

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES RECEIVED AUGUST 27, 2001  
8/28/01  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

1. Convene the meeting.

Chairman Scafidi convened the Board at 7:03PM on the above date. Present in addition to Paul Scafidi were Joseph Pace, Robert Eastman, Paul Binette, Robert Rowe and Town Manager George Olson.

2. Minutes of Selectmen's meeting of August 13, 2001.

*Mr. Binette moved to accept the minutes as submitted; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.*

3. Bid Opening: Environmental Compliance Audit -- Public Works.

Five of the seven vendors sent bids (see attached bid sheet). *Mr. Binette moved to refer the bids to the Town Manager and Public Works for review and to return with a recommendation; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.*

4. Discussion of Ambulance Study Committee Report.

The original presentation of the Committee's report was on August 13<sup>th</sup> with follow-up scheduled for this evening. Chairman Scafidi asked for comments from the Board.

Mr. Rowe commented on the *Exeter News-Letter's* editorial regarding the "cash cow" formed with increased rates, through Medicare, for ambulance runs. He feels a policy should be implemented to treat the indigent and those without insurance, rather than taking them to small claims court, etc. on any amount owed. Mr. Pace noted Medicare would cause an increase in the rates and people might not be able to pay, but there is a way to cover those. He felt the fund would not become a 'cash cow' as a number of related expenses are now not covered by the fund. Currently, just the replacement of the vehicle is included. There are supplies, overtime, training, other vehicles responding, etc., but a policy would be needed to now cover those. An additional study should be completed on expenditures related to the ambulance that are now covered by the general fund and taxpayers' money.

Mr. Eastman stated the Committee did a good job but disagreed with the minimum and maximum balance and feels all monies should stay with the account and cover all services. He did not wish the excess to go to the general budget for some other department to spend. He does not like the government mandating the Town into such an ambulance service and being required to set a particular fee. He suggested a formula taking expenses and numbers of runs (he estimate \$145 per run with a 4% increase factored in each year), rather than the \$157.10 set by the government. He agrees the \$100 fee we currently charge should be raised.

Mr. Rowe suggested a work session of the Board to discuss further.

Mr. Binette asked if labor negotiations, and using the ambulance revenue to self-support the ambulance fund, would be affected? Mr. Olson noted it was similar to the Water & Sewer Departments and the Public Works contract. Nothing is stated in the contract on where funds are derived from to pay contract expenses.

Vincent Pascucci, a member of the Committee, noted the “cash cow” was addressed in the report noting policies would be written to prevent this. It also notes policies needed to address those of low income and/or no insurance, using a perfectly legal sliding scale billing practice. The recommendations are all addressed referring to the 1997 Balance Budget Act that is now law and his using a spin-off of the Act. Along with policies on sliding rates, the Town’s Welfare Department is available to aid residents not able to pay for services AND meeting qualifications.

Mr. Scafidi asked what the problem is if the money is returned to the General Fund. Portions of the Fund are used to reduce property taxes, which helps everyone. Revenues are not spent by other departments.

***Mr. Rowe moved to discuss this further in a work session; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.*** [This will be scheduled in September.]

5. Appointment to the Conservation Commission.

This item is being postponed to a future meeting.

6. Land taken for non-payment of taxes – Conservation Commission.

William Campbell, Chairman of the Commission, was present to explain their thoughts on the various parcels available (list attached). [A number of parcels were identified by Vision (firm conducting reval in 1998) as “owner unknown” and they are now becoming eligible for taking by Tax Collector’s deed.] The Commission would like to take over and manage these properties.

Mr. Scafidi asked of the quality of the land by the Town Forest. Tom Chamberlin, also a member of the Commission, replied it had been heavily cut over 10-15 years ago so there is now a lot of under brush. It is also wet.

The Board asked varying questions regarding the remaining properties. Mr. Pace asked the Town Manager to explain the process of acquiring the properties. Mr. Olson noted he is awaiting receipt of the Tax Collector’s deeds in two to three weeks. Should any **owner** come forward and pay the back taxes, the property would not be deeded. Sealed bids are to be received September 10<sup>th</sup> by anyone interested in the properties.

***Mr. Rowe moved to donate the lots on lists A & B to the Conservation Commission subject to the appropriate tax deeds being received by the Town and appropriate time period; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.***

7. Appointment of Selectman to Master Plan Steering Committee.

The Planning Board is preparing a new Master Plan and is forming a steering committee consisting of a broad range of members from the community. Mr. Pace has expressed an interest in serving. ***Mr. Eastman moved to appoint Joe Pace to the Master Plan Steering Committee; second by Mr. Rowe. VOTE: Unanimous.***

8. Permits:

Mr. Olson presented the following for acceptance by the Board:

- Maureen Barrows, Mud in your Eye 500 requested permission to use the Nowak Room on October 3 at 6PM for an organizational meeting. *Mr. Binette moved to approve; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.*
- Rose Bryant requested permission for a neighborhood Block Party on Union Street from 1-8PM on September 22, with rain date of September 23 and second rain date of September 27<sup>th</sup>. *Mr. Binette moved to approve; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.*
- Diane Donahue, from Head Start, requested permission to hold a Policy Council meeting in the Wheelwright Room on September 26<sup>th</sup> from 9-12. *Mr. Rowe moved to approve; second by Mr. Binette. VOTE: Unanimous.*
- Bill Childs, Chairman of the Exeter Arts Committee, requested use of the Nowak Room on Saturdays, September 29<sup>th</sup> and October 6<sup>th</sup> from 10AM to 12N for their lottery and hanging of art in the Town Office. *Mr. Binette moved, second by Mr. Rowe, to approve. VOTE: Unanimous.*

9. Town Manager's Items:

- The Town's offices will be closed on Monday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> for Labor Day. Rubbish & Recycling will be one day late all week.
- The budget process begins this week with Mr. Olson meeting with Department Heads regarding their requests. The preliminary budget will be presented to the Board on September 27<sup>th</sup> followed by the Budget Committee meeting for sub-committee work. The Committee will return to the Board with a recommended budget for action in December.
- Household Hazardous Waste Day is Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup> at DPW.
- Fall pick-up is the week of October 29<sup>th</sup>.

10. Selectmen's Committee Reports:

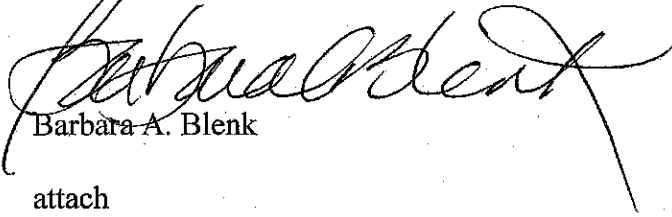
- Mr. Eastman reported the Planning Board met Thursday and the CIP sub-committee is meeting.
- Mr. Pace had no reports though he will follow-up with notes on the Master Plan Steering Committee.
- Mr. Binette had no reports.
- Mr. Rowe noted the Council on Aging has suspended meetings till fall.

- Mr. Scafidi noted the Water & Sewer Advisory Committee met last week and work will soon start on the Webster Avenue pump station. Budgets are also being prepared.

11. Public Comments: None.

*Mr. Binette moved to adjourn; second by Mr. Rowe. VOTE: Unanimous. Time: 8:07PM.*

Respectfully submitted,



Barbara A. Blenk

attach