

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES JANUARY 27, 2003

1. Convene the meeting

Chairman Pace convened the Board at 7:05 PM on the above date and introduced the Board members to the audience. Also present: Paul Binette, Robert Eastman, Lionel Ingram, William Campbell and Town Manager George Olson.

2. Minutes of the Board of Selectmen's meetings of January 13 and 20.

It was moved by Mr. Binette, second by Mr. Campbell to approve the minutes as presented. SO VOTED.

3. Introduction of Firefighter Stevens

Chairman Pace invited Fire Chief Brian Comeau to the mic for the introduction. Chief Comeau in turn invited Paul Stevens, the Town newest firefighter to the mic. Chief Comeau introduced Firefighter Stevens to the Board, explaining his training and experience and welcomed him to Exeter.

4. Use of Buzell Ave. for truck deliveries

Chairman Pace introduced the topic and asked if there was anyone in the audience who wished to address the topic. Mr. David Alan approached the mic indicating that he resides at 92 High St., which is on the corner of Buzell Ave. Mr. Alan asked for the closing of Buzell to commercial traffic. He expressed concern over the danger of commercial vehicles given the number of small children in the neighborhood and the presence of a school bus stop at High and Buzell. He stated that there is no need for trucks to enter the hospital campus from High St. and suggested that coming onto Alumni Drive from Portsmouth Ave. is a better approach.

Mr. Campbell asked Mr. Olson if all roads in Exeter are open for deliveries. Mr. Olson responded that they were. Chairman Pace asked if we prohibit commercial traffic anywhere in Town. Mr. Olson responded in the negative. Mr. Ingram suggested that the easiest solution seemed to be to ask the hospital to help with this matter asking that delivery trucks use Portsmouth Ave. to access the hospital.

Chairman Pace suggested that a letter to the hospital would be in order. Mr. Campbell indicated that he lived near Buzell and that while there was a great deal of car traffic on the road accessing the hospital campus, he did not see a lot of truck traffic.

Michael Lambert approached the mic and stated that it was his experience that a number of hospitals were having large deliveries made to off site locations and that the supplies were subsequently distributed to the hospital itself, based on need, using smaller vehicles.

It was agreed that Mr. Olson would prepare a letter to be sent to the hospital asking for their help in keep delivery trucks off Buzell Ave.

5. Extension of lease with Exeter Sportsman's Club

Chairman Pace asked Mr. Olson to address this matter. Mr. Olson explained that the lease with the Sportsman's Club expired in December 2002 and that the Club was now required by the lease to remove their buildings from the site by December 2003. He went on to express concern that the Club could not use its facilities unless a new lease was prepared. Given the water treatment plant design warrant article before the voters, it was possible that surveyors would be on the property by April, making it impossible for the Club to carry out its activities. However, if the warrant article failed, there was no reason to prohibit the club from using the property. Mr. Olson suggested that a month-to-month lease be prepared to address this issue. It was the consensus of the Board to prepare such a lease. Mr. Olson will bring the lease to the Board once it is ready for signature.

At this point in the meeting Chairman Pace asked the Board to agree to an addition to the agenda to allow for a presentation from Bob Kelly, Chairman of the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee. The Board agreed.

Mr. Kelly came to the mic and explained that he was at the meeting this evening to brief the Board on the past year's work of the Committee to address the issue of water and sewer rates. He reminded the Board that the last significant rate increase was in 1992, with a small adjustment in 1996. The utility has been able to keep rates constant by using its fund balance to fund projects. Unfortunately the fund balance for water and sewer is down to \$1m, as low as it is prudent to go given the potential for unanticipated expenses. Thus a rate increase is necessary in the immediate future. Mr. Kelly referred to an explanation of the situation and the specifics of any rate increases provided to the Board prior to the meeting (attached). Mr. Kelly explained that he would be back before the Board in March with a recommendation for Board action, the specifics depending on Town Meeting vote.

Chairman Pace asked if this means the utility is operating at a deficit. Mr. Kelly responded that that was true. Mr. Eastman asked why so much of the increase proposed in the material was associated with service fees as opposed to usage. Mr. Kelly responded that this change was necessary to bring the formula for rates in line with actual costs. Mr. Binette asked how long the utility could operate without a rate increase, given its current fund balance. Mr. Kelly responded that it is difficult to say since no one knows what the emergencies will be but that it could be less than a year.

Mr. Kelly thanked the Board for its time and indicated that he would be back to request action on a rate increase following Town Meeting in March.

6. Traffic flow in the downtown

Chairman Pace asked Mr. Olson to address this issue. Mr. Olson reminded the Board that a couple of months ago when the traffic pattern was changed back to what it had been the Board expressed interest in addressing the matter again to see if the changes were working. Chairman Pace indicated that as far as he was concerned the traffic patterns was just great. Mr. Eastman expressed no interest in going back to the one-way pattern. Mr. Campbell indicated that the stop sign by the Town Hall seems to be working fine and did not wish to go back to the old one-way system.

Michael Lambert was recognized once again and came to the mic. He stated that he thought the system worked fine but that a little courtesy could be shown by drivers to let through traffic on Water St. pass more easily.

Mr. Eastman expressed some concern with making traffic coming into Town go up Front St to get to Court. Mr. Campbell indicated he goes that way often and his experience was that it might be a little longer than it had been, but not significantly so.

