

Official

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES Regular Meeting Wednesday, September 24, 2008

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman D. Dickson called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

PRESENT: William "Bill" Gahara, James Gorton, Paul Loiselle (excused), George Longfellow, Michael Pischetola, David Ross, Patricia Rueppel, Nancy VanScoy, Chairman David Dickson, David Jodoin (Town Administrator)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 27, 2008 – *G. Longfellow moved to approve the August 27, 2008 minutes as amended. Motion seconded by M. Pischetola. Motion carried.*

September 10, 2008 – *W. Gahara moved to approve the September 10, 2008 minutes as amended. Motion seconded by D. Ross. Motion carried.*

PUBLIC INPUT

Matt Mercier, Old Home Day Committee member: Nancy (VanScoy) told us that the Town will not be able to pay for fireworks. Typically, commercial fireworks cost about \$5,000. There was a discussion about fundraising or sponsorship. I took the responsibility to raise the \$5,000. Unfortunately, we were unable to come up with \$5,000. PSNH donated \$500 towards fireworks and helped us solicit \$1,500 from Fairpoint. We have raised \$2,000. It's my understanding that the Council is not completely against paying for fireworks but does not want to pay for the whole thing. I am requesting to reconsider your decision and bring a full commercial fireworks in Town for Old Home Day.

Dale Hemeon, Highway Manager updated the Council on the status of Martin's Ferry Bridge. Stantec came up with the design. They are waiting for DES approval. The repair is estimated to cost between \$30,000 to \$50,000. They are hoping to get the bridge on the State's 5-year replacement plan.

Peggy Teravainen, 2 Bert Street: I attended a "Stay Warm" forum in Hillsborough County. The forum addressed the concern for people with low/fixed incomes who will have a difficult time this winter staying warm. Fuel assistance funds will not be enough to help everyone in need of assistance. This is an initiative to share information and ideas with seniors and families on how to utilize resources to keep warm. I urge the Town to support and encourage this initiative. We have facilities in Town, which could be used as warming centers.

Harold Murray, Emergency Management Deputy Director: I intend to bring this back to the Emergency Management Director. I believe the Police Department has a "call-in" list. If they don't call they check up on you.

H. Murray asked the Highway Manager if the bridge itself has been compromised. The Town could get 5 inches of rain this weekend.

D. Hemeon: The State engineer said the bridge itself is okay. We just need to get it secured. I'm hoping to meet with DES this Friday to get approval. It's safe to go over the bridge. We're trying to keep some of the weight off. The sign was changed from 6 tons to 10 tons weight limit for the school buses. We'll put more layers of sandbags to keep water away from it.

NOMINATIONS/APPOINTMENTS

Available Positions:

Budget Committee (3) Full members, exp. 6/2009 & 6/2011
Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, Full member, exp. 6/2009

Chairman D. Dickson announced that the Budget Committee now has three (3) open positions.

G. Longfellow moved to appoint Terry Creamer as Conservation Commission, Fill-in Alternate member, exp. 6/2009. Motion seconded by N. VanScoy. Motion carried unanimously.

SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS

Supervisors of the Checklist

The Supervisors of the Checklist were invited to attend the meeting to address some issues with regards to the voters' checklist used at the recent Primary Election held on September 9th.

Frank Gray, Chair: I had requested for George (Longfellow) to set this meeting up. I want to clarify some things. First of all, I was the Chair when these issues came about. I take full responsibility as the Chair. I do not know what the actual cause because there are many things that happened. I do want to point out the people involved. We have the Moderator, the Town Clerk, the Supervisors of the Checklist and to some extent, the Councilors. I have not run into anyone that I thought did not do their very best to ensure that every voter was handled properly. Leslie Nepveu, the Town Clerk, I would match her efficiency and knowledge with any Town Clerk in the State. HAVA (Help America Vote Act) was put into place two years ago. The system they have is flawed. Our checklist, streets and district boundaries were not correct. We went to SNHPC, we got from them the latest list of streets and voted on the new districts. We had no records. We had nothing to work with. We had to correct the list. We had problems with the computer system. I don't like HAVA. I think it's a gateway for fraudulent voting. I'd like to tender my resignation effective Oct. 1st and hope that it would help put integrity back to the Town election.

Arlene Longfellow, Supervisor of the Checklist: People were not changed over after they voted. It made them upset and I don't blame them. We're working with HAVA to put all the corrections in.

Bob Ehlers, Supervisor of the Checklist and Co-Chair of Hooksett Democratic Party: We have people with several names on the list. We are in the process of cleaning the data. When you're undeclared and you walk in the polls, you have to declare a party to pull a ballot. At that time, when you have a ballot, you are either a Democrat or a Republican. When you leave, you have to reassign yourself and go back to undeclared status. Unfortunately, because of the problem, people were not changed back. We finished scanning the election from the last primary. We haven't reconciled the books yet. The town is assisting us on that.

Leslie Nepveu, Town Clerk: The Town Administrator authorized me to hire an assistant to correct the checklist. We will go through the original cards, correct and reconcile the list.

