

**New Durham Board of Selectmen
Minutes of Meeting ~ February 1, 2010
Town Hall**

Members Present: Theresa Jarvis, David Bickford

Others Present: Interim Town Administrator Jeanie Forrester, Road Agent (RA) Mark Fuller, Police Chief Shawn Bernier, Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer (BI/CEO) Arthur Capello, Town Clerk Carole Ingham, Marcia Clark, Robert Craycraft, Scott Drummey, Ron Gehl, Sheri Hotchkiss, Michele Kendrick, Robert Kroeppel, Tom Mason, Mary McHale, Cathy Orlowicz, Paul Raslavicus, Peter Rhoades, Carleton Woods, members of the public, Billy Perkins, Ryan Noonan

1. Call to Order – Chairperson Terry Jarvis called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Agenda Review - Selectman David Bickford indicated he wanted to add Fire Department Communications Officer to the agenda. Chair Jarvis said it could be covered under New Business, along with accepting the new tax maps. She announced that Representative Susan Price will be holding a presentation February 4, 2010 at Barrington Town Hall regarding various aspects of property tax. She also announced that the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid annual report for 2009, which explains how towns are billed, is available. Chair Jarvis said that the bid opening for various road projects previously scheduled for February 2, 2010 has been changed to February 3, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. at Town Hall

3. Citizens' Forum – Ron Gehl said on his last day as a selectman, he requested Chair Jarvis and Selectman Bickford act on the Red Oak Ridge warrant articles to afford enough time for petition articles if the Board did not place them on the warrant. He asked if the Board intended to include them on the warrant. Both Chair Jarvis and Selectman Bickford said that was their intent. Selectman Bickford added that it was his intent at this point, as the Board still had to vote on the Town Warrant. He said Town Counsel cleaned up the articles pretty well. Chair Jarvis said the Board was doing what the voters asked it to do.

4. Non-public Session

Motion by Chair Jarvis at 7:08 p.m. to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (c); second by Selectman Bickford. A roll call was taken. Jarvis – aye, Bickford – aye. The Board met with Interim Town Administrator Jeanie Forrester, and Tax Collector and Town Clerk Carole Ingham.

5. Return to Public Session

The Board reconvened in public session at 7:12 p.m. Chair Jarvis said the Board would sign a deed waiver presented by the tax collector in September.

6. PTO Raffle Permit

Sheri Hotchkiss, co-president of the New Durham Elementary School PTO, requested a raffle permit for the organization's spring fundraiser. She said the raffle will include a grand prize of an Ipod Touch and gift certificates to restaurants and the Kittery Trading Post. The drawing will take place during a Family Fun Night on St. Patrick's Day.

Motion by Chair Jarvis to approve the application for the PTO's raffle to be held at the New Durham Elementary School on March 17, 2010; second by Selectman Bickford. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Jarvis asked TA Forrester to add developing a list of organizations that hold raffles for annual approval to the "to do" list.

7. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Selectman Bickford to accept the minutes of the work session of January 25, 2010, as amended; second by Chair Jarvis. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Selectman Bickford to accept both parts of the non-public minutes of the work session of January 25, 2010, as amended; second by Chair Jarvis. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Selectman Bickford to accept the minutes of the business meeting of January 18, 2010, as amended; second by Chair Jarvis. The motion carried unanimously.

Scott Drummey urged the Board to be careful not to change what was spoken at meetings. He said the Board could not change the minutes to reflect what was intended. He said it was important to maintain what was spoken. Selectman Bickford said minutes were not transcripts. He said Recorder Cathy Allyn puts a lot of detail into the minutes. As an example, he said it did not matter that the Board changed Road Agent Mark Fuller's comment of January 18, 2010 from "...letting the public decide what to fix" to "...letting the public decide what to fund."

