

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

MINUTES of January 8, 2007

Board of Selectmen: Nancy Scovner, Chairman; Curtis Payne; Dominic Albanese

Administrative Staff: Steven Schneider, Town Manager; Alisa D. Bonnette, Recording Secretary; Richard A. Crate, Jr., Chief of Police; Ken Daniels, Director of Public Works

Others: Dan Kiley; Shirley Green; Caroline Lorie, Valley News; Joe Cote, Connecticut Valley Spectator; Kurt Gotthardt

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Scovner called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Albanese moved to approve the minutes of December 19, 2006 as printed; Mrs. Scovner seconded, vote unanimous.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

Comcast correspondence dated 12/28/06 ~ Pricing changes, improvements, enhancements & value-added features

Michael A. Davidson v. Town of Enfield

Joseph DePalo, Jr. correspondence dated 12/23/06 ~ Property Taxes:

Mrs. Scovner will respond to Mr. DePalo's concerns regarding high property taxes.

Tax Collector's Trial Balance Report ~ December 2006

Community Development Director Report ~ December 2006

Building Permit Report 2001-2006

Gerry Stark correspondence dated 1/2/07 ~ BTLA Appeal of 2005 Tax Assessment

Mr. Schneider will check with Norm Bernaiche, the Town's assessor and have Mr. Bernaiche respond to Mr. Stark's concerns.

LISTEN Community Services**Letter of Resignation:**

A short period into the meeting, Mr. Albanese submitted and read his letter of resignation from the Board of Selectmen. His resignation is a result of added responsibilities at his place of employment, which will not allow him the time to devote to his position as Selectman. In order for this vacated position to be included on the ballot for the next election, his resignation is effective immediately.

Mrs. Scovner expressed her desire to reject Mr. Albanese's resignation, but accepted it with a great deal of grief. Mrs. Scovner asked Mr. Albanese to remain on the Board until after Town Meeting. Mr. Albanese agreed to do so.

Mrs. Scovner moved to appoint Dominic Albanese to fill the office of Selectman until the conclusion of the 2007 Town Meeting; Mr. Payne seconded. Mrs. Scovner and Mr. Payne in favor, Mr. Albanese abstained, motion carried.

IV. BOARD REPORTS**Budget Committee:**

Mr. Densmore came before the Budget Committee to discuss the topic of charging for ambulance services. It was unclear whether he was in support of the idea or simply thought it worthy of discussion. Mr. Albanese is also not sure he was speaking for the FAST Squad.

It was acknowledged that there are a lot of intricacies to this issue and policies would need to be set up before such a program could be implemented.

Regarding the suggestion to move the Town Meeting to May, Mr. Albanese assumes the Budget Committee will hear about this at their meeting tomorrow night. It may be too late to pursue it this year.

V. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**Employee Compensation:**

Mr. Schneider reported on the progress of the employee compensation package review. Four areas of study were identified: health insurance, salary, time off and other benefits.

Mr. Schneider's initial recommendations include:

- Health Insurance - Elimination of the JW health plan as an option. The JW plan is the most expensive plan offered by the Town and there are no employees enrolled in this plan at the moment.

The Health Insurance committee met with HealthTrust representatives early in the day to review the Town's existing health and prescription plans and options available to the Town. All the information provided will be reviewed looking at real world of the Town's employees to see how everyone would be affected by potential changes. In terms of the

2007 budget, Mr. Schneider has budgeted for the anticipated increases in current plan. Changes in the plans offered can be changed mid-year.

Also discussed with the HealthTrust representatives were wellness programs and incentives; it's quite comprehensive.

Mr. Albanese recommended including something on this subject in the Town Manager's report in the Town Report.

- Salary – 1% COLA, and up to 3.5% merit increase. This proposal provides a potential increase of 4.5%, but changes the make-up of how COLA and merit increases are awarded to reward those employees who deserve it. Mr. Schneider has a philosophical problem with paying someone an increase for just being here.

Mr. Albanese moved to accept Mr. Schneider's recommendations to eliminate the JW plan and to provide a 1% COLA and up to 3.5% merit for employees in 2007, Mrs. Scovner seconded, vote unanimous.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kurt Gotthardt ~ Stump Dump:

Mr. Gotthardt read in the previous meeting minutes that the moving of the Stump Dump to the Public Works Facility site might require a warrant article due to encroachment on the wetland easement on the property. Mr. Gotthardt asked what kind of encroachment was being discussed.

Ken Daniels explained that there are no plans to encroach on the wetland itself, but there is the potential to encroach on the surrounding area. He is investigating the conditions of the easement and how it came to be, whether as a condition of a permit for the McConnell Well, negotiations between the Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission or other if it was an action of Town Meeting.

Mr. Gotthardt's understanding is that the wetland easement was mitigation for wetland encroachment when the McConnell Well was put in. There is also usually an easement holder and could not find information about who that is.

Mr. Albanese replied that the Board does not have the answers to his questions. Mr. Daniels is researching the issue.

