

**FINAL**

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING**

**June 20, 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; Athos Rassias, Selectman; Judy Doherty, Selectman and Julia Griffin, Town Manager. Absent: Peter Christie, Selectman.

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

**2. PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT THE PROPOSED RATES AND FEES SCHEDULE FOR FY 2011-2012.**

Chairman Walsh noted that this Schedule consists of approximately 30 pages and this is the set of Rates and Fees which were passed by Town Meeting and would be in effect as of July 1, 2011.

Ms. McClain offered an overview of the changes. The following changes were noted:

Fire and Ambulance

1. New per person fee (\$75.00) for the conduct of CPR classes.
2. Collapse separate fees for Ambulance and Fire Report copies based on whether the report is more or less than 4 pages to a single fee (\$15.00), regardless of the length of the report.
3. Per capita charges to communities serviced by Hanover Ambulance (\$22.81 to \$22.84 per person).
4. Increase selected Ambulance Treatment Charges to maximize the revenues from private insurers and to bring them in line with the market and prevailing rates.

Chairman Walsh confirmed that the communities were notified of this change. Ms. McClain stated that they were and this brings the Town in line with the increase in costs of services and the amounts charged by other communities.

General Administration

1. Add "Limited Size" vendor daily permit fee of \$10.00 (versus \$15.00) in accordance with Ordinance; this was inadvertently omitted from previous Rates and Fees Schedules.

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Ms. McClain stated that there was a member of the public who read the ordinance closely and noted that there was a "Limited Size" vendor daily permit fee of \$10.00 versus the regular permit fee of \$15.00. This needed to be reflected on the Rates and Fees Schedule.

Ms. McClain noted that there is a working group that is in the process of being commissioned to review the Town's vendor locations which should come before the Board at some point in the near future.

#### Public Works – Highway

1. Add Obstruction Permit Fee of \$25 to defray the administrative handling costs associated with issuing such permits for any closure or obstruction of the public right-of-way.

#### Police

1. Revise the Special Detail Rate to reflect higher step/grade level of pay for officers (per union contract) and annual salary schedule adjustments.
2. Eliminate Juvenile Diversion Fees as these cases are now referred directly to the Court and the Diversion Program is not currently an option for juveniles.

Ms. McClain stated that the change in the Juvenile Diversion Fees is related to the fact that the juveniles are now sent to Court. Vice Chairman Connolly asked about the Youth Court program. She asked whether a juvenile ends up in a program like Diversion by going to Youth Court.

Elizabeth Rathburn reported that a juvenile offender has to appear before a Judge and a jury of their peers who then come up with a reasonable outcome including requirements that may be personal to them; the offender in turn would be required to serve on the Youth Court jury and this process can take months and is much more intensive.

#### Parking

1. Add meter rates to the schedule; these were inadvertently omitted from previous Rates and Fees Schedule. The rates have not changed at all.

#### Parks and Recreation

1. Add various fees related to the After School Adventures Program; these were inadvertently omitted from previous Rates & Fees Schedules.
2. Cost of Circle H Camp has gone from \$125.00 to \$175.00 for the six week program. Added Non-Resident Circle H Camp Fee (at the standard twice resident fee), as non-residents are eligible if program is not filled.

Chairman Walsh pointed out that the Parks and Recreation Board every year reviews the fees and seeks to essentially break even on most activities.

#### Water Utility Fund

1. Adjusted Water Connection Fee from \$1.26/GPD (gallons per day) to \$1.25/GPD based on updated asset net book values and outstanding debt.

Ms. McClain stated that they are trying to approximate the accumulated equity in the plant that new connections are buying into. The Town is looking at the most current net book value of the operating assets that is available; they are backing out the outstanding debt principal because all ratepayers are paying as they go; they are also making an adjustment for the accumulated capital reserves for the Sewer Fund.

#### Water Reclamation Facility

1. Introduce new lower quarterly base charge (at 5/8" rate) to accommodate instances where residential connections to the municipal wastewater treatment system with a private well (vs. municipal water) and with a meter larger than 5/8" for water pressure purposes. This fee would be applied only after the property owner/resident consults with the Department of Public Works to determine the particulars of their property's water flow and plumbing situation.

Ms. McClain stated that this is an issue that came up with a resident requesting an abatement request who discharges to the municipal sewer but has a private well source and because of water pressure issues, needed to have a larger meter to decompress to a smaller pipe. As a result, the Select Board discussed having a new fee for those residents with private wells who may have oversized meters to boost their water pressure and charging it at the 5/8" fee.

