

DRAFT MINUTES

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

MINUTES

December 8, 2008

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Joe Pace convened the meeting in the Nowak Room at the Town Offices at 7:00 pm and introduced other members of the Board: Mr. William Campbell, Ms. Julie Gilman, Mr. Matt Quandt and Town Manager, Russ Dean.

- 2. Public Comment** – Peter Francis asked the Board to include a paragraph in the Sportsmen's Club lease about the sound. For Veterans of War, it is a serious issue and with the hospital near by the sound needs to be addressed. Mr. Pace explained about the up coming public hearing with the Sportsmen's Club and that the Board will need to vote on the final decision of the hearing.

Rita Benjamin spoke of the Sportsmen's Club. She said that they have nothing to offer the Town and that they are asking for a "free lease" and are acting immature about the issue. She asked the board to keep the Town's best interests in mind.

Jay Childs came before the Board to express his concern. He understands the Club's need for the lease but does not want a lawsuit. He has no problem with the Club being used for sport use or training and does not want the Board to get backed into a corner to sign something that is not in the Town's best interest.

Eileen Flockhart expressed her concern for the tax payers and the Sportsmen's Club. She wondered about the Club's tax abatement when there are people in town struggling. She asked if it could be verified that the Sportsmen's Club is a non-profit group.

Susan Hampton asked about the clean up at the Club that tax payers would end up paying for. She also spoke about inconsiderate 6:00 am wake ups on Sunday from the noise at the club and said that they are not always good neighbors. She asked the Board to look out for the people of Exeter and consider the Town as a whole. Mr. Pace stated that if they reach a tentative lease it will be voted on during the public hearing at the work session this Wednesday at 5:30 pm. He understands what he needs to do. He will give every option to be fair and mutually beneficial.

3. Minutes & Proclamations

- a. Minutes of December 1st, 2008

Ms. Gilman asked that the map and lot numbers be put on the tax abatements and exemptions.

Mr. Campbell moved to waive the reading of the December 1st, 2008 minutes and accept them as amended; Ms. Gilman seconded. VOTE: Unanimous.

Proclamations - Ms. Gilman read the proclamation of International Human Rights Day, December 10, 2008.

4. Appointments - none

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5. Discussion / Action Items

a. FY09 Budget/Default Budget Review and Warrant Articles

Mr. Dean spoke about his recommended changes in the FY09 budget. The first change he spoke about was reducing the paving budget. Jennifer Perry, Director of Public Works, was in attendance to give a synopsis about the paving budget. She stated that they have accommodated for the increasing process. Town roads are one of the most important assets and it is not possible to consider them deferrable. The original request for paving was \$630,000. Mr. Pace said that he would like the overall budget to be lower but it would not do the Town service to drop to the default budget. Jay Childs, a DPW Budget subcommittee member, spoke of the budget. He said that there have been a lot of suggestions. They have cut money where they could. Paving has been brought up year after year. You can't just add another layer of pavement because it will just need to be dug up costing even more money. Mr. Quant asked what the big projects were for paving. Jay Perkins answered his question by talking about the paving program. The arterial roads come first and every street in Town as a whole. There is a lot that goes into a good paving program. Ms. Gilman noted that the Budget Committee went thoroughly through each line item. They swapped and traded for priority items and she agreed with their recommendations. Mr. Campbell talked about the out of state travel and the police cars in the budget. He is concerned about the police cars because the Budget Committee recommended taking out both cars. Mr. Campbell would like one to be put back into the budget. He would like to come back with \$500,000 for paving. Ms. Gilman backed Mr. Campbell on the \$500,000 for paving. Mr. Pace stated that he was thinking \$540,000 for paving and that the Board will be looking at the police car decision again. He also said that limiting the out of state travel is a good way to save. Debbie Perou, Executive Director of Rockingham Nutrition and Meals on Wheels, was in attendance to talk about some confusion on the Budget Committee's recommendation on reducing their funding. Ms. Perou explained what Meals on Wheels has done for the Town for the last 2 ½ years. Ms. Gilman stated that Meals on Wheels does some things that no other service does and she would love to fund them but they just need to find a way to do it. Mr. Pace said that either the Board goes with the Budget Committee's recommendation or adding additional money for the funding of Meals on Wheels. He asked Ms. Perou, and Ms. Gilman to get together and talk about additional funds to add and come back with the information and the Board will decide what to do.

