

Approved  
11-7-94

TOWN OF NEW BOSTON

SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 31, 1994

A regular business meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chairman Pimenta.

**PRESENT:** Michael S. Pimenta, Chairman  
Darlene M. Goodin, Selectman  
Harold C. Strong, Selectman  
Lorraine A. Cleveland, Town Administrator

**REQUESTED APPOINTMENTS**

Police Chief, Jim McLaughlin, Officer Tim Lamy, and Catherine Widener were in to discuss time and staffing concerns of the police department. He stated that the staff is here to voice their frustrations so the Board can be informed about what they have been experiencing. The expectation of 24 hour coverage by the public is one they can not keep up with. The staff is stressed out and the part-timers can't fill the gap of hours not covered by the present staff.

Chairman Pimenta asked how many men the Chief is looking for. Chief McLaughlin replied two additional full-time officers so the 16 hour/day patrol can be adequately manned 7 days a week. The part-time officers are utilized to fill times when the officers are sick, on vacation, etc. . .The Chief said he has used the officers to fill gaps on the regular on-call shifts which are stressing them out when they work other full-time jobs during the day. State police are not available to fill these gaps.

This on-call shifts are not like they used to be. They are very active. Officer Lamy described his personal experience. He said as an example after he covers the 4:00 p.m. to midnight shift, he then is on-call from midnight to 10:00 a.m. Even one call-out on that shift impacts his regular shift later in the day due to a lack of sleep. Residents have come to expect the Chief and patrol officer to handle call-outs because they have been willing to do so in the past. However, the demand has become too much for them to handle.

Part-timers are stressed in the same way because they must assume full-time officer responsibilities such as court appearances. The part-timers will respond to a certain point but then resign because it has become too much. Part-time officer Roger Stearns has resigned, effective November 18 on this premise. He can no longer give the hours requested of him. The Chief stated that he manages and utilizes part-timers unlike other agencies in the area. Typically, part-timers are interested in the service and extra money, however, New Boston places extra demands due to the

lack of adequate full-time staff. Chairman Pimenta asked if the situation would improve if more part-timers were hired. The Chief replied that it would not as he would have to manage an additional 4-5 individuals and the State limits how many hours each part-timer can work a year--1,300 hours/year. He said it would be more efficient to have three full-time officers work on a rotating shift basis 7 days a week. He would use part-timers on Friday and Saturday nights.

In response to the school patrol, the Chief said there is 10-15 minute coverage everyday. He knows it is not enough but it is the best they can do.

Selectman Strong said New Boston is a small town and it moves slowly. He said the Selectmen must justify what the Town does in order to get the end result. He said he would support two but feels only one additional officer will be accepted. He suggested showing the costs of part-timers. The Chief said he has prepared and shared manpower studies with the Board in the past, however there are no minutes in the record to show this.

Officer Lamy expressed the demand of calls is now beyond his ability to give and is conflicting with his personal life. He must rely on mutual aid for backup and they may take 15 - 30 minutes to respond. A safety factor is at issue when he must respond to stabbings, shootings, etc. . Officer Lamy said major investigations keep him off the street. His schedule intensifies when the Chief is out on vacation. He has to supervise the part-timers and keep all the paperwork moving. He can not do two jobs at once.

Cathy Widener raised her concerns from a clerical/receptionist standpoint. She is constantly swamped with reports as just one dispute may generate 5-6 reports. The department must respond to all complaints. She also raised safety concerns which should be corrected in the new facility. However, there are many times when she is alone and has to deal with angry, difficult individuals. The Board asked if more officers would add more administrative hours. The Chief said he would convert the present part-time hours to administrative.

The department employees thanked the Board for their time and willingness to listen to their frustrations.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE**

The Board reviewed and approved the weekly payroll and accounts payable.

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The Board approved a certification of yield tax for Map 7, Lot 74-2.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Selectman Strong made a motion to accept the October 24 minutes as written. Chairman Pimenta seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

The Board reviewed a letter from Jim Hansen on Briar Hill Road regarding Daniel Donovan's building permit. The Board asked that Ms. Cleveland prepare a response stating that a cease and desist order was issued until the ZBA and Planning Board complete its joint process; his letter is on record; and the Board thanks him for his concerns.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

The Board reviewed and approved the list of 1995 paid holidays for Town Employees.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lorraine Cleveland, Town Administrator.

*Lorraine Cleveland*