

Official

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES Regular Meeting Wednesday, March 8, 2006

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman M. DiBitetto called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

PRESENT: Daniel Belanger, Philip Fitanides, Jason Hyde, Mike Jolin, Paul Loiselle (excused), George Longfellow, Doug St. Pierre (excused), Stuart Werksman, Chairman Michael DiBitetto, David Jodoin (Town Administrator)

There was a moment of silence in memory of Kevin Delahanty, former Hooksett Volunteer Firefighter who passed away on Saturday, March 4th, 2006.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

February 22, 2006 – G. Longfellow moved to approve the February 22, 2006 minutes as amended. Motion seconded by P. Fitanides. **Motion carried.** D. Belanger abstained, not present at the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

Ambulance Study

Councilor D. St. Pierre requested at a previous meeting to form a study committee to look into setting up a 24-hour, 7-day a week dedicated ambulance service for the Town of Hooksett. A petition is being circulated around to staff an ambulance service.

Chairman M. DiBitetto asked the Council if they still wish to convene the committee to formulate a plan for the ambulance service.

Council consensus was to continue the discussion after the scheduled appointment with Tri-Town Ambulance Service.

Volunteers' Appreciation Night

G. Longfellow moved to spend up to \$2,000.00 for Volunteers' Appreciation Night. Motion seconded by S. Werksman. **Motion carried unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS:

Conservation Commission Warrant Article

G. Longfellow stated that the warrant article does not reflect the Council's vote (tie), neither ***Recommended***, nor ***Not Recommended***.

G. Longfellow moved to reflect that the Council is silent on the warrant article. Motion seconded by S. Werksman. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Quimby Mountain

P. Fitanides brought up the subject of Quimby Mountain. He was under the impression that the Town owned the whole Quimby Mountain, or a good portion of it. He learned recently that the Town did not own the top of the mountain. He requested for the Town Administrator to look into the matter.

D. Belanger explained that the Town does not own the top of the mountain. The developers came to the ZBA with a proposal to allow them to split 2 or 3 lots into 4 or 6 lots, which did not meet the zoning guidelines, in exchange for the top of the mountain. The variance was denied

because there was no legal basis for the Town of Hooksett and the ZBA to grant a variance for the Town to own the top of the mountain, which is only accessible from the Town's side.

Council consensus was to include the matter on the next agenda and have the tax maps available, showing the parcels in question.

Warrant Articles

In order to clean up the ballot, Chairman M. DiBietto suggested for the Council to vote to strike the articles, which the Budget Committee voted not to recommend. These articles are not likely to pass.

Discussion on the matter ensued.

Council consensus was to leave the articles on the ballot and let the voters decide on the matter.

Discussion on warrant articles was continued after "Scheduled Appointments".

SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS:

Public Hearing (continued from 2/22/06), Fire Lane Ordinance Amendment
Chairman M. DiBietto continued the public hearing at 7:00 pm.

At the last meeting, Fire Chief Michael Williams recommended amending the Fire Lane Ordinance as opposed to striking it out completely as the Council originally intended.

Deputy Fire Chief Michael Hoisington presented the proposed amendment to the Fire Lane Ordinance (attached). He explained that the amendment was done not to restrict the use of the existing buildings and to accommodate changes of a less intensive use in a pre-existing building.

Chairman M. DiBietto closed the public hearing at 7:03 pm.

The Council would vote on the matter at the next meeting.

Chairman M. DiBietto asked M. Hoisington whether the Village School could be developed as Town Offices relative to the proposed Fire Lane Ordinance amendment.

M. Hoisington replied, under the Fire lane Ordinance, the Village School could be developed as Town Offices but would still need to be reviewed for Building Code and Fire Code compliance.

