

1. Convene the meeting

Chairman Lionel Ingram convened the Board at 7:01PM on the above date in the Nowak Room.

2. Introduce members of the Board of Selectmen

Chairman Ingram introduced the other members present: Joseph Pace, William Campbell, Robert Eastman, Paul Binette and Town Manager Russell Dean.

3. Minutes of November 14, 2005

Mr. Binette moved to accept the minutes of the November 14, 2005 meeting as submitted; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.

4. Proclamation: Human Rights Day

Mr. Binette read the proclamation explaining Human Rights Day being observed on December 10, 2005 as well as the Nobel Peace prize awarded that same date. Defenders of human rights world wide are remembered. Ilse Andrews, Exeter resident, thanked the Board for the acknowledgment and suggested anyone against torture and violence to contact the Amnesty International.

5. Bid award: Splash Pad Design

Chairman Ingram explained the bids were opened on the 30th (due the 28th but no meeting was held) in order to expedite a bid award for this evening, in the presence of the Chairman, Town Manager and Mike Favreau, Parks & Recreation Director. Results were:

Aquatic Recreation Co., Minnetonka, MN	\$52,824.70
O'Brien & Sons, Medfield, MA	\$59,972.50
New England Recreation Group, Westboro, MA	\$37,895.00
Northeast Aquatic Design, Peabody, MA	\$80,000.00

Mr. Favreau was present to recommend awarding to New England Recreation Group. He explained the initial bid of \$37,895 included the design a little on the "light" side so they were contacted to include a substation in order to compare apples to apples. Once submitted at \$43,895, they were still over \$8900 lower. He requested the Board approve the expenditure out of the Revolving Fund in order to move forward with the design specs, State DES approval and bidding the installation – pending passage of the warrant article. He notes approximately \$60,000 should be in the fund at year's end, up from the originally estimated \$35,000.

Mr. Campbell asked if more funds could be used from the Revolving Fund and cut down the amount requested in the warrant article. He noted that prior to warrant articles being set for Town Meeting, a more definite figure in the Fund should be available.

Mr. Eastman moved to award the bid to New England Recreation Group of Westboro, MA for \$43,895 for the design and engineering of the Splash Pad and to authorize the expenditure of \$43,895 from the Revolving Fund; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous.

6. Bid opening: Parks & Recreation Van (surplus)

No bids were received. Mr. Favreau asked permission to seek a salvage company to pick it up as he would like it off the lot prior to snow accumulation. Mr. Binette suggested seeking a charitable organization that picks up autos – lending to their cause and solving our situation also. The Board agreed with that idea. Mr. Favreau to seek names.

7. Meetings with the Board: Nathan Szanton re: Squamscott Block project.

At the November 14th meeting, Mr. Szanton was asked to return to the Board to answer questions relative to the Downtown Growth District designation by the Selectmen, as well as getting feedback from the NH Housing Finance program on the designation. Mr. Szanton and his attorney, Michael Donahue, were present to answer questions.

Mr. Szanton noted Attorney Donahue researched the Board's authority to designate the district and, under RSA 41:8, they have the power to manage the prudential affairs of the Town. He has added that language to his draft 'resolution', as well as noting that the growth district does not commit the Town to any public expenditure. He also reported the NH Housing Finance agreed the "district as written will pass muster" for their program and should allow an extra 10 points toward his project. The only other item for the Board would be a letter of support for the project – this is good for an additional 5 points.

Mr. Binette questioned whether the creation of the 'district' should come under RSA 674:3 II and III for Master Plan preparation and should the Planning Board not be involved? Atty. Donahue noted the process has been through the Planning Board process and noted by the Selectmen adopting this, it will not tread on the Planning Board's power as it exists under the Master Plan.

Mr. Pace noted there are basically 3 branches of Town government: judiciary, legislative and executive. The Board has its set of 'executive orders' (i.e. their policies) and the day-to-day operations function under these. The approval of this request could be under a Selectmen's policy which could set up guidelines for accepting of projects and not impinge on the Zoning/Town meeting.

