

FINAL MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

September 21, 2009

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman William Campbell convened the meeting at 7:00 pm in the Nowak Room of the Town Office Building. Mr. Campbell introduced the other members of the Board: Mr. Robert Eastman, Mr. Matt Quandt, Mr. Bobby Aldrich, Town Manager, Russ Dean and Ms. Julie Gilman. Mr. Campbell noted that the Board had convened in the Wheelwright Room at 6:30 for a non public session and is now in public session.

2. Public Comment- None

3. Minutes and Proclamations - None

Ms. Gilman moved to approve the non public minutes of September 14, 2009 as presented. Mr. Aldrich seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Mr. Aldrich moved to approve the non public minutes of September 8, 2009 as amended. Ms. Gilman seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Mr. Aldrich moved to approve the non public minutes of August 10, 2009, as amended. Mr. Quandt seconded. Vote: Unanimous. Ms. Gilman abstained from this vote as she was not present at the meeting.

Mr. Aldrich moved to approve the minutes of August 31, 2009 as presented. Ms. Gilman seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Mr. Aldrich moved to approve the minutes of September 8, 2009 as presented. Mr. Eastman seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

4. Appointments

Although there is interest in the open position in the Budget Committee, nobody had submitted a letter of interest. Mr. Aldrich asked that letter of interest be submitted to the Town Manager by Thursday afternoon in order to be appointed at the next meeting. Mr. Aldrich also noted that the Budget Recommendations Committee will meet on September 30 at 6:30 pm.

5. Department Reports: Police Department and Finance Department

Police Department- Chief Kane appeared and informed the Board that there is one officer currently enrolled in the Police Academy who should be graduating in December if all goes well for him. Chief Kane had a meeting regarding the fleet study which included Captain Dockery and a meeting with Unitil to resolve a lot of the communication issues that arose during last year's power outages. The panic alarms have all been tested at the Town Office and are in working order. The Police Department conducted alcohol compliance checks with a result of 27% of town establishments being non compliant. There will be rechecks in the future. Ms. Gilman asked If Chief Kane had looked into the Idle-right Program and he stated that after a review it was determined that while it is a good program, it is not a good fit for this town because of the initial expense.

Finance Department- Doreen Ravell, Finance Director, appeared and offered the Board an overview of the Finance Department:

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- The Finance Department serves over 14,000 residents and approx 6,100 taxpayers and 4,000 water and sewer ratepayers, 5 Board of Selectmen and 12 Town departments.
- Finance provides financial accountability, reporting and communication of financial results.
- Finance records, monitors and analyzes all revenue and expenditures of the Town, collects property tax, water, sewer, disposal and permit revenues and ensures financial compliance with all local, state and federal governments.
- The 2009 year was filled with transition and positive change for the Finance Department. In January 2009, the Finance Department embarked upon on a Town-wide financial system conversion to MuniSmart.
- We spent over 2,000 man hours and 5 months on converting to MuniSmart for General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Cash Receipting, Property Taxes, Utilities, Payroll and Purchase Orders. Year-to-Date we have spent \$ 48,500 on the conversion.
- We implemented lock-box for tax and utility payments...a project which took over 6 weeks of planning and teleconferences with Citizens bank.
- Began rolling out General Ledger to department managers last week.
- Finance works interactively with all Town departments by providing financial management information so that 12 Department Directors have tools to manage their departmental expenditures.
 - The Finance Director supervises the General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Payroll, Water/Sewer Billing and Collection, Meter Reading, Tax Billing and Collection and the Reception functions.
 - Reviews and appraises the soundness, adequacy and applications of accounting, financial and operating and internal controls.
 - Responsible for CAFR compliance and GASB 34, 45 and other related GASB compliance.
 - Responsible to establish policies, plans and procedures, to include state and federal statutes where applicable.
 - Ascertains the extent to which the Town's assets are accounted for and safeguarded from losses of all kinds.
 - Supervises the various clerical aspects of the accounting functions, including bookkeeping and preparing periodic financial reports.
 - Property taxes are billed semi-annually from my office.
 - Under my supervision, the tax department bills and collects approx \$ 36M in tax revenues
 - Finance bills utilities on a monthly basis for 3 separate and distinct billing districts.
 - Annually the water/sewer department bills and collects approx \$ 4M in utility revenue.
 - I work under the direction of the Town Manager to preparing the Town's \$ 19M annual operating budget
 - Process monthly payments to the Exeter School system.
 - All audits of the town are managed by me through the finance office.
 - I supervise the weekly payroll Preparation, funds transfer and distributing weekly payroll for 174 (129 FT and 45 PT) Town employees and filing of all quarterly payroll reports.
 - I've supervised the processing of over 2,871 A/P transactions and \$ 27M in weekly vendor payments for all departments in the Town.
 - I review and approve payroll, accounts payable, and purchase Orders on a weekly basis.
 - Monitoring and analyzing the activities of the current fiscal year to project trends in both revenues and expenditures that will have an effect on future budgets and fund balance.
 - Preparing the reports required by the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration to set the Town's tax rate.