Mr. Ingram asked, and the Board concurred, that Mr. Olson be asked to take a look at the location of crosswalks in the downtown area to see if there are any recommendations for changes as to number and location. Mr. Olson will do so. The Board also expressed an interest in seeing the plan for making the stop signs on Water St., at the Town Hall, permanent.

Mr. Baillargeon was recognized and came to the mic. He stated that he liked the new traffic patterns but would like to see drivers acting more courteously.

7. Implementing the Master Plan – the role of the Selectmen

Chairman Pace asked Mr. Ingram to address this item. Mr. Ingram stated that some of the recommendations contained in the first three chapters of the master plan could only be implemented if the Board takes action. He suggests that Board members review the list of recommendations and decide which require action by the Board. Following this the Board would meet, go over each Selectmen's list and set priorities and act accordingly.

Chairman Pace stated that he sees a value in this and suggested that the Board meet in a work session to undertake the task. Mr. Campbell questioned if it would not be better to await additional chapters being completed. There was agreement not to wait and that a work session would be arranged for February 17th.

8. Appointment of Winterfest Committee

Chairman Pace turned to Mr. Olson who explained that the Town has a history of formalizing committees that undertake activities supportive of the community, noting the Christmas Parade Committee as an example. He went on to recommend the Board formally accept the purpose and membership of the Winterfest Committee.

It was moved by Mr. Eastman, second by Mr. Campbell to accept the Winterfest Committee described as "The group of volunteers whose aim is to create an exciting and unique experience each February with the organization of the Town's Annual Winterfest. They will enlist people of all ages in the preparation and follow-through for the event. Monies are subject to the Town auditor's review." The Committee to be composed of the following members, as read out by Clerk Eastman: Carla Ranks, Wayne Raymond, Kelly McGahie, Diane Gainty, Jan Trueman, Kathleen O'Leary and Robert Spoerl. SO VOTED.

Mr. Eastman asked to speak to an issue prior to Mr. Olson taking up permits. This was agreed to and Mr. Eastman went on to discuss his concerns over materials being printed under the aegis of the Conservation Commission calling for a yes vote on warrant article 12, the \$3M bond issue to acquire an interest in open space. He questioned the legality of the Commission making such a statement

since he does not see the authority for such a statement in the statutes. He sees no legal issue with the material indicating that the Board of Selectmen support passage of the article since that is permitted by statute. Mr. Campbell indicated that he did not see a problem with the statement particularly since the subcommittee of the Conservation Commission that is preparing the mailing was created just for the purpose of promoting passage of the article.

Chairman Pace indicated that since this matter was not on the agenda any action was inappropriate and that it should be discussed as an agenda item at the next meeting. It was agreed that the matter would be placed on the agenda for the February 10 meeting. It was agreed that Mr. Olson would approach the New Hampshire Municipal Association for an opinion on the legality of the statement.

9. Permits

Chairman Pace asked Mr. Olson to address the matter. Mr. Olson read the following permit requests:

The Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce requests to use the Wheelwright Room from 9 until 11 AM on January 30 to hold a meeting of the River Front Project Committee

Project Prom/Project Graduation requests to use the entryway of the Town Hall to store oranges used as a fundraiser on February 13, 14, 16 and 17.

The Head Start Program requests to use the Wheelwright Room from 8:45 until 11:45 AM on March 19, April 16th, May 21 and June 18th to hold its Policy Council Meetings.

Moved by Mr. Binette, second by Mr. Campbell. SO VOTED.

10. Town Manager items

Mr. Olson reminded voters the window of opportunity to file for elected office closes at 5 PM on January 31, the dates of the school, Co-op and Town deliberative sessions, that the next Selectmen's meeting is scheduled for February 10, that the Town's web site was down until Friday the 31st and that February 13th at 4 PM has been set as the time individuals have the opportunity to tape their own comments associated with the warrant articles.

11. Selectmen's Committee reports

Mr. Campbell reported on attending the Planning Board's Visioning session. Mr. Ingram noted his meeting with the Council on Aging and their concern about getting the word out on programs for seniors to the 18% of Exeter's population that is above the age of 65. He also reported that Frank Winterer had been elected chairman of the Town's Safety Committee. Mr. Eastman reported that February 13 will be an important meeting of the Planning Board in that they will hear RiverWoods' plans for expansion and a 175 to 250-unit subdivision off the Watson Rd.

12. Public Comment

Michael Lambert was recognized and came to mic. He requested that the Board invite in the Fire and Police Chiefs to explain to the Board what they see as additional cost in equipment and personnel associated with the planned new High School. He expressed concern over the "hidden" cost of the proposal in terms of municipal investments.

Don Clement, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, came to the mic and stated that it was his understanding that there were 96 lots being proposed off Watson Rd. as of last Saturday. He went on to read from RSA 36, stating that his reading suggests that the Conservation Commission can promote passage of warrant articles. He went on to note both North Hampton and Stratham, involved in a similar effort to raise money for land protection, had committees similar to Exeter a Special Place that prepared material calling for a positive vote on the article.

Chairman Pace explained that the matter will be on the agenda for the 10th and that Mr. Olson would be approaching the NHMA for an opinion on the matter.

There being no other business before the Board it was moved by Mr. Ingram, second by Mr. Eastman, to adjourn. SO VOTED. 8:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,



George N. Olson
Town Manager

:gno

attach.