

APPROVED MINUTES

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

MINUTES

November 3, 2008

1. Call Meeting to Order

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

2. Public Comment – none.

3. Minutes

a. Minutes of October 27th, 2008

Mr. Campbell moved to waive the reading of the October 27th, 2008 minutes and accept them as presented, Mr. Eastman seconded. VOTE: Unanimous.

b. Minutes from Non Public Sessions
Minutes of September 15th, 2008

Mr. Campbell moved to approve the minutes of the September 15th, 2008 Non Public session, Ms. Gilman seconded. VOTE: Unanimous.

Minutes of October 6th, 2008

Mr. Campbell moved to approve the minutes of the October 6th, 2008 Non Public session, Mr. Eastman seconded. VOTE: Unanimous.

4. Appointments – none.

5. Discussion / Action Items

a. Water/Sewer Abatement Appeal: 25 Cullen Way

Mr. Dean reported that this is an appeal for resident Mr. Ranjan from 25 Cullen Way. His water bill was 3 times higher than the typical amount on his July 20th bill. A water/sewer technician went out to his home to test for leaks and found 3 leaking toilets. Mr. Ranjan had also informed the technician that her parents were staying with them. The technician stated that the leak and increased occupancy could be why the bill amount went up so high and also told them of the abatement process. Mr. Ranjan filed the abatement but because of the 3 leaks and the reported occupancy increase the abatement was denied. Mr. Ranjan appeared before the board for his appeal. He thanked the board for the opportunity to explain the reasons for his appeal. Mr. Ranjan stated that if he thought it was the toilets leaking he would not be here. It was a shock to see his bill go up 3 times the amount. Since then his bill has gone back to normal and he has not fixed the toilets. He also said that his in-laws arrived after the billing period so they could not be a reason for the increase. Mr. Pace said this has not been seen before and that the water had to have gone through the meter. The meter is in good working order. Ms. Lorrie Maker stated that she has done a lot of research on this and that 3 leaking toilets can cause such an increase in water usage. She can not explain how the bill has gone down to they typical amount again with

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out fixing the leaks. Mr. Dean spoke of unpredictable leakage in homes and a tier system. The Ranjan's may need to go through this process that includes the tier system. Mr. Ranjan spoke again to the board. His concern is more with the report about the 3 leaks and that there was no company at the time of the bill increase. The evidence that was written up is not consistent and if the abatement is not approved he would at least like the report to state the correct reasons for the increase. Mr. Pace stated that it is obvious that occupancy is not what caused it and that it may happen that Mr. Ranjan will receive a letter back saying it is not these 2 reasons and that a reason can not be found. Mr. Pace asked Mr. Ranjan to contact the Town if he finds anything that may be to blame or if there are any discrepancies in bills in the future.

Mr. Campbell moved to uphold the recommendation to not grant the abatement, Mr. Eastman seconded. VOTE: 3/2 to uphold the abatement decision.

b. Steven Leavitt re: Community Church Use of Senior Center

The Exeter Community Church is requesting use of the Senior Center to provide Sunday services. Mr. Steven Leavitt was in attendance to speak about this. Mr. Leavitt, who is also the Church's Pastor, spoke with Parks/Recreation and with Mr. Dean about this situation. The Church's previous location was at 134 Front St. They will be loosing this location at the end of this month. The Community Church will need a place for worship. Mr. Leavitt stated that they will be making payments to the Senior Center for rent. This is not intended to be a long term rental. Mr. Leavitt explained that it will not be more than a year. The Senior Center is open on Sundays with the morning and early afternoon available. Mr. Leavitt already has an agreement with the Senior Center that they will rearrange and clean up every Sunday after the services. Cathy McNeal came forward before the Board and said that the Catholic Church has an arrangement to use the school rooms on Lincoln Street without having a set length of time. She suggested that the Selectman leave the arrangement between the Community Church and the Senior Center. Mr. Pace stated that he personally doesn't want it left open for more than a year and that a follow up is needed.

