

**FINAL**

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING**

**December 5, 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 Peter Christie. Present were: Peter Christie, Chairman; Katherine Connolly, Vice Chairman; Athos Rassias, Selectman; Judy Doherty, Selectman; William Geraghty, Selectman; and Julia Griffin, Town Manager.

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT.**

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

Chairman Christie welcomed Bill Geraghty to the Board.

**2. DISCUSSION REGARDING REQUEST TO INCREASE OPTIONAL VETERANS TAX CREDIT.**

Ms. Griffin stated that Mike Ryan, Town Assessor, was present to speak to the Board regarding this issue. She noted that it has been a few years since the Board last reviewed the Veterans Tax Credit. In comparison to other towns, Hanover is at the low end of the tax credit at \$50. The minimum allowable credit is \$50 and communities can vote to increase it to a level of no more than \$500. Lebanon allows a credit in the amount of \$100. The tax credit impacts town revenue and therefore has an impact on the tax rate. It is up to the Board as to how they wish to proceed; for every \$50 increase the Town loses \$8,100 in tax revenue. There are 162 qualifying veterans in the Town of Hanover. The Statute is very clear regarding eligibility and with the most recent conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq, this number is likely to grow over time.

Chairman Christie noted that he is one of the 162 veterans and if it comes to a vote to increase the credit, he will recuse himself from the vote. He noted that in past discussions, the Veterans Tax Credit was more of an acknowledgement but it was not a needs based credit.

Ms. Griffin stated that there is an elderly and disabled tax credit which are more needs based but this credit is the least connected to needs based.

Selectman Rassias recalled that the Board had a lengthy discussion about this in the past. He didn't have a strong opinion about this one way or the other with regard to adjusting the amount.

Selectman Doherty is interested in receiving feedback from Mike Ryan. There was one letter forwarded to the Board on this issue and a fact based memo from Mr. Ryan with

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options. She wondered if there was anything else that they should be considering beyond what is outlined in the memo.

Mr. Ryan stated that the Town of Hanover has been at the lower end of the credit of \$50 since it was established in the '70s. The family that wrote in noted that it has not been raised in the 20 years that they've been in Town and wondered why this was the case.

Mr. Ryan felt that the statistics on the '09 report are very telling and stated that because it is a local option, it moves pretty fast toward the maximum. Ms. Griffin noted that any proposed increase would get voted on at Town Meeting. Mr. Ryan stated that he would increase it by some amount.

Vice Chairman Connolly stated that although it is not need based, she felt that they should increase the credit.

Selectman Doherty stated that the decision is based on policy and criteria and this feels emotional and wants the Board to think about the premise for raising it and asked Mr. Ryan why he felt they should increase it.

Mr. Ryan stated that he is looking at the statistics and the Town of Hanover in comparison to other towns. He stated that this is tough for him because he manages the situation and does not create it but it's been at \$50 for many years and it is an emotional issue; the legislature has put this in the Select Board's lap.

Selectman Doherty stated that she does not have data other than what is being put out by the popular media. The media indicates that the veterans are struggling. The veterans don't need to show a need but must meet certain criteria to qualify for the Veteran Credit. Mr. Ryan clarified that these veterans are eligible based on their service during times of conflict, not for periods of time when there are no overseas conflicts.

Ms. Griffin stated that in comparison to other towns, Hanover is the only Town at the \$50 rate. One could argue that Hanover is an affluent community and should be able to afford the credit at the \$100 level. The \$8,100 loss in revenue does have an impact on the tax base and is something that they need to make up. Some other towns are up to \$200.

Selectman Geraghty stated that he's trying to balance the needs based aspect. He stated that he was surprised to see that more than 50% of the towns in the State are allowing a credit of \$400 to \$500. He is assuming that the 162 veterans in Hanover are in the older age bracket versus just coming out of a more recent military event.

Mr. Ryan stated that the number has come down quite a bit in the past 8 years. Selectman Geraghty stated that he feels a little awkward having the Town of Hanover at \$50 when so many other towns are at a higher level. He agrees that it is emotional and that it is an appropriate recognition of the veterans. Selectman Geraghty stated that this made him question other credits for tax purposes and how many more will be open for discussion as they move toward the tax rate discussions. Selectman Geraghty confirmed

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with Ms. Griffin that the Board could discuss increasing the Veteran Tax Credit but it would ultimately be voted on by Town Meeting.

Ms. Griffin stated that the last time the tax credits were adjusted was after the last revaluation of properties to keep in line with inflation. The Board chose not to make a change last time because it is not needs based. The Board has not tackled this in the past 15 years.

