

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

MINUTES of January 22, 2008

Board of Selectmen: Curtis Payne, Chairman; Rebecca S. Stewart; Donald J. Crate, Sr.

Administrative Staff: Steven Schneider, Town Manager; Alisa D. Bonnette, Recording Secretary; Ken Daniels, Director of Public Works

Others: Dan Kiley; Bob Cusick; Shirley Green; Francine Lozeau, Bart Thurber, Library Trustees; Dr. David Beaufait;

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Crate moved to accept the minutes of January 7, 2008 as printed; Mrs. Stewart seconded, vote unanimous.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

Town Clerk Report ~ Year End 2007:

\$778,836.93 came in, somewhat under what was budgeted (\$780,000). The expected revenue for 2008 was reduced even further to \$770,000. The shortfall in 2007 was made up on interest on investments. New car sales have an impact on this revenue line. If new car sales are down, so are Town Clerk revenues.

Planning Board Public Hearing Notice ~ Wednesday, January 23, 2008:

This hearing is in regard to property on Blacksmith Alley. There is now a proposal for a preschool. Mr. Crate's only concern is parking.

Mr. Schneider explained that there are some slots along the side of the building, and some behind the building. After this spring the Town-owned are can be marked. Mr. Schneider does not imagine there will be a need for a lot of people.

Dan Kiley stated that there are plans to put in a play yard with fence around it.

Mr. Schneider said the information could be shared with the Planning board that the Selectmen's goal is to get more parking, but he Selectmen haven't decided how it will be used, such as permitted or overnight.

Trustee of Trust Funds ~ Year End 2007:

From first to fourth quarter about \$9,500 interest was accrued. Mr. Schneider believes this report reflects year-end transfers. The Technology and Reappraisal Capital Reserve Funds (CRF) had large withdrawals in 2007. The Land Acquisition CRF has a sizeable balance (\$110,692.34)

Hazard Mitigation Plan:

The Town of Springfield sent an invitation to Enfield to participate in a Hazard Mitigation Plan on January 26. Unfortunately, this conflicts with other scheduled meetings.

Attorney Opinion ~ Petitioned Warrant Article:

Bart Mayer, Upton & Hatfield, the Town's Attorney, provided his opinion on the petitioned warrant article relative to elected officials being unable to serve if they have unpaid property taxes. It is Attorney Mayer's opinion that this article is void, illegal and unenforceable. In spite of this fact, the article does have to be placed on the warrant. Attorney Mayer's opinion will be included in the warrant narrative in the Town Report.

IV. BOARD REPORTS

Capital Improvement Program Committee:

Mrs. Stewart reported that the CIP Committee met January 10. The Committee finished the 2008 expenditures, which were provided to the Budget Committee for consideration. This is as far as the Committee could go with it this year.

Heritage Commission:

The next meeting of the Heritage Commission is Thursday, January 24.

Budget Committee:

Mr. Schneider reported that the Budget Committee met on January 12. They went through the budget and identified areas for some trimming. They will meet again on Thursday, January 24 to continue review of the budget.

Planning Board:

The Planning Board voted in opposition of Paul Mirski's Village Plan Alternative for which a petitioned warrant article will appear on the ballot.

There is a project proposed for property on George Hill. This property has serious slopes and water running on it. More information will be available after the next Planning Board meeting.

V. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Police Facility:

The Police Facility has developed a leak coming down the chimney and leaking into the conference room. It's believed the chimney is plugged with birds and nests. Once the chimney is cleaned out a cap will be installed to keep the birds from entering.

Ambulance:

The cost of a new ambulance has been quoted at \$142,000. The City of Batavia, NY just purchased an ambulance for \$89,000, for which Mr. Schneider has the specifications. It could have a significant impact on the Town's budget if the cost of the Enfield ambulance could be reduced. Mr. Schneider has spoken with Lee Carrier and Kim Withrow and emailed Mike Mehegan. The specifications from Batavia may not be completely transferable to Enfield. Ms. Withrow and Mr. Mehegan have the specifications to review. Mr. Schneider will update the Board as things progress.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS**Bob Cusick ~ Revenues & Budget:**

Mr. Cusick noted that Enfield is at a point where we have a lot of taxes going up. This year especially, the Board should pay strict attention. Car sales are flat. Foreclosures are going up. Sources of revenue are going to become more complex. The Board should take a serious look at the Town's budget. After looking at salaries, fuel, etc., look at the variables, things we can postpone and make do with what we have.

Mr. Cusick went on to discuss the new high school proposal. It's being said by some, in essence, that there are three alternatives for the high school: pay \$39.5 million, pay large amounts of money for rehabilitation of the existing building or have your children's education suffer.

