

Select Board

Minutes

October 25, 2018

Present: Rick Alpers, JP Morrison (arrived 5:15pm), Wayne Anderson, Les Dion and Town Administrator Nik Coates.

Absent: Don Milbrand

Others Present: Department Heads and members of the public.

Mr. Alpers opened the public meeting at 4:40PM.

Mr. Alpers stated this was a work session to discuss health insurance options and cost sharing between the employees and Town.

After some discussion, the Board agreed that the Town should move from the current NH Interlocal Trust (Harvard Pilgrim) plan to a comparable plan with Health Trust (Blue Cross). The Health Trust Plan would be for 18 months. The rates for the first six months with the Health Trust would be much lower than the current NH Interlocal Trust plan. After six months, the increase in the rates for the Health Trust plan would still be lower than the Health Trust Plan. Health Trust also has a better wellness program which can help keep the Town's rates down because employees could be more proactive about their health.

There was discussion about the advisory warrant article that passed at Town Meeting calling for a 17% cost share by the employees versus the current 10%. The Board looked at the costs to the Town with the current split of 90/10 and other options like 89/11, 88/12, 83/17 and so on. Mr. Coates shared what other towns do for a cost split and Bristol is in the majority with the 30 other towns he spoke to. Some are higher, some are lower. The Department Heads agreed that keeping the cost share the same or as close to the same as it is now would help the Town remain competitive in recruiting and retaining employees. Mr. Coates said that recently with two positions that were hired that we received many more applicants this time around than the last time the jobs were posted before the wage scale was updated. The point being is that Bristol is doing a good job competing for talented individuals. The Board decided to table a decision on the cost split until its next meeting.

The discussion about annual maintenance of the wage scale was not taken up this work session.

Mr. Alpers declared the meeting in recess at 5:45PM and the Board reconvened at 6:00PM.

Mr. Alpers opened the meeting back up with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes: Ms. Dion made a motion to approve the October 11, 2018 minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Anderson. The Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

Consent Agenda: Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve the October 25, 2018 consent agenda to include the items named therein, seconded by Ms. Dion. The Board voted 4-0 to approve the consent agenda.

Concert Series and Old Home Day Recognition: The Board wished to thank the generous sponsors for this year's Summer concerts and Old Home Day. Really appreciate all that you give to the community.

SAU 4 Request for Reconsideration of Decision to End BES Plowing: Mr. Alpers stated that he thought the decision came to at the October 11, 2018, to end the Highway Department's plowing of Bristol Elementary School wasn't the right one. It is also a tough time to do this because of winter coming soon. He felt that the Board didn't have all the information it needed to make an informed decision after he heard back from Superintendent of Schools Stacy Buckley about the meeting she and Business Administrator Mike Limanni had with Board members Anderson and Dion and Mr. Coates. Ms. Buckley submitted a request for reconsideration by the Board. Mr. Anderson stated that there was no agreement coming out of the meeting with Ms. Buckley and Mr. Limanni. It was a meeting to listen and that it was a decision that the whole Board would have to make. Mr. Alpers stated that wasn't the impression he got after talking to Ms. Buckley. Ms. Dion said she regretted missing the October 11 Board meeting because she felt there was an agreement reached with the School District and that details just needed to be worked out by the Board. Mr. Bucklin stated that the demands of plowing the parking lot are too much now and he thought the Highway Department shouldn't have to plow the BES parking lot because it is a district school now and not just for Bristol students. Mr. Morrison disagreed with reversing the decision the Board made on October 11 because this issue has been discussed for years. He said that the additional cost to hire a contractor to keep the parking lot was minimal. This district has \$900,000 some-odd dollars for capital improvements for this year and the next 10 years, with what they're trying to pull through. This little thing is a bump in the road. It's not going to kill anyone. Mr. Anderson asked Newfound School District School Board Chair Jeff Levesque about the idea of swapping the plowing of BES for having the Highway Department plowing Newfound Road and knocking back snow banks and without Bristol providing salt and sand for a contractor for BES. Mr. Levesque said he understood the difficulty of the time and he thinks switching responsibilities is a good compromise. He also said the School Board would be open to discussing terminating the agreement in the future when there is time to prepare for taking over the responsibility. Ms. Dion made a motion to have the Highway Department plow, salt, sand Newfound Road and push back snow banks at Bristol Elementary School when possible and to have the School District take over plowing, salting and sanding of Bristol Elementary School. Mr. Alpers seconded the motion. The Board voted 3-1-0 in favor of the motion.