Motion by Chair Jarvis to accept the minutes of the business meeting of October 7, 2009, as written; second by Selectman Bickford. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Selectman Bickford to accept the minutes of the non-public session of October 7, 2009, as written; second by Chair Jarvis. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Selectman Bickford to accept the non-public minutes of January 18, 2010, as amended; second by Chair Jarvis. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Department Reports

Highway – RA Fuller reported on equipment and building maintenance. He said some roadwork was done after the heavy rains.

Building - Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer (BI/CEO) Arthur Capello said there is still no word back on the 50 Main Street court case. He said the matter of 105 Ten Rod Road has been reactivated and he is working with Town Counsel. He said the Board signed the order, which was submitted to the court, and the Town will now go to court action.

Police – Police Chief Shawn Bernier provided the police activity breakdown for 2009. He said there were a total of 5,769 calls, 54 motor vehicle accidents, and 35 OHRV complaints. The mileage breakdown for the police cruisers indicated a total of 83,561 miles traveled and just over 6,000 gallons of gas used. Chief Bernier said he has started comparing the percentage of crimes from year to year. From 2008 to 2009, all crimes, such as crimes against persons and crimes against society, were up, except for crimes against property, which were down five per cent. Mary McHale said the percentage increases seemed high, but that could be because low incident numbers were involved. Chief Bernier agreed. He said there were five aggravated assaults this year. He clarified that these numbers represent allegations, not convictions.

Mr. Drummey asked if that report could be on the website and Chief Bernier said he could put it on the police department's page.

Chief Bernier showed the Board a traffic sign with Slow and Stop on it. He said a new law requires anyone directing traffic to have one of these signs. He said the signs would be in the police cruisers. Chair Jarvis said firefighters also often have to direct traffic. Chief Bernier said his department purchased the sign to follow DOT guidelines, and he assumed the fire department would have to, also.

Town Clerk – Ms. Ingham announced the filing period has closed. She read the list of candidates, and added that elections are March 9, 2010 and Town Meeting is March 10, 2010. She said she has reported to the Governor Wentworth Regional School District that two students can be removed from the New Durham tuition roll.

9. Administrator's Update

Query Manager Software - TA Forrester said she spoke to Assessor Bob Estey and Land Use Administrator David Allen regarding the merits of purchasing software offered by Cartographics Associates, Inc. She said both thought the software valuable, but said the purchase could wait a year.

Holding Tank – She reported RA Fuller did the registration for the holding tank.

Interim Selectman – TA Forrester said four applicants indicated interest.

Census Bureau – She said she scheduled the Census Bureau representatives for the Board's meeting on March 1, 2010.

Annual Report – TA Forrester said Mr. Gehl declined to write the annual report, so it was up to Chair Jarvis and Selectman Bickford to write it.

Warrant – She said DRA was reviewing the 24 articles for the warrant.

SWF Privatization – She said Town Counsel was reviewing the privatization document.

Pending List – She indicated she included a pending list in the selectmen's packets that noted things to do and important dates.

10. Old Business

Outstanding Budget Issues – Chair Jarvis said she had spent time with Financial Assistant Vickie Blackden, and that some budget numbers had changed since the Budget Committee meeting.

4130 Executive Offices – The town administrator salary line was decreased by the BC to \$127,429

Motion by Selectman Bickford that the Board of Selectmen concur with the Budget Committee's number of \$127,429; second by Chair Jarvis. The motion carried unanimously.

4155 Personnel Administration

Motion by Selectman Bickford to accept the Budget Committee's increase for a total amount of \$536.697 for the Personnel Administration line; second by Chair Jarvis. The motion carried unanimously.

4191 Planning Board – Chair Jarvis said the BC decreased this line by \$270

Motion by Selectman Bickford that the Planning Board line 4191 be changed to \$47,071; second by Chair Jarvis. The motion carried unanimously.