School and County taxes are expected to increase. There are a lot of things going on and Mr. Cusick is depending on the Selectmen to hold down their end and the School to hold down their end.

Dan Kiley asked if the Selectmen were going to take a stand on the proposed school. Mr. Payne responded that the Selectboard has not discussed it.

It was noted by Mr. Cusick that the school design is modular and could be built in stages. Mr. Payne said he should relay that to the School Board not the Selectboard. Mr. Cusick replied that he has.

Rebecca Stewart ~ Petitioned Warrant Article:

Mrs. Stewart noted that there was another letter in the Valley News regarding the petitioned warrant article relative to elected officials not holding office if they have unpaid property taxes. This latest letter was from Patrick Thayer. Mr. Thayer attempting to contact Town Departments to no avail. Mrs. Stewart does not recall ever having met him or had communications with him.

He said in his letter that officials of this Town are feeding at the public trough. He may be a little ill informed. There are few officials that receive remuneration besides the Selectmen. And the \$3,000 received by the Selectmen covers personal expenses related to the position. Mrs. Stewart would be happy to talk to Mr. Thayer.

Regarding this petitioned article about not being able to serve on Town boards and committees, Mr. Cusick went on-line to look for information. Mr. Cusick thinks people are looking at this

[unpaid taxes] as a free ride. It's not a free ride. There is a high interest rate that delinquent taxpayers are subject to, it's reported to credit agencies, and it also precedes your mortgage. If this is illegal why is it going before Town Meeting?

Mr. Schneider replied that as a petitioned warrant article the Selectmen are bound to place it on the warrant.

Dr. Beaufait, the Town Moderator, noted that the Town has dealt with plenty of advisory warrant articles by petition. There is a possibility that some articles can be amended to be legal, though he doesn't know about this one. The same process will be followed at Town Meeting as has been in the past.

Mr. Schneider noted that where it appears on the warrant is up to the Selectmen.

Mrs. Stewart stated that to the best of her knowledge anyone behind on their taxes is not doing so out of protest, but must make tough financial choices.

Mr. Payne closed the floor to public comments at 6:35 PM/

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Grafton County Correctional Facility:

The Board was provided with a Project Update January 2008 Newsletter and Financial Impact Information. They looked at the effect on the project costs by increased staffing. They calculated the financial impact through 2012. The financial information includes their budget, how the bond payment affects the budget and taxes for the affected communities. They've done the work to figure it out.

Mr. Payne pointed out that complaining that they didn't put funds away could only be done for so long. The jail is needed. They've trimmed what they can.

Mrs. Stewart acknowledged that she's been something of a naysayer, but they listened to the public and done what they can to limit the impact on taxes.

2008 Budget:

Mr. Schneider continued the benefits discussion from the last meeting. The Budget Committee for the most part is supportive of the additions to the plan. The Board received a memo with Mr. Schneider's recommendation for changes to the employee compensation plan:

- 1) On additional personal day to be added, for a total of three (3) days. This will have no impact on the budget.
- 2) Establishment of a deferred compensation plan with an employer contribution of up to 1% of an employee's annual salary. This will have an impact of about \$15,000.
- 3) Establishment of a sick leave buy-back program that will be capped at \$1,500. This program would allow employees to cash in at their full hourly rate up to 40 hours of accumulated sick time; 41-100 hours could be cashed in at 35% of the employee's hourly rate; 101-250 hours

could be cashed in at 40% of the employee's hourly rate; anything up to 480 hours could be cashed in at 45% of the employee's hourly rate.

This is all in response to requiring employees to contribute 5% to their health plan.

Mr. Payne commended Mr. Schneider for being fair and flexible. There were changes needed. Both sides need to come into the 21st century. For non-police employees another personal day is important. It's a win-win situation. Employees know as insurance costs rise so will their contributions, but this will be balance with these measures.

Mr. Schneider said that at the past two meetings he and the Budget Committee spoke about trimming the operational budget. They were able to trim about \$100,000 out of the budget while still being able to achieve what they want to achieve.

There are currently four separate line items for bridges, sidewalks, guardrails and drainage. This will be combined into a single maintenance line and used where it's most needed. This allows for more flexibility in managing the projects and allotted funds.

\$100,000 was cut, but more may be possible at the next Budget Committee meeting.

Regarding Public Works Vehicles and Equipment (4 yard dump truck, SUV, pick-up, mechanic's truck and chipper) the Budget Committee is pretty adamant about supporting the 4-yard dump truck and chipper. If the Town is going to accept brush it's best to have a chipper that accepts what people are going to bring.

