

**Town of Auburn
Board of Selectmen
August 7, 2017**

Selectmen Present: James Headd, Richard Eaton & Dale Phillips

Also Present: Fire Chief Ed Gannon, Mike DiPietro, Michael and Linda Dross, Michael Rolfe, Scott Norris, Tom Gonyea, Catherine Barry and Keith Leclair, Residents; and William Herman, Town Administrator

Mr. Headd called the public meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Payroll for Week of August 7th, 2017

Mr. Eaton moved to approve the Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$43,271.58 for the week of August 7th, 2017; Mrs. Phillips seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda – Week of August 7th, 2017

Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber:

- ❖ Camp Carpenter BSA (Storm Salvage) – Rattlesnake Hill Road (TM #1, Lot #2)

Warrant to Collect Taxes / Land Use Change Tax:

- ❖ Haven Drive (Tax Map #5, Lot #29) -- \$1,000.00

Request for Abatement / Refund:

- ❖ Calef Lake Camping Area (5 – 65 – BLU – 02) - \$47.00
- ❖ 20 Priscilla Lane (Tax Map #1, Lot #36-26) – Common Land should not have been taxed -- \$451.00

Pistol/Revolver License:

- ❖ Three (3) Licenses

Mr. Eaton moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; Mrs. Phillips seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Appointments with the Board

Fire Chief Ed Gannon – Auburn Fire Department Survey Report

Mr. Headd opened the meeting by asking Chief Gannon if he had a chance to review the survey report since the Board's last meeting and what his general thoughts were.

Chief Gannon noted he had read the report and felt it was generally positive. He indicated he felt a few surveys went out to former members of the department, which may have affected the results to some degree, but he thought a 71 percent approval rating was something he was satisfied with as a result.

Mr. Headd asked Mr. Eaton for his thoughts. Mr. Eaton agreed with the Fire Chief and specifically noted on Page 7 of the survey report the comment: *"Members need to be willing to allow the current administration to make changes that it believes are to the department's benefit. It is the chief's job to lead the department and he has the authority to make and enforce changes even if certain members may not agree with those decisions."* He felt the same was true in business and in government and if individuals were unhappy, they should either fall in line or move along. He stressed he felt there was good participation by the volunteer members, and it is recognized throughout the region. He indicated the survey results were what he expected, and he asked the Chief to keep up the good work.

Mr. Headd asked Mrs. Phillips for her thoughts. Mrs. Phillips said she had a slightly different take on the results than Mr. Eaton. She agreed the bulk of the survey was positive, but there was a 20 – 30 percent response that was of concern and could not be ignored. She felt the Fire Chief was a good person and a good firefighter and EMT, but was not a good leader. She also noted the survey was undertaken to try to address numerous complaints members of the Board had received, and the Board worked with Town Counsel to set-up a process where everyone could respond anonymously. However, it was found that several in the department, including officers, were texting and directing how some survey responses should be made. Despite that, she said there were 26% who felt they were not being given solid leadership, with several complaints being focused on several Lieutenants. She was also concerned with the number of responses suggesting the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator should stay out of the business of the Fire Department. She said the members of the department need to understand the fire department business is Town business for which the Board of Selectmen is responsible. She noted the Town received a report from Municipal Resources in October 2016 on the operation of the Fire Department that was a favorable report on the department when Chief Gannon assumed command. The report contained 71 recommendations for improvement, and she felt moving forward we need to focus on those recommendations. She said the Police Department also had a review completed earlier in 2016 with 101 recommendations for improvement, and the Police Commission and administration has focused on those recommendations at each monthly meeting. She felt the Board of Selectmen and Fire Chief should do the same moving forward with the Fire Department review. She also indicated the Towns of Rye and Allenstown have recently undergone a process of changing leadership structure in their fire departments, and thought perhaps Auburn should consider looking at the same.

Mrs. Phillips noted the issue of SOPs or SOGs was mentioned throughout the survey, and she asked how those policies were being addressed. Chief Gannon reported he

has a committee within the department to work on SOGs. The Committee will develop proposed policies and, if they are brand new policies, they will be posted internally as a draft for 60 days to allow members of the department to comment on them and offer suggestions. If they are existing policies that are being updated, they are posted internally for 30 days. Once the 30 or 60 days' time frame passes, the committee goes through any suggestions, may make adjustments accordingly and then submits the policies to the Chief for consideration and adoption.

The Board looked at recommendations offered by the Town Administrator as to three areas for potentially moving forward. The first concerned the development and implementation of policies, which Town Counsel had noted the Board has statutory responsibility for under RSA 154:4, II. The Administrator felt it was important for the process to directly involve the Fire Chief and the department in the development and recommendation of the policies, with the formal adoption to be done by the Board of Selectmen. The Fire Chief indicated support for this process, and Mr. Herman reported he would have a draft policy for the Board's consideration to formalize that process at their next meeting.

