

Town of Damariscotta, Maine
Board of Selectmen's Meeting
Wednesday, December 17, 2008, 6:00 p.m.

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Public Hearings

III. Call to Order—Chair McLean called the regular selectmen's meeting to order at 6:12 pm.

Present: Selectmen Dick McLean, Josh Pinkham, Vicki Pinkham, Ed Stelzer; Town Manager, Greg Zinser; Fire Chief, Neil Genthner; Highway Commissioner, Terry Sutherburg; Police Chief, Steve Drake; Deputy Clerk, Jurate Barnes; members of the Budget Committee; Jim Campbell; Barnaby Porter; Chris Roberts.

IV. Communications

V. Town Manager Discussion

1. Audit Presentation—Zinser: The auditor's representative has to reschedule due to bad weather.

2. Letter from concerned citizens-the Youth problem. Zinser: Town received a letter on 12/5 from a conglomerate of many people who live/work/shop in town.

Porter: how do we start talking about the youth; need to do the right sensitive thing; there are some rampant problems. Need to bring the Third Place Concept to people's attention: 1st place is home; 2nd place is where you work, go to school; 3rd place is where you go to relax, socialize. The hallmarks are free food, drink, highly accessible, within walking distance of the school. This problem with the youths goes back many years; (Maine Coast) book shop dealt with unruly youth for a long time. Porter then gave several examples of problems the book store staff has faced and gave a list to Chief Drake.

Zinser: need to be proactive; my knee-jerk comment was taken out of context; I was not suggesting a new officer.

Porter: a regular, daily presence of a police officer would make a difference.

Drake: need to allocate manpower; allocate my resources between patrol and investigation, we have a lot of criminal cases. For directed patrol, like speeding on Bristol Rd., have had to hire reserves for the task. For every hour on patrol, spend 30 minutes on paperwork. Maybe just have a substation downtown, take 10 or 15 minutes each hour and go out on patrol.

Gormley: we'll give you space (in the library)

J.Pinkham: can we just use the school reserve officer one hour after school.

Drake: not sure what Mark does, he is not in Damariscotta a lot, he does give me a call if there are issues or hear of a party and so forth.

McLean: relationship with the school officer is part of the concept of the job between school and the village; spend time where the kids are.

Dave Wilbur joined the meeting at 6:26pm

Gormley: a teen problem, they are all in the library, numbers are quadruple what they were before, the Teen Center closed so they have no place to go so when the cold came, they went indoors; any place on Main St is likely. A core group of about 25 kids goes to the library; they want me even to be open on Mondays. The kids all adhere to library rules.

V.Pinkham: we are told over and over again that Damariscotta is the service center of Lincoln County; the businesses support 24/7 police coverage; why not swap out car patrol for foot patrol; swap one job for another.

Zinser: not as easy as taking someone out of patrol and put onto foot patrol—effects one another; manpower issue. What can we do in the downtown area, lacking a community center: talk with Lincoln Academy, PD, sheriff's office, Great Salt Bay school, library, where can the kids go. It would be great to have a PD sub station.

Dave Page: not a new problem; it was a problem 30-35 years ago, George Hutchings would make us disperse; when was the decision made for no police presence; need it a couple times a week.

J.Pinkham: if the kids are outside, have the police drive by

Porter: regarding the back parking lot situation: surprised how many women are afraid to go to their cars, some have seen drug deals.

Drake: trying to deal with that situation, I drive downtown in my private car at all hours. If you ever feel uncomfortable, give the police department a call, we will escort you to your car. The situation at Miles hospital is ripe for an attack. Can't do this without your help, but do need to balance the situation as well.

J.Pinkham: draft letter to Chamber of Commerce and others in downtown, to please call if there is a problem; set some protocols.

Drake: I have walked into every business downtown and discussed how to combat shoplifting, contacted businesses when notified of organized shoplifting rings and counterfeit bills; need to get the information out to the businesses.

Don't necessarily need the name of a specific business, just the downtown.

Zinser: need to know when things are going on

McLean: separate but adjoining: the cost of the PD budget—add to that how do we provide downtown coverage as we develop a budget; how do we deal with the situation, have some kids as part of the discussion.