The other vehicles are replacing current trucks. The Budget Committee looked at how we budget for this and suggested pooling the money and letting the manager figure out how best to use the available dollars. Give Ken Daniels the money and let him get what he can out of it, perhaps buying used. It works in our personal lives, why not our professional ones?

Mr. Crate voiced his opposition to the purchase of used vehicles and equipment. The Town has been that route before. He would not be in favor of purchasing used vehicles. The Town has spent a lot of money on used equipment. You're buying someone else's headache. There's a reason they are getting rid of it.

Mr. Daniels noted that he has seen the Town put used vehicles and equipment into service and had problems. Putting in a lump sum of funding will just change the approach. While in the past the Town has usually gone out to bid, they may have to kick a few tires and dicker a bit.

Mr. Payne likes the idea of letting Mr. Daniels decide what he has to have for his department.

Mr. Schneider values Mr. Crate's opinion. Sometimes what you look at it from a dollar standpoint it makes sense, but in reality it doesn't. It's hard; you don't want to have a spike in the tax rate unnecessarily.

Discussion ensued regarding equipment and its useful life, followed by discussion of the undesignated fund balance to finance some purchases.

Mr. Schneider does not recommend using the undesignated fund balance to purchase recurring capital expenses. It sets up an unrealistic spending pattern.

David Stewart asked if it's possible to put more money into Public Works vehicle funds and less into the undesignated fund balance.

It was explained that the money that goes into the undesignated fund balance is the unexpended appropriations at year's end. A small portion of undesignated funds is used to write down the tax rate each year.

Mrs. Stewart spoke about use of the undesignated fund balance for the purchase of Public Works vehicles and equipment since this fund continues to grow. There are some capital items the Town maybe should have purchased in previous years. Instead of raising taxes to pay for these capital items that we should have purchased in prior years, perhaps some of the undesignated fund balance could be used for these purchases.

Dan Kiley noted that the Town needs to fund for that equipment. The Town needs to fund for depreciation, plus 5% for increases.

Capital Reserve Funds and use of those funds for long-range planning was discussed. Mrs. Stewart suggests putting money away. Some items will be purchased outright. The law requires a six-year capital improvement plan. The CIP Committee's philosophy is to look at 15 years.

Mr. Schneider explained that the Town's undesignated fund balance is at a more than comfortable level from DRA's perspective. It is expected that a 2007 surplus will add to the undesignated balance. Is it the Board's recommendation to utilize undesignated funds for some of the equipment that Public Works needs? Mr. Payne said he would not be in favor of it this year.

Mr. Schneider will look at the undesignated fund balance, talk to the Town's auditors, see where the Town is and what the Board can do.

Mrs. Stewart is in favor of using some undesignated funds for the purchase of Public Works vehicles and equipment if there is a sufficient balance to do so. She is not suggesting the Board deplete that fund.

Mr. Schneider believes the fund is about \$1.1 million. 8% or 9% is well within DRA's recommendation. He would not want to go below 5%. Mr. Crate was thinking of a minimum of 7%.

Mr. Schneider recommended against dipping into the undesignated fund for operational needs.

Mrs. Stewart suggested the Town not fund capital expenditures out of current revenue that it doesn't have, if there are undesignated funds that could be used and it won't bring the fund below the Board's comfort level.

2008 Town Meeting:

The Board reviewed the draft warrant for the 2008 Town Meeting.

There are options for property tax exemptions for alternative energy systems: solar, wind-powered and wood heating. These are the only alternative energy systems for which the State allows exemptions.

There is an article for payments to existing capital reserve funds. The amounts in the drafted article are those currently identified by the Budget Committee. \$40,000 to paint Whitney Hall was removed from the operational budget and is suggested as a payment to the Whitney Hall Renovation capital reserve fund for which the Board of Selectmen is named agent to expend. It also includes payments to Sand/Salt Facility, Library Technology, Fire Vehicle/Equipment and Emergency Services & Equipment (for a generator).

An article is included for the transfer of \$2,100 from the undesignated fund balance to the Cemetery Maintenance Fund. This amount represents the revenues from the sale of cemetery lots in 2007.

There is a very brief article for ambulance billing. The narrative for this article will include the reasoning behind this article.

The Board of Selectmen determines the order in which the articles will appear on the warrant. Typically the funded articles are first and the others follow; perhaps the Library article(s), then budget, capital reserve funding, alternative energy exemptions, then the petitioned article regarding wetlands and finally the petitioned article regarding elected officials with unpaid property taxes.

Mr. Payne and Mr. Crate agreed they would like the majority of people there for the monied articles.

