

ITEM 6: To Discuss Other Business

- A. To countersign the Warrants for RSU #9 Budget Referendum on June 14, 2022.

Matthew Smith reviewed the Warrant. No vote was required.

The Selectmen signed nine (9) copies of the Warrant.

- B. Stephan Bunker requested an agenda item for a future Selectboard meeting. He would like the Board to agree upon a review process for the new hire/Town Manager's evaluation. And some decisions on the new Fire Chief selection process.

Town Manager Christian Waller reported, in adherence with past precedent, that the Fire Chief position will be advertised soon. And a hiring committee will be put together to review, score, and evaluate the candidates. Mr. Bunker asked if the FRD Chief position was open to all applications. Mr. Waller confirmed that to remain consistent and follow established past precedents in seeking professional individuals. He certainly thinks promoting from within is fantastic, especially when there are qualified candidates. Mr. Waller stated he has every faith in Interim Chief Hardy. But since the Town advertised for the Police Chiefs position and the Town Manager's position, he feels it is prudent to use this practice to avoid any potential concerns about favoritism. Mr. Bunker acknowledged that he has a bias in this area; he is probably too close to the people involved. He is satisfied with a shorter route but would go by majority rule. Mr. Bunker stated Interim Chief Hardy would compete very well with any applicants. Deputy Chief Clyde Ross remarked that in all fairness, after six months, this has gone on long enough. It had caused a stir within the departments as to how long this would take before a decision was made. He stated he feels it is an injustice to Interim Chief Hardy that something has not come from the Board as to where we were going. This was the first time he heard anything straightforward. Suggestions were made that applications would be accepted from in-house and then, if necessary, would go out and be advertised. He said unless there are specifics within the department that have created chaos or stood out as fault, going out for competitive applications is not necessary. Deputy Chief Ross declared that you have a qualified person in-house. He hopes the Town considers that person before going nationwide because he does not know any specific reason not to go in-house. If there are things that need to be corrected, he would like to hear about them. Chairman Smith reported the last three department heads were hired; this is the system we used. He thinks it is important that we remain consistent. He understands that Interim Chief Hardy is very qualified. We had what we thought was a qualified candidate coming out of the Police Department as well, and for the Highway Department, as it turned out, the Board decided to go in a different direction. Chairman Smith imparted that he feels it is important that we keep the integrity and keep the consistency. Deputy Chief Ross responded that it is to our benefit to take it case by case, and he thinks there are exceptions in every situation that needs to be considered, look at the situation and then make the decision. Dennis O'Neil agreed; he does not feel there is anything wrong with doing an in-house search first for any candidate to give the employees a chance to move up, be motivated, and stay. That there may be some future for them instead of immediately assuming there is some better candidate out there. There is no reason you cannot go out and search if you do not find a qualified in-house candidate. He stated this is not nepotism to do something in-house for qualified, long-term employees. Chairman Smith said he does not see this as nepotism, just following a standard we set a while ago. Captain Bell (former retired FRD Chief) asked if they would first put the position out to in-house employees. Mr. Waller said he was going to put it out to all candidates first and then, based on the candidates, determine which ones will be interviewed. He reiterated he has no issues with Interim Chief Hardy's performance. He has done admirably. Mr. Smith