Mr. Ryan clarified that the Elderly and Disabled reductions are exemptions and not tax credits which comes directly off the assessments. Mr. Ryan stated that these were increased in 2003 just prior to the first revaluation and then adjusted again in 2007 just before the 2008 revaluation. The numbers were adjusted based on the perceived increase in value and with the CPI to the means testing parts of the Statute. Hanover participates in most of the exemptions allowed.

Selectmen Doherty clarified that the premise in which they are making the decisions are: 1) in the region, Hanover is lower in comparison and, 2) it sounds like an acknowledgement for the veterans.

Chairman Christie stated that knowing what the Town will be facing in March, he feels that the Town of Hanover may be more interested in giving \$8,100 toward the social service agencies.

**Selectman Rassias MOVED to increase the Veterans Tax Credit to \$100.00. Vice Chairman Connolly SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED AND 1 ABSTAINED TO INCREASE THE VETERANS TAX CREDIT TO \$100.00. (Chairman Christie abstained from the vote).**

**3. RECOMMENDATION TO ACCEPT SCULPTURE PLACED IN PINE KNOLL CEMETERY.**

Ms. Griffin stated that Board approval was needed prior to the sculpture being placed in the Pine Knoll Cemetery because it is a piece of art. It is the headstone for an individual who passed away this summer.

Selectman Doherty asked what the Board's responsibility is in accepting this sculpture. Ms. Griffin stated that it's strictly for insurance purposes so that if somebody tripped and fell on it, it would be covered under the Town's property and liability insurance. Ms. Griffin stated that they don't have any other monuments like this in town. This is similar in size to a raised grave marker although there is no casket enclosed inside.

Selectman Doherty asked if there was any maintenance required on the part of the Town. Ms. Griffin stated that a burial comes with a payment into a perpetual fund that is used to

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maintain headstones, for example. The Town could have it repaired if it was damaged but they have limited liability in terms of being required to replace it.

Vice Chairman Connolly asked what would happen if it was defaced. Ms. Griffin stated that the Town will do whatever repairs it can handle but there are no guarantees.

Vice Chairman Connolly asked about the material of this sculpture. Ms. Griffin thinks it's some form of copper and brass; it is metallic instead of stone.

Selectman Doherty asked about the Town's liability. Ms. Griffin stated that this is simply in the acceptance; this item would be covered as any objects are in the cemetery for insurance purposes.

Selectman Doherty asked if the Board typically accepts just about anything for this purpose. Ms. Griffin noted that the last debate in Pine Knoll was regarding the bell that was coming out of West Lebanon and there were public hearings about the religious nature of the bell and bell tower and people had concern about the Town taking ownership of it in the cemetery. A family wanted to install it near a family member's grave and they talked about accepting it with significant conditions. Ms. Griffin stated that there are other headstones in the cemetery that are quite modern.

**Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to accept the sculpture placed in Pine Knoll Cemetery. Selectman Doherty SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ACCEPT THE SCULPTURE PLACED IN PINE KNOLL CEMETERY.**

**4. DISCUSSION REGARDING HUNTING AT HAYES FARM PARK UPPER MEADOW.**

Ms. Griffin stated that this is a 4 acre parcel attached to the Trescott Ridge Wetlands which runs adjacent to Partridge Road. The issue came up this fall because there are two deer stands there and the previous owners want to be able to continue to hunt there. This is now an area that is more public and the Conservancy in conjunction with the Conservation Commission has planted some native plants there. There is a plan to have a public park as well. Ms. Griffin is anxious about allowing hunting there without restrictions.

Chairman Christie asked if hunting was allowed there this fall. Ms. Griffin stated that it was allowed this fall and it is clearly posted that hunting is being allowed. There needed to be a formal discussion about this with the Board. The Town does not have the authority to decide to post a property as 'No Hunting' unless the Select Board makes a decision about it. The Conservation Commission talked about this and their recommendation is to phase out hunting but if the deer population increases they may want to reopen this.

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Selectman Rassias stated that the Conservation Commission was careful to consider all aspects of this issue and it is perceived that deer are becoming a problem town wide including this area and there is a history of hunting in that area which appears to be well controlled. The Conservation Commission voted to present the three options and he recalled that they didn't have a strong favorite one way or the other. Each person had individual concerns.

Ms. Griffin stated that the deer population could cause significant damage to the native plantings. She stated that this parcel is only 4 acres and there is plenty of hunting going on in Etna.

Chairman Christie asked about other hunting areas on Town land. Ms. Griffin stated that on Dana Road there is hunting allowed on 100+ acres.

Vice Chairman Connolly stated that hunting was allowed again recently on Dana Road due to the increased deer population. Vice Chairman Connolly would vote to disallow hunting in that area until something comes up that creates some sort of emergency.

