

1. Convene the meeting.

Chairman Paul Binette convened the meeting at 7:00PM on the above date with the following members present: William Campbell, V-Chairman, Lionel Ingram, Clerk, Robert Eastman, Joseph Pace and Town Manager George Olson.

2. Minutes of the Selectmen's meetings of March 3rd and March 10th.

Mr. Pace moved to waive the reading of the minutes of March 3rd and to accept them as submitted; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous. Mr. Pace moved to waive the reading of the minutes of the March 10th work session and to accept them as submitted; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.

3. Swearing in ceremony.

Town Clerk Linda Hartson was present to swear in those successful candidates from the Town Meeting election. Present: Joseph Pace, Selectman; Michael LaPerle, Swasey Parkway Trustee; Amy-Beth Swiezynski, Trustee of the Trust Funds; Kathy McNeil, School Board; Joanne Murphy, Library Trustee. They took the oath for their respective offices and were congratulated by both Town Clerk Hartson and the Board.

4. Results of preceding Selectmen's work session.

Chairman Binette thanked Mr. Pace for his hard work this past year as Chairman and welcomed him to his second term. He asked Clerk Ingram to read the appointments to various Boards and Committees (attached).

5. Bid opening – District Court sound system.

Only one bid was received for the work at the Town Hall. Williams Communications, Stratham, submitted a bid for \$3500. *Mr. Eastman moved to pass the bid to the Town Manager for review and return with a recommendation and to also speak with the State for payment of the project, as the system is being installed to protect the Court from the noise; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.*

6. Bid award – Personal protective equipment – Fire Department.

Mr. Olson, following review of the bids by the Fire Chief, recommended a divided bid award between Bergeron Associates of Pittsfield, NH and C & S Special, Inc. of Rhode Island (see breakdown attached). *Mr. Campbell moved to accept the bid award as recommended; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.*

7. Water and Sewer rate adjustment.

Mr. Olson noted that following the positive votes at Town Meeting, the process of designing the new water treatment plant and the lease purchase of the replacement sewer vacuum truck may now begin. The Water & Sewer Advisory Committee, at their January 27th meeting with the Board and February 8th presentation at the Deliberative Session, recommended water and sewer rate increases with a

majority of customers having 5/8-inch 'residential'-type connections. An updated fee structure was presented to the Board (attached) for their review prior to the March 31st meeting. Members of the Committee will be present to answer questions prior to passage of new rates.

8. Domestic partner insurance coverage.

The Board discussed the proposal to add a 'Domestic partner rider' to the Town's health and dental insurance coverage at their work session of March 10th. Mr. Olson reviewed that the Board could choose to offer a rider for same sex relationships, opposite sex relationships or both, or not at all.

Mr. Binette asked Mrs. Blenk if she had answers regarding length of time the Board can require a relationship to be in place. Her findings, per the Health Trust, show a minimum of 12 months, with some communities requiring up to a seven-year relationship. If the Board were to approve the rider, a revised agreement with the Health Trust would be devised, probably as early as May 1st.

[Note: Discussion at the work session reviewed tax implications of the employee with the partner, noting contributions for additional premiums would be reported as additional income for the employee and any co-payment for premiums (Town requires 10%+ payment toward JW and JY plans) cannot be pre-tax deductions.) It was also noted that affidavits are required prior to coverage.]

Mr. Pace moved to extend coverage to both domestic partners (same sex and opposite) with a 5-year minimum commitment as of May 1, 2003; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: 3-1.

9. Application for Federal funds – Water Treatment Plant.

Mr. Olson noted the process has begun to seek federal funds in support of construction of the new water treatment plant. DPW Director Noyes prepared a request for funds, requiring the Board's signature, to each of the State's delegation to Congress (copy of one attached). ***Mr. Ingram moved to approve signing the letters to Congressional members; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.***

10. First reading of Selectmen's Policy on religious observances.

Mr. Olson noted a resident had expressed concern over a conflict with a holiday they were celebrating and that of a Town event. Mr. Campbell has provided a list of the many holidays and, as part of a sub-committee to review holiday observances, prepared a draft policy. This policy will allow departments to be aware of observances when preparing events in which residents participate.

