

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

**MINUTES of February 9, 2005**

**Board of Selectmen:** Keith Oppenneer, Chairman; Nancy Scovner

**Absent:** Dominic Albanese

**Administrative Staff:** April Whittaker, Town Manager; Alisa D. Bonnette, Secretary

**Others:** Richard Crate, Jr.; Eric Crate; Kurt Gotthardt; Phil Neily; Gene Talsky; Francis LaBounty; Donald LaBounty; Jim Taylor, Community Development Director; Curtis Payne; Ken Daniels; Steve Stancek; Carolee T. Higbee, Tax Collector; Bob Cusick; Gerard Lozeau; and other members of the public.

**PUBLIC HEARING ~ ELDERLY EXEMPTIONS**

Mr. Oppenneer called hearing to order at 5:37 pm. and proceeded to read the public hearing notice (attached). He also explained that the proposed exemption amounts were increased 15% over the current exemption amounts.

Gene Talsky noted that the asset limit did not increase. Mrs. Whittaker responded that when compared to neighboring communities, Enfield's asset limit is very generous. She presented a spreadsheet of exemption data for other towns of comparable size within the State of New Hampshire.

Mr. Oppenneer stated that the Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen are in favor of this article. Carolee Higbee and Gene Talsky also voiced support for the increases.

Mr. Oppenneer advised everyone to attend Town Meeting on March 12<sup>th</sup> and to stay until the end of the meeting to vote on this article.

Mrs. Whittaker also wanted to make assurances that under the Right-to-Know Law information relating to personal circumstances for an application for elderly exemption are not public information and will not be disclosed.

With no further questions, Mr. Oppenneer called the hearing to a close at 5:45 PM.

**PUBLIC HEARING ~ TAX INCREMENT FINANCE (TIF) DISTRICT**

Mr. Oppeneer called the hearing to order at 6:00 PM and proceeded to read the public hearing notice (attached). He then turned the hearing over to Jim Taylor, Community Development Director.

Jim Taylor presented a map, which includes a shaded area representing the proposed TIF district, and a list of properties that fall within the district. Mr. Taylor read into the record the "Proposed Tax Increment Finance Plan" (attached). He clarified that in the introductory paragraph, the words "hereby adopts" is draft wording to be voted at Town Meeting. The sources of revenue listed in the plan are by no means guaranteed.

It is required that the Grafton County Commissioners and School District provide letters in support of the proposed plan. Mr. Taylor read into the record letters of support from the Grafton County Commissioners and Grafton County Economic Development Council (attached). Mr. Taylor did not have a copy of the School Board letter of support at this meeting, but School Board minutes document a formal vote to support the proposal.

It was noted the largest portion of projected revenue appears to be from the build out of Laramie Farms. What are the obstacles? Mr. Taylor replied that the development is approved – having all state and local permits in hand. The weather is holding up progression of the project. Estes & Gallup is either contracted or in partnership with Laramie Farms.

Concerns were voiced regarding added students in the school system and the cost of their education being covered by the remaining tax base. Mrs. Whittaker proceeded to explain the school district funding formula that is not based on assessments, but on student attendance.

Mr. Oppeneer pointed out that the population of Enfield has been growing, but the number of children has actually decreased over the same period.

Mrs. Whittaker explained the projected project costs of 3.6 million and referred to the revenue progression spreadsheet for projected tax revenues. Revenues are unknown, but Mrs. Whittaker anticipates more businesses. If water and sewer are extended the interest in the area will be elevated. A best guess is all that can be provided, and it seems prudent to be ultra-conservative.

It was questioned whether the town should obtain more funding that is proposed what with interest rates at the levels they are. The Board explained that in 2005 they are asking only that the district be established, providing a year to plan. Mr. Albanese stated that he and Mrs. Scovner were hesitant, thinking things might be moving too fast. The next year will allow the town to look at three things: Is zoning as we want it? What will be the impact on services? Is 3.6 million investment too much, too little or just right? The town can rescind its vote for the district at any time.

Mr. Oppeneer informed those present that there would be a cost. \$40,000 is budgeted for water and sewer studies.

