

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

MINUTES of January 20, 2009

Board of Selectmen: Rebecca S. Stewart, Chairman; Donald J. Crate, Sr.; John W. Kluge

Administrative Staff: Steven Schneider, Town Manager; Alisa D. Bonnette, Executive Assistant

Others: Lee Carrier, Budget Committee Chairman; Bob Cusick; Dan Kiley

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 5, 2009:

Mr. Kluge noted a typographical error on page 5 “lat” should read “last.” Mr. Kluge moved to accept the minutes of January 5, 2009 as corrected; Mr. Crate seconded, vote unanimous.

August 4, 2008:

The Board was informed that there was no record of approval of the August 4, 2008 minutes. Mr. Kluge moved to approve the minutes of August 4, 2008; Mr. Crate seconded, vote unanimous.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

Trustee of Trust Funds 4th Quarter Report, December 31, 2008:

The annual yield is 1.1%.

Standard Dredge & Fill, NH DOT, NH Route 4A/Knox River, Culvert Maintenance

IV. BOARD REPORTS

Planning Board:

Mr. Kluge reported that Wendell Smith and a representative of the Enfield Village Association came before the Planning Board for a site plan review. Mr. Smith and his daughter would like to open a business of green energy products at 78 Main Street. They hope to make connections with installers. The building will need a significant amount of work. The business would be located on the first floor and there are plans for 2 apartments on upper levels. The Planning Board approved the project.

Heritage Commission:

Mrs. Stewart reported a request from the woman who did the inventory of the theatre drops for a status report. Mrs. Stewart would recommend to the Heritage Commission that the Town make a Moose Plate grant application this year for preservation of the drops.

The Heritage Commission meeting was postponed from this Thursday to next Thursday, January 29th.

V. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Stimulus Package:

The Board received correspondence from Congressman Paul Hodes regarding the stimulus package that President Obama and Congress are developing. Congressman Hodes explains where he thinks the money will come from and asks that the Town keep him informed of any projects that might not be covered by the stimulus package.

Mr. Schneider met with the architect for the new Library building. Plans will be ready March 9th and the project "shovel ready" March 10th.

Friday, Mr. Schneider attended a meeting in Concord with the Secretary Campbell of NH DOT. They spoke about what money is available as part of the stimulus package. Mr. Schneider provided the Selectmen with a copy of information provided at that meeting that provides several breakdowns of where the money might be used. It is not all for infrastructure.

Broadband money is available. That project is far enough along in the pipeline to be eligible for funding.

The State expects to receive \$150 million, about half of what they had hoped for.

Mr. Schneider will continue to push for Enfield projects. It should be stressed with each project how it will impact the economy and the region. For instance, workforce education can be provided by computers available in the new Library building.

Mr. Schneider will write a letter to the Congressman to push Enfield projects such as the Library, Shaker Bridge replacement and water & sewer infrastructure. He will also reach out to Executive Councilor Raymond Burton. State Representatives can also be contacted.

Mrs. Stewart said the Shaker Bridge would be a priority for her over the Library.

Terri Dudley Show:

Mr. Schneider was interviewed by Terri Dudley as part of the Terri Dudley Show on WTSL. It will be broadcast on Sunday, January 25 at 10 AM. They discussed the budget process, human services arrangement between the Town of Enfield and City of Lebanon, the good work done by EVA and the bridge work completed by the State that has improved downtown Enfield. Mrs. Dudley liked the Enfield tradition of rotating the chairmanship of the Board of Selectmen.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS**Broadband:**

Bob Cusick feels it is critically important that the Town of Enfield have broadband service across the entire Town. The value of homes are critically dependent on broadband.

Mrs. Stewart invited further comments from the public; being none, Mrs. Stewart closed the meeting to public comments at 6:26 PM

VII. OLD BUSINESS**Budget:**

Mr. Schneider met with the Budget Committee to review changes as described in his January 5, 2009 memo to the Board of Selectmen. The Budget Committee agreed with the change and that the tax rate be kept at \$6.86. To that end, they were able to add back a few items, as follows: Police Cruiser (\$24,500),

DPW Pick-up Truck (\$22,000), Library Book money (\$5,000), Fire Department (\$15,000), Personnel Changes (\$25,000) and Miscellaneous Items (\$10,000). These changes would keep the tax rate either at the current rate or a few pennies lower. The budget process is always fluid right up until the end, so the final version will be printed the day after petitioned articles may be submitted, February 4th.

The personnel changes would allow a part-time employee to move to full-time. The majority of the increase would be due to benefits, rather than the number of hours for the position.

Mr. Kluge asked if any new hires were planned. He was informed that the 7th officer would be hired and the 2nd person on the grounds crew as well. These positions were included in the original budget proposal. No new positions would be added.

Mrs. Steward expressed concern about the cut in the paving budget. She asked if it was maintenance paving and if it was wise to cut it. She was informed that the cut in paving would have eliminated paving on Lapan Circle. Potholes would still be patched and the road would get no worse than it is currently.

Discussion ensued regarding the purchase of new vehicles and the affect this would have on other lines in the budget, such as reduced maintenance needs, the ability of Town Meeting to vote a reduction in the bottom line of the budget and the need to maintain the tax rate at stable levels to avoid spikes in the future.

Mr. Kluge inquired into raises for employees. Mr. Carrier informed the Board there was an overall increase in salary and benefits of 6.5%.

Mr. Schneider explained that the maximum wage increase for employees would be 2.5%, plus longevity pay that is distributed to employees with 10 years of service or more. At ten years of service an employee is paid the equivalent of one week's pay. Mr. Schneider stated that this is a benefit that deserves some review. He stated that what the Town pays it's employees is in the middle of the road of comparably sized municipalities.

