

**Enfield Board of Selectmen
Whitney Hall
Enfield, New Hampshire**

MINUTES of November 7, 2011

Board of Selectmen: Fred Cummings, Chairman; Donald J. Crate, Sr.; John W. Kluge

Administrative Staff: Steven Schneider, Town Manager; Alisa D. Bonnette, Executive Assistant; Richard A. Crate, Jr., Chief of Police

Others: Bruce Berin of Certified Ambulance Group, Richard Martin, Dwight Marchetti, Bob Cusick, Dan Kiley

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Cummings called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Crate moved to accept the minutes of October 17, 2011 as printed, Mr. Kluge seconded, vote unanimous in favor of the motion.

Mr. Kluge moved to accept the non-public minutes of October 17, 2011 as printed, Mr. Crate seconded, vote unanimous in favor of the motion.

The Board approved the correction of the minutes of October 3, 2011. The bid was accepted and the leaf blower was purchased from Upper Valley Tractor & Equipment.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

Town Clerk's Report – October 2011:

Revenues are still on track with 2 months to go. It looks like a good revenue forecast.

Tax Collector's Reports – October 2011:

First issue 2011 property taxes are 95% collected.

2011 Tax Rate:

The 2011 Property Tax Rate has been set at \$20.61 per \$1,000 valuation; an increase of 9 cents.

Mr. Schneider informed the Board that this was as smooth a rate setting as he's ever been to. With an initial Town tax rate at \$5.96 undesignated funds were applied to bring the Town rate back down to \$5.95, the same as 2010. The increase seen in the overall tax rate is due to increases in the State School and County rates.

The Town's undesignated fund is now in the mid- \$800,000 range, about \$100,000 greater than last year. It amounts to about 8% of the Town's financial obligations. The Town has little debt and a healthy undesignated fund balance; we're in real solid shape. Tax bills will go out this week.

IV. BOARD REPORTS

Enfield Village Association (EVA):

EVA has been busy. The scarecrows on Main Street and elsewhere were a big hit. Brown bag meetings are seeing attendance of 15 to 19 at each meeting. They've discussed the use of electronic social media. They also did a co-op advertisement to cut local business ad costs.

Planning Board:

The Planning Board scheduled for next Wednesday should be an interesting meeting. Ironman will be in to talk to the Board.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee:

The CIP Committee has met with the Fire Department and Public Works Department to look at equipment needs. They will next look at financing options and how best to leverage the Public Works Facility debt that has been paid. They will hold a couple more meeting this month to finish up.

Budget Committee:

The Budget Committee met last week and will meet again this week. The Selectmen have been provided the preliminary budget.

Mr. Kluge asked if there have been any particular conclusion about equipment. He was informed by Mr. Schneider that the Public Works Director, Jim Taylor, has two 55's up for replacement. Mr. Taylor is proposing to replace these with 25,000 GVW International trucks. The International truck is a bigger vehicle, but the thought is that the bigger vehicle can better hand the plow wing and last longer than the 550's which don't handle the wing very well.

The Fire Department has no specific recommendations at this time. The Department has two engines of the same age that need replacing.

The Police have their cruiser purchase built into the operating budget now. They are looking at a leasing option. The Town of Auburn with a similarly sized Police Department leases cruisers.

V. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

None.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Marchetti asked if he could wait until the end to make his comments. The Board agreed and moved onto other business.

VII. BUSINESS**Whaleback Taxes:**

Mr. Cummings asked about the status of Whaleback taxes. Mr. Schneider reported that the Town's Attorney has all of the information. The attorney has 3 years of past due taxes for which a proper list of mortgagees must be compiled for the mailing of legal notices. It will take about 45 days to get things in line.

In order to avoid a taking, Whaleback has to pay the most delinquent taxes in the amount of about \$10,000. Once the deed has been filed they would have to pay the full amount. If the oldest taxes are paid before the deeding they're fine until May 2012.

Ambulance Billing:

Bruce Berin of Certified Ambulance Group came to meet with the Board of Selectmen and provided revenue projects for soft-billing of ambulance calls.

The Board discussed the revenue projections and the possibility of a full-time daytime ambulance staff when adding the savings for Lebanon daytime ambulance service to the projected revenues. If there is full-time, daytime staffing, on-call staffing for nights and weekends would need to be put into place.

The Board unanimously felt that if the Town is going to implement soft-billing for ambulance service that must be coupled with improved levels of service. Bob Cusick agreed.

Soft-billing involves billing patients, their insurance companies, Medicare and Medicaid. If an individual can't afford to pay the charges will not be forwarded to a collection agency s they would be with hard-billing.

Mr. Cummings expressed his desire to have a paramedic on the daytime staff, as well as his willingness to pay a paramedic overtime rate when needed to provide the same level of service on nights and weekends.