Adoption of a TIF district is a method for paying for infrastructure improvements. Without a TIF district the entire town would pay for any of the improvements made. A TIF district allows the town to isolate the costs.

Kurt Gotthardt submitted a list of questions (attached) for the Board to consider. In response to Mr. Gotthardt's concerns, Mr. Albanese responded that by doing this now the town would reap the benefits of Laramie Farms, Lake Sunapee Bank, and other improvements within the district.

Discussion ensued regarding the undesirability of having individual leach fields for expanded residential use within the wellhead protection area due to potential negative impacts on municipal well production.

Bob Cusick said no box store (Wal-Mart, Home Depot, or the like) would move into Enfield. All of these chains have footprints and they won't build if there is insufficient room for the footprint and insufficient traffic counts to support them. New businesses will draw from the existing traffic. Developers must be made to pay for turning lanes to prevent accidents.

Mrs. Whittaker confirmed that she and Ken Daniels met with the NH Department of Transportation regarding the Route 4 corridor. There is room for a third lane, and closer to Canaan there is room for another lane. Maybe the advisory committee wants to look at whether the town should invest in a 3<sup>rd</sup> lane. Developers will have to meet with the Planning Board and NH DOT since Route 4 is a state road. At the same time the town is very cognizant of the need to maintain the quality of life for residents.

Mr. Gotthardt discussed his findings following review of DOT maps. Starting from the Enfield/Canaan town line, for about 1000 feet, there is quite a bit of room for road expansion. After that first 1000 feet, DOT said there could be 3 lanes, each 12 feet wide with 4-foot shoulders. That would reduce the State right-of-way to 10 feet on either side of the road. Some property lines are pretty close. Mr. Gotthardt wondered how it would look built out.

Relating to water and sewer expansion, part of the reason is to add users to the municipal system. One existing commercial user asked for discounts and the Board turned them down. Mr. Albanese does not anticipate changing that stance. At this point in time the town does not provide discounts for using more water. Mrs. Whittaker does not want to close the door on anything. There is no harm in asking, but the Board hasn't deviated from that policy.

Richard Crate, Jr. asked if any study had been conducted on the savings that would be found if residents could obtain services in Enfield rather than drive to West Lebanon? Mrs. Scovner estimates that it costs her \$4 to travel to the store.

Mr. Daniels replied to Mr. Gotthardt's comments about the width of Route 4. The State holds easements for the right to maintain because they can't purchase rights-of-way. Route 4 is a 4-rod road from Lovejoy Brook Bridge to the Canaan town line; that's 66 feet wide.

Mr. Oppenheimer stated that this is the sort of thing that the advisory committee would work on over the coming year.

The inevitability of growth was discussed.

It was noted that estimated revenues are quite conservative. If Laramie Farms were taken out of the proposed district there would still be about 4 million in revenues. It was questioned if Laramie Farms has to be included. It seems it may push the tax burden for the school to other taxpayers.

Mrs. Whittaker replied that Laramie Farms is the safety net and establishment of a TIF district makes infrastructure improvements more bearable, hopefully not encumbering any general fund money.

Mr. Albanese noted that the infrastructure is defined. He's having trouble with this because Laramie Farms is so residential. While it all feels too good to be true, he can't find where it's not.

Mrs. Whittaker explained that Peterborough has mixed residential and commercial properties within its TIF district. She went on to name other towns in NH that have tried this successfully. The proposed district has been approached very conservatively. There are 400 acres of developable acreage. If those 400 acres were developed into individual 1-acre lots the town would need to look for additional water sources.

In response to concerns voiced by Steve Stancek, Mrs. Whittaker explained that school costs are based on a per-pupil cost rather than property assessment. Calculation of the adequacy grant is based on assessments and where revenues may be lost, the town may be able to maintain current funding levels from the adequacy grant (1.3 million).

The question will be discussed and voted upon at Town Meeting on March 12<sup>th</sup> at the Enfield Village School.

Mr. Oppenneer called the hearing to a close at 6:55 PM.

## **BUSINESS**

The Board reviewed and signed 2004 property tax abatement and refunds, timber tax levies and the 2005 warrant.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.