

3, 4. Reconvene Regular Meeting, Introduce Members of Board of Selectmen.

Chairman Binette convened the Board at 7:04 PM in the Nowak Room of the Town Office and introduced other members of the Board: Mr. Lionel Ingram, Mr. Bob Eastman, Mr. Joe Pace, Mr. Bill Campbell and Mr. Russell Dean, Town Manager.

Before the Board began addressing agenda items, they acknowledged the successes of some of the fall sports teams at Exeter High School. First they recognized the Girls Field Hockey Team, which made it to the State Finals, and next they recognized the Varsity Football Team, who also made it to the State Finals.

Next, they brought in the Girls Varsity Soccer Team and their coaches. 19 members of the Soccer Team entered the Nowak Room and stood behind the Board, and they went through and introduced themselves. Chairman Binette stated this was the first time since 1979 that the Girls Soccer Team won the State Championship.

Finally, they brought in the Boys Varsity Soccer Team and their coaches, who also stood behind the Board and had introductions. Chairman Binette recognized Coach Tufts who has coached both hockey and soccer for over 30 years. This is his fourth State Championship.

5. Minutes: November 13th, 2006.

Mr. Pace moved to waive the reading of the minutes of November 13th, 2006 and accept the minutes as presented; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.

6. Bid Opening: River Pump Station.

Two bids were received for the river pump station. The first bid was received from Comeau Services of Groveland, MA in the amount of \$3,850.00. The second bid was received from Waterline Industries Corporation of Seabrook, NH in the amount of \$4,885.00.

Mr. Pace moved the Board of Selectmen return these bids to the appropriate departments for review and to make a recommendation; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous.

7. Bid Award: Copier System, Town Office Building 2006.

Mr. Dean recapped that a bid opening was held on October 30th for replacement of copiers in the Town Clerk's office as well as the Finance Office. The appropriation was approved as part of the FY 06 budget. The town clerk is recommending to award the bid to Imagistics, which has a 90 day warranty, comes with all supplies, and has a guarantee for 4-hour response time, in the amount of \$4,610.00.

Mr. Campbell asked if any investigation had been done to see if money could be saved by buying from the same company. Mr. Sheehy noted that requirement was not included in the bid and it had not been discussed. Mr. Campbell felt this was something that should be looked at in the future. Mr.

Campbell also asked why we're paying more than the actual bid price, and Mr. Sheehy explained that it was the cost of the two items (copier and service contract) combined.

Mr. Ingram noted that the lowest bid for the Town Clerk's office was from Northern Business Machines. He agrees to go along with the recommendation from the people who use the equipment but thinks in the future, it should go out to bid as a package. Chairman Binette added that the 90 day warranty seemed sure; Mr. Sheehy said a 90 day warranty was typical.

Mr. Eastman moved the Board of Selectmen approve the award of bid for the Town Clerk office copier replacement to Imagistics in the amount of \$4,610.00 and also move the Board of Selectmen approve the award of bid for the finance office copier to Northern Business Machines in the amount of \$3,545.00; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous.

8. Excavation Permit Requests.

Mr. Dean stated that two contractors have asked to address the Board to petition for excavation permits this evening. The first is for this the Squamscott Block Project; the second request is from a contractor wishing to do work on Linden Street. Work done after the fifteenth of November requires Board approval per Town Ordinances.

Mr. Peter Shibelhute, contractor for the Squamscott Block Project, requested to open the road on Water Street. He explained there is a catch basin that he needs to tie into. The entire drainage system works off this connection, and in order to have proper drainage through the winter, he needs to connect to this culvert. Due to scheduling problems work has been delayed. He has contacted three asphalt plants and they have confirmed that they will be open so he can get asphalt to repave the road. He said he plans to do work on Tuesday of next week and anticipates the project will take one day.

Mr. Pace asked if the work would be done on Water Street or Front Street, and Mr. Shibelhute confirmed it was Water Street. Chairman Binette asked Chief Kane if he expected this to cause traffic issues, and Chief Kane did not foresee this to be an issue.

