

From: "Kris Blomback - Pats Peak Ski Area" <kris@patspeak.com>
To: "Bruce Trivellini" <molarsolutions@tds.net>, "Tia Hooper" <tiamariamhooper@me.com>, "Benjamin Fortner" <fortner.benjamin@gmail.com>, "dsosgood henniker" <dsosgood.henniker@gmail.com>, bfrench479@comcast.net
Cc: "chris trovato" <chris.trovato@tds.net>, "Secretary" <hennikeradmin@tds.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2016 5:09:12 PM
Subject: RE: procurement Policy

Dr. Trivellini:

Apologies for the delay. Busy time of the year.

Thank you for the comments on your e-mail. Citizen input keeps the democratic process flowing and transparent. You are technically correct that a purchase order was not filled out. Please remember though that policy was instituted, at the Department Head level, to keep the selectboard informed of decisions that were flowing upward through the town flowchart. Since this directive was given by the Selectboard to clean up and remediate the highway yard the Town Administrator, rightfully so, granted authority to the Road Agent to expend resources. This authority was granted with financial circuit breakers so there was accountability. We satisfied concerns as it relates to purchasing and everyone in the chain of command was aware that this project amongst a host of others was underway. The selectboard understood that there was a letter of deficiency from the Army Corp of Engineers, it was a project with moving parts, some of which were easy to quantify and some that were needing quick decisions in the field all with the backdrop of an impending deadline.

I take comfort that throughout the process that we adhered to the purpose/mission statement of the procurement policy. To be clear though, even if there was no policy we would have acted in the best interests of the taxpayers anyway. Common sense dictates so. The procedures that you highlight were adopted by the selectboard years ago (Selectmen Policies-Section III-1) and was directed at the Department Heads:

PURPOSE *The purpose of this Procurement Policy is to obtain goods and services for the Town of Henniker:*

1. *at the lowest possible price consistent with the quality needed*
2. *to exercise financial control over purchases,*
3. *to clearly define authority for the purchasing function,*
4. *to assure the quality of purchases,*
5. *to allow fair and equal opportunity among qualified suppliers*
6. *And to provide for increased public confidence in the procedures followed in public purchasing.*

I am more than 100% confident that we met the intent and purpose of the policy and ALL of its 6 points. Since no aspect of the project reached the bid threshold/policy amount of \$15,000, the Non Major Purchase Procedure kicked in which is in the paragraph below:

NON-MAJOR PURCHASE PROCEDURE *Department Heads shall have authority to purchase goods and services for a value of up to \$3,000.00. These purchases shall be made in a manner concurrent with the intent of this policy. For all non-major purchases over \$3,000.00, it shall be the responsibility of the Department Heads to provide to the Finance Director a standard purchase order form. The Department Head must accompany the purchase order form with at least three quotations or prices and specify the method by which the quotations or prices were obtained. The purchase order shall be presented to the*

Finance Director for review. If the Finance Director recommends the purchase order be paid, he shall sign it and present it to the Town Administrator. By his/her signature, the Town Administrator shall approve or disapprove the purchase order. In the absence of the Town Administrator (in emergency situations), the Finance Director shall approve and sign the purchase order.

While it certainly did not rise to the level of “emergency” there was a spirit of “get er done” as this issue was a simmering one that for one reason or another (Highway building fire, numerous Town Administrators, and highway department turnover, etc.) had fallen to the back burner. The project, while small in the overall scope of town budgeting, required some on the spot decision making. The current chain of events, upon receipt of the letter, is this:

- The board was aware of what needed to be done and that the Army Corp had given us a deadline to get it remedied.
- The selectboard directed the Town Administrator to get it done and she, in turn, gave authority to the Road Agent (with conditions/operating parameters attached) to align and assign resources in the direction of achieving compliance.
- The Road Agent called upon a local excavator contractor who, historically, has consistently billed the town the lowest hourly rates when compared to other contractors in the area.
- The Road Agent also worked with a few other local suppliers who had product readily available to ensure timely delivery and to keep all the other parts of the process moving.

All of the contractors/suppliers that were used in this overall restoration effort were of local nature (McComish Excavating, Michie Corp, Henniker Crushed Stone, and the Henniker Farm & Country Store). All have decades of proven track records, in dealing with town business, of charging competitive rates as well as countless hours of donated time, equipment, and labor for other areas in the town.

Was the letter of the policy followed 100%? Call it 95%
Was the intent of the policy followed? Yes
Was there any adverse impact (\$\$\$\$) on the taxpayer? No.

In closing on this particular issue, while the Army Corp has not issued a letter of compliance yet, we expect that to be arriving in the mail shortly. We take great comfort in the inspector’s words as they ended their review of the site: “We wish all towns did this kind of work.” I extend a hearty “thank you” to the hard work and professionalism of the highway department in getting this project completed. Multiple resources converged on a thorny issue and it was resolved very nicely.

Finally, the board takes its commitment to controlling costs for the town very seriously and if you were to get in the minutia of our meetings about spending money you will find that there is ALWAYS pushback. While I can only speak for myself in answering your letter, I find Ms. Hooper, Mr. French, Mr. Fortner, and Mr. Osgood to all be financial hawks as it relates to the expense of taxpayer dollars. In fact, you personally have witnessed quite a few meetings where spending requests were shot down or curtailed significantly. Our Department Heads work very hard, as some are fellow taxpayers, in keeping their operating budgets down. The board, and by extension the annual meeting of taxpayers, holds these folks accountable. The selectboard is not interested, does not have the capacity, nor the expertise in micro-managing every aspect of the budget. We set targets and Department Heads have to hit them. The financial review process we have in place allows us to review EVERY expenditure and I witness each week, at least, one member of the board calling into question checks that have been cut. The TA will give forth information until the selectboard member is satisfied. The selectboard is vigilant. Regrettably, we can say almost every increase this year in our operating cost is related to

higher health insurance premiums or slight cost of living adjustments in wages. Most all other line items of the budget are flat.

As I am quite confident this letter will be distributed for public consumption the only thing I ask is if any part of this letter is to be highlighted I ask that the ENTIRE letter be included and not cherry picked for lines that may be misconstrued if taken out of context. If I may be of any other service or offer any other new insight please don't hesitate to reach out.

Best Regards,

Kris Blomback
Chairman – Henniker Selectboard