Mr. Crate's biggest concern has been that elderly residents might not call for an ambulance because they can't afford it.

Dwight Marchetti asked if there were any incentives for ambulance personnel to get additional training. Mr. Cummings is supportive of this idea and would like to have the entire staff trained to at least the intermediate level.

Mr. Cusick said the Selectmen need to get behind the process to ensure the health and safety of our community.

Mr. Kluge expressed the need to be able to say it won't raise the tax rate, to which Dan Kiley added that he would pay the extra \$20 in his tax bill for the improved service.

The Board discussed a timeline for implementation of the proposed program, including the daytime staffing and soft-billing for ambulance service. There are a number of things that must be coordinated as this is a major change in the way the Ambulance Department currently operates. Staffing and coordination of staff, and funding were discussed.

In order to start billing, the Town needs to acquire a provider number. This process can take a number of months, but can be started now.

Certified Ambulance Group charges 8% to administer soft-billing. Mr. Cummings asked if this was non-negotiable, to which Mr. Berin said "everything's negotiable."

The Selectmen asked if this plan would have Budget Committee support. Mr. Schneider believes it would if it can be supported with revenues. The Board further discussed funding and budgeting issues. Rather than having a contracted service with Lebanon under the new plan, mutual aid would be put into place.

Mr. Kluge said the Board now has projections for revenues. He'd like to see projections of expenses as well.

Mr. Cummings said the Board should set a date when we want this to happen. There's a lot of work to do.

Mr. Berin informed the Board that Certified Ambulance Group can help with the paperwork so on January 1st is practically turn-key.

At the next Selectboard meeting, Mr. Schneider will provide expense projections. He also needs to meet with the FAST Squad.

Mr. Kluge made a motion to move forward with an ambulance study of billing and the professionalization of service with an implementation goal of January 1, 2012, Mr. Cummings seconded, vote unanimous in favor of the motion.

Enfield Channel 8:

Currently, Comcast Franchise Fees are collected and counted as general revenue. Curtis Payne is requesting that the Franchise Fees be transferred to the Enfield Channel 8 TV station, specifically to hire a program manager.

Mr. Kluge is not sure it has a lot of support. Given today's budgetary times is this the time to give all of the revenue to Enfield Ch. 8? Mr. Kluge is willing to give a portion of it.

\$30,000 in revenue is budgeted, but we're bringing in about \$40,000, enough to hire a program manager. The cable franchise fees are user fees.

Mr. Kluge feels this is a luxury that Enfield cannot afford. The Selectmen said they would buy equipment and be supportive, but he would vote against the entire sum.

Mr. Schneider said the channel can be and should be better. They need some type of funding. Mr. Payne has a couple of interns from the high school. Mr. Schneider has asked Mr. Payne for a budget.

The Selectmen discussed providing funding to Channel 8 in the amount of \$20,000 - \$25,000, maximum. Mr. Kluge thinks it should be half of whatever Comcast pays the Town. Mr. Cummings expressed support for ½ of the Comcast fees.

Tax Increment Finance District: Public Discussion Meeting:

A public discussion meeting has been tentative scheduled for Tuesday, December 6th at the Community Building. This is a TIF Committee driven event and the meetings should be TIF driven from here on out. The Committee will see how it goes and determine later if another public discussion meeting is needed in January. The Selectmen are not expected to be active participants.

FastRoads Connection License Agreement:

The FastRoads Connection License Agreement is the first step for allowing our organization to connect municipal buildings to this fiber system. The Selectmen were supportive of the signing of this agreement by the Town Manager.

2012 Budget:

Mr. Schneider reported that one assumption made when compiling the initial 2012 Budget is a 2% salary adjustment for employees. Debt service for the Public Works Facility was \$120,000 annually. This debt was paid off in 2011, but was included in the 2012 budget. The \$120,000 has nothing tied to it at the moment, but there is a strong chance of utilizing it in another area of the budget. If we don't want to raise Town taxes we will need to find another \$200,000 in cuts from the budget.

Rooms & Meals tax revenue from the State is expected to stay the same. Retirement percentages are not changing again; we're at the new normal. There will, again, be no Shared Revenue from the State. There will be no change in Highway Block Grant funding.

Deputy Treasurer:

Donna Perillo is leaving the Town as Treasurer as of Thursday, November 10. Joyce Osgood is her deputy and will serve as Treasurer until the next election in March 2012. As Deputy

Treasurer, Mrs. Osgood cannot appoint another deputy treasurer, instead the Selectmen must do so. Mrs. Osgood recommends the appointment of Lisa Largent Gelin as Assistant Treasurer.

