

Official

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES Regular Meeting Wednesday, March 24, 2010

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

PRESENT: David Boutin (excused), David Dickson, James Gorton, Paul Loiselle, George Longfellow, Michael Pischetola (excused), David Ross (see "Announcement"), Nancy VanScoy, Chairman William Gahara and Carol Granfield (Town Administrator)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCEMENT

Chair Gahara announced that Councilor David Ross submitted his resignation from the Council. Per policy and procedure, a formal resignation is needed in order to open the position for prospective candidates interested in filling the district seat. The Council has the ability to appoint a fill-in Councilor until the end of the fiscal year.

J. Gorton moved to waive the rules on waiting period between nomination and appointment. Motion seconded by P. Loiselle. Motion carried unanimously.

P. Loiselle moved to appoint David Ross as fill-in Councilor with term ending June 30, 2010. Motion seconded by J. Gorton. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Councilor D. Ross was asked to join the Council.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

N. VanScoy moved at 6:37 pm to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II (c) "Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant."

Motion seconded by J. Gorton.

Roll call vote carried unanimously.

P. Loiselle moved at 7:14 pm to exit the non-public session. Motion seconded by J. Gorton. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

The Council made a statement that they voted to seal the minutes of the non-public session. No action was taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 10, 2010 – P. Loiselle moved to approve the minutes of March 10, 2010 as amended. Motion seconded by J. Gorton. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC INPUT

John Pieroni, 26 Autumn Run (Budget Committee Chair): I'd like to thank all Town employees for all their work during the last storm and flooding. I would also like to thank the Town Council for bringing a

responsible budget to the Budget Committee. It was a difficult year and we had to make some adjustments particularly in the Police Commission line. We heard some complaints about some of the Budget Committee member. I'd like to go on record that I think the Budget Committee did a tremendous job. I thank all the members. It was not an easy process. The recent issue with pay raises has upset a lot of people. The reason I speak on this is that I'm angry like a lot of people. I am concerned about the Council's response by putting a non-binding article on the warrant to eliminate the Police Commission. There have been some bad decisions made by the members and not the Commission. I don't think you should throw out the Commission simply because bad decisions were made by the people. You have to figure out how to best manage the Commission. We need to figure out what makes sense. If it is to eliminate it, how would it be overseen. It would be the Town Administrator's responsibility. How much time is the Town Administrator going to spend on that? To give people a non-binding choice is not the best way to deal with the issue. This does not give them choice of what to do.

NOMINATIONS/APPOINTMENTS

Available Board Positions

Planning Board, alternate member, exp. 6/2012

Zoning Board of Adjustment, alternate member, exp. 6/2010

Trustee of the Trust Funds, exp. 6/2012

PRESENTATION

On behalf of the Council, Chairman W. Gahara presented the Eagle Scouts citations to the following:

John Paul Brennan

Kenneth Scott

Andrew Stencavage

SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS

Public Hearings

Acceptance of Donation to the Fire Department from Hooksett Happy Helpers.

The public hearing was opened at 7:30 pm.

Bernadette Chevrette, Hooksett Happy Helpers asked the Council to accept a donation to the Fire Department in the form of (3) lifesaving equipments amounting to \$14,529.

Fire Chief Mike Williams presented the three equipments purchased namely, (1) Amkus 22 Cutter (Jaws of life), which is capable of cutting through stronger type of metals on newer car models, (2) Lifepak 12 Defibrillator/Monitor, which allows for rapid evaluation of changes in patient condition and (3) Broselow Pediatric Resuscitation, a color coded emergency resuscitation system designed for children.

Chief Williams thanked the Hooksett Happy Helpers for their generous donation.

Harold Murray: The Hooksett Happy Helpers raise funds through selling used clothes. They are located next to the Court House. Anyone can donate unwanted clothes to be sold.

P. Loiselle: I've been in the Council for 8 years. The organization has made donations to the Fire Department year after year. On behalf of the Council, I thank you for everything you do.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:35

D. Ross moved to accept the donation in the amount of \$14,529 per RSA 31:95-e. Motion seconded by N. VanScoy. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Proposed \$1,538,000 Bond for Reconstructive Renovations of the Safety Center.

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:38 pm.

The Town has a warrant article for \$1,538,000 bond to reconstruct and renovate the Safety Center. The Town Administrator announced there will be a brochure detailing the project and an open house will be held at the Safety Center this Saturday from 9:00 am until 12:00 noon. The public is encouraged to go and see what the situation is. HL Turner Group, Harvey Construction, as well as staff from Police and Fire will be on hand to answer questions.

