MECHANIC FALLS TOWN COUNCIL

April 6, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Nancy Richard, Chair

Stephen Bolduc

Cathy Fifield

Lou Annance

Wayne Hackett

**STAFF PRESENT:**

John Hawley – Town Manager

Shirley Marquis – Town Clerk

Lisa Prevost – Finance Director

Jeffrey Goss – Police Chief

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Nick Konstantoulakis – Sanitary District Superintendent

Bonnie Payette – Budget Committee

Oliver Emery – Budget Committee

Mary Martin – School Committee

Tina Meserve – RSU #16 Superintendent

Stuart Davis - MFDC

Win Durgin

Meeting called to order by Nancy Richard at 7:00 pm with all Council present. We stood and saluted the flag.

**Reports:**

**1.01 Council Meeting Minutes** February 9, 2015 **1.02 Municipal Financial Reports 1.03 Departmental Reports Submitted** Cathy Fifield made a motion to accept the reports as submitted. Seconded by Lou Annance. All in favor. So voted.

**Public Comments:**

John explained that Stuart Davis had expressed an interest to address the Council concerning residency requirements to serve on Town boards. Wayne Hackett stated that to live in another Town and vote on business loans, etc. for Mechanic Falls doesn’t seem right. Lou Annance made a motion to table for now. Seconded by Stephen Bolduc. So voted. Stuart Davis has just walked in. Stuart said he did not have much more to say than what’s in his letter to the Council. Stuart did say that over the years, confidentiality has been a major factor. John stated that we don’t have people beating down our doors to serve on these committees. MFDC is a 7 member committee already down 3 people. Lou Annance stated that he wouldn’t be opposed to let him continue to serve, but in future appointments go with the residency issue. Lou made a motion to allow Stuart Davis stay on the MFDC Committee for another 3 year term. Wayne Hackett stated we should look at this issue next month. Lou Annance retracted his motion.

John explained that Mary Martin and Tina Meserve are here to tell the Council where they are in the budget process, go over the tax impact on the Town. Tina stated that they have been building a budget without knowing the Revenue figures. They did have a decrease in Insurance costs; it came in lower than they anticipated. They are waiting to hear about retirement costs that may be

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taken back to the State. They are working on the worst case scenario, which would have a $39. Tax impact for the Town of Mechanic Falls. They are hoping for less than that depending on their revenue figures. They have had a loss of staff of 42 teachers in the last 2 years. They have started doing exit interviews to find out why teachers are leaving. The major issues are better pay and closer to home. Tina is not sure of the percentage of teachers that are residents of the RSU. Wayne Hackett stated that if the 3 Towns could plow their own elementary schools they could handle the high school and save money. If we contract this service, it’s for profit, whereas with the Towns it is at cost.

Mary Martin stated that we have been told we have enough administration personnel; we don’t need a business manager. All the duties of a business manager have fallen to the assistant superintendent. The superintendent deals with education leadership, works more closely with the teachers and the classrooms. Education standards keep changing. They did have a business manager 3 years ago, and have since been trying to manage the job, but its very time consuming.

**Reports of the Town Manager:**

**Old Business:**

**3.01 County Debate**

John explained that there is no movement on either part. They don’t want to deal with this, but they need to otherwise this will come back. Still deadlocked.

**3.02 AVCOG Officers**

John explained that this was the Telephone vote with the slate of officers, which needed to be done before this meeting.

**3.03 Water Rate Increase/PUC Report**

John stated that the PUC has given us permission to go to the rate payers with a new rate increase. Because of the increase of hydrants, our hydrant rental would go down.

**3.04 Homestead Exemptions**

John stated that measure is failing; it will be kept as it is.

**3.05 Plowing for RSU 16**

John said he had talked with Scott today; we need to have all 3 towns charging the same figures. Minot is not interested in doing this. We could still save some money if Poland and Mechanic Falls does this.

**New Business:**

**4.01 Policer cruiser Replacement**

John explained that the Pickup truck replacement was extended 2 years, but the Charger needs to go. John turned the floor over to Jeff Goss. Jeff stated that there is an all-wheel drive police interceptor a Ford Explorer SUV that they have been looking into. Basic price is $27,500.

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Cruisers in 2012 were more than that. On paper the Explorer is much cheaper than the cars. He is asking the Council for support. The Town of Oxford, Scarborough, and Lewiston have one. Currently, we have enough money in the reserve account, we have had good luck with the pickup, but, if the Explorer works out we may go with another explorer instead of another pickup.

**4.02 Transfer Station Fees**

John said we would like to bring the sticker fee back up to $10. It is revenue, a user fee. It’s not a lot of money considering it’s for the year, and also used as a sand sticker. Lou Annance made a motion to increase the transfer station sticker fee to $10.00. Seconded by Stephen Bolduc. All in favor. So voted.

**4.03 Notary Fees**

John explained that we currently charge $2 per notarization for non-residents and -0- for residents. We checked with other surrounding towns and provided a listing to the Council. Cathy Fifield made a motion to charge $5.00 per notarization for non-residents and -0- for residents. Seconded by Wayne Hackett. All in favor. So voted.

**4.04 Budget Discussion**

John stated that the meeting went well. Looking into contracted services. Next year we should have a committee to explore combining services. Bonnie Payette stated that if we have a hugh shortfall next year, we are going to have to have a plan B. The budget committee is asking to have permission to look into shopping around for numbers, Rescue and Police numbers. The Council stated that our Town Manager can ask for those numbers. The Towns people voted to have 24 hour protection. Bonnie stated that we have lost a lot of money from Revenue Sharing. John said this could be the last year for Rescue unless we get more staff.

**4.05 New Property Value**

John stated that part of the Governor’s budget proposal includes transferring two-way telecommunication property taxes to the local communities in which they exist. The State has given us the estimated assessed value of the property in Town. Not sure if this program will happen.

**4.07 Voting Hours 6/2 & 6/9**

There is the RSU Budget vote on 6/2/2015 and the Town Budget & Officials vote on 6/9/2015. Mary stated she would check into combining the two elections for the same date. The hours will be 4 pm to 8 pm, which is fine because absentee ballots will be available. Stephen Bolduc made a motion to set the voting hours on 6/2 & 6/9 for 4 pm to 8 pm. Seconded by Lou Annance. We will advertise having absentee ballots available on the sign out front. All in favor. So voted.

**Executive Session**

Wayne Hackett made a motion to go into Executive Session for a Personnel issue 1 MRSA Section 405 (6) (A). Seconded by Cathy Fifield. All in favor. So voted.

Wayne Hackett made a motion to go into regular session. Seconded by Lou Annance. All in favor. So voted.

Wayne Hackett made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Stephen Bolduc. All in favor. So voted.

Meeting adjourned at 9:11 pm.