4210 Police Department – Chair Jarvis said the BC's amount is \$338,276 and the Board's is \$339,696. The discrepancy reflects the police chief's salary increase. Selectman Bickford said he did not think the Board should get in a contest. Chair Jarvis said she would like to leave the increase in and see if the BC revisits the matter. She said the issue of equity convinced her. She stated it is the BC's number that is presented to the townspeople. Selectman Bickford said he was not aware of that. Chair Jarvis said the difference is \$1,420 and that there would be no change in line 4210.

4220 Fire Department – Chair Jarvis said the BC decreased the fire department budget.

Motion by Chair Jarvis that the Board of Selectmen concur with the Budget Committee's number of \$157,997 for line 4220 fire department; second by Selectman Bickford. The motion carried unanimously.

4240 Building Inspector – Chair Jarvis said BI/CEO Capello decreased his budget by \$650.

Motion by Chair Jarvis that, regarding line 4240 Building Inspector, the Board of Selectmen concur with the Budget Committee for the amount of \$25,285; second by Selectman Bickford. BI/CEO said he made cuts in printing, training, and software. **The motion carried unanimously.**

4312 Highways and Streets – Chair Jarvis said RA Fuller reduced the diesel line by \$4,000. A recalculation of the full-time salary line resulted in a change to \$260,856 for a bottom line of \$639,454.

Motion by Selectman Bickford to accept the Budget Committee's number of \$639,454 for line 4312; second by Chair Jarvis. The motion carried unanimously.

4901 Land and Improvements – Chair Jarvis said the Budget Committee placed the \$105,055 Highway Block Grant in this line.

Motion by Chair Jarvis that the Board of Selectmen concur with the Budget Committee and place \$105,055, all coming from the Highway Block Grant, in line 4901; second by Selectman Bickford. Selectman Bickford asked RA Fuller if the Highway Block Grant came under this same line last year, and RA Fuller replied that he believed so. **The motion carried unanimously.**

4915 Capital Reserve Funds

Chair Jarvis said the BC placed \$146,595 in the Capital Reserve Funds line for the proposed Road Reconstruction article. By utilizing the Highway Block Grant, the total available money for road reconstruction would then be \$251,645. She added that \$30,000 the Board decided not to utilize for police facilities has been removed. Chief Bernier asked what would happen if the article fails at Town Meeting. Chair Jarvis said \$0 would be put in.

Motion by Selectman Bickford to accept line 4915 Capital Reserve Funds at \$430,058; second by Chair Jarvis. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Jarvis said the total budget number is now \$3,741,710. She said the BC's public hearing is Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. at the library. She said the BC would take public input at this hearing.

Mr. Rhoades noted the only difference between the Board's budget and the BC's is the police department line. Chair Jarvis said it was a difference of \$1,420.

Mr. Gehl asked about the updated calculation on the tax rate. He asked if any revenue projections had changed. Robert Kroepfel said Chair Jarvis said the BC's number is presented to the town. He asked what was being discussed then. Chair Jarvis said both recommendations of amounts are in the warrant. She said the total valuation estimate, including March's Pond properties full valued taxes, is \$440,889,020. She said utilizing \$251,000 for road reconstruction, the amounts would be \$3,741,710 for expenses and \$959,958 for revenue. The amount to be raised by taxes, with the operating budget and capital reserve funds, would be \$2,906,252. The estimated tax rate would therefore be \$6.59. The tax rate for 2009 was \$6.32. If the road reconstruction were funded at the proposed \$317,000, the tax rate would be \$6.74.

RA Fuller said he was not sure that figure was correct. Chair Jarvis said Ms. Blackden calculated it. Cathy Orlowicz said it would be offset by \$105,055, bringing it to \$211,000 to be raised for an increase in the tax rate of 46 cents. Mr. Gehl said the total amount approved is reduced by \$60,000, and the discrepancy in the tax rate reflects that. Chair Jarvis said she would speak to Ms. Blackden about it. She said conservative estimates were used when figuring revenue this year. Mr. Gehl noted no modifications regarding conservative estimates. He asked for confirmation that there has been a zero per cent increase in valuation with the exception of restoring the March's Pond properties to full value, and Chair Jarvis said that was correct. He confirmed that no additional blanket was applied.

