

Final Minutes

Exeter Board of Selectmen

December 2, 2013

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Don Clement called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices building. Other members present were Vice Chairman Dan Chartrand, Selectman Frank Ferraro, Selectwoman Julie Gilman, and Selectman Matt Quandt. Town Manager Russell Dean was also present.

2. Board Interviews – Water/Sewer Advisory Committee

The Board appointed a new member to the Water/Sewer Advisory Committee.

3. Public Comment

Jerry Hamel, trustee for Swasey Parkway, thanked the Heron Group for their donation. He also thanked Exeter Parks and Rec and the Chamber of Commerce for their donations to the Parkway. He thanked all who volunteer at the Parkway as well. He reminded everyone of a bonfire which was being held at the Parkway this weekend.

Don Woodward spoke, saying there were some typos on the draft Town Warrant.

4. Minutes & Proclamations

a. Regular Meeting: November 18, 2013

A Motion was made by Vice Chair Chartrand and seconded by Selectman Quandt to accept the minutes of the November 18, 2013 Board of Selectmen meeting. Motion carried – all in favor.

No proclamations.

5. Appointments

A Motion was made by Vice Chair Chartrand and seconded by Selectman Quandt to formally appoint Richard Huber as an alternate to the NH Coastal Risk and Hazard Committee. Motion carried – all in favor.

5. Discussion/Action Items

a. New Business

I. Great Dam Discussion

Chairman Clement said he would like to see if the majority of the Board could come up with a decision and time frame. He invited comments from the public first. He asked to limit comments to Exeter residents.

Barb Smith, of Bell Street, said she prefers the dam to be stabilized in place. She has long term concerns with the dam being removed.

Eric Warisak, of Court Street, talked about damage people have had to their property because of the dam flooding. He talked about the grant that could pay up to 75% of the dam removal cost, saying the decision to take the dam down has to be done in 2014 though. He thinks they would be doing a disservice to the tax payers to not at least do the paperwork for the grant. He said a lot of people have been affected. He is told there will be water left in the river with the dam removed. He said water quality will be better. The River Committee recommended dam removal. He hopes the BOS will decide to remove it. He said they have a duty to try to get the grant. He said people will not be happy if the money is coming out of their pockets.

Bonnie Flife, of Washington Street, wants the dam to be removed for the health of the river. She said it seems removal wouldn't give maintenance costs and water quality would improve. Fewer people will have to pump out their basements. She hopes the BOS will think of all these factors.

Joe Fisher, of River Street, said he's been flooded four times. The water has been close to his house 30-40 times. He said every time he goes away he has to have someone come check on his house for flooding. He has four sump pumps. Water quality is getting worse. It smells. Fish aren't around. He thinks the dam needs to be removed.

Nelson Lorenzo would like the dam removed. He has talked to neighbors. He thinks the 120 signatures that were submitted to the BOS in favor of applying for the grant should be taken into consideration. He thinks dam removal will have a lot of benefits.

Brian Griset has been working on this for 10 years. In 2004, he found 28 people that had been complaining about flooding and were told it was just weather. He said with the abundance of EEE and West Nile there is now a health issue. He talked about the water quality for the fish. They have to apply for the grant by the end of January 2014. He thinks the most appropriate solution is dam removal.

Nora Arico would like this on the 2014 warrant. She asked about the Bell Ave and Court Street flooding, wondering if it is still an issue.

Paul Vlasich, Town Engineer, said the issue on Bell Ave and Court Street has not been fixed. The culverts on Little River are in poor condition. They are in the process of designing new ones.

Pat Belageron asked what the odor will be like with only puddles if the dam is removed.

Dennis Brady had a question about the culverts, wondering if the dam was removed and the river level dropped would the culverts work better.

Addy Griset said flooding and EEE are two big concerns. The new dam restoration won't be an ugly dam. Embankments are shrinking from weeds. She said they will not be flooded anymore with dam removal. It is better for the community to remove the dam. She said dam removal/restoration is what everyone wants.

Mimi Becker, from the River Study Committee, said there will be a public meeting on December 12. The Climate Adaptation Group will provide information about flooding and such. She said water quality below the dam will not be affected, only above the dam will be improved if dam is removed.

Mike Lampert has talked about dam removal for years. He said they should get excited about this, saying it will be beautiful with it gone.

Brandon Stauber would like it put on the warrant, and would like to apply for the grant.

Lionel Ingram said he tries to make sure no "what ifs" are in the report. He said let's assume the dam stays and then the town will have to go through this again in the future. He would like to see the dam removed.

Barb Smith asked if the grant money is available no matter what happens. She also asked for percentages on flooding.

Mr. Vlasich addressed numerous questions. He said the culverts will still have to be replaced. He said he does not have percentages for flooding but he does have maps. He said if the dam is removed the floods will still happen. It will only reduce flooding to remove it.