Coastal Partners – Conservation Easement

Marc Vanson, TF Moran Senior Project Manager presented a map which covers the conservation easement on the corner of Route 3 and Benton Road (next to 99 Restaurant) being conveyed to the Town of Hooksett. He stated that as a part of the site plan and wetlands approval process on the property, Coastal Partners, LLC established an easement for the Town, which includes the pond. Coastal Partners, LLC will be the grantor and will have all landowners' responsibilities such as maintenance, insurance, environmental monitoring and water testing.

Charles Watson, Town Planner stated that DES does not want developers to hold conservation easements. It will be appropriate for the Conservation Commission or the Town to be the holder of the easement. He suggested for the Town to establish a policy for the Conservation Commission/Town to hold and maintain conservation easements.

Deborah Deitz-Brewster, TF Moran suggested conveying the easement to the *Town of Hooksett, Conservation Commission*.

Chairman M. DiBietto advised the Council that similar easements are likely to be presented in the future because of DES's new requirements.

Discussion on the matter ensued.

G. Longfellow moved to accept the easement and to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the documents. Motion seconded by P. Fitanides.

Roll Call:

D. Belanger	Yes	G. Longfellow	Yes		
P. Fitanides	Yes	S. Werksman	Yes		
J. Hyde	No	Chairman M. DiBitetto	Yes	6-1	<u>Motion carried.</u>
M. Jolin	Yes				

Tri-Town Ambulance

Laura Thibeault, Tri-Town Ambulance Service, Inc. Chair introduced herself to the Council. She stated that Tri-Town would like to offer their assistance with the study regarding the Ambulance Service proposal in Town. She added that Tri-Town is willing to offer the Town of Hooksett 24-hour ambulance service.

G. Longfellow stated that the Council has nothing against Tri-Town Ambulance. The Town has simply reached the point where it would be better to staff its own dedicated ambulance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

P. Fitanides asked if anyone from the Town of Hooksett is involved in the executive branch of Tri-Town Ambulance operations.

L. Thibeault stated that their meetings are open to all town members (Hooksett, Allenstown and Pembroke) with the exceptions of personnel issues.

Ronald Adinolfo, Tri-Town Ambulance Treasurer stated that financial reports are available for anyone to review. He added that the lines of communication were not good. Tri-Town heard about Hooksett's plans to set up its own ambulance service through the grapevines, which puts the other two towns (Allenstown and Pembroke) and the Tri-Town employees into hardship.

Fire Chief M. Williams stated, as the Town's Fire Chief, his job is to do what is in the best interest of the residents of Hooksett.

Chairman M. DiBitetto explained that about a month ago, one of the Councilors suggested for the Town to staff an ambulance. The plan was to form a study committee this evening to look into the matter. The Council had no intentions of springing this up on anyone.

OLD BUSINESS: (continued)

Ambulance Study

Discussion on the matter continued.

Judy Casey, Budget Committee Chair explained that after hearing the Fire Department's proposal for an ambulance, the committee members unanimously voted to initiate a petition in order to push it ahead to 2006 instead of 2007.

NEW BUSINESS: (continued)

Ambulance Warrant Article

S. Werksman moved to place the warrant article on the ballot. Motion seconded by G. Longfellow.

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$156,207 (one hundred fifty-six thousand two hundred seven dollars) to establish a paramedic ambulance service within the Hooksett Fire/Rescue Department (7 days a weeks 24 hours a day) for the Town

of Hooksett. This warrant will require the Town to hire 4 (four) paramedic firefighters. The appropriation is for 6 months of the first year's wages, benefits, taxes, hiring costs for 4 paramedic firefighters as well as for gas, maintenance and insurance for the ambulance and the cost of collecting revenues during this 6-month period. The operation of this ambulance service will be funded by fees collected from the patient. This will be a non-lapsing account per RSA 32:3, VI and will not lapse for 2 years or until project has been completed whichever is less.