Ms. Griffin noted that they worked on the language regarding this issue to make it clearer. Chairman Walsh felt that this language made more sense.

2. Adjusted Sewer Connection Fee from \$4.78/GPD to \$4.82/GPD based on updated asset net book values, outstanding debt, and accumulated capital reserve balances.

**Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to adopt the Rate and Fee Schedule as presented for FY2011–FY2012. Selectman Doherty SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED TO APPROVE THE RATE AND FEE SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED FOR FY2011-FY2012.**

### **3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF INVESTMENT POLICY.**

Chairman Walsh would like Peter Christie to review this policy to make sure that he's comfortable with this. Chairman Walsh also asked that Jessie Levine meet with Peter Christie about the Tax Abatement Policy as well.

Ms. McClain stated that the policy adopted last year recommends that the Board of Selectmen review the investment policy annually. Pat Coutermarsh, Town Treasurer, did not recommend any changes to the policy from last year.

Vice Chairman Connolly asked about internal controls and who is authorized to effect wire transfers. Ms. McClain stated that Julia Griffin and Pat Coutermarsh are authorized to effect wire transfers. She noted that another person in the accounting office posts it to the ledger.

Chairman Walsh asked about the collateral agreement where it “lists no specific pledged securities” and he would like to know more about why the Town doesn’t have any specific pledged securities.

Selectman Doherty felt that Town staff did not recommend changes because the policy currently works. She felt that staff would be able to recognize if a system in place was not working.

Chairman Walsh would like to have the Finance Committee and the Trustee of Trust Funds to look over this policy. Ms. Griffin stated that the Finance Committee did review this last year and that the review was helpful as they came back with minor changes.

Ms. McClain stated that two years ago this was brought before the Finance Committee and they were very helpful in providing input. Chairman Walsh suggested that the Board adopt the policy and then send it on to the Finance Committee and encourage input for next year’s adoption of the policy.

**Selectman Doherty MOVED to adopt the Investment Policy. Vice Chairman Connolly SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED TO ADOPT THE INVESTMENT POLICY.**

#### **4. DISCUSSION REGARDING HARDSHIP TAX ABATEMENT POLICY.**

Chairman Walsh invited Jessie Levine, Assistant Town Manager, to speak to the Board on this issue. Ms. Levine stated that she is pleased that the Board wants to postpone the approval of the Tax Abatement Policy because she felt that they are really at the start of the conversation about a policy.

Ms. Levine stated that there are currently two abatement requests for hardship based on ability to pay and the Town does need to review its policy. She felt that the Town needs to review this carefully since other taxpayers end up footing the bill. There were past discussions that indicate that hardship abatements have to be an abatement of taxes; it means that the Board of Selectmen agree that there is severe inability to pay property taxes and therefore the property taxes and any of the penalties and interest that have accrued should be waived. This is entirely separate from a lien associated with general assistance, also known as welfare, which the Town does have a duty to provide but is separate from the abatement process. A person should not be in the position of applying for an abatement of property taxes and then later be subject to a lien for assistance. Ms.

Levine stated that most of the time when someone is seeking an abatement for property taxes, they are probably already subject to a lien for lack of payment for taxes. There are two types of liens involved in this. She would like the Select Board to consider that an abatement for hardship should not be in the first year that a property owner is subject to a property tax lien. That lien is in place to give the property owner some time to try to come up with the taxes and it gives the Town some protection that they will recover some of the unpaid taxes. Moving forward, if a property owner still has the inability to pay, and the Town has been working with them on the general assistance side, the Town can re-evaluate whether they are going to lose their property.

Ms. Levine stated that the inability to pay property tax and the provision for general assistance are linked. Ms. Levine stated that there have been past discussions about how long term property owners that contributed to the Town over time might be taken into consideration with regard to this issue. She would like to hear thoughts on this from the Board.

Ms. Griffin stated that for many years, the Town dealt with hardship tax abatements that were elderly residents who were surviving on social security and had very little net assets. These people had no other alternative other than losing their homes. Ms. Griffin stated that as the economy has changed, there are more complicated hardship tax abatement clients coming forward and this is what led Ms. Levine to review the policy and get input from other communities.