2019 Budget Metrics and Priorities: Budget Committee member Joe Caristi presented his thoughts on bringing some more organization and communication to the annual budget process. He walked the Board through a process that his company uses and other companies like Toyota use where there are metrics to measure. Mr. Coates stated that he had talked to the Budget Committee and Department Heads about Mr. Caristi's ideas. The Department Heads have agreed to a start in the process where they will write explanatory notes for lines in the budget that are proposed to cost 3% or more over the previous year's budget. The Budget Committee also agreed to do the same for any proposed reductions by 3% or more. Mr. Alpers stated he wanted to take more time to think about how a process like this

could work for the Town. The Board thanked Mr. Caristi for putting a lot of thought into improving the process.

2019 EMS Contracts: Chief LaRoche presented the upcoming 2019 EMS contracts for the towns receiving service from the Bristol Fire Department. The 2019 contract includes a budget line for the new ambulance. This line will be 1/6 of the ambulance purchase price for the next six years. Other adjustments include costs of cell phones, for example The 2019 contract will run from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. This will be the new performance period, after the adjustment was made in 2018 to correct concerns in the old performance period. Total revenue from EMS contract towns from the 2019 contract is \$253,531.71, this is a 1% increase from 2018. Total revenue remains mostly unchanged due to a decrease in operating expenditures, decrease in EMS percentage, and an increase in Bristol calls for service. The 2019 budget method is based on the Bristol EMS budget being 68% of the operating budget. The 68% is determined by taking the total Bristol EMS calls (transport and non transport) and dividing by the total Bristol responses. Mr. Anderson asked whether the pay period for the ambulance charge could be shortened in the contract. Chief LaRoche stated that would create spikes in the annual charges and his plan is to spread out the costs evenly. Mr. Anderson also stated he thinks it costs more in hourly wages for ambulance crews to serve other communities and that charging the same per transport cost for someone outside of Bristol didn't seem fair. Chief LaRoche stated that it takes about the same of time for wherever a call originates. Each call also typically requires about three hours between the call and paperwork. Also, those who are responding are on duty so there is no real savings in wages. Mr. Morrison asked what a private ambulance service would cost so that there could be a comparison done. Chief LaRoche stated that he 100% believes that we could not get a private service here and provide a level of service the Bristol Fire Department does. The only way to get an accurate number would be to go out to bid. Mr. Alpers said that the Board would need to start in April if they wanted to get information that Mr. Morrison was looking for. Ms. Dion asked if any towns had switched to private ambulance service. She'd be interested what the community felt about the service. The Board agreed to come back at its next meeting to discuss the contracts again.

Town Office Project Update: Mr. Coates reminded everyone that Special Town Meeting is coming up November 1 at 7:00PM at the Old Town Hall now that it has been approved by the court. He stated that the corrected Warrant had been posted. Also, he asked what the Board was interested in doing for duration of the bond because Finance Director Bob Blanchette was looking to get going on that effort if the project passed. The Board agreed that a 10 year bond from one of the banks made the most sense.

Scheduling: Mr. Coates outlined some important upcoming dates for the Board to think about.

Town Administrator's Report: Mr. Coates said he will be bringing a website rebuild contract to the Board at the next meeting for discussion.

Reminder that the Winter Parking Ban goes into effect November 15 to April 15.

Transfer station project is progressing well.

Select Board Items:

Public Comment:

Adjournment: Ms. Dion made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Anderson. The Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas J. Coates (Nik)