

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

MINUTES of September 15, 2003

Board of Selectmen: Ilene P. Reed, Chairman; Keith Oppenneer; Dominic Albanese

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

Others: Dwight Marchett; Dan Kiley; Mike Dudley, Budget Committee Chairman

CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Reed called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Albanese moved to accept the minutes of the August 18, 2003 public session as printed; Mrs. Reed seconded. Mr. Albanese and Mrs. Reed in favor, Mr. Oppenneer abstained, motion carried.

Mr. Albanese moved to accept the minutes of the August 18, 2003 non-public session as printed; Mrs. Reed seconded. Mr. Albanese and Mrs. Reed in favor, Mr. Oppenneer abstained, motion carried.

Mr. Oppenneer moved to accept the minutes of the September 2, 2003 public session as printed; Mr. Albanese seconded. Mr. Oppenneer and Mr. Albanese in favor, Mrs. Reed abstained, motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Release of Information and Right to Know Law Policy:

The Board signed the Release of Information and Right to Know Law Policy.

Veteran's Tax Credit:

Mrs. Reed moved to approve a Veteran's Tax Credit for Joan Essenberg; Mr. Albanese seconded, vote unanimous.

Elderly Exemption:

Mr. Oppenneer moved to approve an elderly exemption for James Moore; Mr. Albanese seconded, vote unanimous.

CITIZENS FORUM**Dwight Marchetti ~ Stone Wall at High & Main Streets:**

Mr. Marchetti stated that the stone wall at the end of High Street was a focal point for him and others when they were attending the Enfield high school. The wall is now gone. Has the Board had any discussions about saving it?

Mrs. Whittaker replied that the wall encroached on the State right-of-way. She understands they are going to replace the wall.

Dwight Marchetti ~ Draw Down of Grafton Pond:

Mr. Marchetti was present for the discussion of the draw down of Grafton Pond in 2002. Nothing was done about the concerns voiced to Jim Gallagher of the NH Department of Environmental Services. Crystal Lake was at its highest level this spring. What is the position of the Selectmen this year? Concerns have been voiced by the Crystal Lake Association and others.

Mrs. Whittaker affirmed that there was no response to the town's concerns in 2002, but that she has just received an email from Jim Gallagher. NH DES will be running numbers to forecast the effect of a compromise draw down of 4'. Following his calculations a public hearing should be held.

Dwight Marchetti ~ Shaker Hill Road Beaver Pond:

Mr. Marchetti questioned the status of the beaver dam on the pond off Shaker Hill Road.

Mrs. Whittaker has spoken with an engineer of the NH Dept. of Transportation, District 2. The Conservation Commission is prepared to install a beaver baffle, but they have no funds in their budget. Mrs. Whittaker told District 2 that if the engineer will provide funds or the beaver baffle material the Conservation Commission will install it.

Mr. Marchetti reported that 30 years ago the area was all woodlands. Because it was a low spot, beaver dammed it and water began backing up. The beaver dam sets on town property and is therefore the town's responsibility. There is a wooden beaver box there that has been plugged by the beavers. In Mr. Marchetti's opinion the pond serves no value and there is no wildlife; no ducks, fish or aquatic life. It is however a potential hazard and cost to the town due to the potential for flooding nearby properties, water encroaching on leach fields and possible erosion of the roadbed. Mr. Marchetti suggests that the beaver, which are rodents, be removed. In addition to other areas of concern, the Selectmen should consider the potential health hazard caused by stagnant water, a breeding ground for mosquitoes, and possible spread of West Nile Virus.

Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of removing the beaver dam completely, removing the beaver, and the danger of damage to equipment if attempts are made to work in the marshy area. Mrs. Whittaker stressed the need to look at both sides and the concerns of citizens to preserve the local wildlife and habitat. She recommended doing whatever is feasible to alleviate the problem before resorting to removing the beaver from the site.

Mr. Albanese expressed the need to provide Selectmen's support to Ken Daniels so he can cut trees and take other action as necessary to control the water level at the pond.

Mr. Albanese moved to ask the town manager to direct the Public Works Department to remove a significant portion of the dam to prevent flooding; Mr. Oppenneer seconded, vote unanimous.

Dwight Marchetti ~ Public Works Facility:

Mr. Marchetti complimented the town on the paving job at the Public Works Facility. He wondered if the unpaved patch is the future fuel tank location. He was informed that this was the case.

Mr. Marchetti was informed by Ken Daniels that the cost to relocate the tanks from the Shedd Street garage to the new facility would be about \$2,500. Mr. Marchetti is concerned that the new facility has been in place for almost a year and the fuel tanks and several pieces of equipment are still at the Shedd Street garage. Everything should be moved to the new facility.

Mrs. Whittaker explained that the tanks have been put on hold so Mr. Daniels can put his energies into sewer mapping so that project can be completed by November. Without the salt and sand shed, the Highway Department still needs the Shedd Street garage. Due to increases in fuel costs and a late sand & gravel bill, the budget for 2003 is tight.

