

FINAL

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

January 24, 2011

7:30 P.M. – MUNICIPAL OFFICE BUILDING – HANOVER, NH

The meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Brian Walsh. Present were: Brian Walsh, Chairman; Katherine Connolly, Vice Chairman; Peter Christie, Selectman; Athos Rassias, Selectman; and Julia Griffin, Town Manager. Absent: Judy Doherty, Selectman.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT.

Chairman Walsh asked for Public Comment. There were no comments from the public.

2. DISCUSSION REGARDING REQUEST TO SWAP SMALL PIECE OF PROPERTY BEHIND 5-7 ALLEN STREET FOR COMPARABLE SIDEWALK SECTION IN FRONT OF BUILDING.

Ms. Griffin reported that Steve Buskey was present to speak to the Board.

Mr. Buskey stated that the proposal is to swap out a 632 square foot piece of property in the front of the building with a 632 square foot piece of property in the back. He is proposing that they make a lot line adjustment for the two pieces of property and then the Town would have control of the loading zones and he would assume control of the parking spaces. He would pay for the legal fees for this transaction if it gets approved.

Ms. Griffin stated that she is waiting for legal counsel to weigh in on this transaction but she felt it might need to be taken to Town Meeting because it is a land swap.

Chairman Walsh stated that it was his sense that the parking behind the building works fine in that area and that it wouldn't make any sense to take parking away from his structure.

The Board reviewed the map for clarification. Mr. Buskey reviewed the map with the Board. Mr. Buskey noted that he needed to maintain a 5' setback per zoning requirements. Ms. Griffin noted that it's an equal square footage to square footage swap. Ms. Griffin stated that it is safest to do this swap through Town Meeting

Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to place the proposed property transaction to swap land on Allen Street on the Warrant for consideration at Town Meeting. Selectman Rassias SECONDED the motion.

Selectman Rassias asked how long this lease has been in place. Ms. Griffin stated that this was approximately 20 years ago and this transfers the lease to a full swap of property.

THE BOARD VOTED 4 TO 0 TO PLACE THE PROPOSED PROPERTY TRANSACTION TO SWAP LAND ON ALLEN STREET ON THE WARRANT FOR CONSIDERATION AT TOWN MEETING.

3. DISCUSSION REGARDING “PARTIAL NIGHT” STREETLIGHT OPTION PROPOSAL BY NATIONAL GRID.

Chairman Walsh stated that he thought that Ms. Griffin’s comments in response to the proposal were very good. Chairman Walsh noted that 25 years ago, the Town was very proud of Granite State Electric and in a very short period of time they have been discouraged by the attitude of National Grid.

Ms. Griffin stated that National Grid has not wanted to make the commitment to New Hampshire to change over the technology. The news from the employees of National Grid is that they are excited about National Grid’s sale to Algonquin. National Grid had not wanted to spend the money to “re-lamp” the areas in New Hampshire but Algonquin may have other plans. Ms. Griffin and Peter Kulbacki will be going to a Public Utilities Commission (PUC) hearing on February 10th to see if they will allow the Town to repay the amount per streetlight over time instead of coming up with \$67,000 to pay back the fees all at once. The payback would be about 8 years and the payback time would be less than half of that if they could change over to LEDs. They want to find out why they don’t have an LED option. She has not had a chance to speak to a representative from the PUC but Peter Kulbacki did speak with a representative who made some suggestions regarding testimony before the PUC.

Vice Chairman Connolly stated that she was not impressed with the offer to pay \$150 per fixture to change to high pressure sodium lighting which she characterized as antiquated technology.

Selectman Christie feels that National Grid is not serious about this offer and they don’t want this to happen. National Grid is expressing this by putting an offer out there that is not acceptable.

Selectman Rassias felt that this was really disappointing, especially when you can drive over to Norwich about a mile away and see all of the LEDs in place knowing that they using so little energy. The \$150 charge per lamp is absurd.

Chairman Walsh stated that his questions would also be that if this is a statewide law, what are the other utilities offering; who else is served by National Grid because he knows that there are only a few locations in the state. Ms. Griffin stated that they serve 6 communities in the Connecticut River area from Hanover down to Cornish NH. They also serve a larger area in Southern New Hampshire. She noted that it is not like the days when the Granite State Electric employees worked in West Lebanon and served the area. There are only a couple of engineers in the West Lebanon office now.

