

Minutes of the Special Town Board Meeting of the Town of LaFayette held December 11, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the LaFayette Commons Office Building at 2577 Route 11 in the Town of LaFayette with the LaFayette Fire Dept.

Present:	Norman Paul	Dep. Supervisor
	David Knapp	Councilor
	Thomas Bailey	Councilor
	William McConnell	Councilor
	Adrian Shute	Councilor

Absent: Gregory Scammell, Supervisor

Recording Secretary: Mary Jo Kelly, Town Clerk

Others Present: Marcel Jeffrey, LFD
Tom Chartrand, Bookkeeper
Greg Hoxie, LFD
Jack Sutton, LFD
Rhett Harmatuk, LFD
Don Bush, LFD

Deputy Supervisor Paul opened the Special Meeting at 6:03 pm. He said Supervisor Scammell might be here in time for the later part of the meeting but was unable to be here at 6:00. This meeting will be in regard to the budget cut of the LFD budget. He was not part of the negotiation so they will have to address their questions to the Board Members.

Jack Sutton said it started with them coming in to talk to the Town Board about their budget. The next thing they heard was from Councilor McConnell who called him and said they cut the budget \$10,000. He said he had to take this back to the membership. He took it back to the members and since the building was going to be paid off this year, they said they would stick with it. He told Councilor McConnell they agreed to stay with this. Councilor McConnell called him back and said he talked to some of the members who advised the building would be paid off so the Board was cutting the budget more. The membership said no. He told Councilor McConnell this. He then heard from Nunzio Vadala that the budget was approved and it was \$6,000 short. He went back to the Board of Directors at the LFD who advised they couldn't accept this as they are at rock bottom now. He asked if they weren't supposed to be consulted about this.

Councilor McConnell said Jack Sutton is correct about their conversation. At the last Town Board Budget Meeting in October, John Harper had advised him they owed \$28,000 by the end of the year for the building. On the line numbers that were presented to the Town Board it showed a building payment of \$38,000. Since it was going to be paid off for \$28,000 it showed a cut of \$10,000 could be made. Out of the grant that the Town Board got for the LFD, the Town or LFD must pay 5% of it. The Town agreed to pay this up front so it made another decrease of \$6,000. If you put a budget together showing \$38,000 and you only have to pay \$28,000, the Town Board can't approve this.

Jack Sutton would like to know if they should communicate with the Town Board or Councilor McConnell.

Councilor McConnell said since he works on the Service Award Committee with Councilor Knapp, he took it upon himself to keep the communication going between the Town Board and the LFD. The missing link in the communication was not being able to come in and talk about this. When he asked how much they really owed on the building, it took two weeks to get an answer. He was told to communicate with the secretary, treasurer or John Harper.

Jack said John Harper is O.K. to communicate with regarding the Service Award program but nothing else.

Greg Hoxie said the main problem is in communication. He as a Board Member didn't know about the November 9th deadline. He didn't know there should be a representative at the meeting from the LFD at that time. Their issue is that a few of the LFD Board Members heard members saying the budget was shoved down their throat.

Councilor McConnell said he and Jack talked and they went round and round. He told Jack there was a public hearing on November 9th on the budget and they could come and contest this and no one came.

Jack said they don't know if they will make it to March on the budget now. If they have to pay for the Service Award then they should budget for it.

Councilor McConnell said the Town pays for this. The \$6,000 cut was from the difference of what they owed originally from the \$38,000 to the \$28,000. After the LFD gave the Town Board the numbers and the Board was advised the building would be paid off at \$28,000, the Town Board said they could agree to the \$28,000 for this. The Service Award is paid for by the Town. \$6,000 was put back into their budget to pay their share of the grant that was awarded. There is really an additional \$38,000 for the Service Award program and compensation in addition to their working budget.

Marcel said they were told one number that was already cut and they agreed to it. Councilor McConnell then called back knowing their membership only meets once a month. The budget got shoved through before they had another meeting.

Councilor McConnell said the Town Board worked 6 budget sessions and he communicated after two of those. He communicated to Jack and he said the membership said no. Councilor McConnell then advised Jack about the public hearing in November and no one came.

Jack would recommend any further communication between the Town Board and the LFD be in writing.

Councilor McConnell said when the Town Board came back with \$10,000 less, we didn't explain the \$10,000 was from the Capital Reserve.

Jack asked why they cut his fire taxes 10 cents or 12 cents instead of just leaving it to pay for the budget.

Councilor Knapp said this was due to the reval.

Jack said they lowered the fire tax and then cut the LFD budget. They can't live with this.

Councilor Knapp said as far as shoving it down everybody's throat, the Town Board wouldn't be here tonight if they were trying to do this. If the LFD really feels the \$6,000 would be the key to them making it, there may be a way of resolving it.

Greg Hoxie said the \$6,000 to him personally is a drop in the bucket. The November 9th meeting is his concern and that they didn't know about this.

Dep. Supervisor Paul asked if it would help for the supervisor to send them a letter of the budget meeting dates and deadlines.

Councilor McConnell said he takes great pride in working with the LFD on the Service Award Program. Most of his frustration is communication. He thinks there needs to be better communication but there needs to be accountability too. Because of the 5 LFD Members who lost their eligibility this year, there is a surplus. If the money is that critical, this amount could be allotted back into the LFD budget after the first of the year.

Greg Hoxie said his concern is the communication regarding the budget between the Town and the LFD. The \$6,000 is not a critical issue to him.

Councilor McConnell asked who the Service Award representatives from the LFD will be.

Greg said John Harper will be President next year and as soon as they know, he will let the Town Board know.

Councilor McConnell said he received a copy of the letter sent to John Harper about what needs to be done in December for the Service Award Program. It was sent directly to John. There is a list of things that need to be done in December. Penflex has agreed to keep with the timeline so we need to keep with it as well. He has strived along with everyone on the Town Board to communicate. He will spell it out in writing format for the next budget time.

Greg thinks a timeline would be good. He asked for a copy of the letter Councilor McConnell received and Councilor McConnell gave him a copy.

Councilor Bailey said the town is under time constraints by law to get the budget done. The Board can negotiate up to a certain point.

Marcel said this is just unfortunate. This is the first time they have had to come in with something like this since 1945. They provide a valuable service to the town.

Councilor McConnell said he doesn't think anyone underestimates the importance of their service. There is a lot of service on the Town Board side too.

Jack doesn't believe there was a lot of communication. The Town Board and the LFD have sat down over the years. They don't want an increase in their budget unless they need it but when they need it, they need it.

Councilor McConnell doesn't dispute this at all.

Dep. Supervisor Paul asked Councilor Shute if he had anything he would like to say.

Councilor Shute said he agrees with Greg Hoxie. In the end he feels like they felt like the communication wasn't there. From his side, he hasn't been told who to communicate with if he has a specific question or information for them.

Greg Hoxie said he will come up with a list for the Town Board of who to communicate with about certain matters.

Councilor Shute said next year it would help to put a couple of these things in line.

Councilor McConnell said he will get the information to them soon.

Jack thanked the Town Board for considering their request.

Rhett Harmatuk thinks if the LFD could meet with the Town Board over the course of the year, it would be good too. If the Town Board has questions or the LFD has questions they can talk about it. He would recommend meeting in May or June.

The Board was in agreement with this.

Councilor's McConnell moved and Bailey seconded the motion to adjourn the Special Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

The Special Meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jo Kelly
Town Clerk

Adopted 1/2/07