Mr. Campbell moved the Board of Selectmen approve the excavation permit request for Schibelhute Construction for the Squamscott Block project; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.

Mr. Chad Connors from Connors Excavating then requested to open the road on Linden Street. He explained that they began excavation on November 1st in order to connect the water and sewer lines for two new homes that were built. Rain earlier this month delayed their plans, and they are prepared to move forward with this work as soon as possible, if approved. Mr. Connors expects it will take one day for the water lines and one day for the sewer lines. He said he has spoken with the police and they are satisfied with their plan. He added he, too, has spoken with various asphalt plants and they have told him they will be open.

Mr. Campbell moved the Board of Selectmen approve the excavation permit request for Connor Excavating; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.

9. Request for Deer Crossing Sign – High Street.

Mr. Campbell excused himself from this discussion since he lives in the area in question.

Mr. Dean stated that residents from High Street are making a request of the Board to install a Deer Crossing sign near the corner of Rocky Hill and High Street. A number of deer have been displaced since Exeter Hospital was built, and recently there was an accident in this area.

Chairman Binette asked Chief Kane if this has been a problem, and Chief Kane stated that this corner has always been a problem with deer crossing the road. Mr. Ingram added that he drove by shortly after the accident and was surprised to see the deer so close to the downtown area.

Mr. George Cowan of 118 High Street said that last year the police had to euthanize a deer that had been struck in front of his house. He said this is the natural path of the deer going from Waterford Pond to the river. Recently he's seen more deer there than usual, and they have even seen a moose in that area. There have been a number of close calls, and he feels the sign would make drivers more alter and cautious while driving through the area.

Mr. Ingram moved the Board of Selectmen approve the installation of a deer crossing sign on High Street, with an exact location to be decided by others; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.

10. First Reading: Parking Ordinance Change.

Mr. Dean said the changes affect two sections of the Parking Ordinances. In section 103.2, the change would require deleting the entire section. In section 103.4, it would remove Front Street, Grove Court, Lincoln Street, Nelson Drive and Pine Street.

This recommendation would keep parking regulations on Gill Street and Linden Street status quo for now. Although there have been requests regarding Gill Street, Chief Kane and Mr. Dean believe it would be more appropriate to discuss down the line once there is more information about what will be done with the old high school.

There will be two future reading on this recommendation at future meetings.

11. Authorize Town Manager to Accept State Grant for Sewage Treatment Works.

Every year, the Town receives grant funds to offset sewer projects. They have several projects from the State and Mr. Dean needs the Board to authorize him to signatures on these funds.

Mr. Campbell moved the Board of Selectmen authorize the Town Manager to sign the grant agreements relating to the 2006 DES State Sewer Installation Grants under RSA 786; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.

12. Arts Committee Request to Expend Unanticipated Revenue.

Mr. Dean explained that earlier in the year, the Town received a check from the State of NH to the Arts Committee for a claim on abandoned property, in the amount of \$4,290. Since this revenue was unanticipated, the Board's approval is required to release these funds so the Arts Committee can use them

Ms. Francesca Fay, Chairman of the Arts Committee, was present to inform the Board how the Committee intended to use these funds. She emphasized that these funds would not cover everything, but it will at least allow them to get a started. Ms. Fay read a list of items from the Committee, which included pedestals to display art, an air conditioner, and other supplies, among other things.

Ms. Fay also asked the Board if the Arts Committee would be allowed to charge admission to shows or charge a percentage fee for art sold. She wondered what options they had to help the Committee raise funds. Mr. Dean said that if they charged fees, the revenue would go towards the General Fund. Mr. Dean thought if they wanted to use it specifically for their programs, they would need to increase the amount appropriated to the Committee in the budget.

Mr. Ingram inquired about setting up a revolving fund for the Arts Committee. Mr. Eastman clarified that you cannot establish a revolving fund for a town committee; there are specific statutes that can establish revolving funds for various departments, for example, the Recreation Department.

