

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**SEPTEMBER 25, 2002**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm.

**PRESENT:** Chairman M. DiBitetto, P. Rueppel, P. Loiselle (arrived 6:40pm), M. Ruel, R. Dion, R. Holley, M. Jolin, P. Ganley, M. Farrell – Town Administrator. Excused: D. Pichette-Volk.

**MINUTES:**

**August 16, 2002:** Chairman DiBitetto tabled to have tape reviewed for further clarification.

**August 28, 2002:** P. Ganley moved to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by M. Jolin. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**September 4, 2002:** P. Rueppel moved to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by P. Loiselle. **Motion carried unanimously.** P. Ganley abstained.

**September 11, 2002:** M. Jolin moved to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by P. Ganley. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**PLAQUE GIFT:**

Chairman DiBitetto read a letter and a plaque that Councilor Pat Rueppel would like to present to the Councilors. The Union Leader Newspaper wrote an editorial complimenting the Hooksett Town Council for doing their job and it has been reproduced on this plaque and she requested it be placed in the Council Chambers and said that she is honored to serve with such a diversified board.

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

Liz Feren, 28 Lindsay Rd., stated there are a number of Campbell Hill residents present and is speaking on their behalf expressing their appreciation to Dale Hemeon for attending tonight's meeting and taking their concerns seriously. The development has gotten quite busy, with many children living there, and changes need to be made to slow down traffic. They have made a number of proposals to D. Hemeon and he has done what he can to see what's reasonable and what's within the Town's standards. They appreciate the attention they have received.

**NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS:**

Chairman DiBitetto stated that Lee Belanger has resigned from the Planning Board, full member, exp. 6/2004 and Bill Stevens, has resigned from the Planning Board, full member, exp. 6/2003.

**Appointments:**

P. Rueppel moved to appoint Lonnie Wright to the Zoning Board of Adjustment, Alternate Fill-in, term exp. 6/2005, and to appoint Joan Holleran to the Zoning Board of Adjustment, Alternate Fill-in, term exp. 6/2003.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

P. Ganley moved to appoint Don Duford to the Solid Waste Committee, Alternate Fill-in, exp. 6/04. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**Nominations:**

P. Rueppel nominated Jim Graham to be moved up to Planning Board, Full Term Fill-in, exp. 6/2003.

P. Ganley nominated R. Guay to be moved up to Planning Board, Full Term, Fill-in, exp. 6/2004.

P. Ganley moved to waive the seven-day waiting period to vote at this meeting.

M. Ruel stated that standing members do not need a waiting period to be moved up.

P. Ganley withdrew his motion.

P. Ganley moved to appoint Jim Graham and Ray Guay to their respective positions. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**  
**HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT – NEW TRUCK.**

Dale Hemeon, Highway Manager, submitted three bids for a new truck and three bids for a multi-purpose body, plow & wing. His recommendation is the \$44,815 Freightliner and \$35,846 E.W. Sleeper.

R. Dion moved to approve the purchase for a new cab and chassis and new multi-purpose body, plow and wing as submitted in the total amount of \$83,241.00. Seconded by P. Loiselle. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**TRANSFER STATION AND HIGHWAY OPEN HOUSE:**

M. Ruel thanked D. Hemeon for the open house the Highway Department held last weekend. She found it most informative and the turn-out was very good.

**OLD BUSINESS:**  
**PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT/BENCHMARKING.**

M. Farrell would like to get a consensus to proceed with performance measurement and benchmarking. He would work with departments, establish a mission statement, propose objectives, and then bring them back to the Council for their review and proposal acceptance. Once that is completed, then look at which department to choose the performance measurements for. Would focus on areas with the largest impact and save dollars or expenditures.

Chairman DiBitetto stated that it made more sense for the department heads to lay out their mission statement and goals, then meet with the Council one department at a time.

R. Dion stated that from past experience there is a possible danger when you monitor results. The danger could be if there are negative results that efforts might be focused on the person in charge when they should be focused on the causes of the negative results; personnel could be blamed instead of looking for the reasons why things did not going well.

P. Loiselle stated that though this is a very worthwhile study he feels that this will take up a good deal of time and our schedules are very full at this time. It seems that it would take a significant effort to digest all the data that would come before the Council.

