

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

Joint Selectmen & School Board Meeting

November 15, 2011

MINUTES

Selectmen: Joel R. Mudgett, Chairman; Edward J. Charest, Betsey L. Patten; Russell C. Wakefield;
Carter Terenzini, Town Administrator; Hope K. Kokas, Administrative Assistant.
School Board: Mark Borrin, Chairman; Kathy Garry, Gary Torressen, Bill Blackadar, Gerry Buteau.

I. CALL TO ORDER: Mark Borrin called the meeting to Order at 7:00 P.M.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. SAU/Town Athletic/Recreation Study: School Board Chairman Mark Borrin stated that the purpose of the joint meeting was to discuss the two studies done; one regarding the merger of the Moultonborough Academy's Athletic Director position with the Assistant Recreation Director position and the second on the After School Program. He said that he would open the discussion first to the Board members, then he will open it to public input, and then a decision will be made. Mark said that he knew both Boards have had open meetings on the proposals and they have received numerous emails opposed from concerned citizens. Betsey felt that the process was worthwhile to identify any inefficiencies between the School and Recreation Department. She thanked Mike Branley for doing a good job gathering the information, along with Carter. She commented that some people are in favor and some are opposed, as is usually the case, but felt it was necessary to see if there were any savings to be realized and if efficiency can be improved. In addition she thanked the community for responding and providing the Boards with input. Joel commented that the emails and comments the Selectmen have received ask to leave things the way they are. Mark said that both Boards have had the opportunity over the past 1½ months to review and discuss the proposals at their public meetings. As there were no questions from either Board, Mark asked for public input.

1) Jean Beadle, Chair of the ABC, commented that the proposals made are not just about saving money, but to offer better programming for the children. As the Athletic Director is retiring after this year, along with the declining enrollment in the lower grades, it is a good time to make the change. Ms. Beadle said that having one solid program was better than two ineffective programs. School Board member, Bill Blackadar took issue with Ms. Beadle's comment of two ineffective programs. He said that the Academy has a fantastic program and the discount of any potential money savings will be a disruption of a really good school program. Ms. Beadle clarified that both are good programs at the moment, but with the declining school enrollment it will be very hard for both Directors to maintain the same level of quality programming. Russ said that while this might be true at the school, this isn't the case for the Recreation Department's participation which continues to grow each year. He added that he didn't see enough benefit in either proposal to remove the independence of both programs and put them under one directing body. Russ did say that from the study there is a need for better scheduling of School and Town facilities. 2) Carter commented that it is hard to argue supporting the recommendations made, when he is aware of the overall opposition. He said that he's found the word 'change' is a four letter word for many people. Change is difficult, but is always constant. Change can be small and incremental or big and wide sweeping. One year ago he predicted that \$35,000 could be saved in merging the School and Recreation Department programs and it was agreed to study it.

The study proved what was predicted. One of the objections was how one position could answer to two masters. On the objection of one person can't do both jobs, Mike showed the Board that it could be done. Rus Wilson of Portsmouth told the Selectmen that this hasn't been a problem and it brought their school and city closer together. The objection of serving two philosophies was answered by the municipal manager in Bellows Falls and Rockingham, VT, two different entities, serving both effectively. At the same time he looked at the School's After School Program and discovered that close to 600 hours per year of Recreation's staff is spent supporting their Drop-In Program. That's when the proposal was made that the School could expand their after school program, discontinuing Recreation's and freeing up staff while the Town would provide some of the money to the School to support the expansion. Carter acknowledged the emails received supporting the present programs and asking that no changes be made. He added this is not about either program being broken or lacking quality. Carter added that the School's Athletic Department under Harry Blood's direction is thought of very highly and the Recreation Department's programs under Donna Kuethe's direction have been very effective. He said that the Town should constantly be looking for improvements to insure that the taxpayers are receiving the best possible bang for their dollars. Programs have been brought to the Selectmen where there was no cost savings, but provided better service for the same money. Carter questioned the reported number of participants in the Recreation Department's Drop-In Program. He cited that through the survey done, there were a lot of people who felt the school had better facilities and could do a better job at providing an after school program. Carter felt that Mike's report showed that a better job could be done in scheduling facilities. The three communities doing joint scheduling are not doing it by trying to sit down and work it out. One person has control and responsibility of scheduling the facilities. The proposal made would allow the Town to do a better job and added to that a savings \$40,000 (a reduction of .02 on the tax rate). Presently there are two out of the four full time jobs are vacant and there will never be a better time to try this. Carter urged the Boards to move forward by saying, "We can do a better." 3) Hollis Austin asked and Mark Borrin replied that he will ask each Board member to vote on each proposal separately. Mr. Austin felt that there should be an effort to coordinate all services provided by the Recreation Department, the Library and School, reminding the Selectmen of the needs of the Town's seniors. He felt that Mike Branley, Carter and Jean Beadle did a good job on the study and the proposals made. Mark commented that in all of his years as a School Board member and chairperson, he has not heard once from the public or school of a scheduling problem for either program. School Board member Kathy Garry agreed that in twenty years, with her children being involved in both programs, to her knowledge there hasn't been any real issues. She added that it's known that the school uses the gym on set days and the Recreation and clubs have access to the gym on the other days. Russ commented that it was his hope that both Directors would resolve any scheduling problems before having to seek support from their supervisors. Kathy added that when working with children, weather, and other factors, the situation can be somewhat fluid, requiring cancellations and rescheduling. 4) Hilary Bride, Assistant Recreation Director and the scheduler for her department said that primarily it is during the winter season when she has to work with the Athletic Director for scheduling use of the school's gymnasium. She reported that she works this out with Harry Blood. The elementary school's gym is available to the Recreation Department and is open until 9 p.m. She felt that this time slot is too late for younger children to be practicing. Hilary said that the school has been accommodating, but the biggest conflict occurs when the school has to make adjustments at the last minute and Recreation's programs then get bumped. The problem is there is a lack of space. 5) John Tolman said that as a coach and a parent, it is frustrating when the younger kids get bumped from using the School's gym. He acknowledged that they are doing the best that they can, but a lack of space exists. 6) Hollis Austin wondered if the scheduling problems and asked

