

1,2. Convene the Regular Meeting; Introduction of Board Members.

Chairman Binette convened the Board at 7:00 PM in the Nowak Room of the Town Office and introduced other members of the Board: Mr. Joe Pace, Mr. William Campbell, Mr. Lionel Ingram, and Mr. Russell Dean, Town Manager.

3. Minutes: July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

***Mr. Pace moved to waive the reading of the minutes of July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006 and accept the minutes as presented; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.***

4. Appointment: Exeter Arts Committee.

***Mr. Pace moved to appoint Donna Dennehy as a full member of the Exeter Arts Committee, term to expire April 30, 2009; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous.***

5. Bid Award: Sluiceway Repair.

Mr. Dean notified the Board that they would be delaying a bid award for the Sluiceway Repair, as circumstances have changed a bit since the bid was sent out and the Town is now looking at options that involve FEMA assistance.

Mr. Kevin Smart, Maintenance Superintendent, explained that the bid sent out was for excavation only, and since that time, FEMA has come into the picture since there was damage due to flooding. The Town is submitting paperwork to FEMA and will put this project on hold until we see what FEMA will reimburse. Mr. Smart is also looking into being able to upgrade to a more permanent solution.

Chairman Binette asked if two weeks would be sufficient time to give an update, since FEMA is known to move rather slowly, and Mr. Smart said to the contrary, FEMA has been quite responsive and he feels two weeks would be adequate time for an update.

6. Review grant application (Belmont & Front Street Pump Station Improvement Project; High Street Sewer System Improvement Project).

Mr. Dean said the Town is seeking approval from the Board of Selectmen to submit a grant to the Department of Environmental Services on two sewer related projects. The Belmont and Front Street Pump Station improvements were completed and paid for by Riverwoods to benefit the Ridge. The High Street project was a Town sponsored project which was shared by Exeter Hospital. If the grants are successful, proceeds from the first project would be returned to the Ridge. The Town would keep the proceeds from the second grant. Authorization would allow us to proceed with these grants.

***Mr. Ingram moved the Board of Selectmen authorize the Department of Public Works to apply for the New Hampshire DES State Aid Grant for Treatment Works for the purpose of offsetting costs related to pump station improvements at Belmont & Front Street, and the High Street Sewer System Improvement Project; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous.***

7. Heritage Commission Appointments.

Mr. Ingram recapped that the original list was larger than the number of positions the Board was able to appoint. Since the last meeting on July 17<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Judy Rowan has submitted a final list and has personally spoken with every one of them, and all applicants were in agreement on the final list.

Mr. Pace wondered if they would stagger the terms, and Mr. Ingram said he did not ask Ms. Rowan to do that.

***Mr. Pace moved the Board of Selectmen make the following appointments to the Heritage Commission:***

***Full Members –***

***Mr. John Merkle, term to expire April 30, 2009***

***Mr. Don Foster, term to expire April 30, 2009***

***Mr. George Dufour, term to expire April 30, 2008***

***Ms. Judy Rowan, term to expire April 30, 2007***

***Mr. Ed Chase, Historic District Commission***

***Representative from the Planning Board***

***Representative from the Board of Selectmen, Mr. Lionel Ingram***

***Alternates –***

***Mr. Tom Barker, term to expire April 30, 2009***

***Ms. Pam Breyer, term to expire April 30, 2009***

***Ms. Mary Dupre, term to expire April 30, 2008***

***Ms. Julie Gilman, term to expire April 30, 2008***

***Mr. Peter Smith, term to expire April 30, 2007***

***Second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous.***

8. 2006 Property Valuation Update.

Mr. Dean explained that it was this time of year that the Board of Selectmen allows the Assessor to move forward on updating the assessed values of property. This process keeps the town assessed values current relative to the real estate market.

The Assessing Clerk did a great job and put information together on the valuation process, as many towns do it differently. This was given to the Board for review prior to the meeting.

