

**Town of New Boston
Selectmen's Meeting
November 14, 2011**

<u>PRESENT:</u>	Rodney Towne	Selectman
	Dwight Lovejoy	Selectman
	Christine Quirk	Selectman
	Peter Flynn	Town Administrator

Brandy Mitroff, Jack Mitroff, Dan MacDonald, Paul Gould, Dick Perusse, Willard Dodge, Amy Parrish, Laura Bernard, Cathy Strausbaugh, Kim Colbert, Sarah Chapman, Chris Krajenka, Rick Bailey, Rick Widener, Cathy Widener, Gregory Gaultaire, Mitch Larochelle, and Susan Larochelle of the public were present.

A. CALL TO ORDER: A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Rodney Towne at 6:00PM beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda-The Selectmen signed the consent agenda. Christine moved to approve the consent agenda. Dwight seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

B. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

C. APPOINTMENTS:

Item 1: Fire Chief Dan MacDonald, Laura Bernard and Jack Mitroff-presentation of new telephone system: Dan, Jack and Laura presented a PowerPoint presentation on the new telephone system the town is considering. The committee has spent approximately 7 months researching different types of phone systems, considering aspects that would be beneficial to the town of New Boston, gone through the bid process, narrowed the list down to four vendors and finally recommend ARCOMM. Phone technology was reviewed. The town will pay for the service but won't be responsible for owning and maintaining equipment. The current phone system costs \$1250 per month. Total town costs are available and cost per town building is also available. It is yet to be determined if each department will pay for their portion of the service. It is expected to cost \$1400-1500 monthly with the new system. There is also a potential for additional monthly savings. The committee is now asking for help from the Selectmen to finalize the contract. It will take one month to install. The Selectmen will decide if they want the system installed as soon as possible or after the town vote in March. The current system is outdated and fragile and could fail at any time. It would cost \$40,000 to repair and take one week to repair the current system if it failed before the new system is installed.

Item 2: Dick Perusse-Road Agent-discussion re: Update-Highway Department Issues:

- Sand: It was agreed at the last Selectmen's meeting to use Thibeault after Dick's review of the quality of their sand. In the meantime Dick received a quote from Mt. Williams,

looked at their product and decided to use them for sand this year. It has been delivered. It is different from the sand the town has used in the past. It was used during the recent storm.

- Propane: through the storm the Highway Department was on generator power and had an issue with the propane supplier who couldn't supply them with propane. Dick got another tank to fill in Goffstown but was told it can't be filled because it is too old. The Highway Department propane tanks are from 1951-1966. Propane tanks shouldn't be more than 20 years old. Dick called Advanced Gas who will visit the Highway Department and make recommendations for equipment and supplies.
- Two dump truck bodies and wheels were recently repainted orange and silver by JW Fleet in Bow. They did a nice job and this should last a while.
- The Selectmen reviewed and signed Highway Department employee reviews and they will be returned to the Highway Department.
- Terry Gordon's probation period ends November 16.
- Terry and Dick have requested vacation holdover, as it may be detrimental to the department if they take the rest of their available vacation time this year. The vacation time accrual policy was reviewed along with a time report from Accountant Karen Craven. One week is usually allowed to be heldover, in certain circumstances more is allowed. The Selectmen would prefer to holdover one week for both Terry and Dick. They both have over one week available. Terry carried over a significant amount of his vacation time last year and has used a lot of it. Christine moved to accept the Highway Department's request for vacation holdover for Terry and Dick's vacation time to be used by April 1. Dwight seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

Item 3: Willard Dodge-Discussion and request relative to the Hillsborough County 4H

Fairgrounds snowplowing: Willard said the town has always plowed into the 4H grounds. The new Road agent did do that during this recent storm as it is considered a private road. Willard asked the town to reconsider that classification and change it to an emergency way as the grounds are heavily used by town residents even in winter. It has potential for use by the Fire Department for training and the need to get emergency vehicles to the area in case of an emergency at the grounds and use by residents for recreation such as cross country skiing and sledding. The Conservation Committee is also considering expanding use of the trail at the 4H grounds. 4H volunteers won't use the buildings again until April. Willard has spoken to the Road Agent who has agreed to plow upon Selectmen consent. It was determined it would take 15 minutes to plow the loop at the fairgrounds at the end of each storm. The Selectmen agree to plow the 4H loop for the above reasons. There is insurance involved at the grounds when they are used by groups. Christine moved to accept emergency way at the 4H center to be plowed once at the end of each storm. Dwight seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