Bill Hickey, HL Turner Group gave an overview of the project. The Safety Center is 12 years old. We've been involved with the project for about a year. We completed a study to evaluate the facility. The major issues are significant air and moisture coming into the building. We propose a series of cost-effective repairs that will take care of the issues. We solicited for construction management services and Harvey Construction was chosen. We will work together as a group including the Town Departments. One of our charges was no more "band-aides" and to "fix" the problem.

Vincent Lembo, 56 Main Street: If the warrant article does not pass, what's the alternative?

C. Granfield: If it doesn't pass, the Town will have to use minimal funds available in the budget to patch the issues and the building will continue to deteriorate.

Michael Sorel, 54 Cross Road: Can you share with us the bond details? The length of the bond, rate and the tax impact.

C. Granfield: It's a 15-year bond with principal payments of \$101,600 plus interest of \$80,000. The estimated tax impact each year is \$0.11, first year being \$0.03. The impact on a \$218,000 median home is \$24 per year. The bond rate is not yet set.

P. Loiselle: When I came on board, the building was fairly new and problems started right away. We tried to find the people responsible for it. A lot of contractors and subcontractors were involved and people were pointing fingers. As a result, things did not get fixed. The warrant article we're proposing will have people who will have long-term responsibility. That's the difference.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:43 pm.

Public Hearing was a requirement, no action required.

OLD BUSINESS

Classification Pay Plan (see file)

The Personnel Plan was adopted in February and the Classification Pay Plan was taken out of it to be adopted separately. The Town Administrator presented an organized Classification Pay Plan consisting of 25 grade levels with minimum and maximum salary. No one is impacted by the changes. The only thing that was changed was the Town Administrator's position was lowered to a more comparable range. The Town Administrator suggested hiring a consultant to update the pay plan in the next two years.

N. VanScoy moved to adopt the classification pay plan as presented. Motion seconded by P. Loiselle. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Request to Use Police Impact Fees

Joanne McHugh, Police Commission Chair referred to the letter from the Police Commission dated March 16, 2010 with regards to the use of the impact fees. The Commission received an opinion from the attorney. They are making a formal request to the Council to expend the Impact Fees.

D. Ross moved to approve the request of the Police Commission to expend impact fees for purchase of mobile laptop computers in the amount of \$28,949.22. Motion seconded by N. VanScoy. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Elderly Tax Exemption

Todd Haywood, Town Assessor: The Town currently has a total of 284 recipients of this exemption. The income and asset limits are \$35,000 for single, \$50,000 for married with an asset limit of \$350,000, excluding the value of primary residence. Hooksett's asset and income limit is higher than most communities and well above the minimum requirements prescribed by NH law.

P. Loiselle motioned to keep the Elderly Tax Exemption as is. Motion seconded by D. Ross. Motion carried unanimously.

Volunteer Recognition

C. Granfield brought up the subject to determine if the Council would like to schedule the event this year. It was funded by a donation last year.

P. Loiselle moved to hold the event and find the funds within the current budget. Motion seconded by D. Ross.

P. Loiselle and D. Ross both stated the event is a small gesture for the Town to do for its volunteers.

D. Dickson suggested advertising to try and solicit donations.

Roll call vote

D. Dickson	No	D. Ross	Yes		
J. Gorton	No	VanScoy	No		
P. Loiselle	Yes	Chairman W. Gahara	No	3-4	<u>Motion failed.</u>
G. Longfellow	Yes				

D. Dickson moved to solicit donations for the event. Motion seconded by J. Gorton.

Roll call vote

D. Dickson	Yes	D. Ross	Yes		
J. Gorton	Yes	VanScoy	Yes		
P. Loiselle	Yes	Chairman W. Gahara	Yes	6-1	<u>Motion carried.</u>
G. Longfellow	No				

Hooksett Goes Healthy Walk for Charity

The Hooksett Goes Healthy campaign has been successful. This is the second phase of the campaign. The Hooksett Goes Healthy Walk for Charity is a 3-mile walk with raised funds being donated to the Hooksett Food Pantry.

Diane Boyce and Jodi Pinard: In an effort to expand the Hooksett Goes Healthy campaign, the Town decided to take a step further and hold a Hooksett community walk for charity.

P. Loiselle moved to support the walk. Motion seconded by N. VanScoy. Motion carried unanimously.

Town Warrant Motions & Seconds

Councilors assigned individuals who would move, second and speak to each warrant articles (see file). The Town Meeting is to be held on Saturday, April 10th at 1 pm at the Cawley Middle School cafeteria.

