

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 21, 2001

The meeting was called to order at 6:53pm.

PRESENT: Chairman R. Dion, S. Sheidow, D. Pichette-Volk, P. Rueppel, R. Holley, M. Jolin (arrived at 7:12pm), P. Ganley, D. Duford and M. Farrell – Town Administrator. T. Young – excused.

R. Dion stated the Council had a nonpublic session tonight from 6:00 – 6:45pm to discuss the Town Administrator's Contract. A nonpublic meeting to discuss and take action on M. Farrell's contract will be held on Wednesday, March 14, 2001. The regular scheduled Council Meeting for March 14, 2001 will be rescheduled to March 7, 2001.

MINUTES: P. Ganley moved to approve the minutes of January 22, 2001. Motion seconded by D. Duford. **MOTION CARRIED.** S. Sheidow abstained due to not receiving a copy of the minutes.

D. Duford moved to approve the minutes of January 24, 2001. Motion seconded by P. Ganley. **MOTION CARRIED.**

R. Dion stated tonight's Scheduled Appointment for Joanne McHugh regarding Adopt-A-Family has been cancelled.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: M. Farrell reported on the following items:

1. There are personnel changes in the Fire Department. They are in the process of hiring three new firefighters. The interview process for these positions will be finished tomorrow and the new employees will be starting in a month. The Department lost Lieutenant Mike Williams who resigned for a firefighter's position with the City of Manchester. Even though he is taking a firefighter's position instead of a lieutenant's position, he will be getting a substantial pay increase working for Manchester.

Deputy Fire Chief Gary Lambert, at his request, is returning to line duty. He will be demoted to position of Captain. The Department has gone through the selection process for a Deputy Fire Chief and has made a conditional offer to a candidate. The candidate is going through the final processing and background check. The candidate will be starting between March 12, 2001 and March 19, 2001.

2. M. Farrell reviewed the budget summary report for January dated February 8, 2001 with the Council.
3. Last Wednesday night the Department of Environmental Services (D.E.S.) held a public hearing in Town regarding the gravel pit off of Route 3A known as the King Pit. They have been stock piling and land applying sludge. M. Farrell stated he has been in contact with the residents on Goonan Road who have occasionally had odor problems in the summertime. The permit from the State has been suspended primarily because the nitrate levels in the wells are rising steadily during the project. The levels are still in normal ranges but are still a problem because they continue to

rise. The D.E.S. has terminated the project. The whole area still needs to be watched. It is not a town issue but we are concerned because they are our citizens.

SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS:

TAX INCREMENT FINANCE (TIF) PRESENTATION: M. Farrell stated he will explain the TIF Plan again due to new Councilors being on board this year. He will then turn the presentation over to Alex Vailas from Phoenix Realty who is the lead developer in this project. The purpose of this discussion tonight is to determine if the Council wants to amend the TIF District including the boundaries itself and the financing plan that goes with it. At the end of this discussion the Council will need to decide whether to hold a public hearing on the amendments and then take action at a later date. We are looking to have a public hearing next Wednesday. Because of the time constraints the public hearing has already been posted for next Wednesday and put in the paper. He is not assuming the Council is having one but had to post it due to the time constraints. The way to amend a TIF District is similar to how one is created. He wants to take the Council through the process similar to December of 1999. There is a new Council, a new developer and a new plan. A TIF is a powerful tool for funding necessary infrastructure improvements without causing a direct impact on the tax rate of the Town or undermine any other areas of revenue. You start with an undeveloped area. It is an undeveloped area because it has no infrastructure such as water, sewer, road or utilities because this is very expensive. The developer does not have the money to put in the infrastructure, only the building. The TIF is like a partnership. The developer will come in and guarantee this building will take place. The Town gets the advantage of the increase in its tax base. He did a demonstration to the Council with example figures.