Chairman Walsh asked if Hanover is in communication with other National Grid customers in the area. Ms. Griffin stated that she has been and Peter Kulbacki was reaching out to them to see about coordinating testimony.

Ms. Griffin stated that over in Hartford they took over ownership of their streetlights over a year ago and it seems like Green Mountain Power is more enlightened on this issue. Ms. Griffin wondered if it would be cheaper for the Town to purchase their own streetlights but they would have to contract with someone to maintain them and many of them have limited residual value because they have been up for so long. She felt it would be interesting to see where Algonquin stands on this issue and whether there would be any change.

Vice Chairman Connolly asked where obligation with the PUC and whether they should be representing the Town's best interest on this issue. Ms. Griffin stated that the Office of Consumer Advocate is there to represent the Town's interest which is a separate entity to the PUC.

4. BUDGET UPDATE AND REVIEW OF BUDGET SCHEDULE.

Ms. Griffin stated that she and Betsy McClain (Finance Director) are refining the wish lists that show the cuts to get to a specific percentage increase for the Board's review. She will begin working on the transmittal letter for the Board.

Ms. Griffin stated that the Municipal Management Association spent time speaking with representatives from the Local Government Center (LGC) and the NH Municipal Association (NHMA). The Governor's budget will be released on February 15th and then the budget committees will start working on it. The good news is that the Municipal Association has stated that the Speaker of the House and some of the committee members have sought LGC feedback regarding their concerns over potential impacts. Ms. Griffin will provide the Board with copies of a full briefing notebook that has been prepared by the Local Government Center on the fiscal situation and a history including revenue sharing, rooms & meals tax information, etc. The goal is to provide the new legislature with a background of these impacts so that there is some institutional knowledge. Every elected official will receive a copy of this notebook. It promises to be a helpful tool and it is their hope that they find it instructive and not a lobbying tool. Ms. Griffin also stated that the State is preparing for a possible billion dollar gap.

Vice Chairman Connolly suggested switching the agenda items for the first budget hearings on Monday and Tuesday since some of the larger departments are scheduled for the 2nd budget hearing. Chairman Walsh made some recommendations for the 3rd budget session. He also thought that some of the items listed for the 3rd session could be moved to either the 1st or 2nd session.

Ms. Griffin stated that this year as part of the budget discussions, she would like to look at moving the hydrant rental charge from the Fire Fund and plug it into the Water Utility and this might require some time in conjunction with the Water Company portion of the budget.

Chairman Walsh stated that he is against this change for this year. They made some promises that this transfer would not increase the water rates and he would rather tackle that issue in the fall rather than as part of the budget process.

Selectman Christie stated that this transfer wouldn't change much regarding the budget money and who it comes from. Ms. Griffin stated that it does change things and they want to show the Board the pros and cons in the context of having the Board think about this issue as they move forward with the budget. They don't think that the Board should take this on during the budget process but there are some complex parts to this issue and they wanted to make the Board aware of some of the issues coming forward.

Ms. Griffin stated that one issue is what the hydrant rental fee should be. The formula was based on something set by the PUC. She asked Peter Kulbacki to come up with a formula/system that makes sense. She wanted to give the Board a briefing paper to set the stage for future consideration. This issue is making the Fire Fund is a challenge to manage and they have had to use \$150,000/year to balance the Fire Department's operating expenses.

Chairman Walsh stated that this feels like the sewer rate issue which is very complicated with a lot of pros and cons with questionable history; staff can brief the Board but he would rather be briefed at the end of May and set forth a working group to work through this in an orderly way rather than incorporate it as part of the budget hearings. If the number of the Fire Fund hasn't changed, the SAFER money is going away and that needs to be addressed separately. The \$150,000 being used to balance the budget was due to people being overtaxed previously and this is outside of the budget. Ms. Griffin felt that it was important to understand the context of the Fire Fund budget and the \$250,000 deficit would be the 4 firefighters that were added to the Fire Department as part of the SAFER grant.

Vice Chairman Connolly mentioned the possibility of cutting back on Capital Improvement contributions. Ms. Griffin stated that this would be one tool that could be used.