Discussion ensued regarding the need for a higher standard of vehicle maintenance, specifically to address problems of rust. Mr. Marchetti noted that there is still sand and salt residue on equipment from the past winter season.

The Board discussed another project that Mr. Daniels is working on; the relocation of the Huse Park pavilion. Mr. Albanese stated that he would be happy to revisit the issue. He does not see a reason to move it. Mrs. Whittaker explained that the parking configuration requires that the building be moved, but that alternatives are being investigated.

Mr. Kiley stated that he stands on the other side of the issue from Dwight Marchetti. Mr. Kiley wondered why, if the town does not have enough money for sand, there is paving being done? Mrs. Whittaker explained that the cost of the sand is being split over two years.

Mr. Albanese summarized by stating the need to go back to the people for a sand & salt shed. Except for the sand & salt shed, moving the gas tanks and some paving, the project is completed.

OLD BUSINESS

Town Manager's Report:

Mrs. Whittaker provided a report on several issues before the town:

1) Fire Department: The town received a legal opinion regarding administration of the fire department. This responsibility falls to the elected Fire Wards and not the Board of Selectmen or Town Manager. Mrs. Whittaker will work together with the Fire Wards to put policies in place. The Fire Wards are very cognizant of safety and liability issues. There is no update regarding the fire truck insurance coverage or repair.

Mr. Albanese stated there was discussion at the last Selectmen's meeting of reporting back to the Selectmen and having a liaison between the Board of Selectmen and the Fire Department. He expressed the need for involvement without pressure. As liaison, Mr. Albanese's role would in no way interfere with Mrs. Whittaker's role.

Mrs. Reed thinks Mrs. Whittaker has a good handle on it and feels the firefighters are appreciative. She believes the Fire Department is moving in the right direction and that the Selectmen should not push too much.

Discussion followed regarding the best ways to assist the fire department and stress the need to address areas where the department needs improvement. Discussion also ensued regarding the potential for a liaison between the Board of Selectmen and the Fire Department.

Mr. Oppenheimer recommended letting Mrs. Whittaker and the insurance companies actively lead the charge in the first instance. If the Selectmen see no progress then they can take a more active role. The pros and cons of providing an active push now versus later were weighed.

2) Joint Loss Management Committee: Tom McDermott of the NH Municipal Association has been enlisted to assist with the Joint Loss Management Committee revival. There will be a working lunch on October 10th from 11 am to 1pm, which the Selectmen are invited to attend. The town of Chester was recently fined for failing a Department of Labor audit.

3) Flu Clinic for Town Employees and Health Insurance Members: Flu shots will be free to employees that participate in the town's health insurance plan. Those that are not covered by the town's health insurance can participate for a \$20 fee. Mr. Albanese would like to pay for the firefighters to have flu shots. Mrs. Whittaker explained that this is not in the town's budget.

4) Pay Scale Review: Mrs. Whittaker asked the Selectmen's feelings on comparable towns. Mr. Oppenheimer noted that there are geographical issues. It makes sense to keep the focus on the Upper Valley, but not to include Canaan, Orange or Dorchester. He suggested towns with a population of 4,000 to 6,000.

Mr. Albanese agreed with Mr. Oppenheimer. He encouraged using the same towns used in the 1996 pay scale adjustment and to adjust for a couple of additional towns. He recommended including all towns within a 40-mile radius with a population of 3,000 to 5,000.

Mrs. Whittaker stated that you know when you are behind the bell curve when you cannot hire at step one in the appropriate grade for the position according to the current pay scale. The \$4,000 for a professional pay study is in the 2003 budget and she has requested completion by December 1. The Board approved Mrs. Whittaker's request to use the state highway and state police departments in the comparison.

5) Town's Health Insurers new Wellness Program: There will be a compulsory meeting of all employees on the town's health plan. The office will remain open however. Sandy Romano has been asked to cover the office.

- 6) Technology Review: Mrs. Whittaker is reviewing the town's internet charges. She has spoken to Lee Walker of SegNet. Mr. Albanese would like to meet with Lee Walker and Mike Dudley.
- 7) Schedule for week of September 15: Mrs. Whittaker informed the Board of her schedule for the week, including a meeting with Anne's Place representatives on Wednesday. Mr. Albanese understands some problems have occurred, including an arrest for drug possession.
- 8) Dog Licensing and Street Numbering Compliance: This project has been initiated with the Police Department.
- 9) Planning Board Conceptual Proposal for land in Canaan: Mrs. Whittaker reported the need for a representative at the Canaan Planning Board meeting for a home business proposal that falls within the Enfield wellhead protection area. The property is located in Canaan on May Street.

Mr. Albanese reported the proposal is for a machine gun shooting range and a place for SWAT teams to practice. The gentleman making the proposal is buy a 200 acre parcel and plans to put the range in the middle of the property.

Discussion of the noise that would result from a machine gun shooting range was discussed.

Mr. Albanese will attend the meeting with Ken Daniels if Mrs. Whittaker is unable to go, although Mrs. Whittaker did commit.