G. Longfellow: I made a list of what the supervisors have to face. A supervisor has to own a computer and a printer. They have to be connected to the internet. They have to attend several training sessions. They have to spend several 15-hours a year tending to voters' list during elections. Most checklist supervisors do their work on weekends or at night. HAVA staffs are only on duty 9 to 4 on weekdays. Passwords are only good for 30 days. If you need to contact them for passwords, you have to wait until a HAVA staff is on duty. Responsibility of maintaining a checklist of over 8,000 registered voters on a voluntary basis is overwhelming. They have to be categorized by party and district. All undeclared voters have to be reclassified back to undeclared individually following an election. All new registered voters have to be approved and added to the checklist. After election, each voter has to be scanned. On top of all these, there is a worry that if you make a mistake, the AG's (Attorney General) office could come down on you, threaten you with jail or fine you. All these, for \$600 a year.

Discussion on the matter ensued.

R. Ehlers assured the Council that voter fraud is not an issue in the State. The Supervisor of the Checklist will go through the list and clean up the data. They are gearing up for the upcoming Presidential Election and anticipating the process to go smoothly.

N. VanScoy: I think the Council should make a public statement. I make a motion for the Council to make a public statement to restore public confidence.

Chairman Dickson: I think it would be more appropriate to come from the Supervisors of the Checklist.

G. Longfellow: The Supervisors of the Checklist are elected town officers just like the Councilors. If there's any statement to be made, it should be made by them.

J. Gorton moved to accept the resignation of Frank Gray effective October 1st. Motion seconded by N. VanScoy. Motion carried unanimously.

The Council thanked Mr. Gray for his service to the Town.

Eagle Scout Project

Ken Scott, Troop 292 introduced himself to the Council and presented his proposal for an Eagle Scout project. The project involves construction and installation of signs, benches and a kiosk for the Heads Pond Trail. He will hold a fundraiser at the Old Home Day on October 4th. Funds raised for the project will be matched by the Kiwanis Club up to \$1,000.

D. Ross moved to approve and encourage the project. Motion seconded by P. Rueppel. Motion carried unanimously.

The Council commended Ken Scott for an excellent project and a nice presentation.

Gym Use

Dale Hemeon, Parks & Recreation Department Superintendent presented a rough draft of what the gym could be used for. Some of the program ideas were haunted park, cooking classes, line dancing, basketball, scrapbook nights, etc. Parks & Recreation looked at what the surrounding communities are offering for adult activities.

There was a discussion as to whether the gym should be made available for non-profit organizations only.

D. Ross: I strongly encourage using the gym for programs. Safety and legal issues have to be addressed first before the gym could be used.

J. Gorton moved to accept the proposal as presented to be modified as needed by the department in charge. Motion seconded by N. VanScoy.

G. Longfellow: I don't think the gym should be used for a profit-making organizations and businesses.

Roll call

D. Dickson	Yes	D. Ross	No		
W. Gahara	Yes	P. Rueppel	Yes		
J. Gorton	Yes	M. Pischetola	Yes		
G. Longfellow	No	N. VanScoy	Yes	6-2	<u>Motion carried.</u>

Acceptance of Donation per RSA 674:44-b

Kathie Northrup, Heritage Commission asked the Council to accept additional donation in the amount of \$1,763 for the Historic Marker program. Former Martin's Corner students donated \$20 and Manchester Sand, Gravel & Cement Co., Inc. donated \$1,743.

D. Ross moved to accept the donation per RSA 674:44-b. Motion seconded by J. Gorton. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Route 3 Project

Two weeks ago, Senator Gatsas asked the Council to hold off on their decision relating to Route 3 project funded by federal earmark.

D. Jodoin: Sen. Gatsas met with Merchants, K-Mart and other Route 3 property owners. From what I heard, it wasn't a productive meeting. We're running into some issues on Benton Road. We're not sure if the FEMA grant for the Benton Road project would move forward because of easement issues. The Highway Manager will go before the State to see if there are any other options for the Town to take care of Benton Road culvert and let other Route 3 flooding issues revert back to the State and property owners, i.e., Merchants Motors, K-Mart, etc. The Highway Department will be doing the work on Benton Road.

This matter would be addressed at the next Council meeting.

Old Home Day

N. VanScoy sent a letter to the Council on behalf of the Old Home Day Committee requesting for the Town to pay \$2,000 towards commercial fireworks.

P. Rueppel moved to approve for the Town to pay \$3,000 towards fireworks. Motion seconded by D. Ross.

D. Jodoin: At this time, we're looking at about \$8,300 total costs for the Town including all details.

Discussion on the matter ensued.

J. Gorton: Given the financial constraint, I feel it would not be in the best interest of the Town to spend this money. I think it would better to come up with another activity other than fireworks, like a huge bonfire.

W. Gahara: I cannot support having the fireworks, either. The bottom line is, you can't spend what you don't have. This does not make sense to me.