Mr. Pace asked why the religion was listed along with the holiday. Mr. Olson it was to assist in understanding which religion was associated with each. He also noted the policy is not intended to cause worry about observances of staff but for those we serve - the residents and encourage participation in town events.

Mr. Campbell noted the 'approximate date' is actually the official date for 2003. Mr. Olson noted we will provide a list each year (when providing dates for the ten holidays the Town observes for its employees). Final reading will be at the next meeting.

11. Permits:

- Phillips Exeter Academy requested a permit to park construction vehicles on Front Street for the purpose of unloading materials and to enter the site during two periods for the renovation of Peabody Hall (March 17-May 19 from 7AM to 5PM and June 9 – August 29 from 7AM to 11PM). The spaces are located between the Academy “arches” and the Historical Society. PEA will be responsible for signage and/or cones and barricades if required. It was noted they are also providing a crossing guard when loading and unloading, for the safety of those utilizing the crosswalk.
- The State Dept. of Safety, Division of Fire Safety & Emergency Management requests use of the Nowak Room on March 26th beginning at 9AM for a “Notice of Interest Meeting” for Federal Snow Emergency declaration resulting from the February 17th & 18th snow storms.
- Donald Foster requested permission for the annual Crop Walk on May 4th from 1-3PM. The route has been approved by the Police Chief.
- Mike Favreau, Parks & Recreation Director, requested permission for a fireworks display at Swasey Parkway on July 19th (in connection with Revolutionary Days) beginning at dusk. An insurance certificate is being prepared. Mr. Campbell asked about the problem with debris left by the company on the Powder House side of the River from last year’s presentation. Mr. Olson noted this has been addressed.
- Randi Moran requested permission for the annual Block Party on Washington Street to Spruce Street on July 19th from 12 noon to 8PM.

The Board approved all requests.

12. Town Manager’s Items:

- Most all boards and committees have openings effective April 30th. Interested residents should send letters to the Board (or complete application located in the Town Report) noting their preference of board. He noted a newly formed committee for Open Space.
- Winter parking ban ended March 15th.
- Spring pick-up is the week of April 7 through 11 and items will be collected on residents’ regular trash day. Any item not in the blue bag requires a sticker for \$2.50. Stickers are available at the Town Office from 8-4:30PM and the Public Works office from 7-3:30. Mr. Eastman asked if the transfer station hours could be extended to Sundays for a short period, as they were in the fall, in order for residents to get their fall leave bags/debris they were unable to deliver to the area in the fall, from their yards. Mr. Olson will check.
- Bids for rubbish and recycling will be opened on March 31st. The contract with Waste Management expires on the 31st and Mr. Olson requested authorization to extend their contract for two months. If they are selected, the contract will continue. If they are not, the two-month extension will allow the new company time to get set up and routes running. The

2-month extension will include a 5% increase. *Mr. Eastman moved the authorize the Town Manager to enter into a 2-month contract extension with Waste Management for the Town's rubbish and recycling collection; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous.*

13. Selectmen's Committee Reports.

Mr. Pace: He thanked all those turning out for the Town Meeting vote and supporting the many items the Board had put forward. He also thanked residents for their support of him. He has a Historic District meeting this Thursday.

Mr. Ingram: None to report but a Safety Committee this Thursday and Council on Aging next week.

Mr. Eastman: Planning Board met Thursday. Tire Warehouse has a conditional approval but must go to the Zoning Board this week.

Mr. Campbell: None.

Mr. Binette: Recreation Advisory Committee the first part of April.

Mr. Binette also thanked residents for their fabulous turnout and for their patience when we ran out of ballots. He also thanked all the members working the polls for so many long hours. A 'thank you' also went to the Board for electing him their new Chairman.

14. Public Comments:

Arthur Baillargeon, asked what the 'sound system at the Town Hall' was for. Mr. Olson noted with the construction of the elevator, with most work taking place in the basement by the cells, it is necessary to provide some sound proofing for the District Court. They will work around some of their busy court days, but other days it is unavoidable. Mr. Baillargeon asked of the Town or the State was paying? Mr. Olson noted it is our project and expenses are built into the fund but he will check with the State per direction from the Board. The State currently pays \$1636.08 per month in rent for the Court.

Mr. Pace moved to adjourn; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous. Time: 7:40AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara A. Blenk
AA/HR

attach.