

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

MINUTES of January 22, 2007

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

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

Others: Kim Withrow; Richard Martin; Shirley Green; Dan Kiley; David & Rebecca Stewart; George Seiler; Joe Cote, Connecticut Valley Spectator

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 regular session minutes of January 8, 2007 as written; Mr. Payne seconded, vote unanimous.

Mr. Albanese reported an update on the Museum Capital Campaign. At the previous meeting he is afraid he may have left the mistaken impression that the campaign was done. He read a statement from the Museum.

“Enfield Shaker Museum’s Capital Campaign for the Great Stone Dwelling is well under way. The 3-year campaign has a goal of \$1,100,000 to date over \$610, 000 has been raised or pledged. We welcome and appreciate the interest and support of Enfield Citizens. Sincerely, Mary Ann Haagen for the Capital Campaign Committee.”

Mr. Albanese moved to accept the non-public minutes of January 8, 2007 as written; Mr. Payne seconded, vote unanimous.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

Municipal Water/Sewer Dept. Report ~ 4th Quarter 2006

Municipal Water/Sewer Dept. Report ~ 2006 Collections Report

Assessing Standards Board position on the “view tax”

Mr. Albanese asked if this position paper should be posted on the Town’s website. Mrs. Scovner does not think it’s clear. She doesn’t want it posted on the Town’s website until it’s clear to her. An alternative report on the “view tax” that is written in easy to understand language will be investigated.

Mr. Schneider pointed out that it’s confusing because people see a rise in their assessment and think it means an increase in taxes, when an increased assessment alone does not.

Equalization Ratio for tax year 2006 is 82.6%

Mr. Albanese is a bit concerned about the equalization ratio that has slipped a bit and asked if there was a strategy to deal with it. Mr. Schneider replied that the strategy is to dig in and perhaps have Norm Bernaiche do a bit more than he may have planned.

Trustees of Trust Funds Report as of December 31, 2006**Bret Smith Letter dated 1/6/2007 ~ Thanks to Officer Hunold**

Mrs. Scovner wished to acknowledge this letter of thanks to Officer Jeff Hunold. Mrs. Scovner moved to thank Officer Hunold for his caring, diligence and exemplary behavior, Mr. Albanese seconded; vote unanimous.

IV. BOARD REPORTS**Planning Board:**

Mrs. Scovner reported that the Planning Board reviewed zoning amendments and petitioned warrant articles.

Mr. Albanese asked if people are grandfathered for the proposed amendment regarding lighting. Mrs. Scovner replied that yes, they would be grandfathered. Mr. Kiley stated that lighting requirements have always been there, they just have to be enforced.

Two of the men that used to work for Dana Robes Woodcraftsmen are building furniture and requested the Artisan designation be allowed in R1, and in R3 & R5 as a special exception.

The Planning Board also had 3 minor subdivisions.

V. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Schneider met with Executive Councilor, Ray Burton and the new Dept. of Environmental Services (DES) Commissioner, Thomas Burack. They had a conversation about dams and past discussions of continued funding of dam maintenance. Commissioner Burack seems confident that DES will continue to maintain their dams and fund for that maintenance. They also discussed the possibility of the Town taking over the Crystal Lake dam. The Crystal Lake dam, built in the 1980s, was last inspected in 2006. There are no plans for the Town to take ownership, but if maintenance is not funded on the state level there is the option available.

Mr. Stewart asked what the benefit would be of owning the dam. Mr. Schneider responded that it would allow the Town control over the level of Crystal Lake.

Mrs. Green hopes the State provides adequate funding because of the benefits of having the State maintain the dams.

Mr. Schneider also discussed with the Commissioner the Town's unhappiness with their shoreline protection. They are committed to staffing to the tune of \$600,000 no matter the body of water. Mr. Schneider also spoke with the Commissioner about additional well sites in Town, such as on Shaker Mountain. Commissioner Burack provided Mr. Schneider with a contact number to call for assistance.

Lastly Mr. Schneider, Councilor Burton and Commissioner Burack spoke about the Lockeaven Road drainage project. The impact on the lakeshore can now be seen with the lowered lake level. Mr. Schneider relayed the Town's commitment to this project.

Public Works Report:

Ken Daniels spoke about Public Works Department staffing. The highway supervisor position has become vacant and will not be immediately filled. Existing staff is taking on some additional duties. Bill Spaulding, Mechanic, is doing some data input into the Iworq program. Other crewmembers are taking on some of their own administrative duties. Attitudes all around are good. Daily assignments for daily operational issues are being taken care of by Mike Sousa.