Porter: can they call 911

McLean: call 911 if emergency or 563-3200 or 563-1909 if “do something”

Wilbur: maybe the town office can send an e-mail with the different contact numbers; the Board of Selectmen and the Chief should get together and set priorities with regard to coverage.

Drake: the biggest job is prescription drugs, so many people are doing it, working on it all the time.

Porter: as an example 2 or 3 teenage boys come into the bookstore to use the men's restroom, is that the time to call?

Drake: grammar school kids are claiming a \$300 per day habit of oxycontin.

Stelzer: I am downtown daily, mostly in the morning, when are the kids around

Porter: mostly after school, a handful usually, worse in the winter.

Zinser: need to formulate a game plan, meet with Lincoln Academy

A.Pinkham: include the Y; they are trying to get kids to come

Drake: maybe where the Electric Mart used to be, officers can use as a sub-station, get kids to come, maybe the Y can help.

Page: if there was a problem at the Teen Center, I just called 563-1909; no kids ever knew Dave called the cops

Stelzer: take a hard look at having a police presence at the right time of day, sporadically, try it for three to six months.

Porter: have the kids involved in a big way.

Gormley: I'll organize the Y, Lincoln Academy, can the Board of Selectmen get the downtown businesses involved, need more than just law enforcement.

Sutherburg: also involve the parents, where are they?

Campbell: for the money spent, not getting the money's worth

McLean: this is a budget issue, will spend time on it.

Campbell: most problems happen at the same time of day, someone should be there from the PD every day.

Porter: this has been a good first discussion.

3. Budget Preparations for FY10—Zinser: this is an opportunity to hear from all of the department heads about any issues. The six month expensed report is the base for a lot of the budgeting for next year.

Zinser explained changes to the fund accounting.

Neil Genthner, Fire Chief: only two line items are affected—payroll and fuel; call volume not going down.

Zinser: need to take a hard look at payroll—six months to go, only \$5K left.

Wilbur: average number of calls?

Genthner: a ball park of about 100; payroll reflects stipends for officers, next payrolls will be strictly call volume. It will be close, maybe a tad over budget.

Zinser: any further thought on additional help

Genthner: trying to piece the need together

Zinser: the issue out of Newcastle—full time fire chief; recognize large amount of work; training volunteer fire department difficult. January 21 special town meeting on ordinances including Fire Department billing ordinance—can bill for some services and offset budget

Genthner: services outside of regular scope

Zinser: bill the insurance company, not the individual

Genthner: already pay for this in your premium

Gormley: where does the money come from for overage

Genthner: never run over the bottom line—hold off buying until the end; only overage is on line items; fuel is right there

Zinser: doing fine

J. Hagar: it is great that the department is looking at billing; need to look at ways to self-fund the department. How many times have the hydrants been used past year?

Genthner: a couple of times

J. Hagar: hydrants cost 122K per year, talk about something we're not getting our money's worth; hard to find a balance.

J.Pinkham: in defense of hydrant rental—just one fire

Genthner: Church St. fire did just that

Stelzer: want to comment on what a good job the fire department did with the ice storm; really appreciate it.

Sutherburg: highway department budget pretty much the same; extra \$1K for tree removal, lots of dead trees

Zinser: highway overage due to snow plow contract, roadside mowing will go up, fuel, 3 ½% COLA increase. We are fortunate to have an engineer to assist, request budget item for engineering assistance, consultation; will add about \$500-1,000 to budget.

J.Pinkham: any specific areas for tree removal

Sutherburg: Lessner Rd., Rocky Run, Belvedere Rd., Joey Winchenbach did Westview Rd, with the highway truck and chipper following, took almost \$900 to do Westview.

Zinser: “issues” within the Police Department are hot topics; the biggest department in town with a budget of about \$368,000; a topic of debate. Need to frame the current problem—the issue started a long time ago—need to go back to the request for 24-hour coverage. Never an increase in the budget for the 24-hour coverage, the coverage came about through overtime and reserve officers. The budget was never increased to accurately reflect 24-hour coverage.