M. Ruel stated that wanted to know to what extent the department heads will go before they come to Council. Since the departments are busy it might be sufficient to have a few tasks at a time such as mission statement and a few goals presented to the Council from each department head.

M. Farrell stated that is exactly his plan of action to get mission statement and a maximum of three to four goals. Another step would be the fine-tuning of objectives, which would be another process and should be done separately. In response to P. Loiselle's comment, we only want to start with a few important measurements. The first year will be an exploratory time and if we could end up with one or two performance measurements from each department that would be a great start.

Council consensus was to start the process on performance measurement/benchmarking.

**OLD BUSINESS:**  
**I-93 WIDENING:**

M. Farrell stated that Bob Varney, Regional Administrator from EPA send a letter to D.O.T. Commissioner Carol Murray. There will be a meeting on October 3, 2002 at the Massabesic Audubon Center. The meeting sponsors are the Conservation Law Foundation and other conservation and ecological organizations. The impact that Town is facing is the mitigation required by the EPA. They are looking at approximately 700 acres in Hooksett for mitigation purposes. The federal government is requiring the State to purchase land, to get approval for widening I-93, they are looking at approximately 700 acres in Hooksett for mitigation. The next issue is the growth issue with an estimate of 41,000 new residents moving into the surrounding towns of the widening project within the next 20 years. The locus of the land is mostly owned by Manchester Sand & Gravel (MSG) near the Dube and Hinman pond areas. Per the Council's request for a meeting, Jeff Brillhart of Commissioner Murray's office, point person for the I-93 widening, will speak at the October 9th Council meeting. He will give an overview of how the state feels the impact will affect Hooksett.

**SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS:**  
**FISH & GAME STATE BOAT RAMP:**

Rich Tichko introduced their new engineer Mark Kirouac who gave an update on the boat ramp issue.

M. Kirouac presented a blueprint of the site and noted that he had to refer back to an amendment to the original permit to add a seasonal dock. Subsequent to the amendment of a floating dock, the concrete walkway was installed. The original concept was to be a floating dock that would be removed in the winter. It appears that ice conditions and river flow were underestimated during the original design process. There is now erosion on the edge of the ramp and the water is currently encroaching on the concrete slab for the portable toilet. We are in the process of requesting a wetlands permit from the D.E.S. to repair the damage. The requested dock would not be capable of withstanding the expected loads. The bottom of the concrete walkway is underwater in the spring therefore he doesn't see it as a functional since one would have to walk into water and up to a floating dock by a gangway. Their consulting engineer did a site visit with him. We are looking at a substantially different type of dock. It would require the walkway to be set further back, above high water elevation, with a pier on to a gangway on to a floating dock. The support of the dock would be wooden piles 12" in diameter and dolphin piles to protect the dock from boats running into it or for protection from ice conditions. The floating dock would come out in winter but the piles would stay. Current damage at the ramp has caused them to consider realigning the ramp that would involve a major reconstruction. A cost estimate from their engineer would be over \$100,000. The design would require soil testing for pile boring installation, waiting for proposal from consultant for cost estimate of the design phase, and then define the design and the subsequent cost. For the DES permit we are looking at three to six months. The earliest the State would be able to fix the damage would be next spring early summer time. Design phase then the construction of a dock brings the date even further out. His executive director Wayne Vetter would have to review and reevaluate the situation, to see if the dock is a vital part to the boating area, if the cost is way over \$100,000 or if ledge enters the situation.

R. Dion said that a fiberglass boat would not be able to get into the water without grounding it. There have been a lot of aluminum boats there but not a lot of fiberglass boats and feels it has taken away a lot of the potential for people to enjoy the river. It is vital to have a dock at this boating area.

P. Ganley asked if there has been any thought for a pier with a bubble motor such as they have in Newfound Lake.

M. Kirouac stated that use of a dock is a big step with a stationary pier and gangway down to floating structure to be removable.

R. Tichko stated that once he receives all the necessary data he would be willing to host an open house showing a dock design for the Councilors and citizens of the Town to receive their view points then Administration could send a letter to Wayne Vetter as to the Town's decision.

