

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
Monday, December 12, 2011
356 Main Street, Farmington, NH**

Selectmen Members Present: Paula Proulx, Charlie King, Gerry McCarthy, Joan Funk and Jim Horgan

Town Staff Present: Interim Town Administrator Gary Stenhouse and Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dale Sprague

Public Present: Neil Johnson, Elizabeth Fischer, Barry Elliot, Adela Lynch, Mr. Lynch. Dave Connolly, Representatives of Emery and Garret Groundwater, Inc. and Kathy Spangler

Chairman King called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

1. Public Comment:

A. None

1. Review Of Minutes:

Jim Horgan motioned to table the minutes until later in the meeting, 2nd Paula Proulx. Motion carried with all in favor.

2. Emery and Garret Groundwater Presentation:

Dan and Jaime of Emery and Garret Groundwater, Inc. presented a PowerPoint presentation on what they would propose to do when looking for available groundwater for future wells and/or town water supply. In their initial research they were able to locate four bedrock primary zones where they would focus future investigations. For conducting Phase II (geophysical surveys) they estimate the cost to be \$30,000-\$35,000. The estimated cost for Phase III (drilling of exploratory wells) in sand/gravel zones is \$35,000 and in the bedrock zones \$70,000.

Gerry asked why the focus is primarily in the downtown area and not further out by the Mad River and such. Dale replied that the cost to run water downtown would be very costly and to minimize cost we would want to be as close to the distribution plant as we can. Gerry recognized what Dale was thinking but noted that it would be nice to know what is available on the other side of town since we know there is more than enough water in the downtown area. Charlie asked what the timeline is for permitting a water source and Dan explained that it is a two year process. The Board will take all the information presented tonight under advisement and discuss at a subsequent meeting.

3. Water & Sewer Abatement Request:

Dale explained that Mrs. Fischer requested an abatement to her water and sewer bills because she had a toilet leaking at her Crowley Street residence. Dale informed the Board that it is an unfortunate circumstance but he recommends denying the request because the water was used and then went through the sewer system and was treated as all sewer water is. Mrs. Fischer explained what occurred and how they fixed the problem as soon as they received the bill and found there was an issue. She also requested that the Board consider billing on a monthly basis to eliminate issues like this.

Charlie asked what the added expense would be to do monthly water bills for those residents who requested it. Dale replied that it would be a matter of sending one of his employees to read the meter and then Kathy Seaver's office would then need to process the bill. Paula asked if people can manually check their water usage on their own and Dale said yes. ***Joan Funk motioned to move forward with Dale's recommendation and deny the abatement request by Mrs. Fischer, 2nd Gerry McCarthy. Motion carried with all in favor.***

4. Public Hearing for Sewer Rate Adjustment:

Chairman King opened the Public Hearing for the Sewer Rate Adjustment at 7:13pm.

Based on a 2010 Town Meeting vote the sewers users need to be 50% of the sewer bond and operating costs and the remaining 50% will be raised through taxation. However 60% of the development of the system was paid for through grants so the cost to residents has been greatly reduced. Dale projects the operating budget for the sewer department to be about \$470,000 and historically this figure has been in the \$300,000. Based on the budget there should be a 40% sewer rate increase with a 5% buffer. The Selectmen asked Dale to look at the option of applying some of the cash from the sewer account to lower the increase for the upcoming year. Dale questions the use of the cash because he has always envisioned this fund for capital projects. Dale also stated that he could not find any rules set up for the sewer capital reserve fund and Gary stated that in his opinion the account is part of the enterprise fund and not an actual "capital reserve fund." Dale also reminded the Board that as of 2013 the town needs to start budgeting \$60,000 for depreciation of the system and the sewer rates will most likely need to be adjusted again.

Adela Lynch, resident, asked what the proposed increase is and Charlie replied that Dale is recommending 40%. Dale explained that on average most families pay about \$400 a year and with the increase at 40% the increase would be \$580. Barry Elliot asked what the total payment is for the year for the bond and Gary replied \$240,000 that will be split between the users and taxes. Barry noted that he was pleased to hear the Selectmen were considering phasing in an increase. Kathy Spangler asked how this all effects people who are not on town sewer and Charlie explained all taxpayers will see an increase in their general taxation.

Gerry stated he does not want to increase the sewer rate any more than 25%. Jim stated he agrees with the 25% increase to start with the second quarter billing (which would make the new rate effective January 1, 2012) to give residents time to adjust. Paula and Joan reiterated that the Board/Town worked diligently to keep the upgrade project costs down and they would be comfortable with a 25% increase noting that the rate will probably need to be reassessed next year. *Jim Horgan motioned to authorize a sewer rate increase by 25% to be effective January 1, 2012 noting the rate will need to be reassessed in the future, 2nd Joan Funk. Motion carried with all in favor.*

At 7:46pm, Jim Horgan motioned for a short recess, 2nd Charlie King. Motion carried with all in favor.

