

MINUTES OF THE SELECTMEN'S MEETING - February 24, 1992

Present for the meeting which began at 7:00 p.m. were Selectmen Dodge and Johnston with Sandra Gendron taking minutes. Selectman Olson would arrive later in the evening having had to attend a wake.

Road Agent Lee Murray was in for his regular weekly meeting with the Board. Accompanying Lee was Engineer Ken Rhodes and Bridge Contractor Michael Kanik to present the progression of plans for replacing Depot St. Bridge funding for which would be sought at the upcoming Town Meeting.

Ken presented to the Board preliminary drawings for the project and stated that the existing abutments look good; however, further testing will be done and discussion ensued on the testing that would take place. Ken went on to identify four major pre-manufacturers of bridges that had been contacted to submit proposals for the project. Those companies are Wheeler Bridge, U. S. Bridge, Perma Post and Continental Bridge.

Ken then presented for review and discussion the field survey. Discussion turned to the schedule by which the project would be pursued, i.e. when each phase would be completed and discussion included the fact that some of the construction would be sub-contracted. It was stated, based on discussions, that the Board of Selectmen would basically be acting as general contractors for the project.

Ken indicated that the bridge manufacturers had all been instructed to design the HS 25 which is the heavier load capacity bridge. Ken commented that all signs pointed to the project coming together and going well. He told the Board that he had examined the available state documents with regard to the replacement of this bridge which were scant to say the least.

Ken estimated, when asked, that assuming the funding was passed by vote of Town Meeting, the bridge could be ordered by May 1, 1992 with construction well underway by July 1, 1992. Ken offered to be available for whatever the Board might like at Town Meeting, i.e. making a presentation or answering questions. The meeting ended with Ken stating that by next Monday he would have the final test results on the existing abutments, would have an updated plan and should have prices from the companies listed above.

Armand "Red" Hebert had arrived during the course of the above described meeting and wished to question the Board of Selectmen with regard to a letter he had received releasing the gravel owner abutting his property from the responsibility of providing a bond to protect area wells. Mr. Hebert was told that the Board had a full schedule and would be glad to discuss the matter at another time. Mr. Hebert left extremely agitated; however, he did return to schedule an appointment for the following week.

Next in to meet with the Board was the Playground Association represented by David and Holly Bowen, William Parker, Wayne Daniels, Leroy Lowell, Michael Pimenta, Jean Lowell and Linda Rollins, to discuss the proposed increased in rent for the building housing the New Boston Police Department and owned by the Playground Association.

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Holly Bowen presented to the Board for review figures comparing the expenses of recent 4th of July Celebrations, which is the primary fund-raiser used by the group for the upkeep of the playground and playing field owned by them adjacent to the Town Office Building.

Selectman Johnston indicated to those present that the Board wished to discuss the proposed increase in rent from the current \$100. per month to \$500. per month, and further expressed the contention that it was a steep increase. Discussion ensued with regard to the 4th of July fund-raiser and the fact that should the weather be inclement in any given year the loss of revenue to the Association would too great to meet their obligations. Selectman Dodge questioned the Association as to what the future of this celebration might be and Holly responded that without younger members becoming interested in the Association and the celebration then the future was not bright. She went on to state that the Playground Association was looking to become self-supporting. Discussion continued on the celebration itself with Jean Lowell expressing the thought that the activities will be limited due to the expense involved. Selectman Johnston pointed out that competition with the event has been scheduled over the past few years by area communities. Jean Lowell commented that the ballfield had to be maintained and supported the rental for the building housing the Police Department as a feasible income. Discussion continued with Linda Rollins commenting that the Association has never asked the taxpayers for money. David Bowen stated that the Association would not have to rely on a second fund-raising event for support if the rental on the building was increased to the proposed amount, with Holly commenting that profits from dances were unpredictable at best.

Selectman Dodge asked if the Association had looked ahead for possible uses of the building beyond the Police Department. Holly responded that she received calls all the time from parties interested in renting the building. David asked what the Town's prediction might be as to the length of time the building would continue to serve the needs of the Police Department. Selectman Johnston responded with an estimate of five to eight years to which Selectman Dodge stating that it would likely be less than that.

