

**TOWN OF ANTRIM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
October 5, 1998**

APPROVED OCT 19 1998

6:00 p.m. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

PRESENT: Chairman Carol Smith, Selectman Tim Seeger, Selectman Denise Dargie and Town Administrator, Kelley A. Collins

6:00 – 6:30 p.m. MEET WITH ROAD AGENT, ROBERT VARNUM

Review and discuss Mr. Foster's concerns regarding pavement and trees on Contoocook Avenue – The Selectmen made the Road Agent aware of Mr. Foster's concerns and request for repair and maintenance of the pavement he laid at the edge of his private property, just off the roadway on Contoocook Valley Avenue. In addition, Mr. Foster would like to see the brush and trees removed from the roadside ditches. The Road Agent noted that contrary to Mr. Foster's statement at last week's Selectmen's Meeting, he never gave Mr. Foster permission to use left over material for this purpose. The Road Agent is totally opposed to maintaining this patch of pavement that is on private property and was never up to the Town's standards. He is concerned that we not set a precedent where any resident can pave a portion of their property and the Town will have to maintain it. The Road Agent noted that he will be cutting brush and scrub trees but he usually waits until the leaves are off. He cannot ditch a portion of the area in question because there is an underground culvert there. In addition, Mr. Varnum can only cut what is actually in the Town's right-of-way and not the brush on private property. The Road Agent also suggested that the Town may want to contact other people on the road because some residents may not want their brush totally cut away. The Selectmen agreed unanimously that the Road Agent should proceed with his brush cutting and ditching as usual and not repair or maintain the pavement that is on Mr. Foster's private property. The Selectmen will send Mr. Foster a letter outlining their decision in this matter.

Bridge on Grove Street – The Road Agent noted that the bridge on Grove Street has been torn out and replaced. This is the end of the bridge work that the Town can do itself. There are two bridges, one we share with Bennington and one we share in West Deering that have approximately 60 foot spans that will require State Municipal Managed Bridge Aid. The Town Administrator has already filled out an application for the Antrim/Bennington bridge. There is no bridge aid money available until the year 2001.

State Aid – The Road Agent suggested that we may want to apply to the State for assistance with granite curbing on the east side of Main Street and replacement of the side walk on the west side of Main Street.

Signs on Gregg Lake – The Road Agent reported that he has erected two more speed limit signs on Gregg Lake Road and will place the "no parking" signs at the beach in the Spring.

Additional Highway Department Employee – Selectmen Seeger asked the Road Agent if he has given any additional thought to budgeting for another equipment operator/laborer in the 1999 budget. The Road Agent noted that he has been giving that a lot of thought but he was hoping to see how much the tax rate increased before deciding if he should propose it this year.

Paving Projects – Selectmen Seeger asked the Road Agent if he has a plan for paving projects. Some discussion took place regarding upcoming and past paving projects.

Fence at the Transfer Station – Selectman Seeger noticed that the fence at the Transfer Station is down and asked the Road Agent if he was able to salvage the fencing. The fencing was not salvageable but the posts are still useable. The Road Agent suggested that we have a fence company look at the fencing around the dam on Summer Street.

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7:00 – 7:15 P.M. – MR. HERBERT RALPH WILL MEET WITH THE BOARD, AT HIS REQUEST – Mr. Ralph thanked the Board for seeing him and made them aware that he is a candidate for the State Legislature. Mr. Ralph noted that he is here to see what issues are pending that are of interest and concern to the Town of Antrim. Considerable discussion took place regarding: cable rates, electric utility rates, welfare reform, teacher competency testing, etc. Mr. Ralph wants to effectively represent his constituents if he is elected.

7:30 – 7:45 P.M. – MEET WITH PROSPECTIVE ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT CANDIDATE, THOMAS COCHRAN

The Board of Selectmen met with Mr. Cochran to discuss his interest in serving as a full member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Mr. Cochran noted that he had been approached to serve in this capacity and although he is very busy until the end of October he is very much interested in serving on this Board. Mr. Cochran will serve until the elections in March 1999, at which time the position will be put on the ballot for the remaining one year of Tom Davis' term. The Selectmen voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Cochran as a member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment and to authorize the Town Clerk to administer the oath of office.

8:00 – 8:15 p.m. MEET WITH TOWN CLERK/TAX COLLECTOR, MARY HAMMOND, AT SELECTMEN'S REQUEST

The Selectmen asked the Town Clerk/Tax Collector to attend this meeting briefly to discuss some of the issues that were brought up at last week's meeting with Mrs. Caswell. The Town Clerk/Tax Collector noted that she has no problem contacting the State of NH to discuss getting one of the free computers available through Vital Statistics, however she would prefer to set that up and get familiar with it before she researches providing stickers and plates from this location. The Selectmen see no problem with the timeframe as long as the Town Clerk/Tax Collector is willing and able to move towards additional automation.