The Board considered the wording of the alternative energy exemptions and how much to exempt. There is one individual on George Hill that is looking for this exemption. It is believed there are others that would also take advantage of these exemptions. The Board will consider these further and make a decision at the next meeting.

Another article the Board is going to see is from the Heritage Commission regarding the National Historic Register District designation for Enfield Village. The 2008 meeting needs to vote for or against the formation of the District. The Heritage Commission meets Thursday, January 24 and will work on the final wording for the article. The Budget currently includes an appropriation of \$5,700 to be placed in a new capital reserve fund, so formation of the District would be 3 years away.

Mrs. Stewart requested the addition of an article to extend a contract for the theatre.

Mr. Schneider reported that to date there have been some bumps, but they haven't been large. At election there was maybe an extra hour spent on set-up beyond what would normally be required. The plays have been fairly successful. We're at a point to discuss a long-term agreement.

WCNH.net:

The Selectmen each received a financial package and intergovernmental agreement. The financial package demonstrates what the program will do for the Town of New London. There will soon be information available on all 8 communities.

The intergovernmental agreement is a trickier debate whether it will require Town Meeting approval. Mr. Schneider is extremely hesitant to go to Town Meeting until he has all of the financials. He does not want to proceed until he knows how it is going to be funded.

The concept they're using is a capital lease where money is taken and used as leverage to finance further development. It sounds like it still relies on municipalities to bear a lot of the burden.

Bob Cusick spoke to Verizon and Comcast. Neither company has plans to expand to anyone, any place. He believes it will be harder to sell a house without ready access to the Internet.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS**Election:**

Dr. Beaufait, speaking as Moderator, explained that last Tuesday served as test run for the November election. Everything worked quite well. About 1700 voters turned out. There was a little parking back up, though it helped that Town staff, election workers, and campaign workers parked elsewhere.

There were more than 10% new voters. This caused a bit of a line for registrations, but this was alleviated by Carolee Higbee and Sandy Romano who set up extra stations.

The Town is a little short of the statutory requirement for the number of voting booths. It might also be beneficial to add a few more ballot clerks.

There was a short discussion of how things were set up and minor improvements that might be made.

Sailing Club:

Mr. Schneider explained that this is in relation to the old motel property. You can see just by the Town plowing out the area the extensive use. There are about 20 bob houses on the lake. The Sailing Club would like to talk about use of the property this year. For the near short term (next 5 years) this is a possible location for them to stage and/or moor their boats. The Town has no intent to put in a beach in the near future.

Dr. Beaufait spoke as a representative of the Sailing Club. The Shaker Village Sailing Club is in the process of changing its name now that it no longer has use of the space at Shaker Village. The Club is non-profit community based organization. They charge low members fees to cover insurance on the club boats, 2 sail sloops and a couple of small racing dinghies, as well as some liability coverage for on the water events. The Club has about 40 families as members, a slight decrease from last year due to the problems with location. Seven or eight Enfield families are members.

The Club realizes this is a potential precedent being set for use of public property for sustained use by a group. Their suggestion for sustained use is that it be for non-profit organizations and community based groups. The Club is not requesting exclusive use and would not support any group that was requesting exclusive use. The Town should also look carefully at liability issues.

Careful consideration and negotiation for maintenance should be done. The Club is asking for access through the Dept. of Transportation (DOT) property that is now managed by the Town for sailing and on-motorized craft. They have already received an endorsement from the Conservation Commission. They would like to have swimming for recreational purposes “at your own risk” and would like to address the broken down stairway that leads to the water. The Club spoke to the Conservation committer about replacing the stairs with a grassy ramp suitable for non-motorized launching.

Mr. Payne said he would love to see a written proposal, review it, and then speak to the Club in more detail. The thoughts are good, but he would simply like to see it in writing first.

Dr. Beaufait asked whether or not some temporary boat covers might be feasible, which could be helpful for land storage. He also thought consideration should be made for a porta-john and trash removal.

Mrs. Stewart said she would like to hear more, but perhaps they could submit a site plan. Mr. Schneider agreed, stating that the proposal should list the number of boats, buildings and storage that would be requested. Mr. Payne would also like the plan for the stairs to be included.

Mr. Schneider would not recommend sole use by the Sailing Club.

Pertaining to the plan, Dr. Beaufait asked if there was any area the Board would like them to keep free. Mrs. Schneider said the Conservation Commission has identified a path that links the rail trail to that site. They’re going closer to the Village and clearing out brush. That corner should probably remain open.

Another member of the Club noted that it’s important to the Club as they move forward that the Club be on the same base as the Board of Selectmen.