Discussion turned to the itemized list of proposals from the Association to the Town. The Board of Selectmen generally opposed entering into a five year agreement suggesting a one year prior notice by either party of a change as a possibility of being satisfactory to both parties. The furnace was the next topic of discussion and all agreed that it is in need of replacement, with the Association stating that a new unit would be installed based on the increasing the rent to \$500. The question remained and was not answered as to what would happen if the rent were lower and the furnace ceased to function. The cellar floor was discussed and the Association agreed that cement could be poured at the Town's expense, with Holly commenting that Police Chief Jim McLaughlin had indicated to her that he could get the necessary work donated. On the matter of the Association requiring that the Police Department would provide security for one other Association sponsored function in addition to the 4th, the Selectmen suggested that reconsideration be given to this proposal. Discussion continued on how area

communities might pay for or figure in the expense involved in policing major public events sponsored by civic organizations.

Selectman Johnston stated that the Board would like to propose increasing the rent a lesser amount this year and then increase it annually until it arrived at what the Association expected. He contended that the Association should get more than was currently being paid and would like this to be considered on a five year lease with a one year bailout for each side. Selectman Johnston suggested that an agreement be made for the current year and then work to get closer to the monetary amount expected by the Association next year, stating that the money was not available this year for the entire proposed increase.

Selectman Dodge explained the growth that has occurred within the Police Department and that this growth has caused the costs of the department to grow, with a proposed increase in rent adding to the burden. Selectman Dodge pointed out that the budget process for this year was complete; however, this item could be amended upward at Town Meeting and he went on to say that the increase could be justified although he contended that the increase was too much this year. Selectman Johnston proposed that the rent for 1992 be \$250. and the Police Budget be amended accordingly, with Selectman Dodge adding that the Playground Association be prepared to explain their needs. Both Selectmen agreed that an additional increase would be looked at for 1993.

Selectman Dodge explained that the Board of Selectmen had to look to the future needs of the Police Department with regard to housing and discussion continued on the proposal offered by Selectman Johnston with an increase to follow in 1993.

Discussion turned to the possibility that if the Concerts on the Common become a reality this summer, the prospect of the Playground Association benefiting financially would be good since they would be selling refreshments from the building adjacent to the playground.

David Bowen returned the discussion to the 4th Celebration and stated that the Association was under the impression that they had exclusive rights to the event describing a situation that had taken place the previous year with the Fire Department and David asked if they were the only group to have a permit for the day. The response was that they were the only group recognized as sponsoring the 4th of July Celebration.

The meeting ended with the Playground Association agreeing to check more thoroughly all the costs related to the sponsorship of the 4th Celebration and everyone agreeing if the entire matter were discussed in detail at the upcoming Town Meeting, then the Association would see if the town in general supported their efforts.

A motion was made by Selectman Johnston, seconded by Selectman Olson who had arrived at the meeting and was so voted by the Board to enter into an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter. The Executive Session was entered into at 8:40 p.m.

The meeting resumed having duly exited Executive Session with a motion from Selectman Dodge, a second from Selectman Olson and a unanimous vote by the Board to do so at 9:20 p.m.

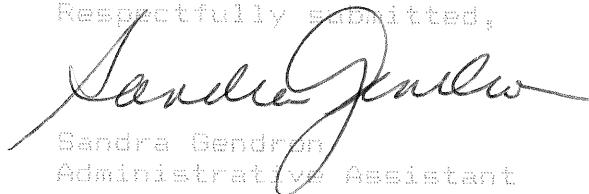
Brought up for discussion by Selectman Johnston was the subject of the warrant article which had been submitted by petition that, if approved would elect the Planning Board as opposed to the current practice of the Board of Selectmen appointing the members. Selectman Johnston wanted the other two Selectmen to know that he would support this article as presented even though it would mean the Board would be split on this issue. Chairman of the Planning Board Harold Strong happened to be in the office on another matter and he contended that a change in the process with regard to the Planning Board might be all right if the end result were known. Selectman Johnston stated that he felt election of this board was in keeping with the democratic process. Much discussion ensued and one issue mentioned was the situation that could exist if the entire Board was to be elected.

Bo Strong had come in to inquire if he could continue to operate his deceased father's pit under the Estate of Cecil Strong. It was agreed that further investigation would have to take place before a decision could be made.

Dennis Hooper a member of the New Boston Fire Department was in to discuss with Selectman Olson the possibility of him teaching members of the department the Defensive Driving Course. It was discussed that the Fire Wards wanted to require department members to take the course and this requirement was fully supported by the Board of Selectmen. There was also the suggestion that Lee might be interested in having the Highway Department take the course.

Mail was reviewed, checks were signed and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Gendron". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Sandra Gendron  
Administrative Assistant