8:30 – 9:00 p.m. MEET WITH SUPERVISORS OF THE CHECKLIST AT THEIR REQUEST RE: AVAILABILITY OF VOTER CHECKLIST

The Supervisors of the Checklist, Mary Allen, Martin Nichols and Lois Essex, requested this meeting to discuss the availability of the Voter Checklist. It was recently brought to the Supervisor's attention that they may be required to provide the voter checklist on disk if they are able to. General discussion took place regarding the provisions of RSA 654:31. Generally, it was agreed that the price of the voter checklist will increase, effective immediately, from \$5 to \$25 and for that price the public will receive a 3.5" diskette and a paper hard copy. There will be no reduction in price for one or the other and there will be no additional costs to have the information mailed. Lists will not be faxed. Supervisor, Mary Allen, also brought up the fact that she now feels very uncomfortable having this information on her home computer, for security reasons. There was a discussion about putting the information on a Town Computer and allowing the Supervisors access to update and revise the list. Nothing will be done before the November elections and possibly not until after the Town Meeting but the Town Administrator will work towards getting this information on to Town computers as soon as possible.

9:00 p.m. GENERAL BUSINESS

- Review and discuss awarding auditing and legal services according to requests for proposals submitted and reviewed at a former Selectmen's Meeting.

The Town Administrator reminded the Board of Selectmen of the Requests for Proposal (RFPs) received early this summer for the auditing and legal services. The purpose of using an RFP

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process as opposed to a formal bid process was so that the contract could be awarded on a "quality-basis" and not strictly on a "lowest bidder" premise. The Town Administrator recommends using The Mercier Group for auditing services. The Town wrote two letters of dissatisfaction for the current auditing company, Mr. Mercier was the only auditing firm that actually came to Antrim to review our books and the net price is only \$60 more than our current company (over a three year contract price) which is .04% of the three year total. The Town Administrator has had an opportunity to work with all the companies that submitted RFPs, although she has had limited contact with the current auditor. The Selectmen agreed unanimously to contract with The Mercier Group for the 1998 audit. Considerable discussion took place regarding the RFPs for legal services. The Selectmen unanimously agreed to keep Attorney Mayer as their lead counsel but to use Mitchell and Bates as reserve attorneys when Attorney Mayer is unavailable or if Attorney Mayer or his firm ever have a conflict of interest.

- **Review and discuss L. R. Long's letter regarding tax lien on an unpaid "timber tax".** The Board of Selectmen reviewed and discussed the letter from Mr. Long regarding his contention that the Town is acting in a parochial and capricious manner by issuing a tax lien for non-payment of a timber tax. The Town Administrator discussed this briefly with Attorney Mitchell and he assures her that there is good case law in these matters.

- **Open Mr. LaRochelle's bid on Parcel #8.**

The Town Administrator explained that after all the bids were opened last Monday, Mr. LaRochelle called on Tuesday morning to see if his bid was accepted. It was noted at that time that no bid had been received from Mr. LaRochelle. After looking around we found his bid in the pet food box next to the drop box. Since this was obviously dropped off before the deadline and since it is the only bid received for Parcel #8, the Selectmen unanimously agreed to open the bid. The Chairman opened the bid and noted it was for Parcel #8 in the amount of \$21,000 and the certified funds for \$100 were enclosed. Selectmen Seeger made a motion to accept Mr. LaRochelle's bid of \$21,000 for Parcel #8. Selectman Dargie seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Discuss Antrim/Bennington fire mutual aid agreement from 6:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. per Fire Chief's request**

The Town Administrator made the Selectmen aware that the Fire Chief approached her with some information about Bennington/Antrim mutual aid. The historical agreement has been to provide mutual aid for confirmed structure fires. Due to the lack of response during the day both Bennington and Antrim fire departments are going to start calling for mutual aid for all fire calls. Both departments hope that this will increase day time response for both Towns. The Chief will let the Board know how this works.

- **CDBG grant will be reviewed on October 15, 1998 in Concord, do the Selectmen want to attend, or send a designee**

The Town Administrator made the Selectmen aware that we received a letter inviting us to attend the Community Development Block Grant Advisory Committee's meeting on October 15, 1998 at 1:30 p.m. in the Legislative Office Building in Concord, NH. The Selectmen are not available to attend and the Town Administrator has quite a few commitments out of the office this month. It was noted that this information should be passed along to Bob Bernstein and perhaps he would be willing to keep us informed, if he is able to attend.