The Selectmen look forward to receiving a written proposal.

Administrative Items:**Tax Increment Finance Committee Appointment:**

Mrs. Stewart moved to appoint Ken Daniels as Tax Increment Finance Advisory Committee member; Mr. Crate seconded, vote unanimous.

Petition & Pole Licenses:

The Board reviewed and approved petition & Pole Licenses.

IX. OTHER ITEMS**Next Meeting:**

The next Selectboard meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 5, 2008, 8 6:00 PM. Whitney Hall Conference Room

Public Budget Hearing:

The Public Budget Hearing is scheduled for Monday, February 4, 2008 at 6:00 PM at the Public Works Building. The snow date is February 5.

CONFERENCE**I. LIBRARY TRUSTEES**

Bart Thurber, Library Trustee, distributed materials to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Thurber summarized the Library Trustees' annual report, which addressed the formation of a new Building Committee and funding issues. Funding included the allocation of funds from a prior appropriation, Trustee funds, the Byrne Foundation Grant and private funds. Information was also provided as to how the Enfield library ranks when compared to communities of a similar size. Enfield circulation is second highest for the number of staff members and has the highest density of books per square foot. This, and other information, resulted in the plans for a new space of about 7,500 square feet.

Nothing is written in stone about where to situate the building, how parking can be accommodated and how the Library can connect to other facilities. The Trustees are looking at a cost for the building of approximately \$500 per square foot and a total estimated cost of \$2,078,660.

Mr. Schneider is working with the Town's attorney about final working of the articles. Mr. Thurber read two warrant articles drafted for Town Meeting. The first article raises and appropriates \$400,000 and places this into a capital reserve fund for the purpose of planning, construction and furnishing of a new library. The second authorizes the expenditure of \$133,000 from this new library capital reserve fund for the purpose of preparing complete architectural and engineering plans for the library building and site work.

A Town Meeting vote will be required before funds can be expended from the capital reserve fund. In addition there will be a proviso that no additional funds from the newly created capital reserve fund may be expended until private fundraising reaches at least \$1,000,000. Through this funding plan \$8.00 would be raised privately for every \$1.00 provided by the Town.

Discussion ensued regarding the commitment to raise a minimum of \$1 million prior to expending any funds from capital reserve. They believe it will take 12 to 18 months to complete the fundraising, then additional time to move so the Town Offices can utilize the old Library space. This was followed by discussion regarding the wording of the articles.

It was noted that the big hidden cost is the Town's donation of the land, which is actually a hidden asset. It's not costing the taxpayers anything, but is adding value to the project.

Mrs. Stewart noted that there is a hidden cost in making the current Library floor into town office space. Bart Thurber responded that Lee Carrier, Budget Committee Chairman, came up with an estimate of \$250,000 to \$500,000 to renovate Whitney Hall for office space. It was not noted at this meeting what this estimate includes.

Mr. Payne pointed out that it's an asset to inexpensively get expansion of Town Offices.

Mr. Stewart believes \$500,000 is the top end. He has a concern about that down the road, if the Library comes back for more money. They can't break ground until we have \$1 million.

Bart Thurber responded that they couldn't break ground until they have \$2 million. They may have to come back to the town if they can't raise the second million.

Mrs. Stewart replied that is a sticking point. Possibly having to come back to the Town for an additional \$600,000 is a big deal. The Library has to make a commitment to raise the \$1.6 million, plus some additional funds; there are always cost over runs. The Town is already looking at a tax increase in the future.

Mr. Payne stated that they would lose everyone if it's left open ended. Mr. Thurber responded that they would then commit to the Town to raise \$1 million. Lee carrier has recommended against it.

The Board explained the importance of being up front about the costs. Mrs. Stewart pointed out that last year the Trustees said they could raise \$1.5 million. Mr. Thurber replied that last year was different since there was restoration of a historic structure.

Careful consideration was given to the pros and cons regarding Town funding and private fundraising and the possible response from the taxpayers.

Mrs. Stewart stated that she would like to commit to a fundraising project. She will direct a children's theatre production and donate all of the proceeds to the Library. Other possible fundraising efforts were also mentioned.

II. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Mr. Crate moved to enter non-public session at 8:39 PM, RSA 91-A:3 II (a) & (d); Mrs. Stewart seconded. Roll call vote: Mr. Crate – aye, Mrs. Stewart – aye, Mr. Payne – aye.

Mrs. Stewart moved to come out of non-public session at 8:49 PM; Mr. Crate seconded, vote unanimous.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Stewart moved to adjourn at 8:49 PM; Mr. Crate seconded, vote unanimous.