

**Town of New Boston**

**Selectmen's Meeting Minutes**

**December 29, 1997**

A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Carlstrom.

PRESENT: Gordon A. Carlstrom, Selectman  
Susan J. Clay, Selectman  
Todd I. Selig, Town Administrator

From 7:00 p.m. - 8:55 p.m., the Selectmen met with the following employees from the New Boston Police Department to discuss wages, benefits, on-call & call-out policy, and special duty assignments: Chief James McLaughlin, Secretary Cathy Widener, Sergeant Timothy Lamy, Officer Craig Frye, Officer Stan Zapanas, and Corporal Don Sims. The employees described in some detail their frustrations which basically revolved around the following themes: employees feel they are not being paid fairly; a wage step program had been promised to employees some five years ago but had been postponed and then rescinded by the Selectmen; no personnel policy document exists for employees to review; health insurance premiums have increased significantly over the last year; the Town has reduced its health insurance contribution over 1997 by changing plan contributions based on the newly offered Blue Choice program; on-call and call-out procedures place an unfair demand on officers who are not remunerated based on the inconvenience of this policy; special detail pay is substandard to surrounding communities; employees at the Police Department are prepared to unionize or form an association to force the Town to deal with them fairly if the Selectmen do not initiate a fair compensation program in 1998.

Police Chief James McLaughlin discussed with the Selectmen and Town Administrator the pro's and con's of buying versus leasing the new 4x4 cruiser scheduled for purchase in 1998. Various aspects of the Police Station building completion project were also discussed.

Following the discussion with the Police Department employees, Selectman Clay made a motion to initiate a 3 hour minimum call out policy for on-call officers. Chairman Carlstrom seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Clay made a motion to increase the special duty hourly pay from \$18.00 to \$22.00 and to increase the hourly fee charged by the Town for special duty coverage to \$25.00. The fee therefore will cover the cost of the officer performing the special duty coverage and will have no net effect on the tax rate. Chairman Carlstrom seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Town Administrator Selig informed the Selectmen that Town Clerk Margit Hooper would not accept the December 22, 1997 offer for expanded hours made by the Selectmen. She felt that

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\$10.85 was not a sufficient hourly wage for the duties and responsibilities which went along with being Town Clerk. She wondered whether the Selectmen would consider a higher rate of pay. The Selectmen felt that they could not offer any more than what had been suggested on December 22, 1997.

The Selectmen briefly discussed wages for Town employees. More will be discussed in the future.

The Selectmen decided that they would not pursue the idea of creating a mechanic position in 1998 as per a 1996 suggestion by department heads. It was not deemed to be economical at this time.

The Board signed Intent-to-Cut forms.

The Board reviewed and signed payroll and accounts payable warrants.

The Board reviewed and/or signed other miscellaneous correspondence and materials.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd I. Selig  
Town Administrator