Mr. John DeVittori, Assessor, explained that back in June, he wrote a memo to Mr. Dean and the Board of Selectmen telling them it was time to do a reassessment, if the Board chose to do so. Since then, the Assessing Department has gathered statistical data which compares the selling prices to the 2005 assessed values. Presently, Exeter is at 95.5% of market value for 2005. The Board was presented two sheets – one with all towns in SAU 16; the other is a list of comparable towns. Mr. DeVittori explained the details of each sheet and what each figure represented, and he pointed out a few examples to help illustrate where Exeter falls in relation to other towns.

Chairman Binette asked Mr. DeVittori what his plans are. Three years have gone by conducting field inspections on all properties in town. The final third was completed last summer. It was Mr. DeVittori's intention that on the fourth and fifth years, they would upgrade the appraisal package, Vision, which has not been updated since 1997. In addition, he would like to do a reassessment

update and put all new values on the internet for residents to view. It would be the same procedure that has been completed over the past 13 years.

On September 1, the MS-1 is due, so it is imperative that, if the Board allows him to do a reassessment, Mr. DeVittori begin working on this right away. If the Board says no, that is fine, that would mean the 2005 tax base, with added value from building permits issued in the past 6-8 months and also added value from new condominium projects.

Chairman Binette asked if the State of New Hampshire tells us what ratio we should be in, and Mr. DeVittori explained that the appraisal standard is for towns to fall between 90% and 110%. No one wants to be overvalued.

Chairman Binette was happy to see that Exeter is within the State ratio. Mr. Pace thought the property valuation system is completely unfair and thinks the best we can do is try to get as close to 100% as possible. Mr. Pace is fully supportive of allowing the Assessor to update values every year in an attempt to stay as close to 100% as possible.

Mr. Binette asked what year is our big revaluation. Mr. DeVittori said it was this year which is actually our recertification year. Mr. Campbell then asked what year is our *next* revaluation, to which Mr. DeVittori responded it was 2011.

Mr. Campbell agreed with Mr. Pace on annual updates. Mr. Campbell also questioned why we have so many exempt properties. Mr. DeVittori explained that there are a number of churches, lodges, the Hospital, parts of Phillips Exeter Academy, as well as some non-profit organizations, and Exeter just happens to have a lot more exempt properties than other towns.

Mr. DeVittori also pointed out that Exeter has the third largest population of mobile homes in the State of New Hampshire.

Mr. Pace clarified that when compared to other SAU 16 towns, the difference in overall tax rates doesn't impact the amount they pay for the school tax, just that the taxes are allocated differently. He felt it important for residents to understand that.

***Mr. Campbell moved the Board of Selectmen to approve the updating of values for 2006, reflecting market values from April 1, 2005 through March 31, 2006; second by Mr. Ingram.***

Mr. Brian Griset asked Mr. DeVittori if, as part of this process, he will also be doing the depreciation adjustments annually, as he knows it has been skipped. He also wondered if he would be doing zoning changes annually.

Mr. DeVittori said he handles zoning changes after the Town Meeting in March. As for the depreciation schedule, since this is our recertification year, Mr. DeVittori is going to get the new Vision appraisal software package, it will have new tables which will have updated information and will assist in the depreciation process.

***VOTE: Unanimous.***

9. Town Office/Town Hall Project Presentation.

The Town Office/Town Hall working group has been meeting with SMRT, the architectural firm chosen to work on the Town Office/Town Hall Renovation project. On July 27<sup>th</sup>, they reviewed a number of options and discussed the preferred “Option D” which SMRT would like to discuss with the Board.

Mr. Mac Collins, architect and planner for SMRT began the presentation by recapping the options that the Town Office/Town Hall Group had reviewed. The first option, Option A, involved renovating the Town Office alone. The second and third options, Option B and Option C, both involved renovating both the Town Office as well as the Town Hall. The Group evaluated the options and refined them into Option D, which includes a complete renovation to the Town Office, and a number of renovations to the Town Hall. There were two primary items to review – one is the primary cost of the renovations, and the second is the “soft” costs, which included fees for consultants, printing, surveys, inspections, administrative costs, etc.

Mr. Collins explained how SMRT conducted an Initial Conditions study, which was an assessment of the needs of each department and current employees. Next, they interviewed all town departments to determine their needs over the next 10-15 years. They performed a computer-based Code Study, which helped them decide if this building could house these requirements now and in the future.

