to a possible Zoning violation with signage, forwarded to the Planning Board Chairman.
- Now that the Tax Rate is set, Finance Administrator Rouse will input it to the portal. DRA will review it. Next it goes to Assessing for a couple of days. Then the warrant gets printed and signed by the Board. Once that is finished bills can be printed, mailed out and due on December 23rd.
- The Board received a complaint via email from a Weare resident concerned with excessive noise with tannerite in South Weare near Twin Bridge Road. Chairman Meaney stated if it is at unreasonable hours there is legal action. Town Administrator Bolton shared she and Selectman Osborne wondered why disturbing the peace does not come into play. Selectman Osborne stated,

after talking to Chief Moore the person making the complaint would have to file a complaint form and go before a judge. Chairman Meaney added a formal complaint charging disorderly conduct. Selectman Van declared it is a legal use of a legal product. No need to prohibit the use of a legal product in town. Chairman Meaney stated unless there is a town ordinance for unreasonable noise. Town Administrator Bolton to email the residents to schedule a meeting with the Board.

- Vice Chairman Hippler asked about the Public Hearing announcement increasing the non-resident entrance fee. Are the numbers driven by data that was received? Town Administrator Bolton replied yes, a comment was made regarding increasing non-resident fees due to taking seats away from residents. Daily seasonal pass visits will be accounted for going forward.

Being there was no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Meaney made a motion, Selectman Van seconded to adjourn at 8:56 pm. Passed 5-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

A True Record.

Karen Nelson

Karen Nelson transcribed from
TA Bolton notes & You Tube recording