Selectman Christie stated that when they used the fund balance in prior years, they did so because they were funding it in excess of 10% but by following that policy they have used that to fund on-going expenses and not one-time expenses. They should think about this in terms of presentation because if this money is being used for on-going expenses, he's not sure what the benchmark should be. There could be a way to rationalize it that would make sense. If the money is being spent on on-going expenses, it will make the problem worse.

Ms. Griffin stated that they are slightly below 10% in the fund balance. She stated that when Peter Kulbacki calculated the operating costs associated with the hydrant from the water utility perspective it came out to a \$350,000/year cost; the allocation to the Fire Fund is almost \$600,000. She stated that they are trying to wean this out of the Water Fund without raising water rates. This is a multi-month project but they wanted to give the Board a sense as to what they are looking at in conjunction with the budget discussions.

Selectman Christie stated that the explanation may be in last year's math and not in incremental spending which led to this situation. Ms. Griffin stated that they are \$280,000 over where they should be to bring the fund in at 1%. Ms. Griffin reported that she worked over the weekend to cut \$80,000 plus \$150,000 which brings them close to the gap.

Chairman Walsh felt that if staff came to the Board with a proposal such as this, the response would be "what would it take to bring it to 1% in the following years?" There needs to be a structure in the Fire and Ambulance costs and revenues for the 1% annual structure and not a 5% or 8% annual structure that they try to deal with every year. He wants to deal with this in more than one year in all of its complexity.

Ms. Griffin confirmed the order of the budget hearings with the Board.

5. DISCUSSION REGARDING PROPOSED TRANSIT STOP IMPROVEMENTS IN FRONT OF HANOVER INN AND HOPKINS CENTER.

Ms. Griffin stated that a study that was funded with grant funds from Advance Transit which was prepared by ORW Landscape Architects contained 20 recommendations for bus stop improvements in Town. Town staff took the study to heart and Peter Kulbacki (Public Works Director) and Mike Chase (Public Works) keep this in mind while tackling other roadways in Town. The area in front of the Hanover Inn and Hopkins Center was one of the larger projects. With the recommendations for that area, Ms. Griffin approached Dartmouth College staff a few weeks ago to discuss the recommendations for that area in conjunction with their renovations. Christine Walker from the Regional Planning Commission called Ms. Griffin to report that they might be able to open up some funding for this project. This project would involve the removal of the parking spaces in front of the Hopkins Center but additional parking spaces would be added to the north side of Wheelock Street, create a safer crosswalk with a refuge island in the middle of the roadway, and a shelter for the bus users. Initial cost estimates provided by Peter Kulbacki come in around \$472,000 but it is likely that more than 80% of this could be funded by outside funding sources. This project would not be done in the next budget cycle but may be part of the 2012-2013 budget. The project being considered for the upcoming budget is the Park Street improvements.

Ms. Griffin stated that they could request that the College consider participating with the Town to construct a small building near the Hopkins Center that would be a warm location in the winter time for bus riders and possibly a visitor's center for the Chamber of Commerce and the College. This could be an area just large enough for people to stay warm with information about the area.

Carolyn Radisch, Bill Baschnagel and Van Chesnut were present to speak to the Board. Ms. Radisch noted that more than 150 buses come through this area per day which is a direct link to the airport and New York City. They are very excited about working with the Town, Advance Transit and the College and moving this project forward.

Mr. Baschnagel noted that this will serve not just Advance Transit but all of the buses that service the area. By taking the parking spaces out of that area, the buses would not need to stack up.

Ms. Griffin asked about the number of parking spaces. Ms. Radisch stated that there would be a net loss of 3 spaces altogether. The proposed changes could make the area more pedestrian friendly as well as efficient.

Mr. Chesnut reported that in preliminary discussions with NH Department of Transportation, they love the concept and he has an appointment with the Federal Transit Administration to learn more about the program funding that might be available for this project.

Selectman Rassias noted that the improvements in front of the Bookstore provide a good example of changes that made the area safer for pedestrians.

Vice Chairman Connolly stated that she was delighted with the project and felt that this would be a welcome resource that will accommodate Advance Transit and Dartmouth Coach.

Selectman Christie asked what the role of Dartmouth College would be for this project. Ms. Griffin stated that they have some portion of the right-of-way and to the extent that they intend to possibly construct a visitor's center, that part would be on College property. Ms. Griffin noted that the area being considered will be staging area for the Hanover Inn project for the next year.

