

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**December 3, 2003**

**PRESENT:** Chairman M. DiBitetto, D. Belanger (excused at 8:20pm), P. Fitanides, M. Jolin, G. Longfellow, M. Ruel, P. Rueppel (arrived 7:10pm), D. St. Pierre, Acting Town Administrator – Paul Loiselle.

**MINUTES:**

November 19, 2003: G. Longfellow moved to approve the November 19, 2003 minutes. Seconded by P. Loiselle. Motion carried unanimously.

November 24, 2003: G. Longfellow moved to approve the November 24, 2003 minutes as amended. Seconded by P. Loiselle. Motion carried. D. Belanger abstained due to absence.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Noise Ordinance: Chairman DiBitetto stated the public hearing was printed in the newspaper and asked if it had been posted.

Tina Paquette, Administrative Assistant, stated it had.

D. St. Pierre moved to adopt the noise ordinance. Motion seconded by G. Longfellow.

Roll call vote:

P. Fitanides	no	M. Ruel	yes	
M. Jolin	yes	P. Rueppel	yes	
P. Loiselle	yes	D. St. Pierre	yes	
G. Longfellow	yes	M. DiBitetto	yes	<u>Motion carried.</u>

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Street name approvals: P. Loiselle stated new street names have been reviewed by the Code Enforcement Officer/911 representative, the Fire Department and the Highway Department for issues. Council approval is needed.

M. Ruel asked for clarification on the procedure of street name approvals.

D. St. Pierre moved to the approval and to have a process in place before it comes back to the Council. Seconded by M. Jolin. Motion carried.

Enver Silkman: D. Belanger stated he would like to recognize Enver Silkman who gave many years of service in various capacities. Mr. Silkman passed away recently.

D. Belanger moved to have a letter of condolence sent to the Silkman family. Seconded by D. St. Pierre. Motion carried.

Membership Subscriptions: P. Fitanides asked for an explanation on the last paragraph of a memo dated November 25, 2003 sent to Department Heads regarding the Town budget funds used for outside organizations.

D. Belanger stated these are membership fees not donations.

Connector Road: Chairman DiBitetto stated that the approval process will be coming before the Planning Board on December 15<sup>th</sup> and requested a Council representative attend to provide feedback on the process.

P. Loiselle answered there would be a right-of-way deed to the Town. There is an agreement with CIGNA's

Corporate office but it has not been signed yet. 3A Construction Company has done the preliminary surveying so that the work can be started in early spring 2004. There have been discussions with DOT as to what would be acceptable to the State and CIGNA for requiring three additional curb cuts. T F Moran is the surveyor and working on the drawings and they should be ready within a week. Funding depends on DOT. Estimates are 1.2 to 1.6 million dollars. 3A Construction would be funding \$500,000 to \$600,000.

M. Ruel asked who is paying for the survey; would the contract with CIGNA be signed by the Council or the Town Administrator; who signed it in the past.

P. Loiselle stated the developer is paying for the survey and the Town would sign the right-of-way deed. CIGNA should be signing the contract by next month and a draft will be presented to the Council.

D. St. Pierre stated the developer would pay for verification of work by town employees.

Chairman DiBietto stated that the Administrator signed it in the past and the Administrator can enter into those types of agreements.

P. Rueppel present at 7:10pm.

**SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS:**

**Misty Meadows bond reduction:** Dale Hemeon, Highway Department Manager, stated the original bond is \$463,743 and he is requesting it be reduced to \$51,211.60. All that work has been completed.

D. Belanger stated the subdivision bond shows Peerless Insurance Company as the Surety in the top of the page and the bottom shows Worcester Insurance Company as the Surety. Peerless Insurance and Worcester Insurance are not affiliated. He would like to see the original bond to see who signed and sealed it and to see that this is a binding bond.

D. Belanger moved to table the issue until clarification is obtained. Seconded by D. St. Pierre. Motion carried.

**Elderly Exemption:** P. Rueppel stated the previous Council addressed the issue of elderly exemptions and voted to increase the exemptions. That increase was fine at the time but with the new revaluations the increase needs to be reviewed. There are many elderly residents that are very worried.

Chairman DiBietto stated this would be addressed at the next meeting due to lack of prior information.

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:** Acting Town Administrator, P. Loiselle reported on the following items:

1. In moving forward with the Assessing Department's budget, MRI expenses were reviewed and calculations were obtained that \$60,000 might be needed to complete the year's work. It appears that we need a subcommittee to determine if a part-time assessor is needed.