M. Jolin present at 7:12pm.

M. Farrell stated once the road and utilities are put in, the developer can subdivide and place a building. He demonstrated an example of the value of the district and the tax revenue. The amount of money for the infrastructure containing the road, sewer and utilities the Town put in would have to first be bonded with town meeting approval. It does not effect the tax rate because the new value can now be used to pay the debt on the bond. Last year we created a TIF District but the financing did not pass at town meeting. But the TIF structure is still there. To amend the TIF District we have to follow the same procedures we did to establish it. We had to define the needs, the area of the district itself and develop a TIF Plan for how the money raised would be spent. In defining the need, we defined them too narrowly. The TIF can be spent on public infrastructure but we wrote it up for sewer only because that was the need at the time. The new development does not require sewer because the type of uses going in are not heavy water users. In defining the district, the number of lots are going to stay the same but we want to expand the district to include all of the right of ways of the road network in the area, Rt. 3A, I93 intersection on and off ramps, Technology Drive and Quality Drive. In the TIF Plan we have the statement of objectives in it. We need to broaden our objectives slightly due to them being too narrow last time. We are going to have change the estimate, the cost of the development plan, the sources of revenue and the estimated tax increment. The amount of the bond is not going to change. We are still looking at the same figure as last time of \$2.6 million. He explained the Proposed Amendment to the Town of Hooksett Tax Increment Finance District on the Exit 10 Economic Development District (see attachment #1).

Alex Vailas, Phoenix Realty, stated he is the consultant for Great Island Development Co. who is the developer of the project located at Exit 10 at the intersection of Quality Drive and Rt. 3A.

With him tonight is Gordon Leedy of VHB, James Winn of HTSD, Ray Damanti and Charles Irving of Great Island Development Co.

Chuck Irving, Great Island Development Co., explained the existing TIF District on a map. Their plan includes approximately 78 acres on the southerly side of the riverside of Rt. 3A. They are talking about having a number of sites for retail development off of Quality Drive. They are looking at having a Target Store at approximately 126,000 sq. ft., a 23,000 sq. ft. facility next to Target, a Home Depot, a Kohl's Store, a 3500 sq. ft. restaurant, a B.J.'s Warehouse and a 24,500 sq. ft. retail facility. Overall, it is approximately 450,000 sq. ft. worth of development. There would be a positive impact to the Town's tax base is significant with this development. One of the issues is that West River Road/Rt. 3A is currently a fairly unimproved road. To facilitate development there are improvements that need to be made to the road.

James Winn of HTSD explained the road improvements that would be needed in the Rt. 3A/Quality Drive area consisting of road widening, additional lanes and signalization.

P. Ganley asked if there would be any taking of land on the west side.

J. Winn replied no, only on the east side.

Ray Damanti stated that the money raised in the TIF District needs to be spent in the TIF District. However, it serves beyond the area. The Town has already met many of the objectives when the TIF was proposed before. It is a win/win proposition and makes improvements for the Town. It is a regional draw for the Town. The Town will get the tax benefit for the regional improvements.

S. Sheidow stated she is familiar with the TIF in Concord NH and questioned why the developers haven't looked into doing Class A office buildings down here. Home Depot and Target are off of D' Amante Drive in Concord. She questioned why they would agree to build less than 10 miles away from where they presently are and with Home Depot losing 20% in the stock market. Home Depot is not having much of a draw anymore.

C. Irving replied his company isn't in the office market. They focus on retail and when they came to Hooksett they had this intent in mind. If there is an office market or demand then they are not aware of it. His company is not against it but there is not an opportunity for it. Most of the retailers on South Willow Street in Manchester now are trying to cram themselves into spaces almost too small. The Home Depot on South Willow street is about 90,000 sq. ft. and is a very successful store. The Hooksett Home Depot would be over 100,000 sq. ft.

S. Sheidow stated she asked about the Class A is because she has had commercial bankers ask her and suggest that Class A is needed here including a hotel and it would put less impact on the services the Town has to provide as opposed to retail.

C. Irving replied if you look at a 100,000 sq. ft. retail building then there would probably be three or four bathrooms. For a 100,000 sq. ft. office building there would be a huge amount of bathrooms needed and there would be a need for sewer.

