

MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN'S MEETING - September 23, 1991

Present for the meeting which began at 7:00 p.m. were Selectmen Johnston, Dodge and Olson with Sandra Gendron taking minutes.

Road Agent Lee Murray was in for his regular weekly meeting with the Board. The first item to be discussed was the paving of Hooper Hill Road. The Board of Selectmen had received two letters from residents on that road expressing displeasure with the possibility that it might be paved. The decision to pave this road had come when the material to be used was available and the length of this road could accommodate the material. Selectman Dodge moved that Lee proceed to place the pugmill mix on Hooper Hill Road as soon as possible, this was seconded by Selectman Johnston and voted unanimously by the Board. At this point in the meeting Rhoda Shaw Clark came in to discuss the issue, she was one of the individual's having written to the Board in opposition of the paving. It was explained to Mrs. Clark that Hooper Hill Road was well traveled road requiring much maintenance, the surface of the road was ready to receive the pavement and the town had the material available, Mrs. Clark was also informed of the voted just taken by the Board. Having seemingly accepted the fact that the road would be paved, Mrs. Clark turned the discussion to the possibility of erecting speed limit signs in an attempt to slow the traffic down. The Road Agent will review the possibility, but Mrs. Clark was told that at this time only 35 mph signs could be used.

As a note to these minutes and to this topic of discussion, later in the evening Mr. & Mrs. William Andrus arrived at the meeting. The second letter had been written to the Board by them. Sandra Gendron spoke to them as the Selectmen's Meeting continued and they expressed to her their greatest concern regarding the paving was what it might do to their driveway which was receiving run-off from the road already and they feared the situation would worsen with the installation of pavement. Their concerns were later addressed with the Board of Selectmen and Lee Murray would be asked to look at their driveway situation to determine what their problem might be. Lee reported back that he felt the paving would help rather than hinder the driveway in question and the Andrus' were contacted and told to contact the Town Office if the matter was not handled to their satisfaction.

The next item under discussion by the Board of Selectmen and the Road Agent was a 5% pay raise which had been scheduled for the month of September for the Highway Department. The problem that this issue presents at this time is that the Highway Department has over the past few years been using the State Highway Wage Scale as a guideline for their wages including the steps used for the various positions and any percentage increases. Due to fiscal constraints at the state level, the State Highway Department would not be receiving their customary 5% and, in fact, were still negotiating a contract. Lee presented to the Board arguments that he felt supported the 5% being given to the New Boston Highway Department regardless of what the situation might be at the state level. Lee pointed out that the 5% increase had been built into the 1991 budget passed at Town Meeting and that his crew was aware that it had been planned for. Lee went on to maintain that his crew was not working for the State, was not manned in the same manner the State was and do not receive the same benefits as the State workers. He feels that the proposed increase is deserved. He further stated that when the economy in general was better, the raises given were lower than those given in the private sector. Lee continued in support of the raise being given by stating that his crew

was good and during winter snow storms, they were only paid for the hours worked; whereas, in the case of the state workers frequently they were called in and had to wait until conditions were such that treatment of the roads became necessary and the workers were paid for those hours spent waiting. Lee stated that he was of the understanding that the State Wage Scale was only used as a guideline. Lee closed his argument by offering to take whatever the difference might be when the State was finally settled on their 1992 increase, if the 5% were approved this year, i.e. if the State were to settle on a 9% increase for 1992, then the New Boston crew would only get 4% having gotten 5% in 1991.

Selectman Olson recalls when the Town of New Boston opted to use the State Guidelines for wages for the New Boston Highway crew. He also reviewed what he knew of the State's current plans, but points out nothing has come to a vote, it is only a hope. Selectman Olson went on to state that he did not disagree with Lee's arguments, but is of the opinion more discussion is needed to determine whether the Town continues to use the state scale as a guideline or not. He also pointed out that when hiring, New Boston has not always started a new employee at the bottom of the scale and increases have been given at a faster rate than the State Guidelines call for. Lee's response to Selectman Olson was in agreement with the statements offered, but countered that New Boston does not offer all the benefits that the State Workers receive.

Selectman Dodge was in agreement with Selectman Olson's contention that more discussion was necessary. Lee responded that he was not expecting an immediate answer, but would appreciate serious consideration of the matter by the Board.

Further discussion ensued on the arguments already presented by Lee and Selectman Olson's recollection that everyone was satisfied when it was decided to use the state scale as a guideline. It was acknowledged that some surrounding Town's pay more than the state scale.

Selectman Johnston expressed full realization that the 5% had been included in this year's budget; however, does not feel a system should be abandoned because times might be tough at the state level and wonders what will be expected when the state is on the upward move again.

Next in to see the Board of Selectmen was County Commissioner John Burns to discuss with the Board the County Government in general and the 1992 budget in particular. The topic that Commissioner Burns spent the most time discussing was that of the costs of incarcerating prisoners especially female offenders. There are many related issues to this subject and the discussion went on at length. He stated that he was attempting to visit the communities in Hillsborough County since many of these communities felt obliged to write letters to the Commissioners expressing displeasure at what had been indicated would be a double digit increase in the 1992 County Budget. The Commissioner wished to make these communities aware of what the county budget was responsible for and how, since the state was experiencing budget woes of their own, additional fiscal responsibilities were being placed on the counties by the State.

A motion was made by Selectman Johnston at 8:10 p.m., that the Board enter into an Executive Session for the discussion of a personnel matter. This motion was seconded by Selectman Olson and so voted by the Board. It was voted at 10:30 p.m. on a motion by Selectman Johnston that the Executive Session be ended, this was seconded by Selectman Olson and so voted by the Board.

Mail was reviewed, checks were signed and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sandra Gendron", written in dark ink.

Sandra Gendron  
Administrative Assistant