<u>Salaries</u>	<u>Taxes, Benefits, Retirement & Hiring Costs</u>	<u>Other Expenditures</u>
\$85,115.00	\$63,075.00	\$8,017.00

D. Belanger stated that he likes the Fire Department's proposal but would like to see other proposals to compare it with. The Council should not vote on putting a warrant article on the ballot without the knowledge of alternatives.

Roll Call:

D. Belanger	Abstained	G. Longfellow	Yes		
P. Fitanides	Yes	S. Werksman	Yes		
J. Hyde	No	Chairman M. DiBitetto	Yes	4-2-1	<u>Motion carried.</u>
M. Jolin	No				

Exit 11 TIF District Warrant Article (5)

In order to meet the deadline, D. Jodoin asked for the Council's decision whether to move forward with this warrant article or hold off. He went over the estimated figures for the TIF plan, which added to a total of \$18 million (attached).

M. Jolin moved to place the warrant article on the ballot at \$14 million and hold a public hearing for the bond. Motion seconded by G. Longfellow.

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$14,000,000 (fourteen million dollars) for the purpose of upgrading the Hooksett Wastewater Treatment Facility, reconstruction/improvements and signalization of lights for Hackett Hill, Hooksett Village Water Precinct improvements and other sewer and town infrastructure improvements in accordance with the provisions of the Exit 11 Tax Increment Finance Economic Development District Plan, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$14,000,000 (fourteen million dollars) of bonds and notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33), and to authorize the Town Council to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes, and to determine the rate of interest thereon. Said bonds are not to be issued without a development agreement in place sufficient to cover the annual debt service of the bonds for the lifetime of the bonds. (3/5 ballot vote required)

M. Jolin explained that in his opinion, \$4 million for Museum Elements should not be included in the amount of the bond, as it is not intended for "public facilities".

Jeff Larrabee, Cabela's stated that he started the project with his father about 3 years ago. The purpose was to have an appropriate venue to memorialize and promote NH's trademarks. The \$4 million dollars is an integral part of the whole development and intended for tourism elements, which draws the crowd. Cabela's is expected to attract tourism 2 to 3 times more than the NH International Speedway.

Robert Smaha, Commercial Broker, added that the bond will not be a burden to the taxpayers and will be 100% guaranteed by Cabela's. If the \$4 million for Museum Elements is not included in the bond amount, the Town may lose Cabela's. There are a lot of communities in New England, which are begging for businesses like Cabela's.

M. Jolin stated that promoting tourism is the State's responsibility not the Town's. Hooksett is responsible for developing the Town and generating revenues.

J. Hyde stated that he believed Cabela's built a similar facility in Omaha without a TIF District. They are a billion dollar company. They are looking to increase their business by millions of dollars by setting up business in Hooksett. He believes this is corporate welfare at best.

G. Longfellow stated he does not see any harm in adding the \$4 million because the bond is guaranteed whether it is for \$14 or \$18 million.

Chairman M. DiBitetto stated that the Town is working with the Bond Counsel to get an iron-clad guarantee to the Town.

G. Longfellow moved to amend the motion to reflect the amount of \$18 million. Motion seconded by P. Fitanides.

Roll call on the motion to amend.

D. Belanger	No	G. Longfellow	Yes		
P. Fitanides	Yes	S. Werksman	Yes		
J. Hyde	No	Chairman M. DiBitetto	Yes	4-3	<u>Motion carried.</u>
M. Jolin	No				

Roll call on the amended motion to place the warrant article on the ballot at \$18 million and hold a public hearing.