Ms. Rose Bryant, member of the Arts Committee, asked how large of a petty cash fund they could have, since they were level-funded by the Budget Recommendations Committee. Mr. Dean said if they showed the income on the balance sheet, then they could adjust the amount appropriated to them in the budget, based on that projection. For example, if next year the Arts Committee showed that they brought in \$1,000 in revenue, their appropriation in the budget could be adjusted by that amount.

Mr. Campbell moved the Board of Selectmen authorize the Arts Committee to spend up to \$4,290 in unanticipated revenue received from the State of New Hampshire in 2006; second by Mr. Pace.

Mr. Ingram thought that some of the items mentioned may be covered by the Town Hall Renovation project. He felt it was important that the Arts Committee understand that some of the items they have identified may be addressed with these renovations. Mr. Pace added that in the past, these things have always been done with Mr. Kevin Smart's (Maintenance Superintendent) coordination. He feels some of the items they listed are the Town's responsibility and should be coordinated with Maintenance to be included in the Town's budget. Mr. Ingram suggested if she can't get this money included this year, that the Arts Committee attempt to get it in for next year.

VOTE: Unanimous.

Mr. Eastman added that he felt they needed to do more research as to whether or not the Arts Committee would legally be allowed to charge admission. He thought it made sense, but he needs to do more research as to whether it is legal or not.

13. FY07 Operating Budget & CIP.

Mr. Dean brought the public up-to-date on the budget process. The Budget Recommendations process completed a couple weeks ago, and the final figures have been forwarded to the Board of Selectmen. Now is the time to answer any lingering questions that the Board may still have. Mr. Dean also thought this would be a good time to discuss the Downtown Restoration Project.

Mr. Don Briseldon was present and began the presentation on the project. He reviewed that in March, 2005, a Warrant Article for the downtown restoration was defeated. The committee listened

to feedback that the price tag for that project was too high, so this time they worked diligently to address those issues. He pointed out that a major reason the cost was so high on the project as it was proposed in the past was because they had proposed burying all of the utility lines in the downtown area. This time, they are proposing putting all of the utility lines behind the buildings, which would save a tremendous amount of money.

Mr. Briseldon asked the Board to support Phase I of this Downtown Restoration Project, which would cost \$90,000 in 2007 for design and engineering costs. Construction would then be in 2008 for \$888,300, and Mr. Briseldon read a list of items included in this cost.

In mid-November, the committee had a public meeting and gained additional ideas from those who attended this meeting. They further discussed the details of this new project, which includes additional green space, the impact on parking, new lighting, etc.

Mr. Arthur Baillargeon expressed his concern for the diagonal parking in the middle of Front Street. Mr. Ruben Hall, contractor working on the project, said the project is still in a conceptual phase. The idea is to retain as much parking as possible. The group thought that if some of the surrounding streets were restriped, it would allow them to recover some of the parking spaces. Part of the engineering costs would be for a detailed survey to help better address some of these specific concerns.

Mr. Briseldon said one goal was to maximize the amount of parking, and this plan as presented would only eliminate 3 spaces. Mr. Eastman said he liked the plan and was not concerned if it was only three parking spots that would be lost.

Chairman Binette asked for clarification that this would be two separate Warrant Articles, and Mr. Briseldon verified that was correct.

Mr. Brian Griset approached the microphone and stated he was told this would not be a public hearing on the budget. He asked to view supporting documentation for the budget and the CIP. Mr. Dean said the purpose of this initial review was to highlight areas of the budget that the Board was concerned with so that the Department Managers could address these in the official discussion. Mr. Eastman added that it was his understanding that this meeting was to address items that may require bonding.

Mr. Dean then moved on to the Town Office/Town Hall Renovation Project. He reviewed that the Budget Recommendations Committee did not recommend the project as submitted by SMRT. SMRT has not done anything further with the plans, as they are waiting for the Board to have a chance to discuss the topic and give Mr. Dean direction.

Mr. Pace said their initial idea was to renovate the Town Office building and also the lower level of the Town Hall. At the Budget Recommendations Committee meeting, Mr. Gerry Hamel brought forth some additional ideas which included using the entire Town Hall to house departments. Chairman Binette asked the Board where they felt the Town should go from here. If the Board is supportive of the plan as it is, they can continue moving forward.