At 8:00pm the Board reconvened.

5. Conservation Commission Year End Report:

Dave Connolly, Chairman of the Conservation Commission explained that this year the Commission focused on managing the properties the town owns. For the French Property the timber harvest yielded 57,000 bf of saw logs, 188 cords of pulpwood and 522 tons of whole tree chips which brought in a net revenue of \$2000. Also for the French Property they established the woodcock singing grounds, created a log landing for public access on Hornetown Rd. and obtained a \$2,000 grant from NH Fish and Game's Private Land Habitat Improvement Small Grants programs to enhance the woodcock singing area. For the Dubois Property a public hearing was held for timber operations, a site walk for the layout of an access road was held and boundary line flagging, skid road layout and tree marking is currently being done. The Whittum project is still ongoing and some boundary line issues are currently being resolved in the Town Forest. Lastly, the Commission participated in Hay Day this past August and considers the day a huge success as far as informing the public about what Farmington has to offer and making community connections. The Board commented that the Commission does a great job!

6. Other Business To Come Before The Board:

- A. Welfare Guidelines** – Gary stated that Erica and he made some additional changes late last week and will have a draft for the Board's review in January.
- B. Second December Meeting** – Gary pointed out that the Board's next meeting is currently scheduled for December 26 and the Municipal Office is closed that day. Jim recommended cancelling the meeting and the Board was in agreement.
- C. Employee Handbook Changes** – Gary explained that he developed a list of proposed changes to the employee handbook. One thing he would suggest is to have a section for seasonal/casual employees. He also thinks the amount of vacation days that can be accrued

should be reduced. He is recommending the employees pay 20% of insurance premiums and 50% of dental premiums in lieu of a flat rate. Gary also believes that counseling sessions should be included in personnel files and levels of discipline should not have to follow the sequence as shown because certain offenses warrant more severe discipline. Gary will provide the Board with his recommendations in writing.

- D. Community Garden** – Jim explained that the Farmington Democrats would like to use the area within the fenced area. Scott Hazelton said it would be a good winter project for his guys to clear the area for the garden. Jim asked for the Board to approve the clearing of this area so that the gardening can begin in the spring once a written agreement has been created. Kathy Spangler stated that the Farmington Democrats are still working on ironing out the details of how the garden will be managed. Charlie stated that the area is currently gated to protect the water tower and questioned how this area is still going to be monitored and kept secure. Jim stated that the fence area is not around the tower but surrounds what used to be a small reservoir but is now filled in. Kathy Spangler stated the initial idea is to have the fence locked up at night and they do have a volunteer who is willing to go up and lock the gate each night. The Board was in agreement to allow the Public Works Department to clear the land within the fenced area for the proposed garden.
- E. Wage and Classification Study** – Charlie asked all Board members to review their job description packets over the next several weeks so that a non-public discussion can be held regarding some disagreements from employees.
- F. Conservation Commission Appointment** – *Gerry McCarthy motioned to appoint Arthur LeClair to the Conservation Commission for three years as a regular member, 2nd Jim Horgan. Motion carried with all in favor.*
- G. 2012 Budget Modifications** – Gary informed the Board that he provided them updated copies of the budget sheets because he asked the department heads to go back through and make some additional cuts. So far they have made \$74,000 in cuts and added \$2400 for the parking lot. Paula asked for the updated sheets with the revenues plus the tax impact for next Monday's meeting.
- H.** Jim questioned if the Board would like to recognize Scott Hazelton for his diligent job in getting the FEMA funds. FEMA recognized the high quality of work Scott did putting the application together and interfacing with the other town departments.
- I.** Jim commented that the school department really needs to reinstate the School Resource Officer at the school and the town needs to do their part also. He believes it would be a great idea to create a warrant to reinstate the school resource officer. Charlie commented that he agrees the school needs this officer, which is evident in the number of calls the PD has answered already this school year, but he does not believe the town should pick up the cost.
- J.** Paula said that the Selectmen were told that the initial fuel bid was lost because the School Finance Administrator was on vacation and therefore a higher bid was signed off on. At the Budget Committee meeting Carolyn Rioux, the School Finance Administrator, stated this

was not true after asked this question and said she did not sign off on the original bid but decided to wait and then actually got a bid that was \$0.34 less. Charlie asked Gary to put together a timeline of what occurred and copies of emails, etc. to back up what really happened because the two stories are so different.

