

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2002**

Present: Chairman M. DiBitetto, D. Pichette-Volk, P. Rueppel, M. Ruel, R. Dion, P. Loiselle, M. Jolin, R. Holley, Town Administrator M. Farrell. P. Ganley – absent.

Chairman DiBitetto called the meeting to order at 8:02pm.

Chairman DiBitetto asked the Councilors if anyone would like to be excused from the inquiry. With no response, Chairman DiBitetto announced that all nine would be involved with the inquiry.

Chairman DiBitetto asked the Councilors to look at the available Wednesdays in October and the next inquiry meeting would be on Wednesday, October 2, 2002.

R. Dion stated he would be unavailable from October 11th – 26th.

Chairman DiBitetto asked the Councilors to create a list of people they would like to call to testify before the board and to also think of information and paperwork they would require.

M. Ruel stated the Council should first think of questions to ask.

P. Rueppel handed out a list of “questions” to think about. (**See Attachment #1**)

Chairman DiBitetto stated that all information would go through the Chair in order to provide for a more orderly flow of information, record keeping, and everyone will read and see identical information.

Chairman DiBitetto stated the Fire Chief would be invited to explain financial issues.

D. Pichette-Volk stated that the agenda states for a fire investigation, not convocation, and the record should show this.

M. Jolin asked that the next two regular Council meeting agendas have a listing on them regarding the inquiry in order that requests for documents may be made and general questions of the proceeding may be asked.

M. Jolin asked that the Town Administrator look at the costs and time frames of hiring an outside firm or agency in order to obtain an unbiased opinion and report for the Council.

Chairman DiBitetto asked the Town Administrator if there are agencies that do such a thing and what the time parameters would be.

M. Farrell advised there indeed are agencies that conduct inquiries such as this, it would be a large undertaking and the timeframe may be lengthy. A scope would need to be decided upon in order to obtain estimates.

M. Jolin stated the scope would have to be to take a look to see how things are running, analyze the flow of the department.

M. Farrell stated that he would ask for a general opinion of the department, policies, procedures, financial aspects, day-to-day operations, resources applied and used, response to calls, training, money spent, overtime money spent, and not in the manner of a witch hunt but an unbiased opinion of the department as a whole.

Chairman Dibitto explained there should be no timetable for this report.

M. Farrell responded that as of the first of the year the Council will be fully involved in the budget process and he would hope to have this all wrapped up pre-Christmas.

M. Ruel asked if there was any basic information the Council should ask for now or should the Council wait.

Chairman Dibitto stated that the Council should receive financial information now and look at a time frame the inquiry would encompass.

R. Dion stated he would like to see a breakdown of the last five fiscal years' Fire Department budget on a summary sheet showing the town administrator's budget requests, the council's request and the appropriations.

P. Loiselle requested the overtime paid per quarter for the last two years and whether the overtime was for training or emergency calls.

M. Ruel stated that the first requests of the Council should be for reports and paperwork that is already compiled, then request information, which would have to be compiled into a report and prioritize the latter.

D. Pichette-Volk stated that most of the Councilors already have most of the financial information in their budget books and that these books should be utilized because of the wealth of information already in them and available.

Chairman Dibitto asked the Budget Committee Chairman Bryan Williams (in the audience) for extra copies for the two new councilors who don't have them.

Budget Committee Chairman B. Williams stated he would look into that.

M. Jolin asked that the Chief compile documents already in existence rather than create new ones.

P. Rueppel stated that a letter to the respondents should be created by the October 2nd inquiry meeting.

R. Dion moved at 8:41pm to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by R. Holley. **Roll call vote carried unanimously.**

Elizabeth D. Dinwoodie
Minute Taker

Mary A. Ruel
Council Secretary