Chairman Walsh wanted to stress that the area needs to be attractive and not just designed by civil engineers. There is a net loss of 3 spaces and he wants to see what it really turns out to be with the design on the ground. The shelter depicted doesn't look particularly warm. Putting \$500,000 into the roadway feels high and it doesn't get them what they need in terms of attractiveness. He wants consideration for lighting in the area and noted that this is a dangerous area in town for pedestrians. He noted that there are no bike lanes shown and he wants to make sure they are considered for this project. He is not sure if the sidewalks need to be as wide as they are. He supports the project but these are the things he is going to be looking at as the project progresses.

Selectman Rassias noted that the Hanover Bike & Pedestrian Committee does not have this area on the map as a main corridor for bicycles but it is known to be an area that has a lot of bicycle traffic. Selectman Rassias felt that to make the bike lanes work, it will require a re-working of the Hanover Inn intersection. Ms. Griffin noted that there will be plenty of opportunities to look at the planning as this project develops but the goal is to strike while the iron is hot and work with the College and other agencies to work on securing funding. Ms. Griffin stated that the \$472,000 estimate is most likely too low.

Chairman Walsh stated that if 80% of the cost is road related, it seems that the dollars were out of balance for what the project is. Chairman Walsh stated that if the Town only had the estimated money to work with, he would invest it differently so there were more aesthetics that met more needs and created more safety.

Ms. Griffin stated that the College is considering this internally. She feels the Town should try to develop a plan that coincides with the College's goals for the Hanover Inn and Hopkins Center improvements.

Mr. Baschnagel stated that there were two things that he encouraged the Board to be aware of: 1) the Advance Transit Operations Center is a fantastic facility with improvements that the Board could see in an Open House that will happen this spring and 2) Advance Transit working on a project relative to a demonstration that will make it easier for people at the bus stop to know when a bus is coming. One part of the demonstration would be an illuminated sign showing when the buses are coming.

Chairman Walsh thanked the Advance Transit Board for the report provided to the Board. Ms. Radisch noted that there are a lot of exciting things in the works and they wanted to keep the Board apprised.

6. APPOINTMENTS:
- Advance Transit Board

Chairman Walsh MOVED to reappoint Bill Baschnagel to the Advance Transit Board. Vice Chairman Connolly SECONDED the motion.

THE BOARD VOTED 4 TO 0 TO REAPPOINT BILL BASCHNAGEL TO THE ADVANCE TRANSIT BOARD.

Chairman Walsh also thanked Mr. Baschnagel for his desire to be reappointed to the Board.

7. BANNER REQUESTS:
- Revels

Chairman Walsh confirmed with Ms. Griffin that this request was for December, 2011 for two weeks. Ms. Griffin stated that they typically allow the banner for one week but if there are no other requests, it could be up for two weeks.

THE BOARD VOTED 4 TO 0 TO APPROVE THE BANNER REQUEST FOR THE REVELS.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
- January 10, 2011

Selectman Rassias MOVED to Approve the Minutes of January 10, 2011. Selectman Christie SECONDED the motion.

THE BOARD VOTED 4 TO 0 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2011.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS.

Ms. Griffin continues to work on the budget. She is also finalizing a letter to the Grafton County Commissioners regarding the Grafton County Dispatch issue and there are 27 other communities that are similarly concerned out of the total of 44 communities in the County.

Ms. Griffin stated that she has been tracking some of the bills in the legislature. There is a bill to kill the PACE program after Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac had concerns about PACE sustainability initiative obligations. The bill hearing is tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. but she is unable to attend. The New Hampshire Retirement System reform Senate bill would implement all of the reforms that the LGC felt should be made to the retirement system.

10. SELECTMEN'S REPORTS.

Peter Christie

Selectman Christie reported that he attended a meeting this morning in conjunction with the Trescott Company to review the Forest Management Plan which was in preparation while under the Waterworks Company. The report has been received regarding the management of the 1,200 acres over the next 100 years.