Sylvia von Aulock, Town Planner, was asked her thoughts. She noted this "district" differs from others, such as the Aquifer District that requires minimum setbacks, acreage, etc. This adopts an area but not a set of regulations required to go along with the area in question, but it is in line with several chapters of the Master Plan whereby it provides a retail component, affordable housing, etc.

Chairman Ingram proposed the following change in wording:

The Board of Selectmen of the Town of Exeter, in accordance with the Town's Master Plan, wishes to encourage growth in Exeter's historic core, centered around the banks of the Squamscott River. In line with this encouragement, the Board of Selectmen hereby designates a Downtown Growth Area as shown on the accompanying map (Exhibit 1). The Town wishes to encourage new construction within this Area which is respectful of and compatible with the historic architecture which is its hallmark.

The intent of this resolution is to:

- *increase the supply of housing in the downtown, providing more customers of the retail shops, offices and entertainment venues;*
- *increase the number of users of the water and sewer infrastructure, so that the fixed costs of those systems may be spread over more users, thus lowering the cost per user;*
- *enhance the ‘walkable’ nature of the Town by putting more people in proximity to downtown public services such as banks, post office and Town offices;*
- *help extend the hours during which the amenities of downtown are used; and*
- *increase the variety of retail offerings in the downtown.*

The Town hereby encourages new construction within this area which is compatible with the Master Plan and existing zoning regulations.

Mr. Pace moved to designate a Downtown Growth Area, as amended, for the purposes of the grant application by The Szanton Company to the New Hampshire Housing Program for tax credits associated with the Squamscott Block project; second by Mr. Eastman.

VOTE: Unanimous.

Mr. Eastman asked who will write the easement language for the warrant article. It will be a collaborative effort between the Town’s attorney and Attorney Donahue. Mr. Campbell asked Mr. Szanton what other towns have received funding. Mr. Szanton noted he has not researched this but is sure some have as there is a policy in place at NH Finance Authority. He will return with this information. He will also draft a letter of support to share with the Board for their consideration.

8. Meetings with the Board: Swasey Parkway Trustees

Jay Perkins, Swasey Trustee, requested the Board’s support for a \$10,000 warrant article for maintenance and upkeep of the Parkway. He explained that traditionally the maintenance of the Parkway has been funding through the Trust Fund. These limited funds no longer provide the adequate maintenance needed, which includes pruning, tree replacement, fertilization, pest/weed control, fence repair or stonewall restoration. The funds basically pay for mowing and clean up. Mr. Ingram noted that if the money is placed in the budget, the money requested each year may vary, depending upon the needs.

Mr. Campbell asked if the money were raised, would the Park then fall under our Parks & Recreation Department or run by the Trustees, similar to that of the Library Trustees. The situation would remain under the Swasey Trustees. It was noted the first year of funding could be placed on the warrant and, if approved, following years be placed in the budget.

Mr. Eastman asked for clarification of “additional work i.e. increased numbers of trees”. Mr. Ingram clarified replacement of trees and work not included in that of general funding. The funding would be handled as ‘maintenance’ and not to run rampant with funds.

Mr. Pace suggested the Town Manager and Trustees develop a warrant article for Board support.

9. Review rates for ambulance service.

Brian Comeau, Fire Chief, stated the Ambulance Charter calls for a yearly review of the ambulance fees relating to costs. He noted anticipated calls for 2005 are 1478 at \$200 each (and no extra for additional services) for an estimated \$295,600 with an 80% collection rate for \$236,480. To date we have collected \$197,392. With 1500 projected ambulance calls in 2006, Chief Comeau stated the proposed ALS rate of \$418.36 would generate \$627,540, with an anticipated 80% collection rate of \$502,032. The proposed ALS One rate would reflect Medicare reimbursement rates and rates paid by private insurers.

Uses of the additional revenue: Offset the ambulance budget to include new ambulances, medical equipment and paramedic education, related payroll expenses for the Office Manager and possibly paying for part of the new engine (this responds to medical aid calls to assist the ambulance when necessary).

