

# Approved

## Town of New Boston Selectmen's Meeting November 2, 2015

**PRESENT:** Joe Constance Selectman  
Dwight Lovejoy Selectman  
Christine Quirk Selectman  
Peter Flynn Town Administrator

Road Agent Dick Perusse, Police Chief Jim Brace, Rodney Towne, Willard Dodge, Vernie and Jim Federer, Amy and Victor Parrish, Kim DiPietro and Brandy Mitroff of the public were present.

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

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

### **B. PUBLIC FORUM:**

Vernie Federer of 74 Labree Road was present and asked if Peter's plowing recommendation is approved would the Highway Department budget decrease as taxpayers would then be paying more for the school budget.

Jim Federer of 74 Labree Road was present and said taxpayers give and give, town departments want more and more equipment but do less and less. He noted the school is also the town emergency shelter. He asked what would happen if the school was not in session and did not need plowing but the shelter is needed. He is disappointed in the status of this issue.

Victor Parrish of 21 Hopkins Road was present and asked about the status of the Memorandum of Understanding the town was considering with the library. Peter said the MOU has been withdrawn.

### **C. APPOINTMENTS:**

**Item 1: Chief James Brace-Continued Discussion and Vote of Acceptance of Revised Police Sick Policy:** Police Chief James Brace was present to meet with the Selectmen to discuss the revised Police Department Sick Policy. He reviewed the history of the Police Department sick policy, time use and impacts on the Department. In the past the policy was 8 hours of sick time were available per month. During his first 22 months as New Boston's chief, there was an overwhelming amount of sick time used and he requested the policy change to prevent this. The change was made to 4 hours of available sick time per month. Jim now proposes to change the Police Department sick policy again now that the problem is under control to 5 hours available

per month, equaling one day every other month. Christine moved to accept the revised Police Department Sick Policy. Joe seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

#### **D. OLD BUSINESS:**

**Item 2: Adoption of Public Minutes of October 19, 2015:** The Selectmen reviewed the public minutes of October 19, 2015. Joe moved that the minutes be accepted as presented. Christine seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

**Item 3: Recommendation re: New Boston Central School Winter Maintenance-Peter Flynn:** Peter said this started as an opinion but is noted as a recommendation. He said it is not known if the Highway Department budget will decrease. He said this is not a document to be voted on tonight. This is an issue that has been discussed over recent weeks, this is Peter's opinion based on his experience with this issue in other towns. Peter recommends the school use a private contractor for winter maintenance, due to legal issues and time constraints. He said sometimes the Highway Department can't get to the school in time as certain town roads need to be plowed first. The Selectmen will make the final decision.

Joe noted Peter did not start this conversation, Joe asked the questions initially after speaking with Peter and the Road Agent. He said the Highway Department responsibilities have increased and the added responsibility of plowing the school and the library were a concern to the Road Agent. Joe said this issue was initially raised at a September Selectmen's meeting when the SAU Superintendent was present. At this time Rodney said it is late for the school officials to try to plan to add the expense of subcontracting plowing to the 2015-2016 school year budget and suggested the town continue plowing the school for now and allow the school officials to research including plowing in the 2016-2017 school year budget. Joe does not expect the school officials have received any quotes yet. The additional responsibilities of the Highway Department that were the background of Peter's memo can be discussed tonight.

Road Agent Dick Perusse was present and addressed the questions raised during Public Comment. In answer to Jim Federer's question he said if the school was not plowing on a day the emergency shelter was needed the Highway Department would handle that as long as they were aware that plowing was needed. He also said he is not sure of budget impacts in answer to Vernie's question. Dick also addressed additional responsibilities of the Highway Department since he became Road Agent and said the town has acquired added roadways and he has modified the number of hired plow trucks for efficiency. He said there is not a plow truck or driver dedicated to the school. To find out if school will be in session he listens to the 5:00 AM news then determines which truck would be best to begin plowing the school.