The group reviewing the report was Ellen Arnold (Dartmouth legal counsel), Peter Kulbacki (Hanover Public Works Director), Jeff Smith and John O'Brien (Foresters for this land), Ed Chamberlain and Adair Mulligan (Conservation Commission and Conservation Council) and Kevin Evans (Forester for the College). They also reviewed the plan to deal with invasive species issues as a result of the blow downs from Mother Nature and the result of management and farming over the past 100 years; they also need to address the deer population that are damaging the forest. They are considering how to manage these issues in an affordable way to make recommendations to the Trescott Board with how to go forward.

Selectman Christie reported that the storm last week prohibited the Finance Committee from meeting last week but they will meet again tomorrow for a final review of the school budgets.

Kate Connolly

Vice Chairman Connolly reported that the Planning Board is continuing their work on the Residential Project. The Board reviewed zoning amendments and were presented with a couple from the College which will be considered in future meetings. The hearings schedule has been light so they will be meeting again next month.

Athos Rassias

Selectman Rassias reported that the Hanover Bike & Pedestrian Committee met and reorganized itself with Scott Drysdale as the new Committee Chair, Joanne Whitcomb is Secretary, and Doug

Deatt is the liaison to Public Works. Selectman Rassias noted that Hugh Mellert deserves a big round of thanks for serving as Chair for so long.

Selectman Rassias stated that the rest of the meeting was focused on the Park Street plans and they reviewed areas where accidents and injuries have occurred for the past 10 years for both bicycles and pedestrians.

Selectman Rassias reported that the Conservation Commission met at a rescheduled time due to a storm but he was unable to attend.

Chairman Walsh asked to see the Bike & Pedestrian accident report as part of the police budget.

Brian Walsh

Chairman Walsh reported that the Sustainability Committee met last Wednesday. They are hoping to have a Saturday workshop on February 26th.

Chairman Walsh announced that the Chamber of Commerce will have their Annual Meeting tomorrow night in Collis. The Chamber has done really well this year with its enthusiastic membership.

11. OTHER BUSINESS.

Ms. Griffin needed to have the Board vote for a Public Hearing on February 7 to amend the Rate and Fee Schedule. There is a State Law that all property landlords must register with the Town for the purpose of being served legal documents so staff has created a form and are obligated to charge a fee. Chairman Walsh asked if the fee is established by the State. Ms. Griffin confirmed that it was.

Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to set a Public Hearing for February 7, 2011 to amend the Rate and Fee Schedule. Selectman Rassias SECONDED the motion.

THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED TO SET A PUBLIC HEARING FOR FEBRUARY 7, 2011 TO AMEND THE RATE AND FEE SCHEDULE.

Vice Chairman Connolly noted that the Planning Board has been looking at a Rental Property Ordinance including the registration of rental property so the State has done a huge service by requiring this.

12. ADJOURNMENT.

Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Christie SECONDED the motion.

Board of Selectmen
January 24, 2011

**THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT
8:50 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Athos Rassias, Secretary

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth S. Rathburn.

SUMMARY

- 1. Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to place the proposed property transaction to swap land on Allen Street on the Warrant for consideration at Town Meeting. Selectman Rassias SECONDED the motion.**

THE BOARD VOTED 4 TO 0 TO PLACE THE PROPOSED PROPERTY TRANSACTION TO SWAP LAND ON ALLEN STREET ON THE WARRANT FOR CONSIDERATION AT TOWN MEETING.

- 2. Chairman Walsh MOVED to reappoint Bill Baschnagel to the Advance Transit Board. Vice Chairman Connolly SECONDED the motion.**

THE BOARD VOTED 4 TO 0 TO REAPPOINT BILL BASCHNAGEL TO THE ADVANCE TRANSIT BOARD.

- 3. THE BOARD VOTED 4 TO 0 TO APPROVE THE BANNER REQUEST FOR THE REVELS.**

- 4. Selectman Rassias MOVED to Approve the Minutes of January 10, 2011. Selectman Christie SECONDED the motion.**

THE BOARD VOTED 4 TO 0 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2011.

- 5. Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to set a Public Hearing for February 7, 2011 to amend the Rate and Fee Schedule. Selectman Rassias SECONDED the motion.**

THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED TO SET A PUBLIC HEARING FOR FEBRUARY 7, 2011 TO AMEND THE RATE AND FEE SCHEDULE.

- 6. Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Christie SECONDED the motion.**

THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:50 p.m.