Chairman DiBietto stated we have been using a contract firm. There is no Council action required because there is an existing position for a part-time assessor.

P. Loiselle stated that it's time to fill the position.

M. Ruel stated she supports filling the position. The Assessing Department would have to come before the Council to make a request for over expending their budget.

The Council consensus was to look in the direction of filling the part-time assessor position.

2. Fire Department's Hose 1 truck will be sold at a possible recoup of \$75,000.

Fire Warden Harold Murray stated there are a few reasons that it's for sale. It's a two-man unit. Three man crews are used. The reel on the unit, which has been added on, overloads the truck when the reel is full.

D. Belanger stated the new Fire Chief should be involved in this. This piece of equipment is still useful. It has saved time and effort so that more time could be put into, and more water available, to fight fires.

M. Ruel stated she spent time with the Fire Department discussing the role, purpose, and the value in keeping it. While it has useful potential, what does the Town have and need? It hasn't been used in the last few years and it doesn't hold the proper number of firefighters in order to have a safe crew. If the Fire Department recommends it be sold, we could put the money towards safety equipment.

D. St. Pierre asked if it is considered a second line piece of equipment and would it be suitable for Call Firefighters of a two-man team.

H. Murray stated it is used for large structure fires at great distances from a main line. If used for Call Firefighters of a two-man team it would have to be re-hosed and would never be a first run piece.

P. Rueppel stated for the record, that she objects to selling it.

Chairman DiBitetto stated Council would be looking at the entire CIP and Fire Department budgets within a month. That would give Council some information as to where we are at and we then would have some basis to make a decision.

3. In September, PSNH requested a streetlight be installed on 28 By Pass on East Point Drive. He wants authority to advise PSNH that the Town will take care of the lighting and PSNH will pay for the pole and the light.

M. Jolin moved that P. Loiselle send a letter to PSNH acknowledging their request but to deny it. Seconded by P. Rueppel.

Roll call vote:

D. Belanger	yes	G. Longfellow	yes	
P. Fitanides	yes	M. Ruel	no	
M. Jolin	yes	P. Rueppel	yes	
P. Loiselle	no	D. St. Pierre	yes	<u>Motion carried.</u>

P. Fitanides stated if PSNH wanted to install and pay for the electricity, they could they do so.

P. Loiselle stated they could do so providing they come to the Town for permission to erect a pole and a light.

4. The Exit 11 right-of-way from the State is as follows: A meeting was held with Tom Palazzi and the Town Planner in reference to sending a letter to the NH DOT indicating support. Commissioner Carol Murray believes the land in question is worth two million dollars to the State. A meeting will be with Executive Councilor Wieczorek and Senator Ted Gatsas.
5. The Town has reached a point that controlled growth needs to be considered.

Chairman DiBitetto stated that's a Planning Board recommendation.

D. St. Pierre stated it has been his past experience from the Planning Board, that until either the Town Administrator or the legal counsel can show a viable plan to stymie the builders, without ending up in

Supreme Court, the Planning Board is not willing to entertain controlled growth. You can't have impact fees and controlled growth at the same time.

Chairman DiBietto stated Hooksett has growth ordinances in the form of impact fees that were created to address growth.

D. St. Pierre stated that the impact fees offset the impact of growth to a certain degree. What people aren't aware of is that if a town adopts a growth ordinance to limit building permits then they must give up impact fees, you can't have both.

M. Ruel agrees with D. St. Pierre in that you can't have both as they serve the same purpose and it would be illegal to have both at the same time. She asked where exactly are we with the impact fees and stated if there are impact fees for roads maybe we should be moving them along.

6. The Town Administrator would like the Council to consider eliminating the Newsletter and instead send a letter to the Hooksett Banner on a quarterly basis.

P. Rueppel moved to disband the Newsletter. Seconded by P. Loiselle.

P. Fitanides stated he spent at least three days working on the newsletter only to find out it had disappeared and will not be sent out.

P. Rueppel stated she sent a copy of the draft newsletter to each Councilor for their review.

Chairman DiBietto stated that he realizes the subcommittee put in many hours on the newsletter but it was a rushed effort and therefore made it a stressed process and there was not adequate time to review it. The Council did not have a chance to review it as a draft and the Council always approves the final draft. Trying to have it mailed out in the week of the Thanksgiving holiday was a tough task to uphold. He thanked the committee for all their hard work.