Willard Dodge of 116 Tucker Mill Road was present to address Peter's memo where he recommends transferring the winter maintenance responsibilities from the Highway Department to the school. He feels this issue highlights lack of communication in town and people need to come together with better communication to let Dick know when school is going to be cancelled or delayed. Willard said he is proud to know Dick. He has discussed this issue with Dick many times as to how Dick does not want to plow the school parking lot and the reasons that include complaints from the school officials. Willard said the decision to continue plowing or not is not Dick's decision, it is the Selectmen's decision. It is a decision that will affect taxpayers. Putting

this cost in the school budget will not save the town money. He is also concerned about the contractor that will take on the job, if they would put the school as their first priority. He discussed the issue of whether it would help the town to itemize sand and salt for each department and said this detail will not help citizens or taxpayers. He said taxpayers probably understand salt and sand from the Highway Department budget is used in different town departments and understand taxes pay for that no matter which budget it is itemized in. It has been estimated plowing the school will cost \$25-70,000. If you use \$25,000, you could instead use that to hire at least one more Highway Department employee whose primary function would be to plow the school parking lot but would also work for the Highway Department throughout the year which is also badly needed. He said a contractor would make the school pay more for salt and sand, maybe less for a driver compared to what the town pays. He also said the Highway Department has been badly understaffed with only 2-3 workers working at a time and needs more than one more year round employee for spring, summer and fall maintenance work. Willard is on the Road Committee and said the Committee agrees with him when he says the Committee worked hard to get a new Road Agent to improve the roads, the right man was hired, but with these issues the road maintenance gets behind because he can't keep up with it then the town suffers with more dollars spent to plow these parking lots. It is so important to continue and the best buck for the dollar is with the existing agency, the Highway Department, with sand and salt at the right price, with people who already know the job and the area and keep the doors open. Unfortunately expectations today is instant perfection. The issue where the Highway Department can't get properly notified when school is closed is unnecessary.

Victor echoed most of what Willard said. He read the memo and doesn't think it is right if Peter took heat over the memo. The Town Administrator's job is thankless and if people don't agree, which Victor doesn't, they should come to Selectmen's meetings to voice their opinions and vote. If adults can't come together to determine how resources should be used and instead determine that spending more money is the best solution is reprehensible. Victor has managed a household and businesses with limited resources, time and money. The school officials want things done immediately and everyone else does too. The decision to keep school open or not or delay without input from the Road Agent and the Police Department is illogical. It is unlikely any scenario where the school contracts out for winter maintenance will save the taxpayers money. If equipment and people are needed for the Highway Department that makes more sense to get the right people to do the job. Everyone wants their area done immediately but the town's limited resources need to be assigned in the best manner.

Rodney Towne of McCollum Road said two people have offered solutions and both of them required money they don't want to spend, hiring more personnel and equipment. Those solutions don't cure the problem.

Joe said the town has been doing it a certain way for a long time. He is interested in investigating both the contracting of the job and the hiring more resources for the town.

Rodney said for the school officials to get what they want or need, someone needs to be assigned to that area. The town started a truth in accounting program to put true costs in each department budget. He said the school has a fake budget. The town began putting materials in the department budgets that used them a few years ago but now it is being suggested to not use the truth in accounting system. He said sometimes it costs more to get what is needed and

wanted and the school officials might have to look at doing things differently as hiring another person for the Highway Department may not be the answer.

Jim Federer said that as a taxpayer he notices his taxes increasing. He is uneasy and wonders if there is something underlying this issue that taxpayers don't know about. The school has been plowed by the town forever. There may be a simple solution-to communicate with the Highway Department when school is closed or delayed.

Dwight said part of this issue is people are speaking out when they need to be doing their own job.

Brandy said the communication has become a problem recently. The Principal and the Road Agent coordinated and communicated appropriately in the past. She said the School Board is very upset about this. Dick noted earlier that this came up due to added roads and the decreasing trucks available for this work. She said this can be solved without costing taxpayers. As far as putting costs in each department budget, that would mean each department would have to guess on mother nature and would have to guess high. For years the Highway Department has calculated winter maintenance costs using a five year average and that has worked.

Joe said there is no hidden agenda, the town is just trying to assess need. There is no fake budget. All departments could use an average to determine their own winter maintenance budget for truth in accounting. Joe said in the past the communication from the school officials to Dick was to "just look at the website" to learn if school was closed or delayed. People can't just say "make the communication better" or "why can't we all get along." All involved are willing to get together to work this out. Joe wonders if there is a way to solve this that will not cost anything. More analysis is needed over the next year to determine individual costs such as another Highway Department employee, truck, sand, salt or subcontractor.

Brandy said communication has broken down and she has been asking all parties to meet to discuss this since September. The school administration and the Highway Department have to put together their budgets. It is now November and the Selectmen are still discussing the issue.

Joe said he thought in September when the issue came up the school administration would call for a meeting with all parties but that call has not occurred.