Selectman Geraghty stated that this is a small parcel and if they are trying to increase foot traffic in that area, it makes him more nervous than a 100 acre lot and further rural area. He also stated that if something came up where they had to deal with the deer populations, the Board could later re-evaluate.

Selectman Rassias stated that the Conservancy and the Conservation Commission are going to be monitoring the situation.

Selectman Doherty asked if the Town has talked with the relatives. Ms. Griffin stated that Vicki Smith has talked to the family. Ms. Griffin would be concerned about the liability issue for the family. Knowing Etna and how many folks are hunting in that area, it is an active area for hunting to the north and west of the property. Ms. Griffin stated that when you look at the hunting season, there could be people out there for almost 6 months of the year if it is not restricted.

Selectman Doherty stated that when they opened Dana Road for hunting, the concern was communication with the public; not only for the hunters but for the hikers or anyone using the area. People could inadvertently hike without knowing that they are right in the middle of people hunting and vice versa. Selectman Doherty asked whether the public is aware of the areas in Town where hunting is allowed. If someone is renewing a license, they may not be aware of changes especially if the changes are the result of a meeting.

Ms. Griffin stated that inevitably, land that is posted gets hunted on. Selectman Doherty stated that there are decisions being made in people's living rooms about who can hunt on their property and who cannot and it becomes confusing for both the hunter and the community. She stated that these are hard areas to change when hunters know that they have hunted in the area for many years.

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Ms. Griffin stated that her assumption is that as this property becomes a much more public area, it's far less attractive to the average responsible hunter. Right now there are two deer blinds that need to come down. They need to re-emphasize that since it is going to have a public park and a library in close proximity. The Trescott Company property is overpopulated with deer and this is being reviewed. This is an active process to be reviewed year to year.

Vice Chairman Connolly asked whether the hunting on Dana Road is controlled in any specific way. Ms. Griffin stated it is not controlled and by State Law, the Town can't control it unless the Board takes an active vote to limit the public's hunting access to public land in some way. It's the exception to post public land 'No Hunting', not the rule.

Chairman Christie stated that from a public policy point of view, he finds it hard to justify allowing hunting on 4 acres near a public park. Ms. Griffin stated that the abutting property owners have posted their land as 'No Hunting.'

**Selectman Doherty MOVED to adopt Option 1 as presented by the Hanover Conservation Commission on their November 15<sup>th</sup> Memo which is a no hunting policy to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public on its use of the former Hayes Property. Vice Chairman Connolly SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT OPTION 1 AS PRESENTED BY THE HANOVER CONSERVATION COMMISSION ON THEIR NOVEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> MEMO WHICH IS A NO HUNTING POLICY TO PROTECT THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OF THE PUBLIC ON ITS USE OF THE FORMER HAYES PROPERTY.**

*(Option 1 from the Conservation Commission reads as follows:*

*"To protect the health, safety and welfare of the public in its use of the former Hayes property, the Town of Hanover, as the new owner, adopts the following policy:*

- 1. to prohibit hunting or trapping of all animal and bird life on this property;*
- 2. to require that all existing hunting stands and access to them be removed;*
- 3. to post signs prominently at all trail access points to the property that prohibit all hunting, trapping and weapons on the property at any time;*
- 4. to enforce this policy immediately upon its acceptance by the Town of Hanover Select Board.")*

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**  
- November 21, 2011

Chairman Christie and Vice Chairman Connolly suggested minor changes to the Minutes.

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**Selectman Doherty MOVED to approve the Minutes of November 21, 2011, as amended. Vice Chairman Connolly SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED, 1 ABSTAINED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 21, 2011. (Selectman Geraghty abstained from the vote).**

## **6. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS.**

Ms. Griffin reported that in light of the pedestrian vs. vehicle accident on West Wheelock Street opposite the church sidewalk, there is now a revised crosswalk with bump-outs installed in the area after consultation with residents and Reverend Collins. Mike Chase from Public Works did the best he could with blacktop to try to keep the cars into one lane until they pass the crosswalk. The other crosswalk was done before the standards changed. There are two streetlights in the area of the new crosswalk to light the intersection.

Ms. Griffin stated that the police department volunteered funds for the pedestrian activated crosswalk signal that will be installed in the spring. The only time it would be on is when the pedestrian activates it when they wish to cross. Public Works ground out the old crosswalk last week and did the temporary bump-outs which will be made permanent with granite curbing in the spring.

Selectman Rassias stated that he has been through the area a couple of times and it is a big improvement; having the old crosswalk emerge from two parking spaces was part of the problem with the old crosswalk. He is concerned about the visibility coming up the hill. Ms. Griffin stated that there is better visibility with this crosswalk than there was before but they did lose a parking space.

