

*MINUTES*

**TOWN OF LUDLOW  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**REGULAR MEETING**

December 3, 2012

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Howard Barton, Jr., Chairman      Brett Sanderson      John Neal (by phone)  
Douglas Ficken      Bruce Schmidt

STAFF PRESENT:

Frank Heald      Pam Cruickshank

OTHERS PRESENT:

Peter Kolenda      Ted Reeves      Sharon Bixby (LPC-TV)

**1. Call to Order**

A. Chairman Howard Barton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All members present.

**2. Approve Minutes of Previous Meetings**

A. Howard Barton advised that the minutes to be approved are from the regular meeting of November 5, 2012.

B. **MOTION by Doug Ficken and seconded by Bruce Schmidt to approve the minutes of November 5, 2012 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

**3. Comments from Citizens**

A. There were none.

**4. Consider and Approve Transfer Station Fees**

A. Frank Heald advised that they have reviewed the fees and feel that there is no justification to increase fees at this time. They are slightly ahead on disposal contract fees. The only suggestion is to discontinue opening the day after Thanksgiving. There were only a few people who came. George Fairchild has recommended discontinuing that day and Frank Heald said that he concurs.

B. Bruce Schmidt noted that the station would be closed for a number of days over Christmas because of the way the days fall.

C. Frank Heald said they would try to open on Wednesday if they could get staffing.

D. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Brett Sanderson to accept the proposal for residential rates as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

**5. Consider and Approve Board of Listers Errors and Omissions**

A. Howard Barton noted that there were three properties in the Lakeside Pines Condominiums. In all three cases, the state lowered the value of the respective condos for 2011 and they were not reappraised by the town in 2012. The values must stay as they are for 3 years.

B. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Doug Ficken to accept the changes to the Grand List as proposed by the listers.**

C. Howard Barton asked why they had not been reappraised.

D. Frank Heald said he did not know.

E. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**6. Consider Request from Gill Home RE: False Alarm Fees**

A. Frank Heald advised that the board had received the request to waive false alarm fees from Gill Home last month. Based on the ordinance, the staff does not have much leeway here. The ordinance is years old. He has asked Chief Kolenda to the meeting tonight to discuss this.

