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MINUTES

Ordinance Committee Special Meeting

Monday, October 12th, 2020- 7:00pm

Zoom Teleconference (646)558-8656 – ID #821 6167 6399

Members Present: Annmarie Drugonis, Bob Findley, Rob VanEgghen

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Town Counsel Bryan LeClerc, Police Chief Paul Satkowski, Chief of Staff Rory Burke

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

All present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4. Approve minutes from Ordinance Committee Special Meeting; Sept 28th, 2020

A motion was made to approve the minutes.

Motion: Bob Findley

Second: Rob VanEgghen

Vote: 3-0

5. Fire Fighter's Abatement

Bryan LeClerc: I reached out to the Finance Director regarding the administration of the program. The chair of the Fire Commission mentioned an IRS memo but the ordinance calls for an abatement. The way the Town has been doing it is issuing them W-2's like an employee instead of issuing them a 1099-MISC and giving them an abatement. Doug indicated it was the firefighters' wish to be treated as W-2 employees so that the Town can withhold for taxes to avoid surprises for them at the end of the year from an increase in taxable income. It's more paperwork for the Town but they get a live check instead of an abatement.

Rob VanEgghen: Do we know how what the impact is on them?

Bryan: It depends on how you file your return in terms of single, married, filing jointly, etc. By doing it this way, the employer has to pay a share as well, such as Social Security. I'm told it was done this way at the firefighter's request.

Bob: But it's supposed to be an abatement correct?

Rob: That's what we have on the books. Do we have a paper trail of the request?

Bryan: I assumed Doug would be here but I do not.

Rory Burke: I spoke to Doug last week and the IRS memo is included in your packet.

Bryan: Yes, the guidance indicates that tax credits for volunteer firefighters are to be treated as taxable income. The question is whether it can be done as a 1099 and have the firefighters handle it accordingly.

Annmarie Drugonis: My thought is that if we're giving them a live check, it's almost as if we have a paid fire department, except without the heavy salaries that comes with.

Bryan: The Fire Commission was supposed to get back to us because they wanted to add these additional restrictions.

Annmarie: We had also requested that it specifically state that they had been serving in Seymour for 25 years, not any other communities. We will have to table this because Clay is not here.

Rory: I will reach out to Clay to have them meet.

7. Non-profit assessment

Bryan: I spoke to your Assessor and sent out a draft ordinance that we worked out together. That would deal with what is allowed under Statute, giving abatements for leased personal and real property. There was a motion to move the ordinance forward to the Selectmen.

Motion: Bob Findley

Second: Rob VanEgghen

Vote: 3-0

8. Noise ordinance

Rory: Just a notice that because the Board of Selectmen meeting on the 6th was canceled, the public hearing for the two ordinances that had been moved forward will have to be rescheduled.

Bryan: I reached out to the Police Chief at your request regarding the number, frequency and location of the complaints. I received that from the Chief and sent it out to you all this morning.

Bob: I'm shocked at the number of gunshots. Hot Tamale is surprisingly rare but Pub 67 is frequent. There's a lot in Balance Rock and at P&S Paving as well. We've been discussing decibels and duration, perhaps the Chief could weigh in?

Chief Paul Satkowski: I think what the Town has in place is sufficient. There are a lot of variables and noise complaints are very subjective. We have a noise meter. It has only been used a handful of times. Usually when an officer shows up for a noise complaint, people are very reasonable and get quieter immediately. It's also a function of where. For example, Pub 67 carries across the water there. You'd be surprised how quiet these levels actually are.

Rob: I think we know that this isn't a safety thing, more a quality of life issue. Is the P&S issue common year over year?

Paul: This is a zoning issue. The area is industrial with some residences. We've been working closely with Planning & Zoning. Most of this is related to the business conducting its operations with all the appropriate approvals. I'm not sure how you fix that.

Rob: My parents live near Oxford airport so I get it. We're just trying to do what we can to help the residents without hurting the businesses.

Bob: I thought it would be worse with the businesses, but they're a really small amount in comparison.

Bryan: Chief, do you need any other tools this Committee can help you with?

Paul: I don't think we're going to be able to solve a lot of them. Some of these are internal complaints in apartment buildings, neighbor complaints. I think what's here is sufficient.

Annmarie: Most of us work with noise levels professionally. Are the police trained on noise levels?

Rob: Is there a hard copy of these?

Rory: We don't print copies frequently because they're updated so frequently, a printed copy becomes out of date almost immediately.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rory', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Rory Burke