Ray Damanti stated if there was a demand for office buildings, then he is not saying it couldn't happen. There is enough land in the District to do both.

S. Sheidow questioned if Manchester is still having an exit on Hackett Hill.

The planner for that project replied the proposal is to relocate exit 7 eventually, a minimum of five to seven years down the road. It is a replacement for the Front Street access.

S. Sheidow stated last year when we were originally going to do the TIF District, it was presented to the past Council and the public for the sewer issues and now it appears we are taking the sewer issue and putting it on the back burner. She asked who paid for the improvements to D'Amante Drive when it was done.

Ray Damanti replied that was a private road they built themselves. As part of this project, a lot of improvements will be done outside the Rt. 3A corridor by this developer.

S. Sheidow stated in the original TIF we were looking at a grant. She asked if this grant is gone.

M. Farrell replied yes.

D. Pichette-Volk asked how Rt. 3A being a State road complicates things.

J. Winn replied since it is a state highway, all of the plans will have to be reviewed and approved by NH Department of Transportation (N.H.D.O.T.). When he drew up the plans, he used all of the N.H.D.O.T. guidelines and requirements for this plan.

P. Ganley moved to hold a TIF Public Hearing next Wednesday, February 28, 2001. Motion seconded by D. Pichette-Volk.

D. Duford stated he objects to this due to finding out about the public hearing through the newspaper. We are the Council and this was all done without Council approval. He knew nothing about it.

ROLL CALL VOTE:	D. Duford	no	P. Rueppel	yes
	R. Holley	yes	D. Pichette-Volk	yes
	M. Jolin	yes	R. Dion	yes
	P. Ganley	yes	<u>MOTION CARRIED – 7 TO 1.</u>	
	S. Sheidow	yes		

The Council took a five minute break at 8:10pm.

OLD BUSINESS:

TOWN ENGINEER POSITION: R. Dion stated there are two options the Council has with this position. They can subcontract the work out or hire our own Town Engineer. The Council needs to examine and decide what they want to do with this. When he met with M. Farrell he thought it would be a good idea to get the input from the Planning Board for their recommendation.

D. Duford questioned how this can be called Old Business.

R. Dion replied because we have had the engineering services all along.

D. Duford replied no. It came under the Administrative Code review. It is not Old Business. There was something in place now and is still in place until something is done with the Administrative Code.

R. Dion stated we have had an employee doing it and that employee is now gone. The Council has to decide what to do.

D. Duford stated the position does not exist.

R. Dion replied the services do.

Jim Graham, Chairman of the Planning Board, stated since Former Highway Manager Robert Pantel left, the Planning Board has been subcontracting the engineering work for site plans and subdivision review to Dufresne-Henry of Manchester. This work includes but is not limited to the design review and construction services, i.e. onsite inspections. Dufresne-Henry estimates that the design review for an average size project will range between \$1,000 - \$2,000 and construction review, i.e. inspections, would be in a similar range. Right now when the Planning Board accepts a plan from the developer they send it out for an estimate to Dufresne-Henry. There are accounting aspects the Town has to do in order to take in the funds. The costs from Dufresne-Henry exceed the \$75.00 per lot and \$1 per foot of road frontage in the fee structure. The current process does not include the Dufresne-Henry's time and costs associated with attending Planning Board Meetings to represent the plans as well as being available for questions and answers. The Planning Board does not get the dialogue back and forth, currently, between them and Dufresne-Henry like they currently did with R. Pantel. One thing that isn't happening is Technical Review Meetings. Many developers would come in prior to the application process and R. Pantel did all of this work and there is no one to do it now. If the Town decides to continue this service of Technical Review Meeting then the Town would have to either purchase this service from Dufresne-Henry and pass the cost on to the developer or eat it. The costs to the developer for design review and construction services are now greater than when the Town was providing the service on its own. The Technical Review process does not currently have the same level of engineering representation as it had in the past. The Planning Board does not currently have the ability to dialogue with the representatives of Dufresne-Henry during the Planning Board meetings. The Town does not have engineering expertise available on staff to do the ad hoc work that is often required during the planning process. They also no longer have the engineering expertise available to provide input into the revising of site plan and updating the zoning regulations on a yearly basis. R. Pantel did this. The Town has the accounting collection responsibility for engineering fees. It is the recommendation from 100% of the Planning Board, except he thinks P. Rueppel has changed her mind since the time of the vote, to have a full-time Town Engineer on staff, for the current fee structure that the Planning Board uses for site plan and subdivision, should be reviewed and brought into line with what developers are paying for the design and review and construction services provided by Dufresne-Henry or a similar engineering firm and for the position to be fully funded through the fees. The Town Engineer's responsibility will be to look out for the Town's best interest.