- B. Pete Kolenda said that the only fee in question is the burnt popcorn alarm. The system did its job.
- C. John Neal asked the reason for the sprinkler alarm.
- D. Brett Sanderson said the breaker tripped.
- E. John Neal asked if Gill has the system inspected.
- F. Pete Kolenda said it is an aging sprinkler system and they do keep having issues.
- G. Brett Sanderson noted that there was no CO level.
- H. John Neal asked if anyone from Gill is present.
- I. Howard Barton said no. He asked if people had been charged in the past for burnt food alarms.
- J. Pete Kolenda said yea. If it was any other location, he would consider it as a false alarm.
- K. Howard Barton said we should stick with that.
- L. Pete Kolenda said that he understands that the false alarm fees cover costs. He said that some people cancel the alarms without really checking out the buildings and that could be catastrophic.
- M. Frank Heald said that if a CO alarm goes off, how people would know if it were false or real. They would have to call the Fire Department.
- N. Howard Barton said if they continue to have CO alarms, they should have the system checked.
- O. Frank Heald noted that there are really 3 types of alarms here: burnt foods, CO and water flow. WE have to consider this. It may be a slippery slope. They were all false, but we did have to respond. We don't know what triggered the CO alarm.
- P. Ted Reeves said that there are many rental units throughout town and sometimes the renters don't understand how the fireplaces work. They would possibly set off alarms.
- Q. Howard Barton explained that there is one free false alarm allowed before fees are charges.
- R. Bruce Schmidt said this board should revisit the ordinance. If there are several units in one building, the building is charged for the false alarms, but they may all come from different units. He said that there is also a potential for a situation to escalate if the Fire Department does not check out the building.
- S. Howard Barton said that if there is an actual fire and the people are able to put it out, that is not a false alarm.
- T. Pete Kolenda said that some false alarms are caused by poorly placed detectors.
- U. Ted Reeves said in this case, the detectors did what they were supposed to do.
- V. Howard Barton said the board could revisit the ordinance in relation to multi-unit dwellings.
- W. Bruce Schmidt said it would be more flexible if based on individual unit.
- X. Ted Reeves added that the occupants in units change all the time.
- Y. Bruce Schmidt said it is important that units have good instructions for use of equipment.
- Z. Pete Kolenda said that wood fireplaces are not allowed in new condominiums anymore.
- AA. Howard Barton said that he thinks that the Gill fees are justifiable.
- BB. Bruce Schmidt suggested possibly waiving the popcorn one.
- CC. Pete Kolenda said that any other burnt food call would be considered a false alarm. We have had that type of alarm in other buildings.
- DD. Bruce Schmidt said that the Fire Department would want to be called for a CO alarm.
- EE. Pete Kolenda suggested having separate CO and Fire alarm categories.
- FF. Bruce Schmidt suggested waiving the CO alarm and keeping the fees for the others.
- GG. Pete Kolenda suggested having CO alarms as a separate line item for false alarms. We get them frequently.
- HH. John Neal suggested having Pete Kolenda review the ordinance and make some recommendations for the next meeting.
- II. Howard Barton suggested that they take the recommendation to have the CO alarm fee waived and all other stay.
- JJ. There was general consensus to this.
- KK. Howard Barton noted that on page 2 of the ordinance, under 2.07, items h through l should be under definitions. He said he would like to bring the ordinance back to the January or February meetings for further discussion.
- LL. **MOTION by Doug Ficken and seconded by Bruce Schmidt to waive the false alarm fee for the CO alarm and keep all the other fees as charged. Motion passed unanimously.**

## 7. Draft Budget Presentation

- A. Frank Heald advised that the Appropriation letters and financial statements are in the packets. He said that the 2012 Auditors statement is not finished. He said we finished the year \$335,000 to the negative because they moved \$330,000 from FEMA to FY2014. There is \$120,000 in the fund balance. He said that the Ambulance Department has no effect on the tax rate and they have funded \$35,000 in depreciation. He asked the board if they wanted to leave the Cemetery Commission separate. Administration expenses were up due to increases for Pam Cruickshank and Diane. He said that there is a request for an Appropriation from the Red Cross for \$500 and based on their activities during Irene, it seems reasonable. The museum fuel bill did not

decrease as expected with the new heating system. They were budgeted for \$16,000 and spent \$22,000.

- B. Howard Barton asked if they take any energy conservation measures.
- C. Frank Heald said we need to have a conversation with them.
- D. Howard Barton said the budget was voted on and the museum should not go over that amount.
- E. John Neal asked if they have any funding of their own.
- F. Frank Heald said that for several years, for the museum and library, the town gets and pays the fuel and utility bills.
- G. John Neal said we should monitor and show them where they could save.
- H. Frank Heald said that the town helped the museum get the new heating system.
- I. John Neal said we need to have conversations on usage with them.
- J. Bruce Schmidt said the voters passed a fuel budget number.
- K. Frank Heald said they have under budgeted the appropriation on fuel and utilities for several years.
- L. John Neal said the town should give them the budgeted amount and let them pay the bills. If they go over, they have to come up with the difference.
- M. Frank Heald said the board may want to look over how much we give the museum and library.
- N. Bruce Schmidt said they should be given the set amount and let them cover the difference out of their operations accounts.
- O. Frank Heald said this agreement was made over 10 years ago.
- P. Howard Barton said that normally, if someone sees that they are going over a budgeted amount, they would look for ways to save. If they are given a blank check, they won't watch their spending.
- Q. Bruce Schmidt said they should be given the total appropriation amount for utilities and fuel. If we purchase the fuel, they should pay us for it.
- R. Brett Sanderson said their operating costs should be one line item.
- S. Bruce Schmidt said if they use less fuel than the budgeted amount, they get to keep the money. If they go over, they pay the difference. Last year was a mild winter and they went over, what happens if we have a harsh winter.
- T. Frank Heald moved to the Community Center and said that we are having trouble with income. We are covering the cafeteria costs.
- U. Howard Barton asked why the uniform costs are so high.
- V. Frank Heald referred to Capital on page 9. There are proposed purchases for:

