

1. Call Meeting to Order

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

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Minutes

Mr. Campbell moved to waive the reading of the minutes of January 7, 2008 and accept the minutes as submitted; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.

4. Appointments

None.

5. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Citizen' Petition: Hospital Zoning Article- Attorney Michael Donahue and Harry Thayer appear to ask the Board to support the withdrawal of the Citizen's Petition regarding Exeter Hospital's proposed Zoning change. Mr. Donahue states that both the petitioners and those opposed to this article wish to withdraw it from the Town Warrant. Mr. Eastman would not support removing this from the ballot. Mr. Ingram believes that the recommendation of the Board would help to move the court proceedings along. The Board agrees take a position not to fight this issue in court proceedings.
- b. Bid Award: Mr. Eastman and Mr. Dean opened the bids at 4:00 PM. The quotes will be forwarded to Jennifer Perry, Public Works Director, and she will award the bids and return to the Board if any approval is needed under the Purchasing Policy.
- c. Request for use of Water Reserves: Water Conservation Program: Jennifer Perry asks the Board to approve the use of water and sewer fund surplus from 2007 to pay for a water conservation program. This would include 500 kits. These kits would be provided free of charge to current town water and sewer users and contain water conservation items. These kits have a cost of \$12.50 and some additional items would be available at a reduced charge through the Public Works Department. The Public Works Department hopes to reduce water and wastewater usage by 10% for the people that utilize these items.

Mr. Ingram moves to approve the use of up to \$30,000 in water fund reserves and up to \$30,000 in sewer fund reserves to fund the Water Conservation Program. Mr. Pace seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

6. Public Hearings

a. FY08 Budget & Warrant Articles including bonds:

Article 10- Sylvia von Aulock, Town Planner, says that the project has been pared down. She believes that some items may be donated or having a fundraiser. Don Clement asked the actual costs of the utility relocation and it was determined that this cost is about one half of the total budget. Mr. Pace says that he does not intend to vote for this article because he sees greater needs in the town. Mr. Campbell does want this article to pass because he believes it will add value to Exeter. Mr. Arthur Baillargeon wonders about other phases of this restoration, and Ms. Von Aulock hopes to plan for it is this article passes.

Article 11- Mr. Baillargeon asked if there is a study of the bridge so far. Ms. Perry says that there has not yet been a study, that would take place as a part of the design, which is included in this article, and there would be a 4-5 year wait at the State level to receive the bond to begin work on the bridge.

Article 12- Don Clement of the Conservation Commission notes that there are options for progressing with the Great Dam modification, and wonders which one the Town would be opting for. Mr. Ingram says that all options are feasible, but the funding in this article would be enough money to allow for any of these options, but the dam will definitely not be moved, as was earlier contemplated. The engineering and design work has not begun yet.

Article 10 (Downtown Restoration Project)- Mr. Campbell moves to support this article, Ms. Gilman seconds. VOTE: 2 in favor, 3 opposed.

Mr. Eastman believes that if the article does not get majority vote of the Board, it should not go on the ballot. Mr. Ingram would like this article to remain on the ballot because he would like the public to be able to have their opinion heard. The wording will be “The majority of the Board does not recommend this article.”

Article 11 (String Bridge Project)- Mr. Ingram moves to support this article, Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 12 (Great Dam Improvements)- Mr. Pace moves to recommend this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 13 (Total FY08 Budget)- Mr. Pace moves to recommend this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Mr. Eastman read each of the proposed and Warrant Articles and then opened discussion on each of them.

Mr. Campbell states that Linda Hartson, Town Clerk, would like to increase the salaries for the Supervisors of the Checklist and poll workers. Mr. Dean is in favor of the increase, but does not think that the FY08 budget needs to be adjusted for this. Mr. Eastman would suggest that this issue is discussed at another meeting.

Article 14 (Dispatch Upgrade)- Mr. Pace moves to recommend this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Mr. Arthur Baillargeon asks the age and intention for Engine 4. Chief Comeau says it is a 1989 model and will remain in service as a water supply truck for several years and then remain as a reserve vehicle for about 7 years.

Article 15 (Engine 4 and Forestry Truck)- Mr. Campbell moves to recommend this article. Mr. Ingram seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 16 (Library)- Mr. Pace moves to recommend this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 17 (Arterial Shoulder)- Mr. Campbell moves to recommend this article. Mr. Pace seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 18 (Retirement Sick Leave)- Mr. Pace moves to recommend this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Mr. Eastman believes that rewording Article 19 would eliminate the need for Article 20.

Mr. Campbell moves to amend Article 19 to include “and raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 toward this purpose and appoint the Board of Selectmen as agents of the fund.” Mr. Pace seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 19 (Land Acquisition)- Mr. Campbell moves to recommend this article. Mr. Pace seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 20 has been eliminated and the articles will be renumbered after this evening.

Mr. Eastman thinks Article 21 should be amended. Mr. Pace suggests additional information regarding the source of the funds. Mr. Robert Aldrich of Court Street asks the wording of the effect on the tax rate is appropriate. Mr. Dean will check the wording with the Department of Revenue, and the Board will table this vote until January 28.

Article 21 (Transfer of Funds to Capital Reserve)- Mr. Ingram moves to support this article. Mr. Pace seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 22 (Fire Command Car)- Mr. Ingram moves to support this article. Mr. Pace seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 23 (Parks and Recreation building Sprinkler)- Mr. Campbell moves to support this article. Mr. Ingram seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 24 (Storm Water Study)- Mr. Pace moves to recommend this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 25 (Raynes Barn)- Mr. Campbell moves to recommend this article. Mr. Ingram seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 26 (Watershed Management)- Mr. Ingram moves to support this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 27 (VNA)- Mr. Pace moves to recommend this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 28 (Seacoast Mental Health)- Mr. Ingram moves to support this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Mr. Baillargeon asked if other towns contribute to the New Outlook Teen Center, and he was assured that the surrounding towns also contribute.