Kurt Gotthardt ~ Selectmen's Meeting Time:

Mr. Gotthardt asked if there was a reason the Selectmen didn't meet at 7:00 PM as the other boards and committees do. Mrs. Scovner replied that the meeting time was moved 10-11 years ago making it easier for staff and the Board of Selectmen. There is plenty of time for the public to come in and share their opinions. Mr. Albanese also pointed out that other boards don't have 60, 70 or 80 meetings a year.

Kurt Gotthardt ~ May Town Meeting:

Mr. Gotthardt has heard the argument that a May Town Meeting would increase attendance. He does not see that happening on a nice, warm, sunny May day.

Mrs. Scovner replied that a large number of people aren't in Town in the winter months. Mr. Gotthardt does not know when these people typically leave Town and return.

Mr. Albanese explained that it's important, but it is not simply about keeping snowbirds happy.

Shirley Green mentioned that many leave between November and January and return between April and May.

Mr. Albanese pointed out that if the Town moves to a May Town Meeting there would be a budget in place before the fiscal year starts.

Mr. Gotthardt stated that the budget year could be changed without moving the Town Meeting date, and he is in favor of tradition.

Mr. Albanese replied that it would be best to keep them aligned, to go one way or the other.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Whitney Hall Project:

The Town Facility Committee will be meeting this evening. Mr. Schneider drafted a spreadsheet of potential tax impacts. The higher the property valuation in town, the lower the tax rate can be.

The range of annual expenditure on a property valued at \$200,000 is calculated as follows:

- High of \$94 – based on the maximum project cost and the Town's property valuation staying the same as it is currently;
- Mid-range of \$60 – based on typical Town property valuation increases; and
- Low of less than \$40 – based on lower project cost and optimum Town property valuation increases.

Mr. Albanese summarized that if property values increase annually, and if the Town is looking at a \$150,000 payment, then the annual cost to a taxpayer with property valued at \$200,000 would be in the \$40-\$60 range. This assumes no fundraising or use of undesignated fund balance.

It was pointed out that the Town has a problem at Whitney Hall that will cost in the vicinity of \$1,200,000 before there's any talk of expansion. Problems include, but are not limited to, windows, insulation and wiring.

Stump Dump:

The Stump Dump is officially closed for the season. It will reopen in the spring and close permanently at its current location on June 30th allowing a spring clean-up season. It's fortunate that the past 1½ to 2 months have been unseasonably warm and allowed the existing Stump Dump to stay open longer than usual.

Ken Daniels is doing research on a new location on Town owned property. Relocation to the Public Works Facility location on Lockhaven Road would not have a big impact on the site.

Optional Fiscal Year & May Town Meeting:

Mr. Schneider will figure out how the 18-month budget transitions.

While State law allows the Selectmen, with a 2/3-majority vote of the Budget Committee to make this change without a Town Meeting vote, the Board of Selectmen is in favor of putting the question to the people.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS**Administrative Items:**

The Board of Selectmen will hold their second meeting in February on February 20, 2007.

The Board reviewed and approved property tax refunds and a veterans tax credit application.

Department of Public Works ~ Departmental Structure:

The position of Highway Supervisor has recently become vacant. Mr. Schneider stated that when someone leaves is a good time to review the structure of the department. The Public Works Department will continue to operate through the winter season with current staff, and will determine the needs of the Department in the spring. It will be decided at that time if the Department needs a person in the field, administration or a combination as they had before.

Mike Sousa, Assistant Supervisor, will take on some minor administrative duties. Bill Spaulding will take on some additional duties relating to mechanical issues. The Iworq program will continue to be used, but the forms will be changed to a task orientation versus a time management orientation and see how it works. If winter plowing becomes too much, the Town may take on a seasonal driver.

Mrs. Scovner thanked the Public Works Department for the condition in which they've maintained Town roads during this winter season.

Grounds RFP:

A request for proposals was developed for grounds work as a result of discussions with the Budget Committee. The question arose, "How can we do the job more cost effectively?" Mr. Schneider had experience with this in Pennsylvania and it worked well. Input was sought from other communities in NH. Some good suggestions were received and incorporated into the RFP document.

Mr. Albanese inquired about the absence of cemetery maintenance in the RFP. Mr. Schneider responded that the cemeteries were excluded because they require greater attention to detail. Town forces would continue to maintain Town cemeteries.

IX. OTHER ITEMS**Town Clerk's Report ~ December 2006:**

Revised estimated revenues were adjusted to \$785,000. Total 2006 revenues came in at \$787,514. This is a decrease in revenues from those seen in 2005 (\$806,613).

CONFERENCE

I. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Mrs. Scovner moved to enter non-public session at 5:54 PM to discuss legal issues, RSA 91-A:3 II (e), Mr. Albanese seconded. Roll call vote: Mrs. Scovner – aye, Mr. Albanese – aye, Mr. Payne – aye.

Mrs. Scovner moved to come out of non-public session at 6:07 PM, Mr. Albanese seconded, vote unanimous.

Mrs. Scovner inquired into the status of police hirings. She was informed that 7 or 8 applications have been received.

II. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Albanese moved to adjourn at 6:10 PM, Mrs. Scovner seconded, vote unanimous.