- K. Gerry asked if the School department is putting up a warrant to buy the CAP building they are currently leasing and Paula said yes, at the Budget Committee they said they would like the school district to purchase the building.
- L. Paula said that a resident came to her and said that Berry Court is still not completed and Gary stated that paving will not be done until spring.

7. Review of Minutes:

- A. *Joan Funk motioned to approve the public minutes of November 21, 2011 as written, 2nd Jim Horgan. Motion carried with all in favor.*
- B. *Jim Horgan motioned to approve the public minutes of November 28, 2011 as written, 2nd Charlie King. Motion carried with Joan Funk abstaining.*
- C. *Charlie King motioned to table the non-public minutes of November 28, 2011 part A , 2nd Gerry McCarthy. Motion carried with Joan Funk abstaining.*
- D. *Jim Horgan motioned to approve the non-public minutes of November 28, 2011 part B as written, 2nd Gerry McCarthy. Motion carried with Joan Funk abstaining.*
- E. *Jim Horgan motioned to approve the non-public minutes of November 28, 2011 part C as amended, 2nd Gerry McCarthy. Motion carried with Joan Funk abstaining.*
- F. *Jim Horgan motioned to approve the non-public minutes of November 28, 2011 part D as written, 2nd Gerry McCarthy. Motion carried with Joan Funk abstaining.*
- G. *Jim Horgan motioned to approve the public minutes of December 5, 2011 as amended, 2nd Charlie King. Motion carried with all in favor.*
- H. *Jim Horgan motioned to approve the non-public minutes of December 5, 2011 part A as amended, 2nd Gerry McCarthy. Motion carried with all in favor.*

At 9:21pm, Jim Horgan motioned to go in non-public session under RSA 91A.3.II (b), 2nd Jim Horgan. Roll call – Charlie King (yes), Paula Proulx (yes), Gerry McCarthy (yes), Joan Funk (yes) and Jim Horgan (yes).

At 9:32pm the Board came back into session and Charlie announced the non-public minutes were sealed with a unanimous vote.

At 9:32pm, Jim Horgan motioned to go in non-public session under RSA 91A.3.II (b), 2nd Gerry McCarthy. Roll call – Charlie King (yes), Paula Proulx (yes), Gerry McCarthy (yes), Joan Funk (yes) and Jim Horgan (yes).

At 9:35pm the Board came back into session and Charlie announced the non-public minutes were sealed with a unanimous vote.

At 9:35pm, Jim Horgan motioned to go in non-public session under RSA 91A.3II (b), 2nd Gerry McCarthy. Roll call – Charlie King (yes), Paula Proulx (yes), Gerry McCarthy (yes), Joan Funk (yes) and Jim Horgan (yes).

At 9:50pm the Board came back into session and Charlie announced the non-public minutes were sealed with a unanimous vote.

At 9:50pm, Jim Horgan motioned to go in non-public session under RSA 91A.3II (e), 2nd Gerry McCarthy. Roll call – Charlie King (yes), Paula Proulx (yes), Gerry McCarthy (yes), Joan Funk (yes) and Jim Horgan (yes).

At 9:55pm the Board came back into session and Charlie announced the non-public minutes were sealed with a unanimous vote.

At 9:55pm, Jim Horgan motioned to go in non-public session under RSA 91A.3II (b), 2nd Gerry McCarthy. Roll call – Charlie King (yes), Paula Proulx (yes), Gerry McCarthy (yes), Joan Funk (yes) and Jim Horgan (yes).

At 9:57pm the Board came back into session and Charlie announced the non-public minutes were sealed with a unanimous vote.

At 9:57pm, Jim Horgan motioned to go in non-public session under RSA 91A.3II (a), 2nd Gerry McCarthy. Roll call – Charlie King (yes), Paula Proulx (yes), Gerry McCarthy (yes), Joan Funk (yes) and Jim Horgan (yes).

At 10:02pm the Board came back into session and Charlie announced the non-public minutes were sealed with a unanimous vote.

Jim Horgan motioned to accept the non-public minutes of November 28, 2011 part A as amended, 2nd Charlie King. Motion carried with all in favor.

Jim Horgan motioned to a \$300 bonus to all full-time employees including those employees included in the collective bargaining police unit contingent upon favorable response from the labor board that it is legal to do so (for the police officers) and \$100 bonus to regular part-time employees paid before December 25, 2011, 2nd Joan Funk. Motion carried with all in favor.

Paula noted that the programming for the heat is not right for the weekends because when she comes in on the weekend it is very warm in the building and Gary said he would have Keith check it out.

At 10:09pm, Gerry McCarthy motioned to adjourn, 2nd Joan Funk. Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandy Sanger

Recording Secretary

Chairman Charlie King

Jim Horgan

Joan A. Funk

Gerald McCarthy

Paula Proulx