Mr. Pace spoke about warrant articles. There were a lot that were not supported but there were a few that were supported that he was not sure of. He would like there to be as few as possible. Ms. Gilman decided that this is not the year to ask for the support of the town building project and said that it is not lost work, just something for the future. Mr. Pace agreed and said he does not want it to go on and fail. Some of the other warrant articles that the Board talked about were; Vehicle CRF Appropriation, the High Capacity Pump, the Library Elevator, Portsmouth Ave Reconstruction, the Sidewalk Tractor, the Brush Chipper and Water/Sewer warrants and SCADA. No decisions were made but all will be voted on at the December 22nd meeting.

b. Sportsmen's Club Lease Work Session Date

The date for the Sportsmen's Club lease work session is set for December 10th at 6:30 pm.

c. Set Date for FY09 Budget Public Hearing

The date for the FY09 Budget Public Hearing is set for Tuesday, January 13th at 7:00 pm.

6. Public Hearings – none

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7. **Permits & Approvals –**
 - a. Tax Abatements & Exemptions –
Map 61, Lots 9 and 10

Ms. Gilman moved to approve the abatements as presented, Mr. Campbell seconded. VOTE: Unanimous.

- b. Water/Sewer Abatements - none
- c. Permits – none

8. **Reports**

- a) **Town Manager's Report**

Russ Dean: Mr. Dean explained that some errors that were found in the Town's accounting system with the anticipated surplus in the Water/sewer fund. This is one example of the issue we have had on regular basis with NDS. January 1st we will move to different vendor. Finance Director, Doreen Ravell is now working on it. The prior Finance Director had not set up tables correctly within the system causing errors and NDS has also said that there are software issues as well. We are grateful to see this old system go and get the new one underway. Ms. Ravell and Mr. Dean are available if anyone has any questions.

Ms. Ravell added to Mr. Dean's comments by saying that this is one horrible example of the errors of the system and she is happy to say goodbye to the old archival system.

Mr. Dean went on to explain the delay in the tax bills. A few weeks ago on November 26th they were hit with an eleventh hour change. The billing company had outsourced the billing to someone else. There was also a circuit board meltdown making them unable to get the bills out. It was a trying and very discerning experience. Ms. Ravell ended up driving to Maine to pick up the bills and she and other 5 or 6 personnel from the office folded and stuffed each bill to mail out. It was not a small effort and hats off to all that helped and much gratitude to them. The return date has now changed and the bills are due in by January 5th, 2009. The Festival of Trees and the Christmas parade were very enjoyable and Mr. Dean thanked all who were involved. He also thanked the IT coordinator and the EXTV crew for videoing the parade. Town report work has begun and Mr. Dean is looking to the Board for ideas on a dedication. Donna Cisewski, the HR Director, held a Benefits Fair at the Town Hall for employees that were interested. Mr. Dean thanked her and said she did a great job. The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be December 22nd.

- b) **Selectmen's Committee Reports**

Julie Gilman: The Energy Committee is looking into the alternative test consumptions to decide if they want to put anything on the warrant for tax abatements for energy systems. They are also looking at a piece of software form the EPA that allows them to audit energy usage in each building.

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Matt Quandt: The River Study will meet Thursday at 9:30 am to discuss dam removal.

Bill Campbell: The Planning Board met last Thursday and gave conditional approval to the new hotel at the McDonald's property.

Joe Pace: Wished everyone to enjoy their Holiday Season. This coming March Mr. Pace will not be a candidate for the Board of Selectmen. He wants to give fair opportunity for anyone who is interested. The filing period is near the end of January.

c) **Correspondence** – none

9. **Second Public Comment** –

Finance Director, Doreen Ravell, thanked all the outside departments who helped with getting the tax bills out when they did. She would not have been able to pull it off without them.

10. **Non Public Session** – none

11. **Adjournment** -

Mr. Campbell moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm; Mr. Quandt seconded. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Aimee Caruso
Recording Secretary