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WEARE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
CALL-IN PROGRAM
MEETING MINUTES
March 11, 2013

PRESENT: TOM CLOW, CHAIRMAN; RICHARD W. BUTT, VICE CHAIRMAN; JOHN LAWTON, SELECTMAN; JAMES LEARY, SELECTMAN; KEITH R. LACASSE, SELECTMAN

RECORDING SECRETARY: Cherry Palmisano

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR: Naomi Bolton

GUESTS: Jan Snyder, Sharon DeStefano, Tim Redmond, Heleen Kurk, Forest Essenwine, Ginger Essenwine, Steve Flanders, Donna Osborne, Tina Connor, Frank Campana, Chief Begin, John Osborne, Christine Hague

7:00 p.m. Chairman Clow called the meeting to order.

The Board of Selectmen held an informal coffee hour from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Televised Call-in Program to Answer Town Ballot Questions

Question: What plans are the Selectmen making to improve communications in Weare?

Response: Chairman Clow said that there is a real need to upgrade the town's website, which is available to everyone in the community and with the right improvements a lot more can be done. Vice Chairman Butt said that Channel 6 provides for the transmittal of educational, government, and public information. There is a volunteer policy in place and any boards and committees that meet in this room are encouraged to be televised. Meetings are currently not being re-televised, but all meeting minutes are sent to anyone who requests them and are available on the town website. The Cable Committee should be encouraging people to put on programs. There is an article on the warrant to hire a part time employee to manage the Cable Channel. Channel 6 only allows you to access the information if you are in town and you have to wait for the information to be posted.

The software used to create the website is outdated and is no longer supported by the company that created it. They will need to update the software in the near future.

Question: Heleen Kurk asked the Board to clarify why the taxpayers should support the Peaselee Bridge project and why it is less expensive to the taxpayers to support it rather than not support it.

Response: Chairman Clow said the project will cost the town approximately \$122,000, which represents only 20% of the project because the state reimburses 80%. The bridge was designed by engineers. Once the construction starts 50% of the cost is reimbursed and then the remainder will be reimbursed at completion. Mr. Redmond said that the project was first proposed prior to 2009 and the design has been completed and accepted by the state. The major factor in building what they plan to build is the 80% reimbursement from the state. The culvert on Lull Road is also an 80/20 program. The federal government is not supplying any funds and all funds are coming from the State Bridge Aid Program. By signing on with the state under the 80/20 program the bridge must be designed based on their program. Part of the expense is to create a temporary bridge for contractors and residents. In Mr. Redmond's opinion, the town could not build the bridge because of the massive amount of

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work that is involved. The town can take on smaller projects such as the Lull Road project. Mr. Redmond said that they are attempting to put the project out to bid and expect to receive a lower bid.

Question: Article 28 asks if the shall the town dissolve the Ethics Committee effective March 2014.

Response: Chairman Clow said that there has never been an Ethics Committee except for the group that actually wrote the Code of Ethics. There has not been a committee for seven years and it is appropriate to remove the committee.

Question: Frank Campana commented on Articles 12, 13, 15, and 20. The articles are all Capital Reserve Articles and what is common to the four articles is the wording "it is anticipated that this money will be expended for." Mr. Campana is concerned that if the articles pass the money might not actually be spent on what was intended and requested in the article.

Response: Vice Chairman Butt said that the money is going into the Capital Reserve Fund and the fund designates what the money can be expended on. The Selectmen did not intentionally change the wording of the articles and Vice Chairman Butt believes the wording has always been included.

Question: Christine Hague asked if it is true that when any Capital Reserve item is requested it goes through many channels.

Response: The request initially goes through the CIP process. The CIP Committee is a subcommittee of the Planning Board. A form needs to be filled out, specifying what the money will be used for, and is required to be signed off by the Board of Selectmen. The Trustees of the Trust Fund make sure that the expenditure meets the definition of the Fund.

Question: Forest Essenwine commented that some of the articles on the warrant and in past warrants ask voters to add money to funds that were previously established. Those funds were set up with some monies put in each year and allowed to build up and were used to purchase items. He said that instead of adding so much each year to build it up, the requests are now for money that the item costs to purchase now. Mr. Essenwine said that is not the purpose of the funds. He feels it doesn't impact the tax rate as badly each year by requesting a little bit each year instead of requesting the full amount all at once. The result is paying more and more each year instead of keeping the tax rate stable. He said that the purpose of the funds is being ignored by the town, school board, and John Stark.

Response: Vice Chairman Butt said that in 2007 there was a request to raise and appropriate \$330,000 to fund 10 different Capital Reserve Funds without defining exactly what it would be spent on. They studied that if they make the full request in one year the taxpayers would know exactly what the request was and as close to the actual cost as possible. In making the full request in one year the fund would not be used as a bank to be used on something in the future and not tell the taxpayers exactly what the purchase would be. If they just raise and appropriate money without specifying exactly what it would be expended on, the money would go into the general fund and could be spent on anything. If they raise and appropriate and specified a certain item in a warrant article than the money can only be spent for something defined in that Capital Reserve Fund.

Question: Mr. Campana commented on Article 6 for the operating budget. The Selectmen's section of the purpose says that among other things the operating budget contains employee wages, health insurance, as well as other insurance costs, and vehicle fuel with a large portion of the increase being due to the contribution rate of the state. The article contains both the default and proposed numbers. Mr. Campana said that the Finance Committee points out that increase is reasonable due to mandatory costs and he asked if those items are included in the default budget as well.

Response: The Board said yes they are.

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Mr. Campana is wondering if there is feeling on the Board, keeping in mind the article does contain proposed and default number, that there should be some obligation to state that if the default budget passes no one will get a raise and some how they will have to come up with health insurance costs.

Chairman Clow said that the purpose wording from the Selectmen is very well written. He feels it is not misleading and does cover both sides.

Mr. Campana said that the article does include both proposed and default numbers so in fairness it should state that those mandated items are covered in both the proposed and the default budgets.

Chairman Clow said that increases for things such as vehicle maintenance and tires are not included in the default budget, but mandatory increases such as retirement costs and insurances are included in the default budget.

It was mentioned that none of the 2012 Capital Reserve articles gave reference to “expected” or anticipated.” It was not known why the wording was in the articles; the Board sends the articles out for legal review.