Projects and Priorities List Review:

Mrs. Whittaker provided a status report on the items listed in the Town Manager Work Goals list prepared by Keith Oppeneer. A substantial number of projects have been completed or are underway.

Mr. Albanese and Mr. Oppeneer requested copies of the last Community Profile and Master Plan.

A new project (#51) will be added for sewer extensions on Route 4 and 4A.

Mrs. Whittaker will provide the Board of Selectmen with a copy of the chain of command that identifies who is in charge when she is unavailable.

Tax Exemptions:

Oak Grove Cemetery: A letter was received requesting a tax exemption. It is unclear is the letter, signed by John Goodwin of the Oak Grove Cemetery Board of Directors, reflects the feelings of the entire board or just those of Mr. Goodwin. At least two members of the Board of Directors were unaware of the letter.

In Mrs. Whittaker's opinion, the letter did not present arguments for tax exemption that meet the four corners of the statute. The town needs to be able to defend the assessment in the case of an audit.

Norm Bernaiche has already looked at the land assessment and reduced it due to lack of building potential. He will be going to back again to look at the buildings.

Mrs. Whittaker will investigate the few private cemeteries in the state of NH that are receiving a tax exemption, which in all probability fall under the religious exemption.

Outing Club: A memo has been received from the Police Department; they are now using the Outing Club as a shooting range. No letter has yet been received from the Outing Club requesting and justifying a tax exemption.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget 2004 – Process and goals:

The Board discussed the budget process and timeline. Mrs. Whittaker and Selectman Albanese will meet with department heads to discuss budgets. She will attend the department head meetings with the Budget Committee, then meet again with the department heads to reconsider requests. State statute says the Town Manager must present the budget to the Selectmen on January 31. She will present the budget at an earlier date. Last budget season there were two budget worksessions of the Board of Selectmen in January.

Mrs. Whittaker has requested mission statements from each department head with their budget requests by October, and that they should strive to level fund, excluding personnel lines.

Mr. Albanese stated that one time increases in capital are OK, but that the operating budget should remain level funded. Mr. Oppenauer replied that maintaining a level operating budget over time will result in fewer services due to the cost of inflation, as a downside example.

The Board is comfortable with the process as outlined by Mrs. Whittaker.

Any Other Business:

Mr. Albanese verified that he was supposed to talk to Jim Gerding regarding the removal of the railroad ties. Mr. Marchetti suggested that maybe the NH Dept. of Environmental Services would remove them.

Mr. Albanese would like a junkyard status report. He also noted that the plywood has come off the windows of the Avallone property. This must be investigated.

Mrs. Reed expressed the importance of having Selectmen representation at community functions.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

FY 2003 Homeland Security and Strategy Program. This has been forwarded to the Chief of Police.

Health Trust ~ Information re: new Wellness Program

Gravel Pit Restoration Workshop to be held.

Mrs. Whittaker expressed congratulations to Phil Neily for becoming a certified sprinkler system inspector.

The town will not pursue a sidewalk from Nadeau's to Coutures.

The town will do the retaining wall by the Copeland Block. The delayed installation of the retaining wall is holding up the state project. The Selectmen do not want the state project held up, so the retaining wall should be completed as soon as possible.

Fire Dept. Report re: underground cisterns.

Mrs. Whittaker is working on a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) program with the Town of Canaan. Canaan has not abated the tax bills it issued to the town of Enfield, even though they should not have issued tax bills in the first place.

A transcript of Shopland vs. Enfield is available to the Board of Selectmen for viewing.

A volunteer award nomination has been prepared by Mrs. Whittaker for submission to the NH Municipal Association.

The Veterans Memorial Park sign is installed together with monumentation. Some tree screening is yet to be planted. A dedication date of November 11 is desired. A ribbon cutting ceremony would be in order.

The Board considered a request from William Layton for waiver of sewer and water connection fees. Mr. Layton is purchasing the "Out of the Woodworks" building at 67 Main St. Mr. Layton plans to use the dwelling as a single-family residential dwelling and will need to extend the water and sewer lines to his property. In light of the rather high cost he will bear for the 300' trench down Main Street, 8" pipe and manhole, Mr. Layton asked for the usual connection fees to be waived. In light of the current sewer charges and other requests for financial relief that were not granted, the Board of Selectmen did not feel they could approve Mr. Layton's request. Mr. Albanese moved to deny Mr. Layton's request for waiver of the sewer and water connection fees for 67 Main St.; Mr. Oppenneer seconded, vote unanimous.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Mr. Marchetti requested a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) & (c).

Mr. Albanese moved to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) & (c) at 7:40 pm.; Mr. Oppenneer seconded. Roll call vote: Mr. Albanese – aye, Mr. Oppenneer – aye, Mrs. Reed – aye, motion carried.

Mr. Oppenneer moved to come out of non-public session at 8:04 pm.; Mr. Albanese seconded, vote unanimous.

Mr. Oppeneer moved to sequester and seal the minutes until April 15, 2004; Mr. Albanese seconded, vote unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Reed moved to adjourn at 8:05 pm.; Mr. Albanese seconded, vote unanimous.