Mr. Vlasich went on to say he tried to apply for the NOAA grant last year. There was a report and a timeline had to be figured out. He said he put a schedule together for NOAA last year. He talked about if they receive the NOAA grant it has to be paid off in a short time. He said there is other funding available for all the alternatives.

Selectwoman Gilman had a question on the grant application language. Mr. Vlasich said it does not apply to the letter of deficiency; it's more for if the town is sued they cannot use this money to pay penalties.

Chairman Clement asked the Board if they had made a decision as to which alternative to do, when it should be done, and if they should go forward with the grant.

Vice Chair Chartrand thanked everyone in attendance. He is undecided on what course is best. He is leaning toward dam removal. He has a few questions and concerns including what are the town's obligation to the Exeter Mill? What is the impact of potential removal on the wetlands? Will removal spur a building boom? What is the role of the Great Dam impoundment? Cultural loss if the dam is removed?

Selectman Ferraro thanked the public as well. The only two options to him are dam removal or stabilization. Stabilizing doesn't address the flooding issue or water quality. Removal addresses flooding, water quality, reduces flood plain which could help with property owner's insurance. He said the historic aspect will be gone, but dam removal has many benefits at a lower cost. He is in favor of a vote tonight to remove the dam and put on the warrant for March 2014.

Selectwoman Gilman said she has not made up her mind yet. She said they can still apply for the grant no matter what happens at this BOS meeting. She said the dam is not being used for its purpose, but removing it has some effects on the whole historic district. It will require mitigation which will be an expense. The dam portrays history of the industrial growth of Exeter. The mills would not have last as long without it.

Selectman Quandt said he grew up on the river. His personal preference is to keep the dam, but he needs to look at the town as a whole. He thanked all in attendance. He said he is undecided but taking everything into consideration. He said they need to have everything in line before they tear down the dam. He is not ready to vote on the dam but would like to apply for the grant.

Chairman Clement prefers dam removal. He said it is important to try to move forward in 2014. He is concerned to move forward with the grant without a decision on the dam.

Selectman Ferraro said they should talk about a time frame. Selectwoman Gilman said the application process should start, and they should talk more about dam decisions at the next BOS meeting, waiting until after the CAPE meeting. Selectman Ferraro said they should be

ready to make a decision by the first meeting in January. He asked the BOS to begin preparing the application for the grant.

A Motion was made by Selectman Ferraro and seconded by Selectwoman Gilman to ask the Town Manager to ask the DPW to begin the application for the Hurricane Sandy grant and to have substantial completion by the beginning of January and completed by the end of January. Motion carried – all in favor.

A Motion was made by Selectman Ferraro and seconded by Chairman Clement that the BOS has on the agenda, no later than the first meeting in January, to make some decision on the dam. Motion fails – Gilman, Chartrand and Quandt vote nay.

Selectman Ferraro wanted to make sure there was a mechanism for people to get answers.

Mimi Becker was concerned about the credibility of the town if no decision was made by the BOS by January.

Mr. Warisak said the town has a window of opportunity. He said the BOS are supposed to do good for the town. He said he is a citizen and he is telling them to do something, so they should do their job.

Selectman Quandt said they were ready to make a decision in 2006 but the Dam Bureau stopped them.

A Motion was made by Selectman Quandt and seconded by Selectwoman Gilman to special order the Exeter Historical Society Lease to the next agenda item. Motion carried – all in favor.

IV. Exeter Historical Society Lease – 47 Front Street

Mr. Dean said it is time to review the lease. The new lease will go from January 2014 to January 2019. Lionel Ingram talked about the Historical Society and what were to happen if it went away. He said the lease would go back to the town. Also, there are items in the building that belong to the town. Mr. Dean said there is a letter of agreement to this effect. Mr. Ingram said the Society wants the town to get everything if they disappear. He said there is a separate letter apart from the lease about this. He went on to say the leases always run smoothly. All DPW and town employees are very cooperative. Selectman Quandt said he is comfortable approving the lease. Mr. Dean talked about a slight change on 3 (f) of the lease. Vice Chair Chartrand said he would feel more comfortable if they had a “clean” lease. Chairman Clement said they will wait until they get a cleaned up version then they will sign it.

II. FY14 Budget and Warrant Articles

Chairman Clement talked about the enclosed budget in the packet, saying it is what was approved from the Budget Rec. Committee. Selectman Ferraro said overall he wanted to thank the Budget Rec. Committee for the hours they put in. He was also looking at the 4.4% increase in the general budget. He thought the 2.8% increase last year was too much, so he certainly thinks the 4.4% is too high. He said there needs to be a correction to the vehicles leases numbers.

Selectman Quandt said 4.4% is tough to swallow. Chairman Clement asked if they BOS felt comfortable with the budget. He asked them to think about it. He said everyone feels uncomfortable with the 4.4%, and asked for suggestions on how that can be lowered. He said it could be specific items. If anyone has any thoughts, he asked to get them out there. Selectman Ferraro said he would get his recommendations to Mr. Dean.