Mr. Crate moved to appoint Lisa Largent Gelin as Assistant Treasurer, Mr. Kluge seconded, vote unanimous in favor of the motion.

Board and Committee Memberships:

There are currently three vacancies on the Conservation Commission. Alan Strickland, Conservation Commission Chairman, sent an email asking the Board to appoint Phil King and Anne Steel to the Conservation Commission. Dwight Marchetti also submitted a request for appointment to the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Crate moved to appoint Phil King, Anne Steel and Dwight Marchetti to the Conservation Commission, Mr. Cummings seconded, vote unanimous in favor of the motion.

Phil Vermeer has verbally expressed interest in serving on the Energy Committee. Mr. Vermeer will be asked to submit his request in writing for the Board's consideration at its next meeting.

Shaker Hill Road Winter Maintenance:

Mr. Schneider spoke to the Town's attorney, Barton Mayer, regarding the issue of winter maintenance of Shaker Hill Road, a State road. Mr. Schneider wrote a letter to the State, in accordance with RSA 91-A, requesting any laws, agreements, etc., regarding the maintenance of Shaker Hill Road.

Mr. Mayer says the Town has a righteous argument: the State has not done the summer maintenance that it has agreed to do, so the Town should not have to do winter maintenance which is damaging to the Town's equipment due to the poor condition of the road.

The State has informed the Town that there will be no roadside mowing of Shaker Hill Road until 2013. The State has no intention of doing anything to prepare the road for winter maintenance and has no intention of providing winter maintenance.

Mr. Cummings asked who made the decision to plow Shaker Hill road on Halloween.

Mr. Schneider is not sure. The Town didn't expect snow so soon, expecting a response from the State before the first snow. Mr. Mayer's opinion is the Town should continue to plow the road as not plowing it wouldn't strengthen our argument.

Mr. Crate feels the Public Works Department did the right thing by plowing Shaker Hill Road and he fully supports it. The State wants the Town to take over the road – we don't want it. Mr. Crate wants to pursue this issue to the fullest.

Mr. Kluge asked if, while we wait for this to go through the courts, do we plow the road.

Mr. Crate doesn't think we can do otherwise.

Main Street Water Main Replacement:

The replacement of the Main Street water main will be sent out to bid. The engineer is preparing specs.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**Dwight Marchetti – Suky’s Marsh Sign:**

In October 2010 the Commission, of which Mr. Marchetti was an active member, had a lengthy discussion about restricting use of foot trails at Suky’s Marsh and Bicknell Brook due to a citizen wanting to ride a horse on the trails. Suky’s Marsh is a 12.1 acre parcel on Shaker Hill Road.

Alan Strickland, Conservation Commission Chairman, wanted to restrict Suky’s Marsh prohibiting hunting and tree stands. After discussion back in October 2010 it was the consensus of the Commission to omit hunting and tree stand restrictions. A 10” square sign at Suky’s Marsh was only recently put up. In the lower corner the sign reads, “Foot travel only. No hunting” Mr. Marchetti attended the November meeting of the Conservation Commission to discuss the sign posted at Suky’s Marsh. Mr. Marchetti doesn’t believe the Conservation Commission has the authority to make that decision. Mr. Marchetti asked for a vote of the Selectmen to have the ‘no hunting’ restriction removed from the sign. Mr. Marchetti has not heard of any problems with hunters at Suky’s Marsh before. There have been no events to precipitate this.

Mr. Schneider informed the Board that Mr. Strickland admitted that he was acting on something he felt was important. He does not question that the Selectmen are the ones with the authority to make this decision. Mr. Strickland felt it was a safety issue as Suky’s Marsh is surrounded by residences.

Mr. Kluge agreed that it is a small marsh surrounded by residences.

Mr. Schneider is not sure this in an active hunting area.

Mr. Marchetti added that if it’s going to be posted, it needs to be posted properly.

Police Chief Crate has not received any complaints.

Mr. Crate moved to remove the “no hunting” from the Suky’s Marsh sign, Mr. Kluge seconded, vote unanimous in favor of the motion.

IX. OTHER ITEMS**Proposed Route 4 Water & Sewer Extension:**

Mr. Cummings asked when the Selectmen should make the policy decision regarding connections to the proposed extension. Mr. Schneider replied that it should be done before Town Meeting.

Mr. Cummings would like to see a waiver of connection fees if they hook up when the line goes by.

Discussion is needed regarding the length of the waiver, which is currently 7 years.

Parking at Water Tower:

Mr. Crate has noticed people are parking at the water tower and going out hunting. They're blocking the gate.

A "No Parking" sign will be put up.

CONFERENCE

I. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kluge moved to adjourn at 7:48 PM, Mr. Crate seconded, vote unanimous in favor of the motion. Meeting adjourned.