Police Commission Warrant Article (#13)

D. Ross stated that the purpose of the article is to get a feel for what the community thinks and in what direction the public would like to go. An explanation should be made that the Council has not taken a position whether to keep or abolish the Police Commission.

N. VanScoy stated it is important to clarify and highlight in the Council Newsletter that the article is non-binding and for advisory purposes only.

P. Loiselles also brought up an article in the Union Leader regarding Joanne McHugh not attending the Council meeting. It tends to be slanted and indicated that Joanne McHugh decided not to attend. In fact, the issue was discussed with the Town Administrator. The two senior members of the Police Commission were unable to attend and Ms. McHugh was advised she did not need to attend. The Union Leader should issue a retraction.

N. VanScoy added that the statement regarding the Police Commission not coming to the meeting was a direct quote from a Councilor and was made at this table.

Approval of Street Names – Market Drive & Mallard Lane

J. Gorton moved to approve the street name, “Market Drive”. Motion seconded by G. Longfellow.

N. VanScoy stated she is not in favor of the street name as it is close to advertising. Note: The street is the location for the new Market Basket.

Motion carried with N. VanScoy opposed.

G. Longfellow moved to approve the street name, “Mallard Lane”. Motion seconded by P. Loiselles.

There was a discussion regarding the exact location of the new street.

Motion and second were withdrawn.

The item was tabled until the location is verified.

Conservation License Plate Grant Program Request

The Town Clerk is in the process of finalizing the grant application in order to have the five “Town Records” books ranging from 1850-1955 conserved and filmed. One of the application requirements is to include letters from the community that show support for the proposed work to be funded.

P. Loiselles moved to send the letter of support. Motion seconded by D. Dickson. Motion carried unanimously.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

C. Granfield informed the Council of the following:

1. Due to a posting requirement, the Town Meeting date and time has been changed to Saturday, April 10th, 1 pm at the Cawley Middle School Cafeteria. Everyone except Councilor Gorton will be able to attend. The change has been published.
2. An informational meeting was held with NHDOT regarding I-93 roadwork and bridge replacement to begin this summer. It is a lengthy project with major work on Exit 10. Work on the ramp will be done at night to minimize traffic impact. Weekly meetings will be held to address any issues.
3. The filing period for the elected offices begins today through April 2nd. The list has been publicized. There are 4 Council positions for Districts 4,5, 6 and At-Large. Anyone interested in filling any of the elected positions must file with the Clerk’s office. In addition to the elected positions, appointed positions were also advertised. The Police Commission closing date is April 5th to allow the Council to conduct interviews.
4. There will be an Open House at the Safety Center this Saturday from 9 am until 12 noon.
5. A press release was publicized for the “Beautify Hooksett” program. A few calls have been received. The public is encouraged to let the Town know of any areas, which need to be addressed.
6. We received a notification that Hooksett is now one of the communities recognized by ICMA (International City/County Management Association). There are currently 43 recognized communities in NH.
7. The Town is currently finalizing the lease agreement for the space at the Town Hall to be leased to Scholars Academy, a small private school. They should be moving in beginning of May.

G. Longfellow asked about rental fees. C. Granfield stated she came up with a rental fee based on square footage and current market. All costs including utilities were factored in. The lease agreement will be reviewed and renewed on an annual basis.

8. The Town currently has 5 volunteers working at the Town Hall as Receptionists. Some volunteers will be working in various Town departments and will be cross-trained.
9. The Town is looking into energy savings.
10. The Town Administrator as well as Councilor Gorton is trying to get in touch with the Census Bureau regarding the census packages being mailed in town having the address of "Manchester" with Hooksett zip code. Will make sure the Town of Hooksett gets the credit for data returned.
11. The next Town Council meeting is April 14th. The second meeting in the month of April is changed from April 28th to April 21st. Notification will be sent.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

Police Commission

The last meeting was mostly about on-going issues. The webpage was improved. There are some positive changes at the Police Department.

Recycling & Transfer Advisory Committee

G. Longfellow recently visited the Town of Goffstown and was able to obtain some valuable information. Goffstown's tipping fees is over \$200,000 less than Hooksett. They have an automated trash pick-up system doing 1,100 stops a day. Goffstown's population is about 30% more than Hooksett.

Board Of Assessors

Current with all items.

ZBA

They will meet on the 2nd Tues of the month, April 13th.

Town Hall Preservation Committee

The last meeting had to be cancelled due to illness. They are looking to participating in the Heritage Day festivities.

