

**OFFICE OF SELECTMEN
6 HOLLAND STREET
PO BOX 139
MOULTONBOROUGH, NH 03254**

Selectmen's Work Session

January 14, 2010

MINUTES

Present: Selectmen: Karel A. Crawford, Joel R. Mudgett, Edward J. Charest (joined at 7:00 p.m.), Betsey L. Patten; Carter Terenzini, Town Administrator.

Absent: Jim Gray (with prior notification).

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

A Motion was made by Betsey, Seconded by Joel to enter into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3 (a). On a roll call vote: Karel – Aye; Betsey – Aye; Joel – Aye. The Board entered Non-Public Session at 4:09 p.m.

The Board exited Non-Public Session at 5:49 p.m. having voted by a vote of 2/3 or greater of the members present to not disclose the minutes and decisions reached therein to the public, as divulgence of the information discussed likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of the public body itself, until - in the opinion of a majority of the members - the aforesaid circumstances no longer apply.

The three positions that are new should be graded where they should be as of April 1st.

The Chair recessed the meeting until 7:00 p.m.

The Selectmen returned from recess at 7:00 p.m.

In attendance: Sandwich Selectmen, Leo Dwyer and Brad Martin; Meredith Selectmen, Chuck Palm and Town Manager, Phil Warren; Center Harbor Selectmen Charley Hanson, Richard Drenkhahn, Randy Mattson, and Fire Chief John Schlemmer.

Karel welcomed the attending members of staff and the Selectmen from Center Harbor, Meredith, and Sandwich to discuss the status of the contract with Stewart's Ambulance. She welcomed the thoughts of the partnering communities on how they wanted to proceed. Karel wondered if the three towns were happy with the service and did they want to renew the contract or did they want to renegotiate its terms or even go back out to bid?

Mr. Martin of Sandwich thought it was a gargantuan task to put a bid package together and go through the process. He observed that Sandwich was happy with the service and wondered if we might not be best served by simply negotiating any aspects we thought needed change.

Mr. Palm of Meredith said Mr. Martin made a good point. He observed that this is where the town's were four years ago. He said the end result of the re-negotiations of that prior contract was a positive one. Mr. Palm referred back to a study done at that time of the alternatives, which he described as "very extensive", that had found Stewart's competitive. He also observed that "They (Stewart's) write-off

quite a few claims under our contract.” He said the bottom line is we are not getting complaints about the quality of care and we get periodic complimentary letters.

Mr. Hansen of Center Harbor said he would reiterate what Mr. Palm said. In general he likes to go out to bid to see ambulance services out there, but this contract does have a renewal clause and we could use that. He also observed that Stewart’s is a local company and that’s a plus.

Joel commented that while he was not against going out to bid, he was surprised to learn through a news account that another town thought we should prior to discussing it with the partnering towns. Fire Chief John Schlemmer of Center Harbor said this (rebidding or renewal) did come up in a Fire Chiefs’ meeting and it was thought there were some things that need to be changed, including the length of the term. He thought five years was a long time in a changing field.

Mr. Palm said that although it was not in the contract, Stewart’s did give us a downward adjustment because of the dip in the CPI (Consumer Price Index) as a courtesy and that was nice of them.

Ms. Mattson of Center Harbor said there had been a discussion of what happens if a single town decides to drop out, with it being noted that the contract calls for the remaining communities and Stewart’s to negotiate an “equitable adjustment”. Betsey (Moultonborough) asked if anyone wanted to “drop-out” and no-one responded that they did. Mr. Hansen stated that although Center Harbor has a rescue vehicle that can double as an ambulance and can transport, “It is not our intent to go into the ambulance business.”

Karel then asked the group, “...so, if we all are in agreement we want to stay together as a group, do we want to re-bid or renegotiate on some basic items?” Mr. Hansen said he thought it would be good to collect the concerns of the Fire Chiefs and other items from each town. Carter Terenzini, Moultonborough’s Town Administrator, brought up a concern with the timing of the contract and suggested we needed it to expire further into the year to give us enough time after Town Meeting to make any transition.

Mr. Palm agreed we should collect these thoughts and proceed to negotiate our concerns. Mr. Martin agreed as well. Mr. Palm suggested they use a similar negotiating group as last time which consisted of members of the Boards from the three towns and the Town Manager for Meredith. Mr. Mudgett spoke to the quality of the service and also the need to locate signed copies of the original Intermunicipal Agreement.

Karel observed that all seemed to agree that the towns have had a positive experience (with Stewart’s) and we should have a meeting with them. It was agreed that Moultonborough would act as the point-on-contact to assemble comments and questions. Mr. Terenzini would have this done by mid-February with the goal being for the group to meet in mid-March. This would allow the group to negotiate in April and May and go out to bid if they were unable to achieve a satisfactory resolution of any issues that had been identified.

Karel thanked all for attending and stated that this portion of the meeting was closed.

A Motion was made by Betsey, Seconded by Joel to enter Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3 (a). On a roll call vote: Karel – Aye; Betsey – Aye; Joel – Aye; Ed – Aye. The Board entered Non-Public Session at 7:50 p.m.

The Board exited Non-Public Session at 8:25 p.m. having voted by a vote of 2/3 or greater of the members present to not disclose the minutes and decisions reached therein to the public, as divulgence of the information discussed likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of the public body itself, until - in the opinion of a majority of the members - the aforesaid circumstances no longer apply.

A Motion to adjourn was made by Joel and Seconded by Ed. All were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Approved

Date
Respectfully Submitted
Carter Terenzini