Fire Truck	\$500,000	\$220,000 from FD Equipment fund, \$50,000 from trade, FD donation \$50,000 and \$180,000 bond
Hwy Single Axle Truck	\$165,000	\$95,000 5-year Note, \$50,000 from HWY Equipment fund, and \$20,000 trade
B&G Equipment Trailer	\$2,500	
Transit Bus	\$98,000	\$50,000 5-year note, \$5,000 trade, \$43,000 from Bus Equipment fund
HWY Garage Furnace	\$6,500	
Transfer Station Culvert	\$35,000	\$380,000 from 20-year infrastructure bond and \$224,000 from Structures grant for balance of items
Lake Pauline Dam	\$40,000	
Mill Street Bridge	\$125,000	
West Hill Storm Drain	\$35,000	
West Hill Culvert	\$55,000	
Pleasant St. Ext. Bridge	\$355,000	

- W. Frank Heald advised that he maintains a long range bond spreadsheet through 2018 and this plan does not mess that up.
- X. Bruce Schmidt said it would be good for Frank Heald to prioritize the above purchases for the next meeting. He would also like to see the balances in the funds.
- Y. Frank Heald said all of the purchases are justified. How would you decide?
- Z. Bruce Schmidt said maybe we should go deeper into the funds. People expect us to fund the balances. We need to go through the process.
- AA. Frank Heald referred to the Highway budget, noting the significant increase in Gravel. We have about 6,000 yards of material and want to bring in a crusher for about \$15,000 to crush about 3,000 yards. There is also a fair amount of gravel at Site 3 taking up space in the dam. It will be surveyed in the spring. We would like to go in and let the water down. Then, recover that gravel and crush it. We would use our trucks to truck it out, but have an excavator come in to load the trucks.
- BB. Howard Barton asked that, then after that, there would not be \$9,000 in the gravel budget.
- CC. Frank Heald said that would be correct. He then referred to the intergovernmental line items and said it is up 6.8%.
- DD. Bruce Schmidt noted that revenue is down in almost every department.
- EE. John Neal noted the \$147,000 budget increase.

- FF. Bruce Schmidt asked if there had been any word about the Education tax.
- GG. Frank Heald said no.
- HH. John Neal asked about the \$307,000 FEMA deficit.
- II. Frank Heald said that was the money they moved to FY2013. None of us understands why. He said, that we think based on information we have received, that we are pretty much whole, but subject to audit and FEMA may take back 7-8%. We still may have uncovered FEMA expenses. He asked the board to review the Bond Payment Master Draft and Capital Equipment Note Schedule to discuss at the next meeting. He said that based on the draft, this is \$.01 additional in the budget.

**8. Department Head Reports**

- A. Howard Barton advised that all reports are in.
- B. Bruce Schmidt asked about minutes from Recreation meetings.
- C. Frank Heald said they are distributed when the committee meets.

**9. Other Business**

- A. Verizon Tower on South Hill
  - i. Frank Heald said that we are seeing activity again. There should be construction in the spring.

**10. Sign Warrant Orders**

- A. Warrant orders have been signed.

**11. Set Date for Next Meeting**

- A. Howard Barton advised that the next regular meeting would be December 17, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.

**12. Possible Executive Session / Contracts / Personnel/Legal**

- A. Frank Heald advised that an Executive session is not needed.

**13. Adjourn**

- A. **MOTION by Brett Sanderson and seconded by Doug Ficken to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

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Howard Barton, Jr., Chairman

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Brett Sanderson

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Doug Ficken

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Bruce Schmidt

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John Neal