Chairman Clement said they have to have a public meeting for the final budget on January 21, 2014. He asked if everyone would feel comfortable to discuss at the next BOS meeting.

III. Draft Town Warrant

Mr. Dean said there are four ordinances discussed by the Planning Board on the 12th. Chairman Clement went through the draft warrant, saying they will make final decisions in January. Mr. Dean said this is a first draft. If anyone has any questions, send him a note.

Don Woodward said on Page 4 Friends Program (formerly RSVP) and RSVP Friends Program are the same so one should be taken out. He also wants to increase COAST fares from \$3.25 to \$4. Selectwoman Gilman said she has no problem with \$4.

Mr. Dean said with respect to the zoning article, one things discussed last year was consolidation of zoning articles for voting.

b. Old Business

i. Fogge Rollins Cemetery Update

Mr. Dean said the town is considering taking Fogge Rollins Cemetery on as a public cemetery. He is talking with town counsel regarding access. He said they are thinking about going through the process to get access in the form of a license. He asked the Board to think about this.

Chairman Clement asked what happens if the property is sold. Mr. Dean said the license will run with the property. Selectwoman Gilman asked if it is just maintenance they have access for. Mr. Dean said it is for anything legal. Selectman Ferraro thinks there should be public access.

7. Regular Business

a. Bid Openings/Surplus Declarations

None.

b. Tax, Water/Sewer Abatements & Exemptions

Selectwoman Gilman said there is an abatement request for 61 Hayes MHP in the amount of \$507.55. The request is due to a leaky toilet. A Motion was made by Selectman Quandt and seconded by Selectman Ferraro to deny the abatement request. Motion carried – all in favor.

There is an abatement request from Leonard Willis of 2 Allen Street, which the Board decided to delay until the next meeting.

Selectwoman Gilman said there is an abatement request for 53 Hampton Road in the amount of \$741.01. The request is due to leaky toilet. A Motion was made by Selectman Ferraro and seconded by Selectwoman Gilman to deny the abatement request. Motion carried – all in favor.

Selectwoman Gilman said there is an abatement request for 44 Hampton Road in the amount of \$800.89. The request is due to an accident in the cellar. A Motion was made by Vice Chair Chartrand and seconded by Selectman Ferraro to approve the sewer portion only in the amount of \$144.31. Motion carried – all in favor.

Selectwoman Gilman said there is an abatement request for 24 Pleasantview Drive in the amount of \$1803.61. The tenants did not advise of a leaky toilet. A Motion was made by Vice Chair Chartrand and seconded by Selectman Ferraro to deny the abatement request. Motion carried – all in favor.

Selectwoman Gilman said there is an abatement request for 1 Heritage Way in the amount of \$712.92. The request is due to a leaky toilet. A Motion was made by Vice Chair Chartrand and seconded by Selectman Ferraro to deny the abatement request. Motion carried – all in favor.

Mr. Dean said there is an abatement request for the Exeter River MHP, map 95, lot 64 for \$35,245 to be applied to the 2013 tax bill, i.e. lot rent in exchange for the tax bill. A Motion was made by Vice Chair Chartrand and seconded by Selectwoman Gilman to approve. Motion carried – all in favor.

c. Permits and Approvals

A Motion was made by Vice Chair Chartrand and seconded by Selectwoman Gilman to approve the application for use of the Town Hall and Tall Hall Stage by Richard Hotalling for an acoustic music performance on January 18, 104 from 2-6 pm. Motion carried – all in favor.

A Motion was made by Selectwoman Gilman and seconded by Selectman Quandt to approve the application for use of Town Hall by Susan Baillanger for a wrapping party on December 17, 2013 from noon – 9. Motion carried – all in favor.

d. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Dean talked about the following:

- Reminder that Portsmouth Avenue project is working towards Walgreens. They still plan on closing up around December 6.
- The Holiday Parade is Saturday, Dec. 7.

e. Legislative Update

None.

f. Selectmen's Committee Reports

Selectman Ferraro had no report.

Vice Chairman Chartrand said he was going to forgo his report due to the late hour.

Selectwoman Gilman reported the Heritage District Comm. met and listened to a proposal on Franklin Street for a house to be demolished. The public hearing is tomorrow (Dec. 3) at 7.

Selectman Quandt had no report.

Chairman Clement had no report.

j. Correspondence

Chairman Clement talked about the following correspondence:

- An email from Brian Fieldsend
- A letter from Maggie Hassan appoint Chief Corneau to the State Advisory Council on Emergency Preparedness and Security
- A letter from New Generations, Inc.
- A letter from Dr. Thomas Oxnard
- A letter from the Southeast Land Trust
- A letter from Anne Edwards

8. Review Board Calendar

Chairman Clement said the next BOS meeting will be December 16, 2013.

A Motion was made by Vice Chair Chartrand and seconded by Selectman Quandt to adjourn the meeting at 9:51 pm. Motion carried – all in favor.

Respectively submitted,

Nicole McCormack
Recording Secretary