Mrs. Scovner wished to thank Mike Sousa and the rest of the highway crew for the good job they're doing.

Mr. Albanese noted that it's important to remind folks that winter is on again off again and it's in the summer when you really need the extra manpower.

Mr. Daniels pointed out that there have been no additions to staff on the Highway Department since he started working for the Town. Mr. Albanese asked if the vacancy could be filled with a part-time employee. Mr. Daniels replied that the full-time position needs to be filled; the question remains whether the position will be filled with a field oriented or administrative oriented person.

Mr. Daniels provided the Board with a copy of the Sewer Agreement with the City of Lebanon.

Mr. Albanese stated there if there are two or three bullet points about why this is a better contract than the one the Town previously had with the City of Lebanon it would be helpful.

Mr. Schneider stated that this is not the meeting to set the rates, but a first discussion of the base rate, consumption rate, revenue sources and ordinance revision.

Mr. Daniels met with a representative of DES and spoke about the structure of the Town's current rate system. Past practices have looked at the rate in a different way than some other communities. Mr. Daniels explained an alternative methodology for calculating the rate, using fixed costs of the departments to determine the fixed cost share of the bill. Fixed costs are those that will always be there and are not dependent upon water production. The costs to produce and treat the water would be used to determine the consumption rate. Mr. Daniels prepared a rate comparison based on the existing rate plan and a revised rate plan using the alternative

methodology. When calculating the rate using the alternative methodology, Mr. Daniels included payments to capital reserve in the consumption rate so the biggest users will contribute the greater share to these funds. Debt service in the Water Department is also included in the consumption charge.

Mr. Daniels discussed the increase in inflow and infiltration (I & I) due to very wet weather and the resulting groundwater infiltrating the system. Prior to this past year the average flow was down to about 2 million gallons. Control of I & I is a continuing process that will never be done. When sizing pipe the standard equations includes an allowance for I & I. He anticipates a lower I & I in 2007.

Mr. Albanese asked Mr. Daniels to choose a dozen users and do a comparison of their usage using the current rates and methodology and the proposed rates and methodology.

Mr. Schneider pointed out that the development off Maple Street, previously known as the Ironman Development, has a potential for more users on the system.

Mr. Albanese pointed out that depending on the results of the rate comparisons it may come back to a close review of expenditures within the departments.

Hook up fees in Enfield are lower than average at about \$3300 for water & sewer, particularly when compared with the average cost of a new septic system of \$15,000 for a system that may last 15 years, and as much again for a new private well. With new construction the cost for septic and well is typically rolled into the mortgage and has a less noticeable impact.

Mr. Albanese expressed the need for a strategy for what to do with revenues. A certain amount should go directly into capital reserve funds.

Mr. Schneider noted that hook up fees may be reviewed. He believes it was initially set up so it wouldn't hurt existing homeowners. A different fee could be charged for existing homes vs. new construction.

Mr. Daniels discussed allocation units, which are currently based on 19,000 gallons per quarter (gpq) equaling a single unit for a single family home. A three person household might use 27,000 gpq and there can be a broad range of usage by families of the same size. The Water & Sewer Departments have been pulling in year-end detailed reports. The departments also have water and sewer audits for every account and can provide an average daily usage. The median average consumption can be calculated. Water only and sewer only can be removed from the equation and they can remove the highest 10% and the lowest 10% to determine a median consumption and set that as the unit allocated. There could then be a higher charge if the user exceeds its allocated units. This method would encourage conservation and potentially increase revenue. Mr. Albanese stated that this would allow the fairest rate possible. Mr. Schneider agreed the Town wants the people with three children and three baths to pay their share and the people with one person and one bath to pay their share.

Mr. Albanese asked Mr. Daniels to provide an estimate on how changing the gallons per unit would affect a sampling of users. Mr. Daniels replied that this would be difficult to do for a

small group of users. Mr. Albanese suggested trying to do the calculation with a neighborhood, just to get a feel of the impact.

It was agreed that the Board wants a fair assignment of expense. The goal is not to make money on the users, but to make it more equitable.

Mr. Daniels stated that this goes back to the consumption charges and the inclusion of capital reserve funding. If you have different pay brackets then industrial users would pay a larger percentage of the cost for using a higher percentage of the pipe capacity.