With all of this information, it was concluded that 14,800 square feet of space would be needed to house all Town Office departments, allowing for future growth. SMRT initially presented six options based on this figure. After analyzing the six options, the Board of Selectmen asked SMRT to focus on an option that involved renovating the Town Office and also the first floor of the Town Hall. The Town Office/Town Hall Group then focused on four options, Options A, B, C, and D. Cost estimates were developed for each option and copies of these proposals were given to the Board prior to the meeting.

Mr. Collins again recapped Options A, B, and C; he then continued to focus on Option D, a plan the committee felt was most worth exploring. As part of this plan, Building, Planning and Code Enforcement moved to the Town Hall. Renovations for the Town Hall would also include updating the HVAC system, making rest rooms more handicap-accessible, as well as correcting some structural issues in the building that need to be addressed. There would be no offices put in the basement of the Town Office in this plan; instead a thorough treatment of the Town Office basement would provide useable storage space and free up quite a bit of space upstairs.

On the first floor, the large offices would be kept in tact. The overall intention is to try to keep things as spacious as we can. This plan does involve an addition on the rear of the building as well.

There are two options for the second floor of the Town Office as well. One has the Assessing Department, Finance, Welfare, and a waiting area on that floor. The second plan has a common waiting area between the finance and assessing department.

With this plan, there would be adequate meeting space, document storage space, interior restrooms for employees, as well as other restrooms accessible from the street.

For this option, rough estimates (based on other similar construction projects and projected supply costs) for renovating the Town Office are \$141 per square foot, which would put the project cost for the Town Office at \$2.4 Million. Soft costs would bring the total building cost to \$3.3 Million. The Town Hall building would cost out at \$1.1 Million, with soft costs increasing it to \$1.5 Million. The projected total cost, in this conceptual stage, is \$4.8 Million for both buildings.

Mr. Collins added one last footnote, explaining that architects have to try to walk the line in situations like this. They do not want to shock people with projected costs, but they also do not want to estimate too low so it has to go to a rebid. Estimates given are conservative, and Mr. Collins agreed it is a lot of money but that is why we're here, to help solve this issue.

Chairman Binette asked if there was any discussion as to where employees relocating to Town Hall would park. Mr. Collins admitted this was not a question that had been brought up by the Town Office/Town Hall Group.

Mr. Campbell did not support relocating the Selectmen's Office. He couldn't agree with bringing it upstairs. Mr. Campbell feels this room needs to be accessible to the public and not out of the way. Also, he questioned the placement of rest rooms only accessible by the Nowak Room. He wondered if meetings were in session, how people would access these. Mr. Campbell was concerned about relocating the IT/Cable TV crew. If technology is upgraded, it would be feasible to have this group farther away. As it stands now, it would be difficult to move them.

One last question Mr. Campbell asked was if the Receptionist area on the first floor would be closed in. Mr. Collins stated that proposed area (currently the Water/Tax Collector Office) would be more open. Mr. Campbell liked that because now sometimes people don't know where to go and the receptionist is at the other end of the building.

Mr. Pace was pleased that the Committee chose to reject taking over part of the second floor of the Town Hall. He felt that would create issues with controlling access to the Art Gallery.

Mr. Campbell asked if we are picking up storage space, would we have moisture issues. Mr. Collins said that basement renovations in this plan included dealing with moisture issues and is included in the cost estimate.

Mr. Pace recalled a previous discussion about holding Board of Selectmen meetings and other events typically held in the Nowak Room in the main floor of the Town Hall instead. Mr. Collins said that it was preferred by the Committee to keep the Nowak Room as the primary meeting space. Mr. Ingram felt if we could make the Town Hall that much more functional, for the money we're spending we should get as much as we can out of it.

Mr. Dean pointed out that one thing discussed was the "thunder" issue for those located in the basement of the Town Hall. Having people walking upstairs is quite audible to those working below. Mr. Ingram felt if we are going to do this once and for all, we should look at the best use for the larger spaces.