PUBLIC INPUT

M. Sorel: You've met Bernadette Chevrette of the Hooksett Happy Helpers. Her husband Alpha has served as a Town Selectman/Councilor. He is not doing well. I am suggesting for the Council to send well wishes.

Mr. Sorel also suggested adding the Town boards members' terms on the website.

V. Lembo: To add something to Mr. Pieroni's comments regarding the Police Commission and the warrant article. I think the Council overstepped their bounds putting the warrant article on the ballot. If we had complained about the Budget Committee, would you have proposed an article to abolish the Budget Committee? Is there any way to reconsider that vote and take the warrant article off the ballot?

C. Granfield stated it's too late. The warrant has already been posted. She will check with legal whether it could be done at the Deliberative session.

G. Longfellow: I don't know what people are so worried about. This is a perfect way for the Council to know how the public feels about the Police Commission.

V. Lembo: By putting the warrant article on the ballot, it could be construed that the Council is for abolishing the Police Commission. At the Police Commission meeting, 2 line Officers, one a veteran and the other a new officer. They both stated they were happy with the Police Chief and the Police Administration. They were tired of hearing the negative comments in the newspaper. The Council was

wrong to add the warrant article because it gives the idea to people that the Council is for abolishing the Police Commission.

David Pearl, 79 Main Street: I've been critical of the Police Department. I don't believe the referendum is an up or down vote on the Department's conduct. If it was voted down, it doesn't mean nothing is going on. If it passes, it doesn't mean the Police Department is ineffective. This is about how to conduct business at the Police Department. I've been really critical about the Police Department but I don't know how I would vote on it. I'd like things straightened out, that's for sure. I would like to comment on what Mr. Lembo said about the Police Commission meeting. I was at the meeting. Two officers that are supposed to be on duty protecting Hooksett were at the meeting for a good hour and a half. I've confirmed that through a right-to-know. We also had the Captain and the Lieutenant. It wasn't a clear-cut testimony that everything was fine. I don't think anybody really think it is. This is about, is business being done correctly? It doesn't matter whether one person or the whole town is complaining.

Richard Sullivan, Morgan Drive: The biggest problem with the warrant article is that, let's assume it passes, it doesn't tell you anything, it doesn't suggest a solution to the problem. I don't think it will help clarify anything. I get the sense that perhaps you are not as strongly for that as the night it was voted. If it is so, you can take a vote tonight that you don't support the article if you can't take it out and dismiss it. The officers who spoke at the meeting were trying to indicate that the issue had seeped to the line people. It was indicated there were morale problems and they did state they didn't have any arguments with administration and with their leadership. They weren't unhappy with the job they didn't say they were overjoyed either. We had sent Representative Boutin to submit a petition to change the size of the committee. No one spoke against the present commission. The Budget Committee did a lot of work this year. I am requesting to have the Budget Committee members available at the Town Meeting.

Mark Miville, 42 Main Street: Regarding the warrant article #13, I'm not sure where I stand on that. I remember being stunned at what the Council did that night. The discussion leading to that vote was the potential to abolish the commission. I was proud of you for coming up with that decision. There was a comment about the Union Leader Article. I don't want to speak for Dan O'Brien but I think he may have gotten that idea based on the discussion. I was not at the last Police Commission meeting. I did see the video that was taken of it. My response to the issue of whether there is a morale problem in the Police Commission now. Some people feel there is and some people feel there isn't. The two officers who spoke, based on what I learned through right-to-know, were on duty that night. Two officers who were supposed to be on the road, another officer and the officer in charge were at the meeting. Leaving one officer on the road for the entire town. That would lead to a question as to why that is so. Is that a proper management decision to bring two out of three officers off the road to address a meeting? They could have sent a written statement in. Regarding Warrant Article #13, I think all citizens have the right to vote "yes" or "no" on it. A vote should take place and it shouldn't be removed. There was a question as to whether this was done in haste. I would argue that things have been happening in the last ten years in the Police Department that warrant this type of procedure to be happening right now. It's been coming for the last ten years.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

N. VanScoy moved at 9:19 pm to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II (c) "Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant."

Motion seconded by J. Gorton.

Roll call vote carried unanimously.

J. Gorton moved at 9:41 pm to exit the non-public session. Motion seconded by N. VanScoy. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

The Council made a statement that they voted to seal the minutes of the non-public session.

ADJOURNMENT

D. Dickson moved at 9:42 pm to adjourn. Motion seconded by J. Gorton. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Evelyn F. Horn
Administrative Assistant

Nancy VanScoy
Town Council Secretary