D. Pichette-Volk asked if there are functions that don't relate to the things J. Graham has outlined from the highway point of view or from other vantage points within the Town that require or benefit from engineering services.

Town Planner Charles Watson replied he spent eight years with the Town of Merrimack. All of their engineering work done through the Planning Board was contracted out to a private firm. The Town of Merrimack has always kept a P.E. on board to handle only the public section of roadways. Hooksett has a lot of miles of road that have to be kept up.

Planning Board Member and Sewer Commissioner Dale Hemeon stated the Sewer Department subcontracts out their engineering to a company that oversees all sewer construction. Since he has been a Sewer Commissioner he has found that this doesn't really work. The present company they work with has a very poor billing system. On the last three jobs they have had sewer work done, all of the systems had failed. The company bills the Town for four hours when they only worked one. If an engineer was on staff, this would be a service to the Town. The companies you subcontract out to, look at it as more of a business and they are not really doing the job they are supposed to be doing.

R. Dion stated the Planning Board takes in approximately \$38,000 - \$40,000 in revenue. He asked if we could increase the fees in order to fund the position.

D. Hemeon stated outside engineers' rates are \$65/hr for their lowest engineer and \$105/hr for their better engineers. The Town could make money in the long run by hiring a Town Engineer.

Planning Board Vice Chair Mark Bourque stated there are intangibles that are in there. Currently, when the contractor they hire goes through their checklist and says everything is okay they are not looking at the growth of the Town and the future. Someone on board with the Town would look at those things.

D. Duford stated the comments the Planning Board has made tonight are valid but a lot of it is a management problem. He has been in this business all of his life. He does not know where all of these systems are failing. Every design consultant that comes before the Planning Board has to have a State certified ticket in hand. The Town Planner with his experience is capable of supervising and setting up these programs and also administrate the financing end of it. This was the problem before. We don't have it now. The trend is towards subcontracting. Having your own people on board is the expensive way out and the easiest way out. The subcontractors either perform or they don't work and go somewhere else. The problem we had with R. Pantel is that he was not available most of the time.

Planning Board Member Dick Marshall stated the point we are missing is that it is the belief of the Planning Board that we need our own town engineer. This is just the point - he is our engineer. He is looking at the Town and how it impacts the Town. The contractor could care less. It is not his job to look out for the Town. C. Watson is not an engineer. He is a planner. We need the two positions and the Planning Board has preached this.

D. Pichette-Volk asked how this position would fit in the hierarchy of the Town.

M. Farrell replied it would be a separate department for the engineering, which would be interfaced with planning, building, etc.

D. Pichette-Volk stated having a dedicated resource of Hooksett is appealing but she is not anxious to add a full-time employee. She supports the current situation we have now, which is a Parks and Recreation Superintendent and Highway Manager together as one position with one person. If this could continue by using the full-time employee that has been freed up by not replacing the Highway Manager then she would support it and supplement it with a revised fee schedule.

R. Dion stated he is not an expert but respects the Planning Board because of the hours they put in and the responsibility they put in to the Town. An engineer is a full-time job and he goes along with D. Pichette-Volk. He supports the Planning Board's recommendation.

S. Sheidow stated she has not decided either way. We had a subcommittee working on developing the Administrative Code and restructuring it and she hasn't heard where we are on this.