D. Belanger	No	G. Longfellow	Yes		
P. Fitanides	Yes	S. Werksman	Yes		
J. Hyde	No	Chairman M. DiBitetto	Yes	4-3	<u>Motion carried.</u>
M. Jolin	No				

M. Jolin was excused at 9:15 pm.

Warrant Article #4

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,500,000 (one million five hundred thousand dollars) for the purpose of upgrading the Hooksett Wastewater Department Treatment Facility such sum to be raised by the issuance of bonds or notes not to exceed \$1,500,000 (one million five hundred thousand dollars) under and in compliance with the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33), and to authorize the rate of interest thereon and to take such other actions as may be necessary to effect the issuance, negotiation, sale and delivery of such bonds or notes as shall be in the best interest of the Town of Hooksett. Action on Article #4 will be taken only if Article #5 (TIF general obligation bond) is defeated. (3/5 ballot vote is required)

G. Longfellow moved to place the warrant article on the ballot. Motion seconded by D. Belanger.

Roll Call:

D. Belanger	Yes	G. Longfellow	Yes		
P. Fitanides	Yes	S. Werksman	Yes		
J. Hyde	No	Chairman M. DiBitetto	Yes	5-1	<u>Motion carried.</u>

Permanent Firefighters' Salary Increases Warrant Article

To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost item included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Town of Hooksett and the Hooksett Permanent Firefighters Association Local 3264 which calls for the following increases in salaries, taxes, retirement, and other benefits at the current staffing level.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Salaries</u>	<u>Taxes, Benefits & Retirement</u>
#1	\$81,532	\$12,159
#2	\$43,306	(\$709)
#3	\$44,442	(\$3,416)

D. Belanger moved to place the warrant article on the ballot. Motion seconded by G. Longfellow.

Roll Call:

D. Belanger	Yes	G. Longfellow	Yes		
P. Fitanides	Yes	S. Werksman	Yes		
J. Hyde	No	Chairman M. DiBietto	Yes	5-1	<u>Motion carried.</u>

Chairman M. DiBietto read the warrant article below for the record.

Shall the Town, if article #_ (Firefighters' Salary Increases) is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address article #_ cost items only?

(Note: Warrant Articles will be numbered on the ballot accordingly.)

G. Longfellow moved to place the warrant article on the ballot. Motion seconded by S. Werksman.

Roll Call:

D. Belanger	Yes	G. Longfellow	Yes		
P. Fitanides	Yes	S. Werksman	Yes		
J. Hyde	No	Chairman M. DiBietto	Yes	5-1	<u>Motion carried.</u>

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

D. Jodoin informed the Council of the budget status in the following departments:

1. Family Service's Welfare line item is currently 78% expended with the winter months' heating requests yet to come.
2. Highway Department's Salt & Sand line item is currently 99% expended. Fleet Maintenance and Gas line item are both at 72%. Additional funds needed for these line items will be taken from Paving line item.
3. Administration Department's Health Insurance line item is under budget for about \$80,000.00. \$30,346.00 of that amount is committed to the Communication/Fire Dispatch budget, which leaves about \$50,000.00. Legal line item is over expended by \$25,000.00, but NH Retirement line item should be under budget by \$20,000.00.
4. Solid Waste Department's Tipping Fee line item may be under budget but unable to determine at this time.

D. Jodoin asked for the Council's action to transfer funds to Family Service Department.

D. Belanger moved to transfer \$10,000.00 from Administration Department Health Insurance line item to the Family Service's Welfare line item. Motion seconded by G. Longfellow. **Motion carried unanimously.**

D. Jodoin asked for permission to dispose of the old obsolete computers being kept in the hallway closet to make room for tax bills. The Auctioneer has determined the old computers of no value. The Council authorized the Town Administrator to dispose of the old computers.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Harold Murray, 311 Hackett Hill Road requested getting 2 easel boards for the Chambers to be used during meetings. Regarding the \$4 million on the TIF District bond that was discussed, he said, if the State drops the \$2+ million for the new public road on Hackett Hill, it would take care of half of the cost for Museum Elements.

Fire Chief M. Williams invited the Council to look at the Ambulance Study his department has put together and stated that they have put a lot of time and effort on the study.

The Council indicated its intentions of reviewing the Ambulance Study.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn F. Horn
Administrative Assistant

Philip Fitanides
Town Council Secretary