if it existed prior to the desire to build new facilities or is it just that they are using this as an argument to build new facilities. Mark stated that this topic is not up for discussion at tonight's meeting, and asked that the public stay on the two topics before them. 7) Ed acknowledged the declining enrollment and commended the School Board for collaborating with other communities to provide additional programs to Town's children, such as the football program with Inter-Lakes. He commented that declines happen slowly and it is important to take the time needed to study it before making any big changes, as the trend could change, especially if the economy improves. 8) Hollis Austin agreed and felt that intra-community cooperation is part of the solution and he hopes it will continue. 9) Joel commented that Donna Kuethe is doing this now. Donna Kuethe added that they've done this all along, but are looking to expand working with other communities for their senior trips and in other areas.

Mark asked all of the Board members if they had any more questions or looking for answers that haven't come up in the five meetings where the topics were discussed. He felt that the Boards have really examined these questions and the community has responded. The proposals have been taken seriously by both Boards and the ABC has urged them to really look at the proposals. All of the Board members should feel good that they've studied the proposals seriously. Garry Torressen, School Board member thanked Mike Branley for his work. He can see the benefits, but felt that at this time with the changes before the School Board and community (i.e. new Superintendent and new Athletic Director), that right now wasn't the best time. He felt that the proposal could be looked at again in the future. Mark asked for the School Board members to vote first on combining the Recreation and Athletic Director position. Gerry Buteau – Nay; Kathy Garry – Nay; Bill Blackadar – Nay; Gary Torressen – Nay; Mark Borrin – Nay. The second vote on combining/eliminating the After School program proposal: Gerry Buteau – Nay; Kathy Garry – Nay; Bill Blackadar – Nay; Gary Torressen – Nay; Mark Borrin – Nay. Joel asked the Selectmen to vote first on combining the Recreation and Athletic Director position: Ed – Nay; Betsey – Nay; Russ – Nay; Joel – Nay. The second vote on combining/eliminating the After School program proposal: Ed – Nay; Betsey – Nay; Russ said he had reservations, but voted – Nay; Joel – Nay. Mark said that by Unanimous vote both Boards have decided that both programs should be left as is. He added that there are things that could be changed, maybe changed, and for now this will be put behind. Mark thanked Donna Kuethe and the Recreation Department and the Athletic Director and the people within their school. Despite questions on both sides, there is a lot of support in the community for our programs the way they are. Joel asked the School Board to include in their advertisement for a new Athletic Director the challenge of coordinating the use of facilities. Mark acknowledged this, saying that the two Boards have come together more in the past couple of years due to the community asking for this. He felt it was important that the two Boards continue to collaborate.

- IV. ADJOURNMENT:** Joel Made the Motion to Adjourn. Ed Seconded the Motion.
 Motion Carried Unanimously.
 Mark adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

 Approved

 Date
 Respectfully Submitted
 Hope K. Kokas, Administrative Assistant

 Approved