P. Ganley replied the subcommittee has had three meetings and haven't addressed the Town Engineer yet.

S. Sheidow questioned how you can justify the position if it has not been done yet. She heard from R. Pantel when he came before the Council that his engineering duties only took him 20 hours a week and this was stated in the Council minutes. If we could get someone part-time then she would defend it. She asked J. Graham if he talked to Bedford about what they are doing.

J. Graham replied he did and at the time he talked to them they said they subcontract the engineering work out. Under their circumstances they have, they are satisfied. But he asked them if they could change their circumstances what would they prefer. They answered him that they would prefer to have an engineer on board.

R. Dion stated he did not believe R. Pantel when he told the Council only 20 hours a week. There was and is plenty of work to be done.

M. Farrell stated the current level of pay is \$55,000 with \$13,000 for benefits bringing a total of \$68,000. If the current rate the Planning Board is bringing in for fees now is \$35,000 to \$38,000 then we would need another \$30,000.

D. Marshall asked who sets the fees for building permits.

M. Farrell replied through the Council.

D. Marshall stated theirs is written in the ordinance. The Planning Board could take it out and have the Council support the fees.

D. Duford replied only through an amendment to the Administrative Code can this be done. The Council as a whole was supposed to review and restructure the Administrative Code but could never get a quorum to hold a meeting. Now there are three Councilors doing it. This is a big job. We are spending a lot of time talking on something that can't be done because of the Administrative Code.

R. Dion stated the Subcommittee should continue to work on the Administrative Code but in the meantime the Council can work on this one ordinance for the Town Engineer. The Council could draft the ordinance and then hold a public hearing on it. The Subcommittee can work on the other items in the Administrative Code. The Town Engineer is a priority.

M. Jolin stated before the Council makes a decision we should first see if the position could be funded by the fee schedule

D. Duford stated the ordinances have already been done, public hearings were held and the vote was deferred.

M. Farrell stated we are only talking about the revenue side and we have to look at the expenditure side because we need a line item created in the budget now because the budget process is almost over.

D. Duford stated the total cost would be far more than \$68,000 when all the hidden costs are factored is probably more like \$100,000.

The Council consensus was to have the Planning Board get back to the Council with an estimation of the fees to cover the salary for a Town Engineer at next Wednesday's Council Meeting on February 28, 2001.

The Council took a straw poll on the Town Engineer Position.

RESULTS OF STRAW POLL:

S. Sheidow – She does not have a problem supporting the position if we can fund it. However, it needs to be a separate position from the Highway Manager Position. She does not want to see it combined. M. Farrell has to come up with the total figure with the hidden costs and see if we can fund it.

D. Pichette-Volk – She supports an independent position but doesn't support adding a full-time employee.

P. Rueppel – She will support the position only if it doesn't cost the taxpayers.

R. Dion – He agrees with S. Sheidow.

R. Holley – He wants the Town to have its own Town Engineer here working for us. Better work will be done. We have to be careful of who we hire and make sure we have enough work on their plate. We need to justify the position. It needs to be an independent position.

M. Jolin – If it can be indicated that we can fund the position through the fees then he supports the position. There is always work to be done. He does not want it to be an individual department but rather under the control of the Town Planner.

P. Ganley – R. Pantel was a bargain for this Town. The Planning Board was spoiled because of him. He was an excellence resource and engineer. The Town can hire a Town Engineer but he is uncertain the Town will get the same quality as R. Pantel.

D. Duford – He does not believe there is enough work for a full-time Engineer or that we can generate enough funds to pay for it. He is in favor of subcontracting it out at this point and agrees he could support a part time employee under the control of the planner.