Mr. Schneider pointed out the need to have changes driven through an ordinance revision. He foresees making the ordinance a focus for 2007.

Mrs. Scovner expressed concern about the potential impact on poorer people with larger families. Mr. Schneider replied that the Board has the authority to write off charges for those in need.

Mrs. Scovner asked how many people work in the Water & Sewer Departments. Mr. Daniels replied that there are 2 full-time employees, plus a percentage of his own time and salary and a percentage of Carolee Higbee's time and wages.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Rebecca Stewart ~ Whitney Hall Project:

Mrs. Stewart expressed concerns about the Board's decision to hold a bond hearing for the Whitney Hall construction project. It is her contention that at the annual Town Meeting the Town vote allocated funds for a review to be presented at the next (2007) Town Meeting. A bond vote short circuits those that expect to see a *plan* at Town Meeting. She understands the Board feels differently. She still feels, after talking to each Board member, the same way. Others she has spoken too also expected to hear a plan, not have a vote.

Mrs. Scovner informed Mrs. Stewart that the Board would be holding an open hearing on the bond before Town Meeting. It should be held at the beginning or mid-February. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Mrs. Stewart understands that. If there hadn't been a Town vote associated with the purpose of the funds she'd agree that would be sufficient, but there was a vote about when this plan would be presented for review.

Mrs. Stewart asked when the minutes from the hearing would be posted on the website. She feels the information from the October 2006 hearing is important for the public. The public comments made at the hearing would be helpful.

Mr. Albanese believes reasonable people can disagree about what the term review means. He thinks for \$35,000 people would expect something to decide on. The Board has been talking about a vote at Town Meeting since this past summer. The Board of Selectmen and Town Facility Committee have been very transparent, almost to their detriment when "uncooked" information has been disseminated. There has been some discussion of separating the project

into two parts, an idea that has some merit. Mr. Albanese does not feel good about moving way from the principals without a vote up or down on this proposal. Without such a vote the Board feels bound by those principals. There was also discussion of a special Town Meeting but he can't justify the expense.

David Stewart is pretty confident this proposal will be voted down then what will we do with the people in the Town Offices?

Mr. Albanese replied that the Board is going to have a number in place to lease space or put in an office trailer.

Mr. Schneider reported preliminary figures for leasing office trailers: \$2,400/month rental for a 2,160 sq. ft. building with \$45,000 installation and removal fee, or purchase of about \$195,000 to purchase, including setup.

Mrs. Scovner pointed out the need to include costs for the connection of phone lines & computers.

Mr. Stewart said he would only support a project of \$2 million in total.

Mr. Albanese replied that \$2.4 million is projected for the construction with funds from capital reserve and the undesignated fund balance. \$1.4 million is projected for the renovation of Whitney Hall and would be financed through fundraising.

Discussion ensued regarding the financing cost. Mr. Albanese pointed out that no one knew last year that there was a \$1.2 million problem with Whitney Hall.

Mr. Stewart asked the cost to building a new Town Office building. He had been told it would cost \$750,000. Add that to \$1.4 million for the Whitney Hall renovation and you get about \$2 million. He would have expected the Town Facility Committee to come up with alternatives for the Town Meeting to decide on.

The minutes had not been written up for the October 23, 2006 Town Facility Committee public hearing, but Mr. Stewart had a copy notes taken. He pointed out an important thing missing from the notes; he remembers a comment by Ilene Reed that she can't take a dime more of taxes or she's moving to [Tennessee]. It's a shame to lose these people. Then there's a safety building, problems with the fire and ambulance buildings, then a new school, then a possible State income tax.

Rebecca Stewart wanted to clarify that there's some confusion about what people will accept as a cost for this project. The Committee talks of the tax dollars and the people are concerned with the total cost of the project. With the combined resource of funds this is still a \$3.6 million project we're talking about.

Mr. Payne disagrees with Mrs. Stewart's first premise of Town Meeting being moved up. A hearing before Town Meeting provides more time to think about the proposed project. The Board will give adequate notice of the public hearing and the voters will have month to think about it. He does not feel this is a violation of the spirit of the Town Meeting vote.

As for the project in general, Mr. Payne stated that the Committee looked at 78 Main Street. There is no idea what it would cost to make that building usable as a Town Office. The project as proposed by the Committee will last at least 20 years. We don't know that about 78 Main Street.

