

TOWN OF SEABROOK

SELECTMEN'S MEETING

JANUARY 6, 2025

Harold F. Eaton
Theresa A. Kyle
Srinivasan "Ravi" Ravikumar
William M. Manzi, III

Mr. Eaton opened the meeting at 9:33AM.

PUBLIC HEARING - COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATION PROGRAM

Mr. Eaton opened the public hearing at 9:35AM. Mr. Manzi explained this is the second requirement of a public hearing for this program. The board may want to hold another public hearing in the evening at a different venue and this one does not impede that just meets the requirement.

Ravi explained further that this program will be on the 2025 warrant for the voters to decide if it is something they want. He explained how this program will benefit the residents of the town by utilizing the consultants to negotiate the best rate for electricity cost. In order to get those rates it requires the community be included in the program unless the resident "opts out" of the program.

Mrs. Kyle said she is not in favor of binding the town to one agent. She said the residents would be paying an agent fee of 1/10 of a cent that will be calculated in the cost of the electricity.

Stuart Ornsby spoke to the program and how they go through the approval steps. The program will not launch unless they can give savings to the town. Once a rate is negotiated a contract is approved for a term which can be 12 months, 18 months, etc. When that contract expires there would be another rate negotiation and another contract.

Vikki Mitchell - asked if she would be able to still go on the website to see if she would have more savings with another company. Anyone can decide if they want to stay with the company or choose someone else.

Mr. Eaton closed the public hearing at 9:55AM.

MEETING - FIRE CHIEF

Chief Bill Edwards was present for his report (see attached). Mr. Eaton said the toy bank is greatly appreciated and helps to support our community and thanked the department for this.

Ravi asked how the tone-out program works within the department for station coverage. Chief Edwards said they have 5 employees at the station. When an ambulance call comes in, the department tones out for 2 additional firefighters to come into the station for coverage. When the 2 employees return to the station after call is completed the 2 employees who came in to cover are sent home. They rotate through the employees to make it as fair as possible. The employees are not required to come in to the station and they do receive call back pay.

Currently they have 20 firefighters but only 16 to staff as 4 are out on injury. Hampton has 40 firefighters and Seabrook does just as many calls with only 20.

Ravi said the employees are paid an overtime rate that is 1.5 times the hourly rate that includes the health buyback, stipends, etc. Chief Edwards said that is a federal requirement.

There was discussion on how the tone out works and when employees are released from the tone out once the 2 employees come back from the call. Ravi said they are on staff but here at the meeting. He doesn't have a problem with them being here just wondering who was covering the station. The chief said they are they have an engine and ambulance here to respond to incoming calls.

There was discussion on what double dipping is. They volunteer to come back to cover the station. Ravi said this is not the best use of taxpayer dollars. He feels if they are called in for 2 hours they should work the 2 hours and do the tone outs that come in during those 2 hours. Ravi feels this "double dipping" is going to continue to increase the budget. Chief Edwards said if they have 100 calls someone is going to get paid no matter what. He said if they hold them you will eventually have no employees come back for the tone outs. Hampton tried this and it doesn't work. Chief Edwards said they are human they need some down time and time with their families.

Mr. Eaton said they have not added any new firefighters in 20 years. He agrees with being conscious with tax dollars but when it comes to the safety of the residents changes need to be made. He said you cannot rely on the current staffing, staffing needs to be added.

Ravi said the census data claims that the population has decreased from 2018-22. He said there are several important

things that need to be worked out and solved. Ravi stated he is not in favor of just throwing bodies in to solve the problems.

There was discussion on assessing fees and impact fees that were trying to be implemented. The residents didn't like the fact that they would be paying more. Chief Edwards said Ravi can propose imposing the fees for use of the fire department services but he is not in favor.

There was discussion on the increase in the budget and how much the resident's taxes make up the total tax levy. Chief Edwards said that Ravi worked on the data and came up with a solution. The Board of Selectmen has not seen this but yet a member of the budget committee used it against the Chief at a meeting. Mrs. Kyle commented she has not seen the information as she doesn't watch you tube and Ravi is working against his own board.

Mrs. Kyle said the residents in town need to realize that they are short-staffed in the department and safety is of concern. Ravi said he does support the issue at hand but not in favor of the solution. Mr. Eaton said how do they have a police department with 30 officers but the fire department only has 20 employees. Mr. Eaton broke it down as to how adding the 8 firefighters would save money on the overtime with the tone outs and minimum station coverage.

Mr. Eaton asked for the department budgets for police and fire. The difference is between the departments is about \$90K. Chief Edwards asked why is it that every time he comes here it is a 3 hour meeting on overtime. He asked why it is that when other departments come here and ask for an increase he doesn't ask for the data. How else is his department supposed to feel?

Ravi said at the last meeting he asked for the number of fires the department has put out. Today he is still waiting for those numbers. Chief Edwards asked when the last time was that he asked police for the data for increases. The hire of new employees would be at step 1 so the full-time line would decrease over the next 5 years or so. This would also decrease the overtime line item due to rate increase of the employees being hired.