Item 4: Police Chief Chris Krajenka-Status re: filling open positions within the Police Department:

- The Selectmen spoke with Chris a couple months ago about potential hires for open positions at the Police Department. Chris updated the board by saying at the last testing the three top candidates were lost. The possible part time/full time certified candidate is at the end of their background check now, and going through the psychological evaluation process. Once this is done the Department hopes to hire him. He will be able to work any shift but once his allowed hours allowed by the legislature are used he cannot

work any more hours under any circumstances. NHTI will have a list of new recruits by December 3 that have already been tested and will move into the hiring phase to fill full time positions. In the meantime Chris could fill the positions with another part time/full time certified person. The open administrative position of part time records clerk was discussed as the amount of clerical work to be done is too much for one person and the department needs clerical coverage when Cathy takes time off. The department has been having trouble filling the position due to qualifications of candidates and fitting the hours needed. A temporary person could not be used due to the sensitive nature of the job. The Selectmen asked the Police Department to consider options for this position further.

- Car three was struck during the recent storm. An appraisal was done and it will be repaired at Auto City. Chris has used Auto City before and was very happy with their work compared to other autobody shops he has used. Another department car is there now for repairs. These repairs are covered by insurance. Vehicle One is the oldest vehicle, a 2005 Expedition that is owned by the town, and its back end is completely rusted and needs \$6,000 of repairs to keep it going. Car one, the chief's car, has rust spots and will cost \$3,900 to repair. Also the computers used in the cars that were leased through a grant five years ago are not holding up well. Chris is considering replacing these with more rugged computers at the end of the lease at \$7,000 for all vehicles. If the department does not replace them now and waits one more year the old computers will cost money to the town for maintenance to keep them going. There is money available in this year's budget to replace the computers now and this will be done by Beltronics. Dwight moved to make available \$10,000 for car repairs to the Expedition and Car One and \$7,000 for replacement computers as above pending available funds from the 2011 budget. Christine seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 Quotes will be made available to the Town Administrator.
- Chris has met with Rick Bailey and Rick Widener in preparation for his retirement to review the files, billing, etc to keep continuity once Chris leaves the department. Cathy has kept the files up to date. Chris asked the Selectmen to rely on Rick Bailey and Rick Widener as needed for police business. Chris has submitted his retirement papers and will leave the position January 5. The Selectmen thanked him for his work for New Boston.

D. OLD BUSINESS:

Item 5: Approval of Minutes of November 1, 2011 Public and Non-Public:

- 1. Minutes of November 1, 2011** - The Selectmen reviewed the minutes. Christine moved that they be accepted as presented. Dwight seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0
- 2. Non-Public Minutes of November 1, 2011** - The Selectmen reviewed the non-public minutes. Christine moved that they be accepted as presented. Dwight seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

Item 6: Budget Schedule Revision and Budget Update: The budget has been revised as discussed last week. It may need review again, Peter will know by tomorrow morning. The departments that have previously met with the Finance Committee will be scheduled to meet with the Finance Committee November 21. The meeting scheduled for November 17 will be cancelled.

E. NEW BUSINESS:

Item 7: Vacation Holdover Request-Town Clerk: Town Clerk Irene Baudreau requested to holdover five weeks of vacation from 2011. Deputy Town Clerk Cathy Strausbaugh is present and said Irene is planning to use three weeks of this vacation from January 13-30. The Selectmen noted they would like employees to use their vacation time in the year earned. Vacation time is only allowed to be cashed out at retirement. Sometimes there may be an issue that employees can't take vacation due to workload or it is not a convenient time of year to take vacation in a particular department. Susan Larochelle was present and said she works at Elliot Hospital where they have different options for use of vacation time but these are not options for the town. Christine moved to accept Irene's letter to have five weeks of vacation time accumulated in 2011 carried over to 2012, three weeks of which to be used in January and the other two weeks to be used by April 1, 2012. Dwight seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

F. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mitch Larochelle is present and said that since last Thursday when residents received their tax bill he has noticed most residents are upset about how much their taxes increased this year. He said the country is in a recession and residents are cutting back on expenses. There recently was a big article in the paper about a big refund to the town from the school and the revaluation, but taxes are still going up every year. The Selectmen said the taxes are dictated by the budget approved by voting in March and the reval moved money around and this was unable to predict last year. Town property values decreased by an average of 20% in the reval. The town portion of the tax rate is 25% of the tax bill and didn't go up as much as the school and state portions of the tax bill this year. Also revenues that are calculated at budget time might not happen as planned. The affect of the school refund was \$400,000 was turned into the town for tax relief and credited to the school portion of the tax bill. The Selectmen have asked the Finance Committee and department managers to carefully consider their budgets this year due to the economy.

Gregory Gaultaire of 88 South Hill Road thanked Rodney and Peter for meeting with him this afternoon to discuss the tax rate. He noted taxes have increased 200% in the past 12 years. He wonders what is the future of taxes in New Boston at this rate of increase. Taxes need to be controlled. He suggested an information session with the community to discuss these issues. He was reminded the public can attend town meetings anytime to discuss these issues but most residents do not attend. Gregory also asked that budget impact be made plain to residents so they can be prepared to vote and understand how their vote will affect their taxes. The school portion of the tax rate increased by almost \$5 per thousand of each resident's property value this year. He was reminded the School Board holds monthly meetings the public can attend. Schools also have state and federally mandated costs they have to include in their budget. High School and Middle School tuition must be paid and every Special Education need must be met by law and contracts but if any cuts do need to be made the School Board would only be able to cut from New Boston Central School and transportation. The public should attend the Finance Committee meetings and the Deliberative Session to discuss these issues. The Deliberative Session is not too late to make changes to the budget but if that is the only meeting a resident attends they have missed all the work and discussion that has already gone into the budget and it is very late in the

process. It is a good idea to attend public budget meetings to make an informed decision before the Deliberative Session. Cuts can be made now but these would be expected to have an even bigger budget impact a few years into the future. The public budget hearing is scheduled for January 16 at 6:00 PM at the Town Hall. The Deliberative Session is scheduled for February 6 at the school gym. Finance Committee meetings are posted and each Department is scheduled to meet with the Finance Committee individually. Residents are encouraged to attend Finance Committee meetings for department budgets they think can be changed to bring forward thoughts they might have that the Finance Committee and Department Managers have not considered and affect the budget then or call or write to the Town Administrator or Selectmen anytime to make suggestions. Peter also suggested residents get a copy of the budget from the Town Administrator before the Finance Committee meeting they plan to attend. There are also two alternate positions available on the Finance Committee for any interested residents.

F. OTHER:

Item 8: Town Administrator's Report: Peter reported on the following items:

1. **Gregg Mill Road Bridge Status:** Peter contacted Holden Engineering regarding the contract. They will follow up with Peter regarding the issue of funding the contract despite the fact that they wouldn't do any work on the project. A meeting will be scheduled with the engineers and Road Agent.
2. **Performance Evaluations:** Department Managers have the evaluations and should sign them and return them to the Selectmen.
3. **Footbridge:** Peter spoke with Footbridge Committee Chairman Sandy VanScoyoc who updated him on the project. He has been trying to speak with Mr. Jamieson at the DOT who is now concerned the town hasn't spent any money recently on engineering but Sandy said no engineering has been done recently.
4. **Complaint:** There was a complaint of an assessing issue. Assessor George Hildum met with the complainant.
5. **Police Chief search:** The open Police Chief position has been advertised in a few locations. Seven applications have been received. The application period closes December 5.

Item 9: Selectmen's Reports:

Planning:

- The Planning Board also wants to end the engineering contract for the Gregg Mill Road bridge project.
- Most gravel pit permits are complete.
- The Planning Board met with the representative from the Indian Falls/Susan Road development and the road construction portion of the project seems to be prepared for winter.

I. ADJOURNMENT: Christine made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 PM. Dwight seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

Prepared by Maralyn Segien