Chairman DiBitetto asked that the Town Administrator keep the Council updated on this issue.

**LINDSAY ROAD STOP SIGNS:**

Dale Hemeon, Highway Manager, stated that he spoke with residents on Lindsay Road then met with Chief Agrafiotis and they viewed the entire subdivision and felt it was in the best interest of the residents to install three and four way stop signs throughout the entire subdivision for a total of 25 stop signs. The cost of a sign with post is \$35.00 each. He named the streets that would require signs. **(Attachment #1)**.

Chief Agrafiotis stated that looking at Lindsay Road then looking at the rest of the area, putting stop signs on that road alone would not solve the problem in the development. It would be more beneficial to install stop signs than it would be to install speed limit signs.

R. Dion moved to install stop signs at every intersection in Campbell Hill Estates per D. Hemeon's list. Seconded by P. Loiselle. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**DEFAULT BUDGET DISCUSSION CONTINUED:**

Chairman DiBitetto stated that he attended the NH Municipal Association's workshop on Town Budgets and feels more confident that the default budget that was passed by Council is very typically the way other Town Councils and Selectmen view it. That it is essentially an adjustment of the prior year's budget for contract

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obligations. He also feels more confident that it is common practice to deal with budget overruns on line items the way this Council has previously done it by discussing and authorizing it without a formal vote to transfer funds in the budget which would essentially change the line items in the budget. It is common to recognize that there may be some overages in certain areas and to acknowledge them and use the initial approved budget as a benchmark for judging how each budget is doing; under versus over budget. It is an acceptable practice that Council is not required to authorize a transfer of funds from one line item to another. Therefore, he would like to move ahead with the default budget as approved. He would like the Town Administrator to give a sense of where items may be going over budget so that Council can recognize it and give some guidance to those department heads and the Administrator.

M. Farrell stated that in the budget recap that is the same as the recent one however on the back there are 10 pages of line items and the final column denotes the difference between the default budget, which you have approved, and his operating budget. The individual line items indicate what each department is faced with. In the Administration part of the budget, the Council approved the concept of the two percent cola and the three percent merit increase of \$42,592.00, the merit increase is not funded under the wage pool, therefore, Finance cannot take any money out of that line item. It will show up in wage line items of the respective departments therefore you will see an overage in those departments. There is \$ 34,786 in the health insurance benefit section, which is more than the amount we will be spending and some of those funds will be used to fund the cola and merit increases. Assessing has a \$ 42,000 deficit because last year there were no contracted services therefore no line item existed. Firefighter clothing equipment was purchased in 1993 and has been put in the budget and get cut year after year. The Fire Department has a critical need in the clothing purchase line item and it will be overspent by \$34,000. There is \$30,000 in the equipment line that will be moved into the clothing line. Highway Department has a \$15,000 wage deficit in road maintenance but there is \$16,000 in replacement equipment with no intent to spend. So as a follow up to Chairman DiBietto's comment, it would be timely to get Council consensus for these line items to be in some cases grossly overspent but acknowledge that it will all balance out in the end.

P. Loiselle stated that he feels that Council should not be knit picking in moving funds from one line to another but to let the Administrator have the flexibility to move the funds and would like to see a quarterly statement of the line item moves.

M. Farrell stated that Finance includes a narrative on the last page of the monthly report for any items that may seem unusual or extraordinary.

M. Ruel stated that in a meeting with the Budget Committee they recommended that Council leave the default budget as approved on August 28, 2002 and Town Council adopt a formal policy that no department go over budget without prior approval by the Council. She feels more comfortable spending the money little by little as opposed to lump sums. She would like a motion from Council on what the next step would be, what their position is, where they are going, what decisions they want to be a part of and which decisions we don't want to be a part of.

M. Jolin stated his concern is with moving large amounts of money from one department to another without knowing why the money is needed. Departments should keep within its default budget line item unless there are extenuating circumstances that Council needs to be aware of. His concern is not with moving line items within a department, but with the department's budget as a whole.

Chairman DiBietto asked at what point do we want to permit the ordering of Fire Department protective clothing. Council needs to either give latitude or draw the line.