Ms. Levine stated that there are two ways that the Town will hear from property taxpayers that need assistance; 1) they will come into the Human Resources (HR) office seeking general assistance, or 2) they can apply for tax abatement for hardship which is the inability to pay and should only be applied for if they have exhausted general assistance. Ms. Levine stated that she would like to see the Assessor's Office and the Human Resources Department work together to find the best resolution in a holistic approach.

Chairman Walsh stated that he was surprised that the property tax abatement came out of the Assessor's Office and not the HR office. His memory of the way that they operated, the Select Board never looked at the welfare side of the equation. The Select Board has reviewed the property abatement requests and the level of justification and recommendations as to whether they abate or not. Chairman Walsh would like to see all of these requests come through the Human Resources office instead of the Assessor's office.

Ms. Levine stated that the abatement form used is the same whether the person is requesting assistance or disputing property value. It can still be handled through HR but the Assessor is the one that manages some of the programs such as disability programs. Ms. Griffin stated that Mike Ryan has been very helpful in assisting residents who may be eligible for assistance for certain programs.

Chairman Walsh still would like the citizen to contact HR. Ms. Levine stated that this would allow the coordinator to determine if there are other ways that they can be helpful to the applicant.

Selectman Doherty asked about the trend in other communities and whether they implemented hardship abatements. Ms. Levine stated that she e-mailed other communities and has not seen a hardship abatement policy; most of the requests are handled on a case-by-case basis directly by the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Levine indicated in her e-mail to the other Towns that she wanted to know how they coordinate the welfare versus abatement issue. The trend is that Towns don't use the welfare process to pay for property taxes.

Ms. Levine stated that the Town of Franklin responded and noted that if a landlord is in arrears in taxes and an applicant is a tenant who cannot pay their rent, the Town would pay the rent but pay down what the landlord owed in taxes. Ms. Levine originally thought that there would be a process that the Town could more easily follow but there isn't.

Selectman Doherty questioned whether there are other cases that shed some light on places where the Town could run into trouble. Ms. Levine stated that the application attached to her memo which requests more salary and financial information is something that other towns use as well.

Selectman Rassias appreciated the information provided. Selectman Doherty stated that the Board had discussions in this direction a year ago relative to the taxpayers' ability to pay. Ms. Levine stated that when there are one or two requests, it may make it easier to approve them but this may not be the best thing for the general taxpayers. Ms. Griffin stated that when they noted the number of requests increasing, this is not the normal pattern for Hanover and it raised a red flag that they should review this.

Vice Chairman Connolly stated that she remembered 5 or 6 requests per year in the past. Ms. Griffin stated that in the past there have been older residents that fell into this category but there is the potential for more complicated cases. Ms. Levine stated that some of the older residents might be more likely to ask for an abatement versus requesting what they consider to be "welfare."

Chairman Walsh felt that it would help him to see a "picture" of how things are changing. He also clarified that these cases would be discussed in non-public session per policy since they deal with the property owners by name with financial information. Ms. Griffin and Ms. Levine confirmed that these requests are discussed in non-public session.

Vice Chairman Connolly would also like more detailed information about the present situations. Ms. Griffin stated that the abatement requests themselves will give the Board a good sense of what is happening. Ms. Levine offered that she could also provide information about the people who have been requesting assistance in the area of welfare assistance.

Selectman Doherty felt that having a holistic approach is the right direction. She felt that Ms. Levine and Ms. McClain could determine what things will look like for the taxpayers in the community, for homeowners, and how that plays out if the Town receives additional requests.

Chairman Walsh thanked Ms. Levine for speaking to the Board.

**5. BANNER REQUESTS:**  
- Special Olympics

**Chairman Walsh MOVED to approve the Banner Request of the Special Olympics. Selectman Rassias SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED TO APPROVE THE BANNER REQUEST OF THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS.**

**6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**  
- June 6, 2011

Chairman Walsh noted one change to the Minutes.

**Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to approve the Minutes of June 6, 2011, as amended. Selectman Doherty SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED 3 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED, 1 ABSTAINED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 6, 2011, AS AMENDED.** (Selectman Rassias abstained from the vote).

