

SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MARIANNE MUNICIPAL BUILDING
December 20, 2021

Attendance: Roscoe Tash Sr-1st Selectman, Robert Whittier - 2nd Selectman, Arnold Knights Jr - 3rd Selectman, Sandra Tash -Tax Collector/Treasurer, Carrie Kester- Town Clerk, Dwight Tilton - CEO/PI

Guests: : Chris DeBeck (Lincoln News), Luke Tash, Rick Bronson (Lincoln Town Manager)

Meeting called to order at 7:05 PM

Mr. Bronson was here to discuss the Fire Protection contract that the Town of Chester has with Lincoln. The rate raised from \$50,558.96 to \$58,962.14 in 2020 except we were unaware of it because the invoices come so late to us. When we got the invoices for 2021, that we requested several times, we thought that the rate had gone up over \$14,000 but really it went up another \$5,914.08 to the rate of \$64,876.22 for the year. This is when I made the Board of Selectmen aware of the rate increase. They wanted to discuss disposing of the contract altogether and going on a per fire basis. However, last night Mr. Bronson claimed that the fire truck was dispatched to Lincoln 31 times in 2021! He told the Board that the minute the door of the Fire Station goes up it's \$2000 minimum. If you multiply \$2000 by 31 it equals \$62,000!!!! He said that most of that expense is Workman's Comp on the professionals that are called out. He also mentioned that the majority of "fire calls" are not fires. It is the professional trained personnel that costs.

Rocky said that going with a contract is good for the Fire Department but it's not good for Chester. He added that he is not interested in signing another contract based on formulas. That if the cost is \$50,000 and then the next year they need a 1% or 2% increase then that's something he'd be willing to talk about. Mr. Bronson's response to that was that it is either a formula, a fee schedule or nothing. Mr. Bronson said that they would have to create the fee schedule. He added that they could charge whatever they want to.

Rocky said that the Town of Chester could call East Millinocket, Howland or Mattawamkeag so you can say that you can charge whatever you want to but we have the option to not even call on Lincoln!

Mr. Bronson informed the Board that that the Lincoln Fire Department is working themselves out of all "mutual aid" contracts. Lincoln feels that they aid other communities with emergency calls but Lincoln does not receive anything in return.

Butch added that the problem seems to have stemmed from it being so difficult to get the invoices. He explained that one year we paid three payments because it was so hard to get the invoice on time. He said that he knows for himself that he talked to Sharon about it before she passed away about how hard it is to get the invoices. He added that the girls in the office have mentioned it several times of how many times they call asking for invoices and that needs to change. Mr. Bronson said he would take care of it first thing tomorrow! (That has not been his attitude when I contacted him multiple times before!).Mr. Bronson said that Lincoln Fire Department would continue to respond if the Town of Chester has a contract or not. He said that if Chester decides to "divorce" Lincoln, they will feel really bad looking across the river and seeing someone losing their home and not responding. He said that the Lincoln Emergency has doubled the number of full-time people.

Next Dwight Tilton covered his business. He said that they will start dismantling Beaver Chester very soon. He said that Ronald Morgan has done very well getting all the needed permits and everything. He said they want to put a solar farm there and it will all be in Tree Growth.

He added that Bruce Rhea has finished installing the septic system.

Next week Dwight is going to start going around and contacting people who have built without a permit, including bringing in little buildings.

The last thing that he mentioned was that he is meeting with DEP and he is really pushing that they certify and accept the 2006/2007 map for the Shoreland Zoning. If they don't, the Town is going to be in a world of hurt. The Planning Board was giving out permits to build along the river and not even using a map (or the Land Use Ordinance).

Larry DiZazzo did not make it to the meeting.

Next was Old Business which started out by signing the renewed contract with Hamlin Associates and the Certificate of Appointment for Dwight Tilton for another year.

After that the Board of Selectmen voted 3 out of 3 to accept the ARPA funds from the State.

Rocky said that he definitely wants to give "the office girls" some compensation but also the Planning Board, School Board, everyone who worked through the pandemic. He thought that because he received a check in the mail from the State.

At this point, I reported to the Board that I had inquired to DownEast Broadband to find out if that might be an option to bring internet services to Chester. I asked them if they would like me to invite Dan Sullivan to come to the January Select Meeting for information only but none of them were very interested in the idea.

Sandy, Town Treasurer, presented the bank statement and financial records to the Board to sign off.

Then the discussion of plowing came up. The Town truck is going to be in the shop for a while until the parts come in. It was decided that Butch will plow for the storm coming on Wednesday and take the tires in the garage for the last Town truck as payment.

The Town Clerk did not have anything to present.

Meeting was adjourned @ 8:15PM.

The next Selectmen's Meeting will be on January 31, 2022.

There is a Budget Meeting scheduled for January 10, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie Kester
Town Clerk