

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING**  
**March 16, 2011**

The Regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held on Wednesday, March 16, 2011 in the Selectmen's Conference Room.

Members present: First Selectman Frank Chiaramonte, Selectman Christina Emery and Selectman Michael Criss.

Attendees: Senator Kevin Witkos, bookkeeper Sonya Swatsley, tax collector Mary Jane Tierney, and Candace Jones-Pacholski.

**Call to Order**

Mr. Chiaramonte called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Ms. Emery moved to accept the minutes from March 2, 2011. Mr. Criss seconded. All were in favor.

**Public Participation**

None

**Appointments and Resignations**

None

**New Business**

Budget Line Adjustment: Worker's Comp and Liability:

Ms. Swatsley explained that line item 1085 has increased due to worker's comp and unemployment. Ms. Emery confirmed that the Town does not pay unemployment on a quarterly basis like other businesses. Ms. Swatsley said that the Town has an unemployment claim which has to be paid to the state and that is the reason for the increase of \$7,696. Mr. Criss made a motion to increase line item 1085 from \$115,139 to 122,746. Ms. Emery seconded. All were in favor. Line item 1019 for election workers has decreased by \$399. Ms. Emery moved to change item 1019 from \$32,404 to 32,005. Mr. Criss seconded. All were in favor. Ms. Emery requested the revenue section of the budget from Ms. Swatsley.

State Senator Kevin Witkos:

Senator Witkos distributed copies of a Legislative Update to the Selectmen. He wanted to meet with his colleagues and be available to answer questions. He explained the new governor is determined to bring forth a balanced budget. The first page of the Update shows a \$57.2 million surplus which is after borrowing. The money may be used for employment benefits or to reduce the budget. Currently the money is being set aside in the event the state has to pay to back an electrical charge to CL&P or UI. The budget for Harwinton remained the same with the exception of one increase of \$397. The governor has said he will not cut municipal

aid. The real estate conveyance tax will increase from .25% to .50%; the Governor is proposing to make this a permanent tax. The sales tax will increase from 6% to 6 ¼% with an additional 1 tenth of 1 percent to be used for local municipalities. The latest data he received was for fiscal year 2008-2009 shows Harwinton's retail sales at \$9,117,038 and sales and use tax at \$1,100,987; meaning Harwinton would receive 1/10 of one percent of \$9,117,038. Senator Witkos said the Governor's proposed solution is 58% in tax increases, 30% employee concessions and 13% in spending reductions. He noted that the Connecticut General Assembly's constitutional deadline to pass the budget is June 8, 2011. The Governor would like the budget passed by May 8<sup>th</sup>. Senator Witkos informed the Selectmen that they funded money for town roads today so as soon as the asphalt plants open, companies can begin working on repairing the roads. It was approved by the House and Senate. After a discussion on some other issues regarding the budget, Senator Witkos provided his contact information and told the Selectmen to call him with any questions. He said he would be happy to come back in the future to discuss any bills that may become law and impact Harwinton.

#### Tax Collector Budget:

Tax Collector, Mary Jane Tierney, submitted a revised budget based on the fact that she will be retiring at the end of the year. She would like to make one of her clerks an assistant tax collector. This would require a \$405.30 increase in this year's budget. She also had to increase her budget due to a 27% increase in fees to the Department of Motor Vehicles. She noted that she removed the mileage the Selectmen had voted against. There will not be any funds to attend any conferences. Ms. Tierney said the clerk is attending the third of four classes for tax collectors and in December of this year, she will have worked in the office for two (2) years. Ms. Emery asked Ms. Tierney if she still needs two clerks. Ms. Tierney replied that she actually needs a full time person. Ms. Emery said she felt it was important to promote the clerk to assistant and she thinks there's room to do it. Ms. Emery made a motion to amend line item 1037 to the new figure of \$55,767.67. Mr. Criss seconded. All were in favor. Ms. Tierney said she would like to promote her clerk now which will affect her current budget. She also noted that her office should be open during Town Hall hours and it's very difficult to do her job in 18 hours per week. Before making a determination on the pay increase, Mr. Criss would like to hear the clerk's thoughts on the job. Mr. Chiaramonte said that will come later. They may decide to do a search. Ms. Emery said the issue now is about the office and not the clerk personally and the tax collectors hours need to be looked at. Ms. Tierney said the retired tax collector from Thomaston, Sandy Bruscano said she would consult with the town, if needed, when it comes time to hire a tax collector. The Board decided not to approve the requested salary increase for the current year for the clerk.

