

**TOWN OF SOMERS
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 26, 2018
Immediately following Public Hearing
Lower Level Conference Room**

Call to Order: First Selectman Knorr called the meeting to order at 6:17pm immediately following the Public Hearing.

Members Present: First Selectman Bud Knorr, Selectmen Kathy Devlin and Tim Potrikus via Teleconference, CFO Michael Marinaccio and Assistant Finance Director Brian Wissinger.

**Opportunity to Add Agenda Items:
Public Health Director:**

Mr. Knorr is recommending Luigi Sartori for the Public Health Director, Mr. Steven Jacobs the Town Sanitarian and Mr. Knorr met with Luigi and found him to be a good fit for Somers.

Mr. Potrikus made a motion to support the First Selectman's recommendation for purposes of discussion, seconded by Mrs. Devlin. The motion passed after the discussion.

Transfer Station Discussion:

First Selectman Knorr acknowledge the citizen concerns/comments about the transfer station closing 2 days and the Board of Selectmen are reviewing all of their options. Mr. Knorr thought it important to point out that increasing the day's hour and the corresponding costs was a budgetary decision and cannot be decided by the BOS without seeking the BOF approval. The Fiscal 2019 budget that was adopted was based on the Transfer Station being open 2 days a week and increasing the days would require additional funds/appropriations and will need BOF approval. Mr. Knorr asked CFO Michael Marinaccio to add his comments about the budget and the so called WINDFALL of \$1.1 million and the implication with the transfer station. (see attached letter).

Mr. Potrikus expressed his frustrations with the lack of resident participation during budget season; with all open meetings that were held in January, public hearing and town meeting and the limited participation of residents in Town to share their opinion with the Board, it impeded the ability in making the decision that best supported what the residents wanted. If there had been participation and residents expressed their concerns then, the Board could have taken it under advisement. The decision to close the Transfer station on for 2 days was not only the first Selectman's decision it was recommended by DPW, went through the budget process and voted on by The Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen understood to be in the best interest of the citizens and take care of the fiscal responsibility and balance the budget.

He explained that there are roughly 4500 households in town and if you look at the deficit that the transfer brings to each citizen every resident is supporting the citizens utilizing the Transfer station.

Mr. Potrikus remarked the fact that the Fire Dept. lost rescue 1 this year because the Town cannot afford to keep it on the road; in addition to that the BOS are working with the State to help offset the cost of for additional emergency response vehicle due to the needs at the prison and to the PILOT cuts. Mr. Potrikus commented he is surprised that residents are more passionate about a transfer station being closed on Sun and Mon for the very few hours they were open then they are about Fire/police services and road maintenance.

Mr. Potrikus went on to thank Mr. Marinaccio for providing the information about the Mythical windfall.

Mr. Knorr commented that residents should take the responsibility to educate themselves as to what the CFO provides on the website and or contact the office and we will provide the information.

Comments and Discussion Regarding the SRO (School Resource Officer) MOU (Memorandum of Understanding):

First Selectman Knorr asked if there was anything the BOS would like to add or comment on with regards to the SRO/MOU as proposed.

Mrs. Devlin made a motion to accept the SRO MOU and authorize the First Selectman to sign the document with the condition that The Town Attorney reviews and there are no major changes to the MOU, seconded by Mr. Potrikus. The motion passed.

Authorization of Scheduled Payments:

Mrs. Devlin made a motion to approve the authorization of scheduled payments in the amount of \$158,564.56, seconded by Mr. Potrikus. The motion passed.

Adjournment:

Mr. Devlin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 seconded by Mr. Potrikus. The motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim LaFleur-Recording

Minutes are not official until accepted at a subsequent meeting.

Message from the CFO regarding the Windfall Myth of \$1.1 million in State aid

There has been a recurring theme in a letters written to the newspaper, public officials and social media posts claiming that the Town of Somers has received more State aid than it budgeted and as a result has received a “windfall” of \$1.1 million. This claim which has at this point reached mythical status is without merit. I’ll attempt to explain why no such “windfall” exists:

- 1) Central points and questions raised by the authors
 - a. For the 2019 fiscal year the Town budgeted \$7,696,138 in anticipated state aid; Total State aid awarded was \$8,824,322. Difference of \$1,128,184
 - b. The \$1,128,184 has been termed a windfall by critics
 - c. They ask: Where did the windfall go? What is it being used for? Now that you have it, why aren’t you giving it back? Why aren’t you lowering the mill rate? Why are you reducing Transfer Station hours now that you have the windfall? The Town budgeted incorrectly
- 2) Last month I provided the Board of Finance with a reconciliation showing what makes up the difference or the \$1.1 million and that there has not been a “windfall”
 - a. First, one needs to understand the following:
 - i. Not all State aid received goes into the Town’s General Fund. TAR grants and Municipal Projects aid is, by statute restricted. These amounts are deposited directly in the TAR Fund. They are earmarked for road maintenance.
 - ii. LoCIP Funding which is included in the state number is not a grant at all. It represents a reimbursable allocation for money spent on state preapproved capital projects
 - iii. State aid amounts are estimates. They are not guaranteed. Grants can be cut or withheld at any time during the fiscal year.
 - iv. State aid is neither received in a lump sum nor is it received at the beginning of the FY. In fact, to date, we have yet to receive any state aid. Aid is received in installments throughout the year, sometimes installments are delayed
 - b. So TAR, Muni Projects and LoCIP (these are monies that don’t go into the General Fund) total \$454k. From the \$1.1, that leaves a difference of \$675k. \$664k or 98% of that amount is an ECS funding increase over budget
 - c. Why the difference? - Town budgeted ECS at the Governor’s amount (a budget cut) and Lawmakers ultimately restored his ECS cuts when they passed the state budget. So we are sitting on a potential increase in ECS money of \$664k. Will that amount be cut between now and 6/30/19? Possibly.
 - i. When Governor signed State budget into law, he vetoed a provision of the bill that said he could not cut, adjust or hold back ECS funding during the Fiscal Year
 - ii. Lawmakers failed to override the Governor’s veto. The governor and his successor now maintain the ability to withhold ECS funding when they feel the need to do so.
 - iii. While it appears we will be receiving \$664k more in ECS funds, that remains to be seen

There is NO windfall, we have not received any state money, to date; state funding is an estimate and not a guarantee; and what we don’t have we can’t use.