N. VanScoy stated that the OHD committee would continue to pursue fundraising.

Roll call

D. Dickson	No	D. Ross	No		
W. Gahara	No	P. Rueppel	Yes		
J. Gorton	No	M. Pischetola	No		
G. Longfellow	Yes	N. VanScoy	recused	2-5	<u>Motion failed.</u>

Other Old Business

Community Calendar - N. VanScoy stated that Google sponsors a free community calendar. She asked the Town Administrator to look into the matter.

Council Chambers Sound System – A few people have complained about the meetings being hard to hear. N. VanScoy suggested looking into the possibilities of installing a sound system for the Council Chambers. The issue would be revisited depending on how the budget stands at end of year.

Hierarchy of the Town Administrator - N. VanScoy requested to document for future reference.

Meeting with Other Boards – The Council is working on this and have scheduled the first meeting.

Historical Society - It was never confirmed who actually owns the collection. David Paquette, Historical Society Treasurer stated the Town owns the collection but Kathy Northrup, Heritage Commission Chair stated they are privately owned. G. Longfellow commented a meeting is scheduled for September 25th at the Arah Prescott Library. A number of people are planning to attend. They are anticipating new officers will be elected. D. Jodoin spoke to D. Paquette about possibly displaying some of the artifacts along the Town Offices hallways.

NEW BUSINESS

Samco Holdings/Smyth Road Bond Reduction

Stantec has inspected the project and recommended reducing the bond.

W. Gahara moved to reduce the bond from \$58,000 to \$20,000. Motion seconded by G. Longfellow. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

School Impact Fees

This procedure is usually done at this time every year. The School Impact Fee Special Revenue account has a balance of \$86,113.75 as of August 31, 2008. The Finance Director recommended transferring \$85,000 to the Hooksett School District.

W. Gahara moved to transfer \$85,000 from the School Impact Fee Special Revenue account to Hooksett School District. Motion seconded by N. VanScoy. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Safety Center "Old" Sign

The old sign for the Safety Center was constructed by an Eagle Scout. According to the Police Commission, the old sign would be re-used. The Eagle Scout would like to know where the old sign is. N. VanScoy would follow-up with the Police Chief.

The Town Administrator stated that he spoke to the Chief about the old sign. They are thinking about placing the old sign at the bottom of Legends Drive, up in a building.

Voting Booths

The new curtains came in for the voting booths. The older booths will be repaired.

Comcast Cable Bills

The Council received several requests to remove a fee from the Comcast Cable bills. This will be an agenda item for October 8th.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

D. Jodoin advised the Council of the following:

1. He presented the agreement between the Town and SNHU regarding maintaining portion of North River Road. The Town Attorney drafted the agreement. Highway Department has reviewed it. He asked for a motion authorizing him to sign the agreement.

J. Gorton moved to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the agreement. Motion seconded by G. Longfellow. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

2. He suggested holding the Assessment Public Informational meeting on October 15th at 6:00 pm. DRA will send a representative to do a Power point presentation and answer questions. He will check with DRA to see if the date is still available.

3. He asked the Council for a budget objective. Budget packets are going out to department heads on October 3rd and are due back to Finance on November 14th. He suggested using last year's budget, without fuel and utilities and come up with a percentage rate increase, i.e., 2% increase.

P. Rueppel: I think we should send a message to all department heads to do away with the wish list and stick to absolute bottom line necessities.

J. Gorton: I can't see us assigning a target when there are so many unknown factors. It has to be a collaborative effort. We have to explain to department heads what were facing.

G. Longfellow moved to have a goal of 2.5% above last year's default budget including fuel and utilities. Motion seconded by D. Ross.

D. Jodoin stated that the fuel increase alone would eat up the 2.5%.

A lengthy discussion on the matter ensued.

Roll call

D. Dickson	No	D. Ross	Yes		
W. Gahara	Yes	P. Rueppel	Yes		
J. Gorton	Yes	M. Pischetola	Yes		
G. Longfellow	Yes	N. VanScoy	No	6-2	<u>Motion carried.</u>

PUBLIC INPUT

Michael Sorel, 54 Cross Road: I was told that some communities have a rainy day fund. Do we have a rainy day fund? Can we set it up if we don't?

The Council will look into the possibilities of setting it up.

M. Sorel: The last couple of years, the leadership came from the Council and they set a budget goal. That was passed on to the Budget Committee and the School Board. A State employee once told me, it's not the role of the government (not the elected officials) to worry about money. They just think of what they need to have to run their departments and to get their jobs done. That comes from the elected officials and the taxpayers. That's why the department heads need your guidance.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

N. VanScoy moved at 9:15 pm to enter into a non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (e)

"Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed against the body or agency or any subdivision thereof, or against any member thereof because of his membership in such body or agency, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled." **Motion seconded by W. Gahara. Roll call vote carried unanimously.**

W. Gahara moved at 9:26 pm to exit the non-public session. Motion seconded by J. Gorton. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

The Council made a statement that they had voted not to divulge the minutes of the non-public session.

ADJOURNMENT

W. Gahara moved at 9:27 pm to adjourn. Motion seconded by D. Ross. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Evelyn F. Horn
Administrative Assistant

Nancy VanScoy
Town Council Secretary