Mr. Campbell moved to approve the Senior Center use permit for the Community Church at Exeter for no more than 1 year ending November 30th, 2009, Mr. Quandt seconded. VOTE: Unanimous.

c. Unreserved Fund Balance Discussion

According to the Town's auditors the new unreserved fund balance is \$914,277. This regards any application of the most recent fund balance to reduce the Town's share of the tax rate for 2008. Mr. Dean stated that the Unreserved General fund for this year is less compared to last year and we need to figure out how much money can be applied to the tax rate. Mr. Pace said each year the Town runs a surplus. They would take from the Rainy Day fund and put it towards that tax rate. Last year there was \$1.5 million returned to the tax payers. We may not be able to do it this year because of the decline. Town Treasurer, Don Brabant, was in attendance. He stated that he thinks that there needs to be at least a \$1 million to apply. This is not bucket cash to dabble from, it is your net worth. Mr. Pace said that they just don't have enough money to put forth to bring that rate down. We will go through the budget process and get creative on ways to make this work for next year. The money will stay in the Unreserved Fund and the Town will be conservative about it. Mr. Dean said that he will be working the plan through and will come up with final iterations. Once this is signed, they will get the date set for the tax rate. This will be discussed again next Monday.

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6. **Public Hearings** – none.
7. **Permits & Approvals** –
 - a. Tax Abatements & Exemptions

Abatement

Ms. Gilman moved to approve the abatement as presented, Mr. Quandt seconded. VOTE: Unanimous.

Abatement - BTLA settled

Ms. Gilman moved to approve the abatement as presented, Mr. Quandt seconded. VOTE: Unanimous.

Veteran's Tax Credit

Ms. Gilman moved to approve the tax credit as presented, Mr. Quandt seconded. VOTE: Unanimous.

b. Water/Sewer Abatements - none.

c. Permits – none.

8. **Reports**

a) **Town Manager's Report**

Russ Dean: A reminder to vote tomorrow, November 4th, at the Talbot Gym on Linden Street.

b) **Selectmen's Committee Reports**

Julie Gilman: The Zoning Ordinance Committee met and finalized changes for a warrant article for the Planning Board. Ms. Gilman met with the Certified Local Government for the Heritage Commission. They are eager to have Exeter join. Once Exeter joins the Certified Local Government program, it will be easier to get federal funding. The Building Committee met and made a presentation to the Chamber of Commerce. Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee had a strategy meeting on how to cut back on spending. They discussed the volunteer program.

Matt Quandt: The Cable TV Committee had their ascertainment meeting last week.

Bob Eastman: Nothing to report.

Bill Campbell: The Planning Board will meet Thursday. Mr. Campbell asked for an update on the Caldwell Tanks. Jennifer Perry reported that they have requested an extension. Public

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Works is not comfortable with the request. The justifications are not adequate and they are withholding liquidated damages.

Joe Pace: The next Selectman meeting will be next Monday, November 10th. The Budget Committee starts their presentations Wednesday, November 5 and will have more meetings on November 12th, 13th, and the 18th / 19th if needed. These meetings will be televised. Come out and vote from 7am – 8pm at the old high school. In NH you can register to vote the same day.

b) Correspondence

1. Comcast re: rate increases effective December 1, 2008;
2. Letter from Jennifer Perry to Caldwell Tanks, Inc. re: delay in construction schedule (w/ attachments);
3. Notice from Rockingham County Treasurer re: Warrant due December 17th, 2008;
4. Email reminder of Seabrook Graded Exercise November 5th, 2008 (already distributed);
5. Appeal of Brian and Adela Griset to Water Council regarding Lake Level Investigation Decision, October 27, 2008 (already distributed);
6. Response of Exeter Sportsman's Club on delivered Lease Proposal of Town of Exeter, dated October 23, 2008 (already distributed).

9. **Second Public Comment** – none.

10. **Non Public Session** – none.

11. **Adjournment-**

Mr. Campbell moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00pm, Mr. Quandt seconded. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,



Aimee Caruso

Recording Secretary