Mr. Payne asked when has the total cost been a problem? It's a bargain. We're doing the project in phases and will still have a usable Town Office and Library. So, if we don't have the money it takes to complete the renovation it just takes longer.

Lastly, Mr. Payne stated that the Committee did its homework, including 78 Main Street. This will save the taxpayers money. Does Mrs. Stewart think this will cost less in the future? He assured her it would not. The impact is roughly equivalent to a tank of gas per year to support the project. Because it's a library and not a fire department doesn't mean it isn't needed.

Shirley Green noted that the Budget Committee hasn't made a decision yet on this project. They are still reviewing it.

Mr. Kiley stated that if the Committee were to say we're not doing this project he would put together a petition.

Mrs. Scovner invited additional comments. None were forthcoming.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

2007 Budget Adjustment:

The Board reviewed a proposed budget with the Budget Committee's latest revisions.

Mr. Schneider was charged with reducing salaries by \$50,000 and benefits by \$30,000. He accomplished this by not funding the vacant grounds position. There was discussion at the last meeting about going out for a grounds RFP. Other changes include reclassifying positions and funding for vacant positions for just 9 months. No one in an existing position is being affected by these changes. This budget includes equitable increased in the solid waste division.

Mr. Albanese noted the need to do something about the Enfield Center Town Hall. Mr. Schneider replied that it's a building with potential use, but in a location that doesn't allow that use.

The Enfield Village Association will paint the flagpole on Main Street at an estimated cost of \$2,400. They will also prepare an economic development pamphlet at a cost of about \$1,000.

\$25,000 was deleted for the paving of the Public Works Facility entrance. Mrs. Scovner would like to have the paving done. Mr. Albanese thought the Budget Committee withdrew its objection to that project, so that project can remain in the budget.

\$10,000 will come out of the Technology Capital Reserve fund for Police computer equipment.

A combined total of \$15,000 was removed from Library salaries and special projects.

The shared vehicle proposed for Public Works (\$20,000), Water (\$10,500) & Sewer (\$10,500) has been deleted.

Tax Mapping was reduced from the original request of \$53,900. It was questioned whether it should have been reduce by \$30,000 or to \$30,000. Mr. Albanese believes it was reduced to \$30,000.

A new capital reserve fund for sand/salt storage was reduced to \$15,000.

In the past money has been put into capital reserve funds and taken out in the same year. This year lower amounts are recommended to go into capital reserves, but nothing is being taken out. Capital reserves are a good tool. If a percentage of anticipated costs are put away each year then the last year when the costs are incurred no money would be place in capital reserve, but instead would come out of the general fund and in addition to the funds withdrawn from capital reserve would cover the full cost.

Mr. Albanese pointed out that there is not enough interest made on reserve funds for Fire vehicles/equipment and bonding would be a better idea.

Mr. Schneider stated that the total is a \$105,000 reduction from the original budget. Rather than paying out on Emergency Equipment this year, that will be done next year. The Bridge CRF is for matching funds. Based on the condition of the ambulance it can last another year. No funds will be withdrawn form Public Works vehicles/equipment reserves. Instead of purchasing a vehicle for departments to share the cruiser that would otherwise be traded in upon the purchase of a new one will be utilized. This will allow mileage costs to be reduced somewhat.

Mr. Albanese mentioned the addition \$10,000 for a power stretcher that has been requested by the Ambulance Department. Mr. Payne and Mrs. Scovner concur with that addition. It was questioned whether these funds could come from the ambulance capital reserves and who is agent to expend.

Kim Withrow stated that the power stretcher would cost approximately \$10,800. Mrs. Scovner suggesting increasing the budget to \$11,000. Mr. Schneider stated that the additional \$800 could be found in the budget.

Discussion ensued regarding the goal of a tax rate increase of no more than 5 cents. Mr. Schneider stated that each penny in taxes is equivalent to \$4,200 in revenue. This year he's banking on a \$5,000,000 valuation. Every \$1,000,000 increase in value is equivalent to \$6,800 in revenue.

The Board reviewed regional organizations. The Budget Committee supported a 3% increase over the 2006 budget amount. After discussion of the value of these services the Board agreed to fund the regional organizations as approved by the Budget Committee. Specific mention was made of Advance Transit to be funded at \$4,120 and Headrest at \$5,000. It was pointed out that while a national ACORN group is a political organization, the local ACORN of VT & NH is not.