Article 29 (New Outlook Teen Center)- Mr. Campbell moves to recommend this article. Mr. Ingram seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 30 (RSVP)- Mr. Pace moves to recommend this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 31 (Great Bay Kids Company)- Mr. Ingram moves to recommend this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 32 (Families First)- Mr. Ingram moves to support this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 33 (New Generation Shelter)- Mr. Campbell moves to recommend this article. Mr. Ingram seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 34 (Seacoast Red Cross)- Mr. Pace moves to recommend this article. Mr. Ingram seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 35 (Balance Transfer)- Mr. Ingram moves to support this article. Mr. Pace seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Mr. Pace moves to amend Article 36 to change the wording to “See if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1 to be used for the purchase of Gilman Park”. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 36 (Gilman Park)- Mr. Campbell moves to recommend this article. Mr. Pace seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 37- Mr. Ingram believes that the wording of “This Article will not impact the tax rate” should be removed. Mr. Pace agrees. No recommendation from the Board is necessary for this article.

Mr. Campbell moves to delete “This Article will not impact the tax rate” from Article 37. Mr. Pace seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 38- Mr. Eastman notes that the Board is already appointed as agents of this fund. The wording should be changed to eliminate that wording and add to the end that the fund was established in 2005.

Mr. Campbell moves to amend Article 38 as stated. Mr. Pace seconds. VOTE: Unanimous

Article 38 (Municipal Transportation Fund)- Mr. Campbell moves to support this article. Mr. Ingram seconds. VOTE: Unanimous

Article 39- Rosemonde Roy, 6 Jady Hill Circle, appeared to support her petition. Parks and Recreation Director also appeared to describe the steps to take in creating a dog park. Ms. Roy contacted the City of Portsmouth and they said that the only problem they have had with their dog park is the attendance of children, so they prohibit children under 12 within the dog park. The users of the Portsmouth dog park are beginning to contribute to the upkeep of the dog park. Sheri Rockburn of Municipal Resources notes that there is not dollar amount associated with this article.

Article 40- Mr. Dean thinks this article needs clarification from the Department of Revenue.

Francine Berman appeared to explain her involvement in the Seacoast Interfaith Hospitality Network. This is a program for families with children who are in need of shelter and a network of churches in the Seacoast area houses them

Article 41 (Seacoast Interfaith Hospitality Network)- Mr. Pace moves to recommend this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: Unanimous.

Article 42- Chief Comeau addressed the Board with statistics from the past year regarding services given and received by the Town of Exeter. Chief Comeau believes that this would not be a beneficial thing for the town, because the amount Exeter would have to pay to other towns would be equal or exceed the services that would be received, and he believes that this would be a dangerous precedent for the residents. No recommendation from the Board is necessary for this article.

Article 43- Harry Thayer states that he is opposed to this article and does not agree that the proposed lease should be presented to the voters on the day of the election.

Mr. Ingram would ask that residents that have evidence of any financial wrongdoing in the town should notify the Town Manager and have him investigate, but if there is no indication of a problem, the article is not worth the money. Mr. Eastman states that the Town of Newmarket thought that there were no financial problems prior to the recent forensic audit. Mr. Aldrich noted that Newmarket spent \$92,000 for a one-year audit, and this article asks for \$72,500 for a three-year audit. Mr. Dean indicates that warrants and invoices are public records for anyone who wants to see them.

Article 44 (Forensic Audit)- Mr. Pace moves to not recommend this article. Mr. Campbell seconds. VOTE: 4 in favor, 1 opposed.

Article 45- Mr. Ingram is concerned that Exeter already had one of the most generous elderly exemption programs in the State, and there are many people in other age brackets that still pay full taxes and cannot meet the financial standards that are set in this exemption structure. Mr. Pace believes that the working families in Exeter are having to pay more for taxes to allow for these exemptions and the property values are being effected.

Article 46- There is no comment on this article.

Article 47- This should be moved to the top of the warrant and will be sent back to the Planning Board for action.

7. Permits & Approvals
a) Abatements and Exemptions

Mr. Campbell moved to approve the abatements and exemptions as presented. Mr. Pace seconded. VOTE: Unanimous.

b) Permits
None.

8. Reports
a) Town Manager's Report-

The garbage pickup this week will be one day late due to this morning's poor weather.

b) Selectmen's Committee Reports

Ms. Gilman: The Town Building Advisory Committee is creating a town wide survey that will address the needs of the residents when doing town business. The Historic District Commission was going to meet on Thursday, but they were cancelled.

Mr. Ingram: No committee reports but would like to note that there is a need for more poll workers for the upcoming elections.

Mr. Pace: The Arts Committee will meet on Thursday.

Mr. Campbell: The Planning Board had a public meeting regarding zoning amendments last Thursday.

Mr. Eastman: Anyone wishing to run in the Town elections must submit their intention to the Town Clerk between January 23 and February 1. January 28 is the last day for submittal of proposed warrant articles. February 2 is the deliberative session at 9:00AM at the Town Hall. Mr. Eastman thanks all of the workers at the Presidential Primary.

9. Public Comment

None.

10. Non Public Session-

None.

11. Adjournment-

At 10:05 PM Mr. Campbell moved to adjourn; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Geis
AA