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- Finance produces all of financial information that is submitted to the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen. Year-to-date I've personally entered over 14,000 journal entries into the MuniSmart system. These entries are mostly attributable to manual cash receipting from the 12 departments in town.
- Accounting for the Governmental Funds, Enterprise Funds, Special Revenue Funds, Revolving Funds and Fiduciary Funds.

Welfare Department- Sue Benoit appeared to update the Board on the Welfare Office. She attends monthly meetings, trainings, and conferences and works with local and state agencies, churches, and organizations to meet individual's & families needs. Ms. Benoit provides online services for unemployment, Social Security Benefits and she is certified for financial, medical, & food stamps.

Ms Benoit is on the NH Local Welfare Software Steering Committee and helps with their applications, statistics, client tracking of those receiving assistance from the State & towns, daily backup and IT support. The NHHS budget cuts have created concerns regarding financial assistance, Unemployment Security, Child care, Medical care and utilities.

Mr. Campbell pointed out that Ms. Benoit does not always offer assistance from Town funds but that she often refers clients to other agencies that are appropriate to their needs. Ms. Benoit reported that the current year's budget is ok, but that she is seeing an increase in requests due to the cutbacks in other agencies. Ms. Gilman wondered if the Welfare Department could be renamed to the Human Service Department. Mr. Dean recommends the name change and the rest of the Board was in agreement.

Ms. Gilman moved to change the Welfare Department name to Human Services Department. Mr. Eastman seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

6. Discussion/Action Items

a. Lease Renewal Provident Bank

Mr. Dean stated that the Provident Bank is interested in extending their lease of the lower level of Town Hall for nine additional months while they complete renovations on their new location on Portsmouth Ave. Ms. Gilman noted that Provident Bank may wish to pursue a month to month extension afterward if the new building is not ready for them. Mr. Dean also stated that the Bank has expressed interest in leaving their ATM machine downtown after they vacate the rented space but there have been no negotiations or agreements to that effect.

Mr. Quandt moved to approve the extension of the lease of the lower level of the Town Hall to Provident Bank per the terms of the lease of September 22, 2008 for an additional nine month period. Ms. Gilman seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

7. Regular Business

a. Accounts Payable and Payroll Manifests

Mr. Aldrich moved to approve the Payroll warrant of September 16, 2009 in the amount of \$148,362.63. Mr. Quandt seconds. Vote: Unanimous.

Mr. Aldrich moved to approve the Payroll warrant of September 9, 2009 in the amount of \$28,643.28. Mr. Quandt seconds. Vote: Unanimous. Mr. Aldrich noted that these are education stipends.

Mr. Aldrich moved to approve the Accounts Payable warrant dated September 18, 2009, in the

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amount of \$185,590.69. Mr. Eastman seconds. Vote: Unanimous.

Mr. Aldrich stated that there were two big ticket items in the warrant: A check to the Northside Carting for \$55,000 and a check to Underwood Engineering for the Inflow and Infiltration Project for approximately \$72,000.

b. Budget Updates

Mr. Dean updated the Board on the progress of the 2010 budget by saying that meetings with departments are ongoing.

c. Tax Abatements and Exemptions- None

d. Water/Sewer Abatement-

Gerry Hamel of Little Pine Lane returned this week regarding his ongoing issue of a requested abatement. Mr. Dean read an opinion from Matt Berube of the Water/Sewer Department had not recommended the abatement and has concluded that the Town is not at fault in the issues at Mr. Hamel's property. Mr. Campbell noted that the Board is able to grant the abatement on a property once every 10 years or deny the request. Mr. Hamel is adamant that the damage is not consistent with the age and condition of the property and believes that it is connected to the new water tank and high PSI readings.