Other organizations may be getting less than they requested, but more than they received in 2006. The Enfield Shaker Museum was not funded because they did not submit a request by the deadline; this is the same as past practice.

The Town tax rate in 2006 was 6.64. The proposed Town tax rate for 2007 is \$6.69. This would have an impact of \$10.00-\$15.00

Town Meeting / Warrant:

George Seiler submitted two petitions warrant articles to the Planning Board regarding wetlands. Some question arose regarding the need for an article to fund the purposes of those petitioned articles. Mr. Seiler explained that, while the Planning Board does not feel it is sufficient, the Town already has a document from which to work, so no funding should be necessary. Mr. Seiler went on to explain that the wetlands evaluation document prepared for the Town by Ray Lobdell was drafted using maps filed in the county. It was the consensus of the parties Mr. Seiler spoke to that these maps would include all wetlands of significant size. The existing document could be used to rate wetlands in town

Ken Daniels agreed that there is a difference between a wetland and wet land. Given the document and the age of that document it probably won't fit 100% with what the Town wants today. Maps existing aren't going to show a 3-acre inclusion. Flyovers have already been done at 200 feet. That information could be used to rate other productive wetlands.

The Selectmen agreed that it did appear that the Town has a tool to start with and that funding in 2007 is not necessary. While financial support may be required in 2008, the Board is comfortable using this tool for the first year.

The drafted article for funding of the petitioned warrant articles was deleted.

The Board received a petitioned warrant article for a Historic District Commission submitted by the Heritage Commission. Mr. Schneider stated that their intent was to form a commission to determine where a historic district could be. Mrs. Scovner moved to accept the petition; Mr. Payne seconded, vote unanimous.

The Board reviewed a time line for implementation of an optional fiscal year. Mr. Albanese feels this is not the year to make this change. Mr. Albanese moved not to include articles to change to a May Town Meeting and Optional Fiscal Year, but to create an informational handout for Town Meeting; Mrs. Scovner seconded, vote unanimous.

The Board discussed an article for alternative housing for the Town Offices should the bond vote fail. Mr. Albanese asked for a written quote if possible. Information will also be sought about the Dana Robes property that is currently available for lease or purchase. Mr. Daniels wondered if the LaSalette Bingo hall was available for rent.

The Enfield Village Association inquired if the Selectmen would voluntarily support an article to adopt the provisions of RSA 79-E that authorizes the Selectboard the option of granting property owners in a designated village area short term property assessment relief to encourage substantial reinvestment in underutilized structures. EVA is prepared to submit a petition if this article is

not voluntarily placed on the warrant. The Board agreed to voluntarily place this article on the warrant and let the voters decide.

The Board considered voluntarily placing an article on the warrant regarding the billing for ambulance services as proposed by Bob Cusick. A petition will be submitted if this article is not voluntarily placed on the warrant. The wording as proposed would not be advisory only as had been previously discussed, but would require the Selectmen to implement a system for billing for ambulance services using a third party billing service. It is also proposed that \$5,000 be raised to pay for start up costs and that revenues from the billing be used to pay for ambulance equipment, training and building repairs. Based on the practices of billing services the Board would have the authority to forgive uncollectible amounts. The Board discussed the merits and drawbacks of this proposal. The Board agreed to place the article on the warrant voluntarily, but to eliminate the \$5,000 appropriation and to provide 12 months to implement the program so there's no budget impact in 2007.

The Board agreed to place an article on the warrant to establish a Capital Improvement Committee and rescind the 1990 vote authorizing the Planning Board to prepare the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Albanese feels Budget Committee participation on the committee is important.

The Board supported an article to increase the veterans tax credit from \$100 to \$200, but did not support an increase of the \$1,400 disabled veterans tax credit.

Town Report:

The Board was reminded of the need to draft their letter to the citizens of Enfield for the Town Report. Discussion of the cover of the report took place. No decisions were made.

Grounds RFP:

The Selectmen voiced their support of the proposed Grounds RFP.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Administrative Items:

The Board reviewed and approved a Yield Tax Warrant and 2006 Property Tax Abatement.

IX. OTHER ITEMS

The Board received an invitation to a School Board meeting to discuss the SAU's plans for a new school building.

CONFERENCE

I. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Scovner moved to adjourn at 8:18 PM; Mr. Payne seconded, vote unanimous.