M. Ruel stated she would not like to see the newsletter and it's committee disband until there is another plan in place; a decision on what kind publication will be made; how often it would be published, etc. She supports giving the citizens of Hooksett information on a quarterly or periodic basis.

M. Ruel moved to table. Motion seconded by P. Loiselle. Motion carried.

7. A letter was sent to the Oak Hill Road residents in reference to trash pick up. The letter stated that the Town would not go up the road to pick up their trash because the road is not safe for the Town's trucks. They may bring their trash to the bottom of the road at the intersections of Rte 3 by 7:00am for pick up.

#### **PUBLIC INPUT:**

Council Newsletter: Town Clerk Leslie Nepveu stated the Council in the past has sent out the newsletter prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> session Town Meeting. Not everyone reads the local newspaper or has email or Internet. It's an important informational tool for the voters.

Insurance Premiums: P. Loiselle stated the time has come for Council to consider employee participation via a percentage increase, he prefers not to have to make this request but must be realistic with the 26% increase in insurance premiums. To be on the safe side there will be a 25% margin of error for the next budget.

D. St. Pierre asked if the increase would be proportionate to the employee's income.

P. Loiselle stated we would have to see what would be equitable. Most people go into the public sector for job security and benefits. It's unfortunate these issues have to be addressed. For this meeting he only wanted to

address employee participation on insurance premiums. A subcommittee should be formed to look at all options.

D. Belanger stated something has to be done. Union contracts would have to be negotiated. It shouldn't be placed entirely on nonunion employees. Employees work for benefits yet realizing that something has to be done. He also stated that he would be willing to serve on the committee to study employee insurance.

D. Belanger excused at 8:20pm.

Chairman DiBitetto stated at this point the committee volunteers, to review employee insurance premiums, are the Acting Town Administrator, D. Belanger and the Finance Director as an advisor. He asked that the Acting Town Administrator report back to the Council on whom the members would be.

G. Longfellow moved to table the employee insurance premium discussion. Seconded by P. Fitanides. Motion carried.

Employee Wages: Town Clerk/Tax Collector Leslie Nepveu stated that a few years ago the previous Town Administrator changed merit raises to merit bonus's, which didn't affect the employee's hourly wage. Unfortunately this affects those paid the lowest and is not in the best interest of the employees. It sends a bad message to the employees that the Council doesn't care about their long-term benefits. Every few years the Council does a study on wages. We are always near the bottom of the scale and then brought up to the middle of the scale for Towns our size.

Chairman DiBitetto stated the issue is if merit increases should be step increases vs. bonus lump sums with no increase to the hourly rate of pay. When an employee is hired at a certain wage it remains the same years later because of the merit bonus system, thus there is no advancement of wage.

D. St. Pierre stated if he reads this correctly, it cuts off 19 steps of pay raises. It is apparent that it was a money saving mechanism for the Town but not the employee.

Assistant Town Planner Jo Ann Duffy stated one of the reasons for employee attendance at this meeting was to ask the Council to consider going back to the salary increase procedure prior 2001 until a study subcommittee can be formed.

P. Loiselle stated he would like to see employees on the subcommittee.

M. Ruel stated she would sit on subcommittee.

D. St. Pierre moved to create an Insurance and Employee Wage Review Advisory Subcommittee and to appoint M. Ruel, D. Belanger, G. Longfellow, Acting Town Administrator Paul Loiselle, and Finance Director D. Savoie, with J. Duffy, and L. Nepveu as employee representatives. Seconded by G. Longfellow. Motion carried.

Council Goals and Objectives: M. Ruel stated prior to the next meeting she would like Council to review the minutes from October 15, 2003 regarding this issue and to e-mail ideas to the Chairman or herself for discussion at the next meeting.

NONPUBLIC SESSION: D. St. Pierre moved at 9:30pm to go into nonpublic under RSA 91-a:3,II,(b) "The hiring of any person as a public employee". Motion seconded by G. Longfellow. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

D. St. Pierre moved at 9:30pm to exit nonpublic session. Motion seconded by G. Longfellow. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

The Council released a statement that the nonpublic minutes would not be divulged at this time.

Chairman DiBietto adjourned the meeting at 9:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Tina M. Paquette  
Administrative Assistant

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Mary A. Ruel  
Town Council Secretary