

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES MAY 14, 2001



1. Convene the meeting

Chairman Paul Scafidi convened the meeting at 7:02PM on the above date and introduced the Board present: Paul Binette, Robert Rowe, Joseph Pace and Robert Eastman. Also present: George Olson, Town Manager.

2. Minutes of the meeting of April 30, 2001

Mr. Pace moved to waive the reading of the minutes of the April 30th meeting and to accept them as printed. Second by Mr. Binette. SO VOTED.

3. Bid opening: Water and Sewer utility van; roof repairs at the Public Safety Complex, Senior Center, Recreation Park pool and Public Works salt and sand shed.

Chairman Scafidi proceeded to open the bids for the utility van. (See attached results) **It was moved by Mr. Binette, second by Mr. Rowe, to turn the bids over to the Town Manager and Public Works Director for review and recommendation to the Board. SO VOTED.**

Chairman Scafidi proceeded to open the bids for roofing work. (See attached results) **It was moved by Mr. Binette, second by Mr. Rowe to turn the bids over to the Town Manager and the Public Works Director for review and recommendation to the Board. SO VOTED.**

4. Request to address the Board – Kathy Corson

Chairman Scafidi invited Ms. Corson to the mic. Ms. Corson noted that at the last Selectmen's meeting she had asked Ms. Gwen English, in her absence, to read a statement on her behalf. In addition to what was contained in that statement Ms. Corson went on to note that she had not been asked for her resume at the time of her interview with the Board of Selectmen and thus the Board did not know the details of her qualifications for the alternate position to which she was appointed. She noted her co-chair position on the Planning Board's Master Plan Committee and the associated 3-year commitment. She asked the Board what she had to do to become a full member of the Planning Board.

Chairman Scafidi stated that he no specific answer to her question and that it depended on the "feel" of the Board at the time appointments are made. He noted that no one is asked for a resume and suggested that the best way to be appointed a regular member is to regularly attend and participate at meetings.

Mr. Eastman noted the form in the Town Report and the request for information contained at the bottom of the form. He was not a Selectman when Ms Corson was appointed an alternate to the Planning Board and thus did not know her qualifications. He stated that he was aware of Ms. Bailey's qualifications when he voted to appoint her a regular member of the Planning Board.

Ms. Corson responded that she had regularly attended Planning Board meetings as an alternate, and that Dr. Derby, of the alternates, has the most experience. She opined that the Board's decision not to make her a regular member was "purely political."

Mr. Eastman responded by reading a history of appointments to Boards and Committees whereby alternates were not chosen to fill regular positions. Ms. Corson responded that many times alternates do not want to or cannot become regular members. Mr. Eastman responded that he saw no evidence of this in his research. Ms. Corson responded that it was her view, and noted the example of Mr. Valade.

Mr. Binette asked Ms. Corson if she had ever applied to be a member of a town Board or Committee other than the Planning Board. Answer: no. Mr. Binette stated that some of the information in Ms. Corson's letter in the newspaper was incorrect. He stated that Ms. Corson had been appointed to the Planning Board as an alternate by unanimous vote of the selectmen. He went on to state that contrary to Ms. Corson's letter in the paper, Ms. English was not kept from reading Ms. Corson's letter, rather the vote was to postpone the matter until Ms. Corson could be present; that the letter was not a part of the motion. He noted that the letter was read during the public comments part of the meeting.

Ms. Corson responded that she had not seen the Selectmen's meeting on TV in that she does not have cable.

Mr. Binette read an excerpt of Ms. Corson's letter to the editor referring to the damage done to other committees. He stated that everyone who applies for a position gets an appointment. He explained the process of interviewing candidates for Boards and Committees. He stated that the comments in her letter were simply not true. He went on to say that comments in another letter of Ms. Corson's stated that Amy Bailey did not have the experience to sit on the Planning Board and that this was not fair to Ms. Bailey.

Ms. Corson responded that the whole matter was not about her but rather it was about how the Board of Selectmen treat volunteers. The question is how the decisions are made and not about her experience. She stated that we "are all entitled to our opinions."

Mr. Binette recalled a statement of Ms. Corson's made last year indicating that she was going to try to become a member of the Planning Board following Wal-Mart's decision not to come to Exeter, if the Board of Selectmen would appoint her. Mr. Binette asked if this statement was not politically motivated. No answer.

Mr. Pace stated that the entire affair is unfortunate and that the politicalization of the matter had gone too far. He stated that he felt bad that volunteers had been treated badly and that dispensations had been made as to Ms. Bailey's experience. He apologized for this. He went on to say that it was unfortunate that certain Board members were bothered by Ms. Corson's statements.

Mr. Pace stressed the fact that the Board has the final say in making appointments to the Planning Board, regardless of the recommendations made by the Planning Board. He does not feel that the Board has done anything wrong or illegal, but does feel that an unwise decision was made. This is simply his opinion, and the majority of the Board has its opinion on the matter, and that is OK. He suggested that the moral of the story is that the Selectmen need to keep in mind the importance of the decisions they make and the need to work hard to do the right thing. He stressed the need for the Board to get beyond the issue and recommended that Ms. Corson put forward her name to be appointed a regular member of the Planning Board next year.

Mr. Rowe stated that as far as he was concerned appointments to the Planning Board were a prerogative of the Board of Selectmen.

Amy Bailey came to the mic. She stated that she has been put in a awkward position in this matter, reminding the Board that when she was interviewed she was told that she would likely be appointed as an alternate, though there was a chance that she would be appointed a regular member. She went on to tell the Board that it would be fine with her if she were appointed an alternate and Ms. Corson a regular member, noting that she and Ms. Corson both have experience, but different kinds of experience. She thanked Mr. Rowe for his confidence in her abilities, but felt that Ms. Corson could do the job as a regular member of the Planning Board.