Increase was always kept to cost of living; leaves us with a PD responding to significant issues, more issues than in prior years, requiring large amount of time; PD operating under budget not adequate to meet the challenges; hat are the issues of patrol, reserves, overtime for 24-hour coverage. The second issue is all the cases; a lot of stuff is going on in this town: 467 arrests for 1st half of the year; 1300 calls for service. When you arrest someone, it doesn't stop there; investigation versus patrol, how all of that impacts/compounds the budget.

McLean: Greg has expressed some reluctance to share these figures; there is no Camelot; Damariscotta is a great town, things go on in every town.

Drake: I have been doing this for twenty-seven years; this is the stuff you pay me for. Damariscotta is a service center, everything meets here, a lot of cases are arrests whole range; have solved every burglary in town, although not necessarily with an arrest.

Zinser: tell me about a typical assault case—what goes on

Drake: the call comes in, one officer goes, mutual aid starts drifting toward source in case of need; interview with witnesses. Whole process can take 1 ½ hours, even without arrest, if arrest is made, go to Two Bridges, paperwork another ½ hour, so far at least three hours invested, then court, summons, etc. Domestic violence cases are messier, even more time consuming. Working on child abuse case, one person arrested, had 402 hours to arrest, will have three binders of paper work before it ever comes to trial.

J.Pinkham: I see all these numbers, what are you trying to tell us?

Drake: need another full-time officer; I am working over sixty hours a week. I can't look at a victim and say no, but can't keep this up.

V.Pinkham: I am hearing that when a violent crime occurs, you take it on yourself; you will still have a hand in it.

Drake: Jen Doe on hard cases; she has the knack.

Zinser: this issue is that the criminal side requires follow-up, patrol is dragged out to criminal investigation, this impacts personnel, happening simultaneously, costs more money to complete the work, due to overtime pay. Looking at the bottom line, 120 hours is too much. PD is always topic of debate, needed to frame the issues, Steve Drake has been asking for the past two budget cycles, now I am convinced to seriously contemplate an additional full-time PD officer.

Wilbur: budget-wise how does it impact adding new officer

Zinser: bottom line impact: \$50K—complete; currently the budget for overtime, court, reserve is about \$33K right now. Starting salary for full time officer is \$32K. Overall net effect is about \$15-20k more this year, will lessen further out. Hire July 1 or in first quarter of new fiscal year, a lot of money in the budget phases in.

V.Pinkham: get rid of reserves?

Zinser: need about \$10k in reserves, still some overtime

Drake: with the built-in overtime start losing productivity, get tired, would rather pay straight time.

J. Hagar: (to Zinser): will you show us the numbers, what is the purpose of bringing up the budget topics

Zinser: as town manager, I will present a budget that meet the needs of the community.

J. Hagar: will you differentiate the changes

Zinser: will see the new line item, other deductions with other line items.

J. Hagar: look at two budgets.

Zinser: great idea: use a primary and secondary budget, then can see impacts of both.

Drake; still need patrol, we are not to the point where we need detectives.

Zinser: looking for two officers, if only a detective, then not solving patrol problem, with additional officers, Steve won't have to do patrol.

Wilbur: can you guarantee that another officer will move from 70 to 50 hours that is more reasonable.

Zinser: it is a waste of money to send Chief on patrols

V.Pinkham: is there anything else?

Drake: move some money around as example have gone electronic, not much paper.

Stelzer: do you have sufficient administrative support to relieve you of the administrative burden.

Drake: Jodi (Prior) has worked in law enforcement; couldn't have gotten a better person, very efficient, does not need help.

Vesery: I've lived here for a while and can see the increase in number of cars, it will compound, will need more PD support; need to be thinking about a person for investigation 5-10 years down the road; work will continue to increase, the Chief cannot continue a 70-hour week.

Zinser: not looking to increase expenses in admin; reorganizing assessing and administration: no contract assessor's agent, confident Jurate Barnes can do the job, office assistant line likely to increase to make up for Jurate's hours.

Approximately a 2% increase in administrative salary budget, everything else status quo. Large increase in hydrant cost anticipated, about 25K annually.