**7. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS.**

Ms. Griffin provided the Board with an update regarding the upcoming 250<sup>th</sup> celebration. She is trying to keep up with Tom Byrne and Bill Young who are very busy ensuring that this event is successful. She provided the Board with a list of upcoming events noting that Pig and Wolf statues are on the street, there are banners in place that were created by the Richmond Middle School students, there are history panels that were created by Middle School students that will be on display at the Howe Library, the Rotary Club is working on the "Running of the Balls" event, there are photo displays of historic buildings in downtown in place at local businesses which were put together by Jay Barrett and staff from Parks and Recreation and the Howe Library. The "Hanover 1961 to 2011" books are out and on sale for \$24.95. Jack DeGange, Willy Black, Tom Byrne and Jon Gilbert-Fox are to be commended for that compilation. Muster day was a wonderful event with perfect weather with the dedication of a memorial stone and benches.

Ms. Griffin announced that the Old Timer's Fair takes place this Friday and Saturday in Hanover Center. There will be Fireworks on July 2<sup>nd</sup> at Reservoir Road. There will be an interfaith service at Rollins Chapel on Sunday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> at 1:00. The "Running of the Bells" is a children's race on the front lawn of Baker Library starting at 2:30 (not to be confused with the "Running of the Balls" event).

Ms. Griffin reported that there will be a magician (BJ Hickman) at 1:45 on Sunday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>. There will be street theater with Bill Hammond playing Dan Webster, Rob Grabill as Eleazor Wheelock and students from Hanover High School will portraying a group of deceased citizens. There will be homemade ice cream at Webster Cottage. There will be an outrageous hat contest.

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The “Running of the Balls” which is a fundraiser for the Rotary Club and the Town will happen at 5:30 on College Street in front of Dartmouth Hall and then a concert on The Green sponsored by Dartmouth College who is generously funding the concert. On Monday, July 4 there will be the “History on Parade” which will be a much larger parade than the usual 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade. The Rotary will be serving hot dogs and hamburgers.

Selectman Rassias asked if all of this information was offered on the website. Ms. Griffin stated that this is all available on the website and throughout the town. There is a need for volunteers. The Hanover Inn has offered to feed all volunteers brunch on Sunday before the events start (up to 100 people).

Ms. Griffin stated that they have invited Bob McLaughry who was on the Board in 1961, Ann Bressett and Helen Lacoss (both of whose husbands were on the Board) and they have an honorary Grand Marshal for the parade, Thad Seymour, who was the Grand Marshall in 1961. Jim and Susan Wright will be in the parade but President Kim can’t be here. Ms. Griffin invited members of the Board to be in the parade. Ms. Doherty noted that she will be in town that weekend and available to help.

Vice Chairman Connolly noted that the Pig and Wolf statues are such a big hit that people are asking when they will be placed up for auction. Ms. Griffin noted that Kathy Boghosian and Jill Polli are co-chairs for the auction which will be at the top of the Hop at the end of September.

Ms. Griffin stated that she has been trying to keep up with the Legislature. Ms. Griffin noted that the State should be finalizing the budget in the next week or two.

## **8. SELECTMEN’S REPORTS.**

### **Kate Connolly**

Vice Chairman Connolly reported that the Planning Board met and Dartmouth College has begun to build a sorority house (student housing) on Park Street.

### **Judy Doherty**

Selectman Doherty had nothing new to report.

### **Athos Rassias**

Selectman Rassias had nothing new to report.

### **Brian Walsh**

Chairman Walsh had nothing new to report.



**9. OTHER BUSINESS.**

There was no Other Business reported.

**10. ADJOURNMENT.**

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

**THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:22 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith A. Doherty, Secretary

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth S. Rathburn.

**SUMMARY**

- 1. Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to adopt the Rate and Fee Schedule as presented for FY2011–FY2012. Selectman Doherty SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED TO APPROVE THE RATE AND FEE SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED FOR FY2011-FY2012.**

- 2. Selectman Doherty MOVED to adopt the Investment Policy. Vice Chairman Connolly SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED TO ADOPT THE INVESTMENT POLICY.**

- 3. Chairman Walsh MOVED to approve the Banner Request of the Special Olympics. Selectman Rassias SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED TO APPROVE THE BANNER REQUEST OF THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS.**

- 4. Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to approve the Minutes of June 6, 2011, as amended. Selectman Doherty SECONDED the motion.**

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**THE BOARD VOTED 3 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED, 1 ABSTAINED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 6, 2011, AS AMENDED.** (Selectman Rassias abstained from the vote).

5. **Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Rassias SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:22 P.M.**