Brandy suggested the Selectmen make a decision if the school should be included in the Highway Department or not so next year's budgets can be prepared. It is too far along in the budget process to begin researching winter maintenance contractors.

Rodney said the decision was made at a prior meeting to start budgeting this for FY 17/18 not FY 16/17.

Victor said he did not mean that this should be solved without spending any more money, if money needs to be spent he wants it spent in the most efficient way possible and he expects it will cost more money. He doesn't think each department should have to look into a crystal ball to include salt and sand costs in their budget, there could be a way to determine the percentage of Highway Department salt and sand each department uses. He doesn't think it is a fake budget

but instead an inaccurate budget and as a taxpayer he can't vote on a budget unless he has true costs within reason of what each department costs.

Dwight thanked everyone and said if they have more on this topic please get on an agenda for another meeting.

#### **E. NEW BUSINESS:**

**Item 4: Adoption of Selectmen's Meeting Schedule-2016:** The Selectmen reviewed the proposed Selectmen's meeting schedule and made no changes. Joe moved to approve the 2016 Selectmen's meeting schedule as presented. Christine seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

**Item 5: Adoption of 2016 Town Employee Holidays:** The Selectmen reviewed the proposed 2016 Town Employee Holiday Schedule that includes eleven holidays and made no changes. Joe moved to approve the 2016 Town Employee Holiday Schedule as presented. Christine seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

**Item 6: YTD Budget Expenditure Update:** Peter reported the status of expenditures. The budget continues to be going well with adequate money to finish the year.

#### **F. OTHER BUSINESS:**

##### **Item 7: Town Administrator's Report:**

- Highway Safety Subcommittee-Foot Traffic Safety Committee: The Committee met and decided to purchase and Algonquin bridge for \$62,000 plus \$100-140,000 for sitework and abutments. The Committee is doing well fundraising for the project. Victor asked about ongoing maintenance burden for the town when the project is complete. Peter said this has not been heavily discussed but the footbridge will not be plowed in the winter. Brandy noted that the Conservation Commission set up a maintenance fund for maintenance of the bridge they installed across from Lang Station.
- Town Hall Basement: Concrete was poured for a new stairway to the basement. The furnace room is almost done, electricity may be hooked up tomorrow and the furnace is expected to be working this week. The chimney was also repaired.
- StairChair Lift: The lift has been built and is en route from England.
- Tree Cut v. Flagpole Removal: Bartlett Tree Service looked at the area last week and a recommendation will be made during the budget process. Police Chief Jim Brace noted there are also some troublesome trees behind the Police Department. Peter said that will be included in the budget.
- Fire Wards Ambulance FRQ: The bid went out.
- Fire Station Land Survey Followup: This project was awarded to Bob Todd as approved by the Selectmen.
- Library MOU: Library Trustee Chairman Bill Gould said the Trustees cancelled this proposal. Peter is working with the Trustees on the plowing issue.
- Budget Schedule to Begin on October 29: The Finance Committee began meeting Thursday. Several town departments presented and it went very well.

- Plowing: As above.

**Item 8: Selectmen's Reports:**

Joe reported the Planning Board finished revising Master Plan goals and will begin research for town demographics.

Joe will go on a tour of NH Fire Stations November 15 as part of his participation as the Selectmen representative on the Fire Station Design Committee.

**Public Forum:**

Brandy noted the school officials are preparing the 2016/2017 budget and wanted to confirm that for that period the Highway Department will continue to plow the school and the school budget should not include a subcontractor.

Joe said the town is continuing to work on the issue, a meeting with all interested parties would be welcome, and he recommended the school officials contact Peter as soon as possible for this purpose if they want to have the meeting soon. He is not locked into holding them to it for next year that town could wait until 17/18.

Christine moved to keep status quo regarding plowing the school for FY 16/17. Joe seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

**Item 9: Request for Non-Public Per RSA 91-A:II, (d) (e)-Peter Flynn:** Joe made a motion to go into Non-Public session per RSA 91-A:3II (d) (e) at 6:56 PM. Christine seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 The Board then entered non-public session after a poll of all members. Dwight=yes, Joe=yes, Christine=yes. Vote was 3-0

**Move to exit Non-Public Session:** Joe made a motion to exit Non-Public Session at 7:10PM. Christine seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

**ADJOURNMENT:** Joe made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:11PM. Christine seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

*Prepared by Maralyn Segien*

Approved: Selectmen's Meeting of November 16, 2015