Mr. Gerry Hamel was present and stated there were two ideas presented during the budget process. One is for a complete renovation of the Town Hall, and he acknowledges that this is a touchy subject

as this is a major public meeting space. He also noted that there has been talk of moving elections to another building. Mr. Hamel believes there is a great deal of unused space at the Town Hall, and the Town has already put so much money into that space. His idea would be to split the main area into two separate floors, which would give us enough square footage to house what the various departments needed, all in one building. He thought the Town could gain revenue by renting the Town Office space, and this way the Town could still utilize the Nowak Room for televised meetings. The bottom line was that the Budget Recommendations Committee did not feel the Town would be getting their money's worth for the amount of money it would cost.

Mr. Jay Childs, another member of the Budget Recommendations Committee, added that the overall feeling of the Board was not against the concept, but felt the plan was underwhelming based on the cost. He clarified that the Committee was not against spending that amount of money, but they thought there were other methods that were not explored.

Mr. Campbell felt that Mr. Hamel has done a lot of thinking on this subject and he appreciates his attempt to get the best 'bang for the buck.' He felt personally that he needed to warm up to the idea of losing the Town Hall's meeting space. Mr. Campbell thought it would be helpful to get additional opinions on this. Mr. Pace felt Mr. Hamel's idea made sense and it's hard to refute, but acknowledged it's a difficult discussion because it's such a great historical space and there's a value associated with that. He felt it will certainly cause controversy but he's not sure how it would actually shake out.

Mr. Hamel agreed, being a native of Exeter, that it would be a difficult change but he said the exterior would not be changed and he feels a lot that can be done, and done right, to make it work.

Chairman Binette asked Mr. Hamel if he felt the Town Hall structure would be able to withhold a renovation such as he's suggesting. Mr. Hamel thought it could easily withstand it, as the building is just as sound as the Town Office, except there are more options by renovating the Town Hall. He reminded everyone that the Town Office is an old vault, which really restricts your options of renovating.

Chairman Binette then asked Mr. Hamel what his thoughts were on putting out a survey to residents to get their opinion on this idea. Mr. Hamel thought that's exactly what they need. He felt there is a good mix of people who would see it as practical, and there are also those who look at the Town Hall as more of a sentimental place. Mr. Childs agreed the survey would be a reasonable approach to help them have a better gauge on which direction the Town should go.

Mr. Hamel added that he also thought they needed to be practical. He doesn't think it makes sense to table the project for another year, since it has already been on the table for so long. Mr. Childs felt the employees working in the Town Office deserve to have something done. Mr. Griset came forward and also presented an idea which mirrors what they did in San Francisco, which was to use glass cubicle walls to preserve the internal historic features at a much lower cost.

Mr. Pace felt there are a number of ideas, and he worried that having people choose on or the other may not be the right method either. If someone answered they do not want to change the Town Hall and the Town decides to go with that plan regardless, it could cause even more controversy.

Mr. Ingram believed when the Board made the decision to explore options, they did not look at it from various perspectives. He feels if they try to push it for the 2007 Warrant, they will botch it. He agrees that he would like to do something for the employees in this building, but thinks the Budget Recommendations Committee threw a monkey wrench in their plans, but he believes it is a good monkey wrench. Mr. Childs felt they should take 2007 to work on developing a sound, viable Warrant Article for 2008 that will finally resolve this issue and provide a long-term solution for Town departments. Chairman Binette agreed and thought the Town is spending too much money on studies and surveys, and they need to develop a solid plan that the voters will approve.

Mr. Campbell voiced his concern that reasons keep arising for them to continue to put this project off. Mr. Ingram thought that when they initially put the project together, it was based on five people's opinions. Now that it's been opened up to others, they came up with other good solutions as well; solutions that haven't been presented in the past. He believes they need to further discuss alternative ideas and get resident feedback and input in order to create a realistic, long-term solution.

Mr. Arthur Baillargeon said there is a lot of sentimental value across the street and he feels he does not have enough information to make a decision if they should use the Town Hall in this fashion.