Insurance increases are normal, all insurances overall, are still less than in 2007. Street lights are going down. Cemeteries have problems which caused overrun over and above the mowing contract. Bethlehem Cemetery has been cleaned, Walpole is next. Need to start saving for repairs to stone walls, roads, etc.

There is the potential of losing some school aid if legislature passes, about a 75K loss for this current fiscal year which will play into budgets for this year.

Hagar: with sidewalk improvements, where do we stand on matching funds.

Zinser: from the sidewalk reserve account, still have money there that was previously approved; have submitted a 450K grant, town match for that would be 68K. We are pulling a lot of grants

Hagar: who oversees the grant application money.

Zinser: contract with engineer, I am planning to become a CDBG administrator, take the place of DOT and manage at the local level. That is why the need for technical assistance money: if we secure the Church St funding, get a contract with the engineer to manage.

Page: understand the needs, the plight of the taxpayer who faces a steamroller coming down from the state. What is the delinquent tax rate; businesses are in survival mode. That is the crisis.

Stelzer: back to Church St. project part of the 450K grant is the 68k match, net is what the government provides. Need to be focused and conservative on spending, budgeting look at anticipated revenues.

Campbell: start billing exempt properties for taxes.

Zinser: determine impact fees for non-profit organizations.

Campbell: any outfit that can spend 750K for property can pay property tax.

Zinser: we are doing what we can to narrow down the dollar impacts that non-profits make.

McLean: PILOT—payment in lie of taxes—we cannot legally tax exempt properties, but can ask.

A.Pinkham: put out alternatives to increase revenues.

Zinser: planning to re-do investment strategy, invest in short-term CD's, getting creative. Town has budgeted very conservatively on revenues, we are already lowballing. Decline in excise tax, pursuing every option we can to increase revenues.

4. Review FD parking lot improvements: Zinser: Wright-Pierce donated time, Fire Department reserve can be tapped to do boring holes, in front of bay doors.
J.Pinkham: move up to \$4,000 to test bore; McLean second.
Zinser: get proposals, start with geo tech, topo survey. Motion approved 5-0.

VI. Selectmen's Discussion Items

VII. Official Action

VIII. Old Business

IX. Consent Calendar

Regular Meeting Minutes of December 3, 2008: V.Pinkham and Stelzer stated that the corrections requested had not been made; minutes were tabled pending corrections.

1. General Fund Warrant #31: J. Pinkham move, V. Pinkham second
Discussion: V. Pinkham questioned Green Energy Products/ Fitch fuel
J. Pinkham as if put out to bid
Zinser: only one source; worked with Will Monsell
V.Pinkham: McPhee Enterprises?
Zinser: fixed sewer back up; problem for years
V.Pinkham: light replacement at the fire station?
Zinser: Neil Genter got three bids, replaced the lights.
Motion approved 5-0
2. Payroll Warrant #29, #30: J. Pinkham move; McLean second. Motion approved 5-0

X. Other Business

Stelzer: want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas
Wilbur: went to the School Board meeting the other night; before the meeting on school consolidation
Zinser: school board member is coming to January 7 meeting to give overview of AOS
Wilbur: will they also go over the short fall
Zinser: maybe a little early; increased enrollment at Lincoln Academy and the state shortfall are impacting; ending dollars are not available until the June meeting; there may be cost savings by then. Bob Bouchard can't be at that meeting, Jim Cosgrove will represent.
J. Pinkham: are the lights changed? How are we coming on the bus?
Zinser: have made progress; in a week or so will be looking at other locations.
Chris Roberts: got a hold of CMP regarding the receptacle; electricians can put the receptacle in, I will get someone to do it, just want the Board to say "okay."
CMP will charge town like holiday lighting, at the end of the year.
McLean move to support effort to get electricians to put outlets into the poles;
Stelzer second. Motion passed 5-0.

Board thanked Chris Roberts for his efforts.

XI. Executive Session

- XII. Adjournment:** J. Pinkham moved to adjourn, V. Pinkham second, motion carried 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jurate J. Barnes, Deputy Clerk