Mr. Kluge expressed concern over the wage increases provided in 2008, as he wasn't aware that employees received up to 4.5% increases. He expressed concern because some employers are letting people go. He does not think in this climate that the Town will lose any employees.

Mr. Cusick feels Mr. Schneider has done a good job budgeted, but feels there is still the possibility of a shortfall in revenues during the coming year. He suggested purchasing the cruiser and the pick-up truck and holding the remainder of the money in an account to be expended only if revenues allowed.

Mr. Schneider offered to crunch the numbers to see how changes in the budget will affect the tax rate. He will prepare a report based on a tax rate from \$6.40 to the current rate of \$6.86.

Mr. Kluge expressed his concerns and nervousness about the economic climate. Mrs. Stewart stated that his concerns are justified.

Mr. Schneider added that the largest impact on the tax rate is on the school side.

Mr. Kiley stated that registrations provide the greatest amount of revenue to the Town and people aren't buying new cars. The problem with making a part-time position a full-time position is that it's "the gift that keeps on giving."

Mr. Schneider stated that he was sensitive to that. Currently at 30 hours, the position could be increased by 4 hours without paying benefits. Mrs. Stewart feels that this year that would be a good compromise.

Mr. Carrier told the Board that he'd like to leave this meeting with a tax rate goal. If the Board looks at the cuts made by Mr. Schneider it was about \$100,000; the cruiser and pick-up are about ½ that. Take the other \$50,000 and put it into reserves for next year or the year after.

Discussion ensued regarding the best way to keep the funds available for the coming year. Mrs. Stewart recommended funding the cruiser and truck as recommended, but not to fund the other items; the compromise being to add hours to the part-time position without pushing into a full-time position with benefits.

Mr. Kluge would support that.

Mr. Schneider said the remainder could go into the Public Works paving line.

Town Report:

The Board considered what to use as a cover photo; Whitney Hall was selected.

The report will be dedicated to Lee Carrier who has served on the Budget Committee and will not run again in 2009, and who has also served the Town through the Enfield Village Association.

Draft Warrant:

The Board discussed the draft warrant for the 2009 Town Meeting. Article 4 pertains to the closing of the Municipal Building, Land Acquisition and Sidewalk Construction Capital Reserve Funds and the appropriation of funds for the acquisition of Public Works vehicles and equipment. This article will be reworded to appropriate the funds to the Public Works Vehicles & Equipment Capital Reserve Fund since the vehicles to be purchased are not yet identified.

Article 5 is an anticipated petitioned warrant article regarding the modification of the Tax Increment Finance District boundaries.

Article 8 pertains to third part ambulance billing. This article was included on the draft warrant as there was previous discussion of the possibility that it would come up again. Bob Cusick stated that he would not pursue this issue this year.

Mrs. Stewart inquired about the program in Grafton and how that was working for that community. She feels there would be a better argument for billing in Enfield if there's a good track record in a neighboring community.

Bob Cusick feels it would be best if the Town had at least one EMS on in Enfield during the day due to the 20 minute response time from Lebanon. That 20 minutes can be critical.

The Board agreed to remove the ambulance billing article from the warrant.

Mr. Schneider informed the Board that there is an article that he would recommend including on the warrant regarding WCNH.net. It would not be a monied article, but would authorize the Town to enter into an inter-municipal agreement for a network among the towns of Orford, Lyme, Hanover, Enfield, Springfield, New London, Sunapee and Newbury. It doesn't commit the Town to any financial obligation and the Town can withdraw at any time. This article will be going before the Town Meeting of each of the referenced communities in 2009. What the agreement does is allow us to form a corporation. The corporation then is liable for debt, hiring staff, etc.

No up-front money is required. The only cost to the Town would be to connect Town buildings to the broadband infrastructure.

Mr. Carrier asked if the provider runs into problems, how is that shared?

Mr. Schneider explained that the financing proposed is capital lease. They go to the capital market and that group will own everything.

Mr. Carrier noted that this brings up the need for contracts and pricing.

Mrs. Stewart said the Town is only liable for the Town's use of the service, not the hardware, which is owned by the corporation.

Mr. Schneider reiterated that this doesn't commit the Town. The Town can walk away at any point. The article will be very short, though the agreement would be included in the supporting detail.

Mrs. Stewart inquired into the timeline for availability of the service.

Mr. Schneider replied that it depends on the economic climate. If the capital market improves the project could begin in 2010.

Mr. Crate moved to add the WCHN.net article to the warrant; Mr. Kluge seconded, vote unanimous.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Administrative Items:

The Board reviewed and approved the following documents: Property Tax Refunds, Franchise Agreement Extension, Certificate of Yield Taxes Assessed.

IX. OTHER ITEMS

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, February 3, 2009, 6:00 PM, Whitney Hall Conference Room

Other:

Mr. Schneider received a note from Robert & Nancy Foley informing him that Comcast provides a senior discount to customers in the Town of Plainfield. That might be something to bring up at the hearing.

CONFERENCE

I. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Mr. Kluge moved to enter non-public session at 7:42 PM, RSA 91-A:3 II (e); Mr. Crate seconded. Roll call vote: Mr. Kluge – aye, Mr. Crate – aye, Mrs. Stewart – aye.

The Board discussed a pending legal claim relating to the 2008 painting contract for Whitney Hall.

The Board discussed sidewalk and equipment maintenance issues.

Mr. Crate moved to come out of non-public session at 7:56 PM; Mr. Kluge seconded, vote unanimous.

II. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Crate moved to adjourn at 7:56 PM; Mr. Kluge seconded, vote unanimous.