Ravi said looking at the ambulance data it seems to him that there are a lot of uncollected fees. He said when complete he will share it with the board. He shared his thoughts on covering the ambulance cost and billing so people pay for the services they use. He does agree they need to look at the

disadvantaged and how they can assist those individuals with the services utilized. Ravi said not every elderly person is disadvantaged but the 200 residents that receive a tax abatement they would need to do something for them.

Mrs. Kyle said if this is such a big issue why not have a special meeting so everyone can have input. Chief said the meeting should include all the departments' not just fire.

There was discussion on fees that can be charged to help offset the cost of the fire department. Chief Edwards spoke to what happened the last time this was tried. Ravi said if they articulate it to the residents they will be open to the changes in the fee structure.

DISCHARGE OF TAX SALES - 45 WASHINGTON STREET

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle To approve and sign the
Second: Ravi discharge of tax sales.
Unanimous

WATER SERVICE APPLICATIONS

Kristin Summer - 78 Seabrook Road
Lawrence Lamagna - 238 Bristol Street
Derek Wessel - 80 Ocean Blvd

MOTION: Ravi
Second: Theresa A. Kyle
Unanimous

SEWER SERVICE APPLICATION

Lawrence Lamagna - 238 Bristol Street

MOTION: Ravi
Second: Theresa A. Kyle
Unanimous

DONATION - \$2500

MOTION: Ravi
Second: Theresa A. Kyle
Unanimous

Ravi thanked O'Brien's for the generous donation.

MEETING JANUARY 20

The town does work normal hours for this holiday. Mr. Eaton said he already has his schedule set and apologized for not being able to accommodate.

TOWN WARRANT 2025

Mr. Eaton would like to take the capital items on the town budget side, articles 14-22, be funded from the unexpended fund balance.

Mr. Manzi said it is within the board's authority to use that fund balance to offset those costs.

Mr. Eaton said the total cost is about \$744K. It was stated that the voters still vote on each article and can contain the budget so it doesn't increase.

Mr. Manzi said there is a collective bargaining agreement that needs action. He said if the board agrees they would need to make a motion on each article so they can make that change.

Article 13 - SPA Union - this is a collective bargaining agreement. Mr. Manzi said this is based on a tentative agreement that has not been ratified by the members. He said this can always be taken off the warrant if it is declined. The increase is a 4.25% COLA.

MOTION: Harold F. Eaton To place and recommend
Second: Ravi article 13 for the
Unanimous 2025 warrant.

Article 38 - Discontinue of Land - this is for Coca Cola to discontinue land as a public way by closing it for public travel. Mr. Manzi explained the quiet title process for this land. This article enables the town to get to article 39 which is for a billboard.

Mr. Eaton asked if these 2 articles could be moved. Ravi said in the note they should put some clear language for the article and that there is no cost to the taxpayers.

MOTION: Ravi To place and recommend
Second: Harold F. Eaton article 38 for the
Unanimous 2025 warrant.

Article 39 - Billboard - this is the article for the billboard on the land in article 38. This would be for only one billboard but it will be double-sided.

MOTION: Ravi To place and recommend
Second: Harold F. Eaton article 39 for the
Unanimous 2025 warrant.

MOTION: Harold F. Eaton To use \$65K from the
Second: Ravi water enterprise reserve
Unanimous fund for article 14.

MOTION: Harold F. Eaton To use \$40K from the
Second: Ravi water enterprise reserve
Unanimous fund for article 15.

MOTION: Harold F. Eaton To use \$284,200 from the
Second: Ravi unexpended fund balance
Unanimous for article 16.

MOTION: Harold F. Eaton To use \$90K from the
Second: Ravi unexpended fund balance
Unanimous for article 17.

MOTION: Harold F. Eaton To use \$50K from the
Second: Ravi unexpended fund balance
Unanimous for article 19.

MOTION: Harold F. Eaton To use \$35K from the
Second: Ravi unexpended fund balance
Unanimous for article 20.

MOTION: Harold F. Eaton To use \$40K from the
Second: Ravi unexpended fund balance
Abstain: Theresa A. Kyle for article 21.

MOTION: Harold F. Eaton To use \$140K from the
Second: Ravi unexpended fund balance
Unanimous for article 22.

Ravi said he would like to group these articles together under a line that says "the following have no tax impact".

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Ravi said there is a work session today at 6:30PM at the Community Center regarding the flooding on Route 286.

Mrs. Kyle commented about a Facebook posting of having fires on the beach. There is to be no fireworks on the beach. She feels there needs to be fines and punishment established.

MOTION: Harold F. Eaton To adjourn the meeting

SELECTMEN'S MEETING

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JANUARY 6, 2025

Second: Ravi
Unanimous

at 12:26PM.

Minutes taken by Kelly J. O'Connor.

Approved and endorsed:

Srinivasan "Ravi" Ravikumar
Clerk

Date: _____