Chief Comeau noted the fund is currently not meeting the goal of supporting the costs associated with running the ambulance.

Mr. Eastman suggested not acting now but researching the true costs needed for the ambulance services (actual including benefits, maintenance, supplies, communications, utilities, percentage of payroll for Chief, Secretary, etc.). Mr. Eastman will work with the Chief on preparing a more exact cost comparison and return when the information is available.

10. First reading: Amend Fee Schedule – Appliance stickers.

Due to changes in the market, DPW is requesting an amendment be made to the appliance sticker fee, with a change from \$6 to \$7. This covers the cost of providing disposal for all appliances with Freon. Second reading is next meeting. Mr. Binette asked why the increase now when costs are on the down-swing. The letter from the vendor was sent September 1st for an October 1st start. Information was just received for implementation on the fee schedule.

Chairman Ingram skipped to Item #12 for time restraints of Ms.Perry.

12. Authorize Town Manager to sign water resources grant agreement.

Jennifer Perry, Town Engineer, was present to discuss the grant received to address two areas of water resources within the Town: the Great Dam impoundment and Norris Brook. The grant funds \$23,445 from NH Dept. of Environmental Services and the Town matches \$23,445 of non-federal in-kind services to qualify for grant funding. Ms. Perry noted the Great Dam (\$20,000) provides for a river study; the Norris Brook (\$3,445) will provide a greenway/buffer zone in Swasey Parkway with plantings near the Brook.

Mr. Pace moved the Board of Selectmen accept the grant titled “Exeter Water Resources Improvement Project” and to further authorize the Town Manager to sign the grant agreement to implement the grant; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous. Ms. Perry reminded the Board and residents of the informational meeting this week (Wed.,

12/7) concerning lowering the Exeter and Little Rivers, in the Nowak Room. Also, the next River Study meeting is the 15th.

11. FY06 Recommended Budget

Mr. Dean presented the FY06 operating budget to the Board (text attached). The budget is broken down into operating budget article (including water and sewer), which was reviewed by the Budget Committee in November (except the Building Inspector vehicle) and the warrant article component. The budget presented is consistent with the recommendation of the Budget Committee.

Mr. Dean reported the recommended budget, including water & sewer, is \$16,887,034, a 7.15% increase over FY05, or \$1,126,913 higher. Major increases continue to be fixed costs, representing 29.32% of the total general fund budget (27.05% in FY05) and represent 53.41% of the total budget increase. The largest two components are group health insurance and the debt service due to the Conservation Bond in FY06. The budget also adds a Sergeant to the Police Department, the first full year of the IT budget, two studies in the Fire Department and repair of the wall at the Winter Street cemetery. Increases also include costs for fuel and utility. Mr. Dean then broke down the budget by functions.

Mr. Eastman urged an upgrade to the reporting of the budget, noting the inclusion of GASB in order to receive a favorable audit report. Mr. Dean suggested possible lease/purchase on the upgrade.

While Department Managers were present, Mr. Dean asked the Board if they had any specific questions concerning their departments.

Mr. Campbell asked why two copiers were being purchased at the Town Office in '06, as opposed to one in '06 and one in '07. Both are used at tremendous volume and both are needed (one Finance; one Town Clerk). [Finance is also used by Assessing and is a table top model; the Town Clerk's has excessive volume and when either machine is down, more volume is added to the larger, more extensive machine in the reception area].

Mr. Campbell questioned the additional funds in the Electrical Inspector's salary. Douglas Eastman, Building Inspector, explained there are now 2 extra months of salary due to the requirement to work year 'round in order to be eligible for the benefits offered part-time employees. With the extra 2 months added, Mr. D. Eastman explained he could still increase the hours to cover the volume of work.

Mr. Binette asked about the vehicle proposed for the Building Inspector. He suggested DPW could get a truck with a plow and the Inspector could get the older vehicle now used in the department for transport. He does need a 4-wheel drive vehicle; the Manager will firm this up for the next meeting.