Mr. Pace liked Option D best of the ones presented, but he also disliked the idea of moving the Selectmen's office. Mr. Ingram agreed, and he also liked adding a waiting area for the Welfare Office. Chairman Binette also agreed, giving the idea three conceptual approvals, and he thinks the

Selectmen's Office should be across from the Town Manager's Office, making both offices easily accessible to residents.

Ms. Tracey McGrail, Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce, thought it was odd to have two rest rooms on the second floor of the Town Office that are not easily accessible. Mr. Ingram agreed it seems like a bit of overkill on bathrooms. Mr. Ingram thinks it still needs work but conceptually likes Option D.

Mr. Campbell asked if each department was comfortable with the space provided in these plans, and Mr. Collins confirmed they were.

Mr. Campbell also asked about the cost estimates. Due to such a high cost, would it be possible to do the Town Hall one year and then do the Town Office the next year? Mr. Dean said that part of the problem with treating one project as two is that if one passes and the other doesn't, we would run into issues.

All four Selectmen present conceptually agreed with Option D but would like to see some alterations to the current plan. Mr. Dean agreed to have the Town Office/Town Hall Group come back with updated plans for the next meeting.

#### 10. Town Manager's Report.

- Next Board of Selectmen Meeting will be held on August 14, 2006.
- Recently there was a report of arsenic in the wells. This is not a new issue – the federal regulations have recently changed, which triggered a Notice of Violation. Exeter is in the same situation as a number of other New Hampshire towns. We are working with the Department of Environmental Services to resolve these issues.
- Budget season is back. Department Managers are meeting this week to kick off budget season.
- The CIP is coming together well. Mr. Eastman and the Town Planner have put a lot of effort into this and we thank them for their efforts.
- We would like to recognize our departments for their hard work and great job during the American Independence Festival.
- Mr. Dean noted the passing of Andrew Sudduth, Exeter native who recently passed away. Andrew was recognized for his appearance in the 1984 Olympic Games.

#### 18. Permits.

Mr. Dean presented the following for action:

- The Great Bay Youth Orchestra requested to use the Town Hall on November 15<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm for a concert.
- The Exeter Firefighters requested to block off parking spaces around the bandstand on Front Street on August 26<sup>th</sup> (September 2<sup>nd</sup> is the rain date) for their annual MDA Boot Drive.
- Glass Act Window Cleaning requested to put a structure on the sidewalk (ladder and cones) monthly, from 8 am – 9 am or 6 pm – 7 pm to clean 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor windows for various residences on Water St.
- The Chocolatier requested to block off parking spaces for a dumpster while they re-roof the building. They requested to have this from August 1 – 18, depending on weather conditions (they should finish much sooner). Mr. Doug Eastman, Building Inspector, waived the noise

ordinance Mr. Neal Jones, Parking Enforcer, requested that when they are stripping the front edges on the street side, that they do it between 5 am – 8 am and the sidewalk must be blocked for pedestrian traffic. Ms. Tracey McGrail, Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce, asked the Board to restrict the dumpster from being placed in front of 11 Water Street, as a dumpster was already placed there after the hail storm which impacted business for 11 Water St. The Board agreed to this condition.

***Mr. Pace moved to approve all permits as advised; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.***

19. Selectmen's Committee Reports.

Mr. Pace Cable TV Committee will be meeting on Wednesday.

Mr. Campbell: Nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Ingram: River Committee continues to discuss issues with the River. They discussed getting a survey out to homeowners on recent flood issues.

Mr. Binette: Nothing to report at this time but he had a question for Mr. Dean. He wanted to verify that extended hours at the Transfer Station were over and that we had notified residents that was the case. Mr. Dean confirmed that we had been conveying that message to residents.

Public Comments: None.

***Mr. Pace made a motion to move to non-public session under RSA 91:A to discuss a personnel issue; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous. Time: 9:05 PM.***

Mr. Pace did roll call. Mr. Ingram – Yes. Mr. Campbell – Yes. Mr. Pace – Yes. Chairman Binette – Yes. The Board then moved to non-public session.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie A Lund  
AA/HR Director