AMBULANCE SUBCOMMITTEE INTERIM REPORT: D. Pichette-Volk stated the Subcommittee has had a six month time frame and they are getting close to the six months. They are at stage three of a four-stage project. Their first charge was to analyze and gather specific data for the past several years. This phase is done. This was easy for them to do because they found some common gateways in the process through the communications center. Another useful thing for them is that there is a single form that is used by all of the people to collect the information. Their real bonus was that all of the forms end up in a single repository at the state level, which is the NH EMS Department. She gave the Council a report

the Subcommittee could review to get an idea of what the Subcommittee has been working on. This report includes transport times, on-scene times, response times, the time of day calls were dispatched, where the calls came from (home or business, etc.), tone out times, etc. The Subcommittee's second charge was to understand and evaluate service delivery aspects. Their third charge is to utilize information gathering methods and tools, which will yield an objective description of the service cost level desired by the various constituents in the Town. The Subcommittee came up with what the best way was to do this. They are proposing to do a survey of Town residents. She handed out the proposed survey questions to the Council (see attachment #2). The Subcommittee's fourth charge is to create a plan, which describes the needs and preferences for the Town of Hooksett. They cannot do part four until they do part three. They thought it was very important to make sure that every household had the opportunity to respond to the survey. They are proposing to print the questions on a dual postcard size mailer to every household. They would get the address labels from the Assessing Department. They would be self-addressed so they can be mailed back. They received a price of \$405 to get the surveys printed. It would cost .20 cents for each survey to be bulk-mailed. They could pre-pay the bulk mail fee to receive the surveys back. The number of households is 4,000. It would cost \$800 to mail them each way. Plan B is not to pay the postage at all to come back. Plan C is they could get a courtesy reply account from the post office for \$150. This would allow them to pay per piece for the pieces returned. It would cost .55 cents per piece for the pieces that come back.

D. Duford stated \$2,000 is very cheap if we are going to get the results we are looking for. There is money in different line items in the budget to cover the cost.

D. Duford moved to go ahead with the survey as proposed and fund the printing and the mailing of them both ways. Motion seconded by D. Pichette-Volk.

D. Pichette-Volk stated it does not cost any more money to print the return label on the surveys. They could schedule a labeling party to stick the address labels on the surveys.

M. Farrell asked if the Subcommittee has considered any other types of surveys.

D. Pichette-Volk replied they looked at other content type surveys and other methods to deliver a survey, including a general survey printed in the press, onsite surveys at voting polls and civic organizations, and publishing the fact that they are doing a survey and to have the residents pick them up at various common points. None of these could get into every household and this is what is important.

M. Farrell stated he has a lot of experience in polling surveys. Reaching everyone is not going to get you a statistically valid survey. The opposite would happen because the people who are going to respond are going to be the ones who feel strongly one way or the other. The only way to have it be statistically valid is to do it randomly. You can adjust the level of confidence in your results by adjusting the sample size. There are formulas to figure this out. A random phone poll would require 200 – 250 phone calls to households reached for a 90 – 95% level of confidence in your answers. In order to get an average mail response is about 5% and if you wanted to increase this you put a stamp on each survey and not a metered stamp and you handwrite the address. Instead of a labeling party they could have each person at the party make 25 calls in one night and this would be a good survey.

D. Pichette-Volk replied they did talk about whether they needed something statistically valid or as a public service; they needed to give every household the opportunity to respond. The sense

she got from the Subcommittee is they wanted to reach every household. She cannot say honestly that phone polling was actively discussed as a technique. However, random sampling was discussed.

R. Dion interrupted D. Pichette-Volk, before the newspaper reporters left, so that he could publicly announce how much the Council is going to miss Jennifer Martel. She has gotten another job and he wants people to know we will miss her dearly. She was a valued employee. We wish her the best.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON AMBULANCE SURVEY:

R. Holley	yes	D. Pichette-Volk	yes
M. Jolin	no	D. Duford	yes
P. Ganley	no	R. Dion	yes
S. Sheidow	yes	<u>MOTION CARRIED – 6 TO 2.</u>	
P. Rueppel	yes		

S. Sheidow moved at 9:30pm to extend the meeting 15 minutes. Motion seconded by P. Rueppel. **MOTION FAILED.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer A. Martel
Administrative Assistant
Hooksett Town Council

Denise E. Pichette-Volk
Town Council Secretary
Hooksett Town Council