Mr. Pace noted it's fine to take \$5000 here and there from the budget but his concern is there are too many warrant articles and people will vote "no" after reading that many. He suggested items such as the splash pad could be placed in the budget; the Inspector's vehicle for about \$15,000 could be placed in the budget, noting \$25,000 is usually the

threshold that generates a warrant article. He suggests being creative with the budget and decreasing warrant articles – applying the fund balance to some items.

Discussion followed concerning some items. Mr. Dean noted \$10,000 was set aside this year for mosquito control; the '06 estimated amount is \$40,000 but he's trying to work that down and figure where to place the fund – warrant article or budget. Mr. Pace suggested a cooperative venture with the school in spraying.

The Board expressed best wishes for a speedy recovery to Library Director Hope Godino following another knee surgery.

13. Appoint Health Officer and Deputy Health Officer.

Mr. Pace moved to appoint Ken Berkenbush as Health Officer for the Town of Exeter and to appoint Judy Jervis as Deputy Health Officer of the Town of Exeter; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.

14. Town Manager's Report:

- The Board's next meeting is Monday, December 12th at 7PM.
- The Christmas Parade was held this last Saturday and it was his first in which to participate. He thanked all involved – departments, civic groups, volunteers.
- Verizon continues to hang fiber optic cable. Hearings for franchise contracts should begin in January or February.
- Winter parking ban began December 1st and runs through March 15th: no parking on Town streets between 12 and 6PM unless in designated areas.

16. Permits:

- William Campbell is requesting temporary parking in a no parking area on January 1st from 5-10PM on High Street. ***Mr. Pace moved to allow; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: 4-0, with Mr. Campbell excusing himself from the vote.***
- Exeter Day School requested permission for a banner across Water Street for their event on January 21st, with the banner up from January 8 through 21, 2006.
- Exeter Hospital requested permission for a banner across Water Street for their annual Snow Ball on February 4th, with banner up from January 23 through February 4th.
- Rockingham Planning Commission requested use of the Nowak Room for regional meetings from 6:30-10PM on January 22, February 8 and March 8, 2006.
- NH Connections of the Seacoast Region requested the use of the Wheelwright Room for meeting with parents on December 15th from 9-11AM.
- EHS Project Prom/Graduation requested permission for a \$5000 grand prize raffle to be drawn on March 11th, with selling of tickets from December 16 through March 10th, 2006.

- PEA requested permission to block off Elliott Street on December 20th from 6-6:30AM to load buses for students going on a ski trip.

Mr. Pace moved to approve all permits noted; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous.

- Ann Campbell requested permission to place luminaries in the right-of-way on High Street on December 24th from 4PM-6PM, with a snow date of December 31st. ***Mr. Pace moved to approve; second by Mr. Binette. VOTE: 4-0, with Mr. Campbell excusing himself from the vote.***

15. Selectmen's Committee Reports:

- Mr. Pace: Exeter Arts Committee meets Tuesday.
- Mr. Campbell: Water & Sewer Advisory has discontinued discussion on the new water treatment plant facility for the interim and is currently pursuing support for the new water tower on Epping Road.
- Mr. Binette: None, though he concurred with Mr. Dean on the fantastic parade this past weekend.
- Mr. Eastman: Planning Board met and discussed the Squamscott Block project. They will meet again on December 15th though Mr. Ingram will attend as an alternate as Mr. Eastman will be unavailable.
- Mr. Ingram: River informational meeting will be held Wednesday at 6:30PM in the Nowak Room to discuss the river and dam.

17. Public Comments:

Barbara Blenk noted the Chairman of the Christmas Parade Committee passed along his thanks to all who participated and the Town for its involvement.

Mr. Eastman asked if the waterfront clean-up was still being planned for Saturday. This was not confirmed.

Mr. Eastman moved to adjourn; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous. Time: 9:20AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara A. Blenk
Admin. Asst/H. R. Dir.