Concerning the MRI Review recommendations, it was suggested the Board of Selectmen include this as an agenda item once a month as the Police Commission has, and that the Board and Chief Gannon discuss the progress made in this area each month. The Fire Chief and the Selectmen agreed to this process and agreed the first meeting would be part of the Board's August 28th meeting.

The final area was making some adjustments to the Town Personnel Policy to address the definition of Volunteer Firefighters, which are actually Call Firefighters, and clearly define what their status as Town employees is. This should also include the development of a grievance process for these individuals, which should be contained in the SOGs of the department. The Town Administrator will work on this to bring forward to the Joint Personnel Board in the fall.

At the end of the conversation, Tom Gonyea asked how much the survey process cost the Town. Mrs. Phillips reported the entire process cost approximately \$2,000, which is inclusive of approximately \$400 for Town Counsel to have a lengthy meeting with the Board when issues were first reported to the Board members.

New Business

Acceptance of Winchester Way

Mr. Headd noted the Board has received a request to accept Winchester Way as a Class V Town road. Mr. Herman noted the request has been scheduled for the required public hearing to be held at the Board's next meeting on August 28th.

Other Business

Lot for Sale on Appletree Road

Catherine Barry of Appletree Road raised a concern with the Town's offering a one-acre parcel of land for sale on Appletree Road. She is an abutter to the parcel and she noted a culvert currently drains on to the lot and crosses the lot to a catch basin on the other side. Road Agent Mike Dross indicated he was going to bring this to the Board's attention as well. He indicated the Town did not place the drainage there, the original developer had done that in the 1960s or 1970s. But in recent years, the Town had replaced one of the culverts. He indicated if a builder bought the property to build a house on, there was going to be an expense to change the road drainage system. Mr. Herman noted the water concerns were noted in the zoning determination the Building Inspector / Code Enforcement Officer had prepared for the Board, and should a builder want to build a home on that property, the cost to change the drainage system would be for the builder to bear and not the Town. Mr. Eaton and Mr. Herman both noted there is expressed interest in this property by two different abutters, and the condition of the property would likely not make it conducive to a builder.

Dartmouth Road

Mike Dross reported there continues to be issues with water on Dartmouth Drive. He noted the sink hole that was recently addressed is still open, and Stantec representatives continue to check it after every storm. They indicate water continues to rise to the surface and then disappear. He will be reviewing the road with Stantec next week, but it appears they will be recommending installing underdrains on the left-hand side of the road with laterals running under the road.

Town Hall Maple Tree

Mike Dross reported he secured a cost estimate as requested to remove the large maple tree in front of the Town Hall. He said the contractor would need to use a crane for that work and the cost estimate was \$2,000. The Board agreed to consider the matter.

Dumping on Raymond Road

Mr. Eaton reported he had been contacted by Scott Soucie of Stoney Brook Lane about ongoing trash dumping on the Class VI end of the Raymond Road. Mr. Eaton reported he had driven the road and agreed there was a problem there, and asked if we could post a sign at both entrances to the road indicating there was a \$500 fine for dumping trash. The Road Agent reported they had a similar situation with this individual and road several years ago, and they were able to determine whose trash it was, but the

Police Department would not take any action against the individual. Mr. DiPetro asked if Leppert Way was still a problem. Mr. Eaton said it was and he recently had picked up some furniture and other debris from there, and took it to the Transfer Station. Mr. DiPetro responded "where do we stop with signs?" Mr. Eaton felt the Town should be a bit proactive in this area, and the Road Agent indicated he will put up any signs the Board wants. The Board agreed to put up signs in this area, and the Town Administrator will work out the wording based on penalties currently in state statute.

Minutes

July 31st, 2017 Public Meetings

Mrs. Phillips moved to approve the minutes of the July 31st, 2017 public meeting. Mr. Eaton seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Non-Public Session

Mr. Headd moved to enter into Non-Public Session at 7:34 PM pursuant to the provisions of RSA 91-A: 3, II (e) – consideration of pending claims or litigation. Mr. Eaton seconded. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Headd – Yes; Mr. Eaton – Yes, Mrs. Phillips – Yes.

Meeting in Non-Public Session with the Selectmen was the Town Administrator.

The Board reviewed proposed telephone pole and conduit assessments for 2017 developed by Avitar Associates of New England, which would bring the total assessed value for Fairpoint Communications property in Auburn to \$1,009,200. The Board had first receive this material at their July 31st meeting, but wanted time to consider it. This assessed value would resolve pending abatement claims. The Board was in agreement with Avitar's proposal and agreed to move forward as recommended.

Mr. Eaton moved to come out of Non-Public Session at 7:40 PM. Mr. Eaton seconded. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Headd – Yes; Mr. Eaton – Yes, Mrs. Phillips – Yes.

Adjourn

Mr. Eaton moved to adjourn; Mrs. Phillips seconded the motion; all were in favor, the meeting ended at 7:41 p.m.