- **Discuss 1998 tax rate**

The Selectmen reviewed the tax rate set by the Town Administrator and the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen and reviewed by the Department of Revenue Administration. Considerable discussion took place regarding the high increase due partially, to the loss of significant foundation aid and the increase in the school budget due in part to the first year payments on the

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bond issues for the two new elementary schools. The rate was originally set with \$100,000 from unreserved fund balance and the former Business Manager, Phil Dwight, made an appeal to the Chairman of the Board to use the entire \$300,000 that he would have used. The current Town Administrator cautioned the Board that the \$534,059 shown as unreserved fund balance is not cash money sitting in a bank account. We have already borrowed \$250,000 in tax anticipation for the first issue and an additional \$250,000 for the second issue. Using \$300,000 will place us \$10,000 under the State's recommended retention of 5-10%. She also noted that if the school has a large increase in budget next year and if we do not get the fully funded foundation aid there will not be a comfortable surplus left to help next year. The Town Administrator recommends using \$200,000 from unreserved fund balance to help defray a large increase this year but to leave something in reserve, if necessary for next year. Selectmen Seeger and Dargie are both concerned about the size of the increase in their taxes for this year and Selectmen Seeger noted it was time to throw this back to the State. Selectman Seeger made a motion to use \$300,000 of the December 31, 1997 unreserved fund balance to set the tax rate. Selectman Dargie seconded. VOTE: Selectman Seeger – yes; Selectman Dargie – yes, Chairman Smith – no. The Town Administrator noted that since we already have our tax rate it will have to go back to the Department of Revenue Administration to be re-worked and will probably not be formal for a couple of days.

- **Review & discuss Rymes credit balance from 1997/98 fuel bid (approx. \$2,700)**

The Town Administrator noted that there is a considerable credit balance from last year's fuel oil bid with Rymes. She just wanted the Selectmen to be aware that she will be requesting this money either in the form of cash or as a credit for diesel fuel. The Board has no problem with that.

- **Reminder on work to be performed on upstairs of Town Hall (heating, handicap accessibility and upgrade electrical services)**

The Town Administrator reminded Chairman Smith that she has still not called a meeting of the building committee to do the \$50,000 worth of upgrades to the upstairs of Town Hall. Mrs. Lois Harriman was in the office asking the status of this project today. Chairman Smith stated she will set a date for a meeting.

- **Review and discuss notice from A.R.T.S. Manager, Bill Lang, that Strategic will no longer be in the recycling business and they recommend BFI**

The Town Administrator pointed out that we are slowly losing all the competition from both the solid waste and the recycling markets. She is very concerned that eventually the Town's costs to get rid of waste will escalate. The Town Administrator feels that this points out the need for a committee to assist Bill Lang with the administrative part of managing A.R.T.S.

- **Review and discuss personnel performance evaluation to be used to evaluate the Town Administrator's performance for her six month review**

Since the Selectmen agreed to evaluate the Town Administrator's performance after six months and since the six months will expire on October 28, 1998 the Board needs to select a format for the evaluation process. The Town Administrator submitted two different types of evaluation forms for the Board's review.

- **Review and approve Planning Board members request to attend and be reimbursed for SW Regional Planning Commission Meeting.**

The Selectmen approved the cost for Planning Board members to attend a Southwest Regional Planning Commission Dinner Meeting.

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- **Discuss pending litigation (petition filed in Superior Court)**

Chairman Smith made the Board aware that she was served with the Diane Cotran vs. Town of Antrim litigation last week. This case is over an appeal of the discontinuance of Hattie Brown Road that was on the 1998 Town Meeting Warrant. The appropriate paperwork has been forwarded to both Town Counsel, Bart Mayer and Antrim Realty Trust's Attorney, John Cronin of Bedford NH.

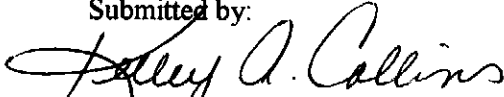
- **Meetings with Department Heads**

The Selectmen would like to meet with the following Department Heads for their regular meeting on October 19, 1998. Bill Lang, Manager of A.R.T.S. at 6:00 p.m., Art Stenberg/Code Enforcement-Building Inspector at 6:30 p.m. and Fire Chief Mike Beauchamp at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 p.m.

Submitted by:



Kelley A. Collins
Town Administrator