Karen Prior was recognized by the Chair and came to the mic. She recalled how difficult it is to come before the Town's Boards and Committees and to be a volunteer. She opined that the Planning Board is one of the Town's very best Boards. She stated one thing that had not come up this evening was the fact that Ms. Corson was the Planning Board's recommendation to fill the vacant regular member seat and stressed that the Board's decision to not appoint Ms Corson will make it more difficult to get volunteers to come forward and the Town needs to celebrate the variety of opinions held by its residents. She recommended the Board reconsider its position.

Gwen English came to the mic. She stated she felt that most everything had been said on the matter and went on to say that she felt Ms. Corson and Dr. Derby had been "blindsided" by the Board of Selectmen. She asked if there was not some other way to make appointments that was more "civil and humane". She suggested that when it comes time next year to interview and make appointments, the Board of Selectmen interview all candidates for the various positions and to ask the questions they feel need to be asked of all the candidates.

Chairman Scafidi reiterated the fact it is the Board of Selectmen that makes the final decisions on appointments and that if the Board wishes to take any action on the matter the discussion will be in a non-public setting. The Board will discuss the matter downstairs and if a decision is taken to make a change in the appointments the Board will be in contact with those involved.

5. Request to address the Board – Marie Cappello, Executive Director, Rockingham Economic development Corporation

Warren Henderson, Chairman of the REDC came to the mic and explained his request for the Board to hold a public hearing on a request for Community Development Block Grant funds in support of a day care center in Exeter. He went on to explain the CDBG program and the role of the REDC. He stated the Board did not have to support the grant application tonight, just agree to hold a public hearing. If, upon reflection, the Board wished to support the application that was important, but if not that was OK too. The day care center, to be built on the Hampton Road across from Churchill's, would employ 20 and provide for 100 childcare slots. He went on to stress that there is only one full time employee of the REDC and that neither she nor he profited from the success of the day care center.

Mr. Pace asked if the loan is repaid to the REDC. Answer: yes. What happens if the loan is not paid back? Answer: The loan is not paid back just as would be the case with any business that goes under. Mr. Pace opined that it is therefore incumbent upon the REDC to make the wisest decisions possible when selecting a project to pursue.

Mr. Henderson stated that all Town expenses are paid for out of the grant.

It was moved by Mr. Pace, second by Mr. Binette, schedule a public hearing on the REDC sponsored childcare project. SO VOTED.

6. Sale of Town interest in land to Adele J. Griset – Article 69, Town Meeting of 1999

Mr. Olson explained that Town meeting had voted to sell the Town's interest in the land for \$1 plus attorney's fees. A quick claim deed for the land has been prepared, reviewed by Town Counsel and is ready for the Board's signature this evening. **It was moved by Mr. Rowe, second by Mr. Binette to execute the deed. SO VOTED.** The Board of Selected signed the deed.

7. Permits

Moved by Mr. Pace, second by Mr. Binette, to authorize the placing of a banner across Water St. from May 21 until June 1 in support of the Air National Guard. SO VOTED.

Moved by Mr. Pace, second by Mr. Rowe, to authorize the annual Memorial Day Parade on May 28, 2001. SO VOTED.

Moved by Mr. Eastman, second by Mr. Pace, to authorize the Squamscott Coalition to use the Wheelwright Room from 8 until 10 AM on June 6, August 1, September 5, October 3 and November 7. Mr. Eastman asked if this was the same organization that has used the room before. Mr. Olson responded that it had. **SO VOTED.**

Moved by Mr. Rowe, second Mr. Binette, to authorize the use of the Town Offices by the Exeter Arts Committee, on June 9 and 16, from 10 until noon for the purpose of holding their quarterly lottery on wall space use and subsequent hanging of art. SO VOTED.

Moved by Mr. Binette, second by Mr. Eastman, to authorize the closing of Washington St. from Brentwood Rd. to Spruce St. from noon until 7PM on July 21 for the purpose of holding a block party. SO VOTED.

8. Town Manager's items

Mr. Olson reported on the upcoming Police Auction, the Alewives Festival and the Memorial Day Parade.

9. Selectmen's Committee reports

Mr. Pace reported on the Conservation Commission meeting of the 8th and the upcoming Historic District Commission meeting. Mr. Binette reported that the Recreation Advisory Committee had new by-laws that the Board was being asked to review. He praised the hard work of the sub-committee that prepared the by-laws, the first update in 16 years. Mr. Rowe noted that frequent meetings of the Ambulance Committee, now that the July 2 due date for the report was approaching, and the fact the Committee was scheduled to meet again next week. The Council on Aging will be meeting on the 17th. Mr. Eastman noted that the Planning Board was doing by-laws and assured the Board that a copy would be provided the Selectmen. Discussion followed as to the role of Selectmen and the need for Board action on Board and Commission by-laws. Chairman Scafidi reported on the recent meeting of the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee and the continuing confusion over arsenic levels in the Town's drinking water. The federal government is still reviewing changes to the nation wide standard. Webster Ave. pump station renovations are to begin in August. Mr. Rowe asked if the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee now had its full complement of members. Chairman Scafidi responded that it did.

10. Public Comments

In the absence of any public comments, it was moved by Mr. Rowe, second by Mr. Eastman to adjourn. SO VOTED. 8:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Olson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

George N. Olson
Town Manager

attach