Ms. Griffin stated that the West Street and West Wheelock Street intersection is still of concern as cars are going through that area at a higher rate of speed going down the hill.

Chairman Christie asked about the blinking light near the river. Ms. Griffin stated that they are in discussions with Carolyn Radisch and the Parking & Transportation Board about better solutions for this area. Chairman Christie stated that because the light is blinking all of the time, it doesn't alert drivers that there is an upcoming crosswalk. Chairman Christie asked if the light is solar powered. Ms. Griffin stated that the light is one that was installed when the Ledyard Bridge was being built and it is a standard light, not solar powered. She has asked Mike Chase and Michael Evans to research a different type of light for each end of the crosswalks for better illumination over the next couple of months.

Chairman Christie stated that several residents came up to him appreciative of the responsive efforts of the Town to address this issue after the accident. Selectman Rassias stated that he has also been approached by residents. Vice Chairman Connolly noted that she has had the chance to use that crosswalk and it is a great improvement.

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Selectman Rassias asked if the Town will be treating Wheelock Street with a bump up similar to what has been done on Maynard Street. Ms. Griffin stated that they are going to be coming back to the Board with some designs and solutions for the area. She noted that the police department has noted that people are slowing down there now especially with the pedestrian barrel in the middle which will need to be removed before the snow comes.

Ms. Griffin reported that she is having initial budget discussions with each department.

## **7. SELECTMEN'S REPORTS**

### **Athos Rassias**

Selectman Rassias had nothing new to report.

### **Judy Doherty**

Selectman Doherty had nothing to report.

### **Kate Connolly**

Vice Chairman Connolly reported that the Planning Board has been quiet and the Residential Committee continues on.

Vice Chairman Connolly reported that the Regional Planning Commission is one of 9 in the State that has just acquired grant money of approximately \$3.5 million to complete regional plans for each one of their areas. They are supposed to do this legally but have been unable to do so since State funding had been pulled out. This will allow them to fulfill this legal obligation. Having these communities act together is of particular importance now.

Vice Chairman Connolly suggested that the Board set the polling hours for the January primary.

**Selectman Rassias MOVED to set the polling hours for the New Hampshire Primary on January 10, 2012 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Selectman Doherty SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO SET THE POLLING HOURS FOR THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY ON JANUARY 10, 2012 FROM 7 A.M. TO 7 P.M.**

Ms. Griffin stated that State Law requires Select Board members to be present during the polling hours. Ms. Griffin coordinated times for the Board members to work the polls.



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**Bill Geraghty**

Selectman Geraghty reported that he will be having orientation spending two half days touring each department.

**Peter Christie**

Chairman Christie thanked everyone involved in the planning of Penny Hoisington's Retirement Party. Both the party and open house were well attended. He also wanted to thank everyone involved in Brian Walsh's celebration last Thursday night which was a great community event and Brian was very appreciative.

**8. OTHER BUSINESS.**

There was no Other Business reported.

**9. ADJOURNMENT.**

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

**THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:25 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith A. Doherty, Secretary

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth S. Rathburn.

**SUMMARY**

- 1. Selectman Rassias MOVED to increase the Veterans Tax Credit to \$100.00. Vice Chairman Connolly SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED AND 1 ABSTAINED TO INCREASE THE VETERANS TAX CREDIT TO \$100.00. (Chairman Christie abstained from the vote).**

- 2. Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to accept the sculpture placed in Pine Knoll Cemetery. Selectman Doherty SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ACCEPT THE SCULPTURE PLACED IN PINE KNOLL CEMETERY.**

- 3. Selectman Doherty MOVED to adopt Option 1 as presented by the Hanover Conservation Commission on their November 15<sup>th</sup> Memo which is a no hunting policy to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public on its use of the former Hayes Property. Vice Chairman Connolly SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT OPTION 1 AS PRESENTED BY THE HANOVER CONSERVATION COMMISSION ON THEIR NOVEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> MEMO WHICH IS A NO HUNTING POLICY TO PROTECT THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OF THE PUBLIC ON ITS USE OF THE FORMER HAYES PROPERTY.**

- 4. Selectman Doherty MOVED to approve the Minutes of November 21, 2011, as amended. Vice Chairman Connolly SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED, 1 ABSTAINED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 21, 2011. (Selectman Geraghty abstained from the vote).**

- 5. Selectman Rassias MOVED to set the polling hours for the New Hampshire Primary on January 10, 2012 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Selectman Doherty SECONDED the motion.**

**THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO SET THE POLLING HOURS FOR THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY ON JANUARY 10, 2012 FROM 7 A.M. TO 7 P.M.**

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

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**THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING  
AT 8:25 P.M.**