Mr. Criss made a motion to add Michael Orefice to the agenda. Ms. Emery seconded. All were in favor.

Michael Orefice, Planning Commission Chairman:

Mr. Orefice said he is attending this meeting to discuss the letter he sent to the Selectman in November, 2010. The letter was regarding a meeting held on November 9th with the chairmen of the land use boards. He thought the meeting was to be with the Board of Selectmen. The meeting left him with some questions. He said a committee was somewhat established but he would like to know if a meeting schedule is available. He noted the agenda he received was different from what was actually discussed and he was not prepared. He had received input from members of his commission on issues to discuss but he did not have the opportunity to present them. He said he was unclear as to why Ms. Emery and Mr. Criss were not present. Ms. Emery stated they were not called in to the meeting but were informed of the events by Mr. Chiaramonte. Mr. Chiaramonte said originally he intended to have a meeting with the Board of Selectmen and the Land Use Commissions. A month passed during which he had conversations with various members, he decided it was best to have an informal meeting with just himself, Attorney Rybak and the commission chairmen to see if the differences existing between them could be resolved. Mr. Orefice stated he wished he had known that prior to the meeting. An issue brought up at that meeting was whether or not members of commissions can speak at other meetings and Mr. Orefice said that still has not been cleared up. He would like some clarification on this issue and feels it will be beneficial for all board members on what's appropriate and what is not. Regarding the public hearing held in June, 2010, Mr. Orefice said he spoke on behalf of himself and not the Commission. Mr. Chiaramonte said this issue has to be resolved and quarterly meetings are necessary. Mr. Orefice would like to see the Plan of Development and Affordable Housing discussed at the meetings. Mr. Chiaramonte would like the meetings to be a way to share information and keep the boards informed on what each is doing or working on. Mr. Chiaramonte said the meetings could be held one hour prior to a Board of Selectmen meeting, on a quarterly basis. The Selectmen agreed to hold the first meeting on Wednesday, April 20, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. in the Assembly Hall. Attorney Rybak will be invited to the first meeting to address the issue of speaking before other commissions.

Jason Emery, Chairman of the Ambulance Committee:

Postponed.

Town Hall Computer Assessment:

Ms. Emery reported that she contacted PC Wiz regarding obtaining a computer assessment for Town Hall. She was quoted a price of \$80 per hour with a 4 to 6 hour estimate of time needed. Mr. Chiaramonte said it's a good idea to have it done. Ms. Emery told Mr. Chiaramonte that he could call the town of Barkhamsted for a recommendation.

**First Selectman's Report**

Mr. Chiaramonte informed the board that they need to find an ADA coordinator for the Town because the former coordinator, Nina Callahan, passed away. The role of

the ADA coordinator is to settle any disputes residents may have regarding public buildings.

**Correspondence**

The Selectmen reviewed the Fire Marshal's report for February, 2011.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Criss made a motion to adjourn at 8:38 p.m. Ms. Emery seconded. All were in favor.

Minutes Submitted by:

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Melissa Santoro

Approved by:

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Francis J. Chiaramonte, First Selectman

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Christina Emery, Selectman

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Michael Criss, Selectman

RECEIVED FOR RECORD AT HARWINTON, CT  
ON 3-23-11 AT 4:54 PM  
ATTEST: PATRICIA K. WILLIAMSEN, TOWN CLERK