Chief Howard stated that there are three equipment lines that far exceed the need for this year but are there because last year those amounts were needed. The excess amounts amount in those three line items will be used for the protective clothing. Bids for clothing will be opened this Friday and on September 27th and he hopes to come before Council with a detailed report of the RFP's which would include the three line items that the funding would come from.

M. Ruel recommend that Town Council would want to see explanations of line changes of more than \$5,000 and would want to pre-approve funding from line item to line item.

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M. Farrell stated change line item to line item to be from department to department, any interdepartmental changes would be documented.

Council consensus was prior to any changes, Council to receive explanations of any proposed changes between department budgets in a narrative form that outlines what one department will be are giving up and what the other department will be gaining.

**NEW BUSINESS:**  
**MANCHESTER WATER WORKS PUC PETITION.**

M. Farrell stated that if a public water company sells water outside of their geographic boundaries they fall under the PUC rules. This happens because the customers outside of the geographic area have no representation or say in what gets done in regard to their water thus the PUC is their representative. These 645 Hooksett customers need representation and Council should take a position on the petition on exemption from deregulation. Action would be to file as an intervener for the customer as this would be the strongest and most effective way to get the attention of the PUC and Manchester Water Works.

P. Ganley moved to file as an intervener on behalf of the 600 plus residents. Seconded by P. Loiselle. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**ELDERLY/DISABLED EXEMPTIONS:**

Chairman DiBitetto has had contact from some of the elderly residents who have lost their benefit of the elderly exemption due to either increases in their earnings or a more restrictive way of calculating their income. These income standards have not been adjusted for many years and there are 20-30 residents that this affects. The Town Administrator reviewed the Town Charter and RSA's and can concluded that the Council has the authority to amend those income levels and propose that we come back with a new schedule of income and assets. Disability is provided under State law and suggested they also come back with a provision of some relief for the disabled that are on social security or assistance.

P. Rueppel stated she would like information on the income cap levels, asset levels and any other material pertinent to making decisions.

M. DiBitetto stated that in comparison with other towns in our region, we are on the low end of the scale on the income caps we are using. The State has some guidelines such as a minimum cap.

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

1. Two fire investigation proposals have come back. They are \$25 apart and the biggest difference is the firm from Oregon's transportation cost. They meet our standards and then some in what they propose to review. The third one received is a modified proposal from MRI to not do a full-blown search but to provide the former head of FEMA as an assistant for the Council on an hourly basis.

Chairman DiBitetto stated that this would be discussed further at next Wednesday's meeting.

2. There will be a several purchases at the next meeting. Fire truck repairs of a sizeable amount. Building Department truck has had a used motor installed just to keep the vehicle running.

P. Rueppel moved at 9:30 to extend the meeting to finish the current item on the floor, the Building Department truck issue. Seconded by R. Dion.

**Roll call vote:**

M. Jolin	no	R. Dion	yes	
P. Loiselle	yes	P. Ganley	yes	
M. Ruel	yes	R. Holley	yes	
P. Rueppel	yes	M. DiBitetto	yes	<b><u>Motion carried.</u></b>

P. Rueppel moved to approve the purchase of a truck for the Building Department not to exceed \$16,999.

M. Ruel moved to amend the amount to \$18,432. Seconded by R. Holley.

**Roll call vote.**

P. Loiselle	yes	P. Ganley	yes
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M. Ruel	yes	R. Holley	yes	
P. Rueppel	no	M. Jolin	yes	
R. Dion	yes	M. DiBitetto	yes	<b><u>Motion carried.</u></b>

**Roll call vote on original motion as amended.**

M. Ruel	no	M. Jolin	yes
P. Rueppel	no	P. Loiselle	yes
R. Dion	yes	D. Pichette-Volk	yes
P. Ganley	yes	M. DiBitetto	yes
R. Holley	yes	<b><u>Motion carried.</u></b>	

P. Loiselle stated that in the future he would like to see businesses given an opportunity to bid even if there are State bids involved.

M. Farrell stated this item was already included as a Capital item.

Chairman DiBitetto adjourned the meeting at 9:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Tina M. Paquette  
Administrative Assistant

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Mary A. Ruel  
Secretary