Mr. Dean said they did not look at the situation from all angles, and one thing that complicates the situation is that it involves two separate buildings. Mr. Eastman was happy that they are not moving forward with the plan as it was presented because he was not personally satisfied with the plan as it is. Mr. Eastman believes there should be two Warrant Articles – one asking the voters to recommend keeping the Town Offices downtown or not, and the second to create a Building Committee comprised of a group of residents to evaluate options. Currently the Committee is made up of all Town employees who all have their specific concerns with what they need.

Mr. Campbell also felt they should ask if residents approved of using the interior of the Town Hall for office space. Mr. Pace was concerned about asking people to vote one way or another and then the Town being “wrong” if they decide to go in another direction. Mr. Ingram agreed and felt they should let the committee run with it and decide on their own how they would like to receive feedback on the topic, whether by public hearing, a survey, etc. This will give them the ability to think widely to come up with various ideas without restricting them from the get-go.

Mr. Baillargeon questioned how often the Town Hall is actually used, and Mr. Dean said they did not have a specific number off-hand but they can find out this figure for him.

Chairman Binette said it felt like the consensus of the Board was to postpone the project, form a committee to evaluate options, and get updates on where things stand. All members of the Board were in agreement.

14. Town Manager's Report.

- Next Board of Selectmen Meeting will be held on December 11th and is the last scheduled meeting of the year. December 18th is open should there be items that need addressing before the end of the year.
- A couple personnel items to report:
 - Congratulations to Jim Boland, Water Treatment Operator, who celebrated his 25th anniversary on November 23rd

- Congratulations also to Ryan Venno, who was named Officer of the Quarter
- Finally, congrats go out to Officer Nathan Liebenow who graduated from Police Academy on November 17th
- The overnight parking ban takes effect on December 1st
- There was an error on a portion of the tax bills. The due date for taxes is Monday, December 11th, not Friday, December 1st.
- The Christmas Parade is scheduled for Saturday, December 2nd
- The Festival of Trees will be held on Thursday, November 30th at the Town Hall

15. Elderly Exemptions.

This has been postponed until the next meeting.

16. Permits.

Mr. Dean presented the following for action:

- The Exeter Holiday Parade Committee requested to use the Bandstand (with an amplifier, microphone and speakers) on December 1, 2007 (rain date December 2, 2007) for music during the Christmas Parade
- The Exeter Holiday Parade Committee requested to block off 4 parking spaces near the bandstand on December 01, 2007 from 2:30 PM until the end of the Christmas parade.
- The Exeter holiday parade committee requested to have a parade on December 01, 2007 from 4:30 PM until completion.
- The Great Bay Youth Orchestra requested to use the Town Hall Main Floor with stage use on March 28, 2007 from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM for youth orchestra concert.
- The Exeter high school chorus requested to use the town hall main floor on January 20, 2007 from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM for chorus fundraiser.
- The residents of High Street requested permission to place luminaries in the right of way along High Street from the Great Bridge to Windermere Drive on December 24, 2006.
- The Christmas parade committee requested to use the wheelwright room on November 27, 28th and 29th from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM for parade planning meetings.

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

17. Selectmen's Committee Reports.

Mr. Ingram: The Safety Committee met and discussed procedures for building inspections and also the idea of having the Safety Committee oversee the Town's health and wellness programs.

Mr. Eastman: Nothing to report at this time, but he did mention he received a call regarding students being dropped off on Old Town Farm Road, near the High School. He's not sure how to address this but would recommend the Town Manager write a letter to the School Department to adopt a policy saying students must be dropped off at the front door.

Mr. Pace: Nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Campbell: The Conservation Commission met on the 14th and reviewed the development behind McDonald's. The Planning Board met on the 16th and discussed an office building on the corner of High Street and Holland Way.

Mr. Binette: Nothing to report at this time.

18. Public Comments: None.

19. Adjourn.

Mr. Eastman made a motion to adjourn; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous. Time: 9:5k3 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie A Lund
AA/HR Director