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reminded everyone that it is the Town Manager's choice, not the Board's; he is in charge of personnel. Captain Bell stated that it is a waste of time and advertising money; you are not going to find a better candidate out there. Unless you are going to pay them a lot more money than what we have in the budget. Interim Chief Hardy is well in tune with the whole State of Maine Fire service, and he is well respected. He is the go-to guy, and we have him here, so let's keep him here because he could go somewhere else. We do not want to go through this again. In all due respect to Mr. Waller and Mr. Smith and the need for consistency, Judith Murphy said. She was totally in favor of what was done with the Police Department; she felt it was necessary. She does not feel like it is okay this time; she supports Clyde's and Terry's opinions. She feels we have the best in-house candidate; we are wasting money, and she does not support this search. John Moore echoed what the others said. He imparted that as a businessman, he works with T.D. Hardy all the time, and he is great to work with; you will not find a better candidate. Mr. Moore said if you are worried about staff morale, especially after the meeting last night (Annual Town Meeting), this is a way to nail this thing down. Make the right decision, appoint him, get it over, and move on. Mr. Moore stated he thought it was a mistake to put the position out for bid. You have a general policy, but exceptions, as has been noted, can be made. Byron Staples asked if there were any legal justifications for not doing it in-house. Mr. Smith said no, that's how Dick (Davis) chose to do it. Scott Landry stated we are going on past precedent. Mr. Scott said he agrees with his fellow citizens. Mr. Waller said he would take that into advisement. Kayla Morgan said she heard a lot of the Board and the community say they want to keep people employed here, which is a frequent issue. People are being hired, and then they are finding a better job or a better paying job, and they are leaving. When you have someone that applies in-house, and for all intents and purposes, they are moving up the ladder, when you reject them after all the grooming you've done with them, all the training you've put them through, for all they've done, they're still not good enough. Do you think that will affect morale overall, and are you worried you will open up more positions in the long run? Mr. Waller said we are not worried we will open up more jobs in the long run. Various factors have been taken into account. Interim Chief Hardy has been kept apprised of the search, which would have taken place much earlier if the budget had not been postponed several times. Mr. Staples asked if the policy was something that the Board could change. Mr. Smith confirmed anything could be changed. Mr. Landry moved to limit the search to in-house. Mr. Smith said that he could not. The Town Manager takes care of personnel; it is his decision, not the Board. Mr. Bell stated that he did not believe there was a policy; it was just something we stuck to. Mr. Smith concurred. Ryan Morgan said he would be afraid that certain individuals passed on before would have a hostile work environment on you if you didn't continue with the policy. Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Morgan for his remarks.

Chairman Smith committed to getting together with Town Manager Waller, and he will get the evaluation started so it can be completed in the next month or so.

- C. Joshua Bell asked Mr. Waller to forward a copy of the Berry Talbot Royer (BTR) contract to the Selectboard. Last night, he wanted to say there was an option in the Treasurer/Town Clerk's budget. He looked at the numbers he calculated that we had a position for...we increased the wage for the Town Clerk, we hired BTR for \$90,000, and the salary for the Treasurer was still in there...if he added it up correctly. He stated that he could be wrong. Mr. Bell concluded he would rather opt out of the BTR contract and see the dollars used towards the employees. And we keep advertising for the Treasurer's position. There are a couple of candidates in town potentially. Mr. Bell said it was previously stated that the Town could cancel the BTR contract.

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Mr. Smith agreed that the BTR contract could be canceled at a cost. Mr. Bell reiterated that it was stated that it could be revoked at any point in time. Mr. Smith said yes, it could be, any contract can be canceled, but it will cost you. Mr. Bell noted no cost was given.

- D. Scott Landry said he wanted to make sure the Town sends a letter to the County Commissioner on the Resolution regarding the non-profits, which was passed at last night's Town Meeting.
- E. Byron Staples spoke directly to the Fire Department members that were present. There was a typo in today's edition of The Daily Bulldog; it said that Byron and Bell recommended reducing the Fire Department's budget by \$119,000. That is not accurate; they recommended a reduction of \$79,000.
- F. Mr. Bunker asked Mr. Staples what the sentiment was behind reducing the FRD budget by \$79,000. Mr. Staples said that he went around and held discussions with multiple department heads. T.D. Hardy mentioned multiple times that even if they received approval to order the fire truck this year, we could not pay for it for 18 months. So, there was \$75,000 in the budget to pay for a fire truck this year. And there was a \$4,000 difference in the health insurance policy. Judith Murphy reported she believed, the original sentiment of the Budget Committee and the Selectboard was to keep the \$75,000 in there even knowing it would be a while before the truck came in because it would be that much less to come up with when it was time to pay for it. Mr. Smith confirmed they had talked about placing the funds in a reserve account if we had to. Mr. Bunker reported the amount necessary to bond would increase later. The Town will need to pay an interest rate on the Bond instead of putting those dollars into a reserve account to reduce the total amount borrowed. That is the difference. We go through this issue every time. How healthy is our reserve when building up in anticipation; how can we avoid long-term debt? It is just a balance. Mr. Bunker said he hopes we can find a truck, and the price hasn't gone up.

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Scott Landry moved to adjourn at 7:52 P.M.; Matthew Smith seconded.**

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5

MOTION CARRIED

Minutes respectfully submitted by Nancy L. Martin.

Byron Staples - Secretary