Mr. Eastman moved to waiver Mr. Hamel's water sewer bill by the amount of 8251 gallons and have the ten year rule apply. Mr. Quandt seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Mr. Hamel agreed that this is a reasonable conclusion and thanked the Board. Ms. Gilman noted that this issue was given a lot of consideration and she wanted the public to know that this is an individual decision based on the specific situation.

e. Permits- None

f. Town Managers Report

Mr. Dean reported that the Health Department is keeping up to date on the Swine Flu problem at Phillips Exeter Academy as well as the pools that tested positive for EEE. There are no human cases to date and the Health Department has been larvaciding. The Town has hired a new Water/Sewer Engineer and he will be introduced to the Board next week. Household Hazardous Waste Day is October 3 at DPW on Newfields Road; the information for that event is on the Town website as well as the Rockingham Planning Commission's website. Our Town website has been offline, however for the past 3 days due to an issue around the server of the owners of the domain name. Mr. Dean says that Andy Swanson, the IT Coordinator is looking for alternatives to avoid this issue in the future. The dog ordinance will also be reviewed based on some current concerns. The Gilman Park easement has been reviewed by counsel and we hope to wrap that up soon. The Meetinghouse project is ongoing.

g. Selectmen's Committee Report

Mr. Eastman - nothing to report

Ms. Gilman reported that the HDC met and reviewed 2 applications. One wanted to replace windows but the HDC asked her to review a refurbishment process which she agreed to look at before replacing the windows. Ms. Gilman noted that the HDC is trying to preserve the older elements as much as possible especially if the cost is similar to replacement. Heritage Commission discussed the Water Supply Presentation and they reviewed the grant application for the Certified Local Government which they need to reapply for due to budget concerns. Ms. Gilman has an Energy Committee meeting on

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Tuesday and a Transportation Committee meeting on Thursday.

Mr. Aldrich - nothing to report

Mr. Quandt reported that the Safety Committee meeting was cancelled and rescheduled, the River Committee meetings are now being televised and he would invite the public to observe the river during the drawdown beginning October 13 and continuing for a couple of weeks. The River Committee also spoke about the need for a Water Sewer Committee and Paul Vlasich, Town Engineer is looking into restarting this committee. Cable Committee will meet regarding the upcoming negotiations.

Mr. Campbell reported that the Planning Board will meet on Thursday.

h. Correspondence

1. Notice of appeal of Taylor matter.
2. Letter from K. Berkenbush re: grant funding
3. Letter from NH DOT re: Rt. 111 culvert
4. Invitation to change of command ceremony at Shipyard
5. Restoration monitoring report from NH DES
6. Letter to NH Fish and Game re: Great Dam
7. Memo from Ken Berkenbush re: EEE detection
8. Letter from James St. Jean auctioneers re: Property auctions
9. Memo from Matt Berube Re: Abatement denial
10. PowerPoint slides from Water Supply forum

9. Public Comment

Harriet Cady, a non resident, asked to speak with the Board regarding a tax assessment issue and asked the Board for a non public session. Mr. Campbell thought this was an issue that Public Works was working on. Mr. Dean advised the Board that Ms. Cady represented Arthur French regarding a property value dispute. Ms. Cady distributed a number of photos for the Board to review and told the Board that the assessment was overvalued based on the purchase price and condition of the property and that Mr. DeVittori, Town Assessor had increased the value of the property improperly after the purchase while renovations were being done and that the value is still not correct and the property parameters are inaccurate. Mr. Campbell advised Ms. Cady that the homeowner must file an abatement request and she stated that Mr. French was not offered any abatement paperwork by Mr. DeVittori. Ms. Gilman advised that this issue must be administered through the Assessing Department to ensure consistency.

Alan Bailey, Greene Street, asked the Board if there is a procedure in place to log complaints regarding increased pressure in the system. Mr. Campbell said all complaints are logged. Mr. Bailey asked if pressure in the fire hydrants have adequate pressure after the new water tower has gone online? Mr. Dean stated that the feedback has been excellent from the Fire Department and that if a report is requested then he can get one from the Fire Department. Ms. Gilman agreed that the report is a good idea.

10. Non-Public Session

Mr. Eastman motioned to move the Board into the Non-Public Session under RSA 91: a (2a) employee compensation and (d) land acquisition at 8:18 pm; Ms. Gilman seconds. Mr. Aldrich

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called the roll.

Mr. Eastman, aye; Mr. Campbell, aye; Mr. Quandt, aye; and Mr. Aldrich; aye. Ms. Gilman; aye.

11. Adjournment

The Board emerged from non-public session and Mr. Aldrich motioned to adjourn at 9:15 pm; Ms. Gilman seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

**Kelly Geis
Recording Secretary**