March's Pond Overrun – Chair Jarvis explained that factors such as reclassification of the dam and the need to get the project done earlier led to a \$65,000 overrun. RA Fuller explained that there were unanticipated problems, such as working through the winter and the classification changing to high hazard. He added there was a December site inspection, small bills from September on, project closeout costs, a notebook completed for the Dam Bureau, and another site inspection to be held in May for a cost of \$1,000. He said, also, in June there will be a release of monies held. He said the approximate total would be \$1,200.

Chair Jarvis said the \$65,000 overrun from 2009 was not yet dealt with. She said money could come from the undesignated fund balance or it could be left as an overrun. Selectman Bickford said the Town paid the bills. Chair Jarvis said that money came from the General Fund, as the residents authorized a certain amount. She said the Board must reimburse the General Fund. She said she thought the Board had voted to do so, but she checked with former Town Administrator April Whittaker before she left, and TA Whittaker said no vote to transfer anything transpired. Selectman Bickford said the Board intended to

transfer the money. Mr. Gehl said he did not recall if the vote was taken. Chair Jarvis said she could not find it in the minutes. She said the Board could handle the expenses from 2010 later.

Motion by Selectman Bickford to authorize expenditures of \$65,000 from the undesignated fund balance to reimburse the General Fund for the March's Pond Dam overrun; second by Chair Jarvis. The motion carried unanimously.

Interim Selectmen Interviews

Mary McHale – Ms. McHale said she was glad she attended the meeting, as no one called to ensure she was present for an interview. She said that would have been good form. She told the Board her involvement with the Town, including currently being a Trustee of the Trust Funds, and vice-chairperson of the 1772 Meetinghouse Restoration Committee. She said she served as chair of the Library Trustees and on the Noise Ordinance committee. She said she worked at Town Hall as deputy Town Clerk and Tax Collector for three years, so she had a good background for a selectman. She said she is also a business owner, as she owns Foxtale Books.

Chair Jarvis asked why she volunteered to be the interim selectman. Ms. McHale said there needs to be another voice at the table because not everyone here will agree or understand what is going on. She said it is confusing for people watching. She said she has helped with assessing and knows the budget and daily work to be done. Chair Jarvis asked what she felt was the biggest issue facing New Durham, and Ms. McHale replied that it was trust and honesty. Chair Jarvis noted Ms. McHale would have to resign from the TOTF and the 1772 Meetinghouse Restoration Committee, and would have to refrain from voting on anything dealing with the Conservation Commission as her husband served on that board. Ms. McHale said she was aware of that.

Robert Kroeppel – Mr. Kroeppel said he was a professional musician and music teacher, self-employed, and an author of music books. He said the reason he was here was because he loved the town. He said he has been a summer resident since 1948, has enjoyed the services of the town, and has a deep appreciation for the town government. He said he had the time to serve. He indicated his previous involvement with the town was in 1994-96 when he served on the New Durham Concerned Taxpayers' Committee. He said issues at the time were the Birch Hill camps available for a Town Beach and dam repair. He helped inform people of the costs and the residents that year voted the Committee's recommendations. He said when he gets involved, he thinks of the needs of the people. He said he was ready to serve.

Chair Jarvis asked what he thought was the biggest issue and he said he had no idea. He elaborated by saying he had no ax to grind, but

he was here just to get involved. He said he realized there would be a learning curve, but he had the time.

Carleton Woods – Mr. Woods said he has lived in New Durham his whole life and was now retired. He said he served as a selectman three times, as well as being on the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and fire department. He also served as a special police officer. He said he has helped any way he could and would be happy to fill the blank spot left by someone who did not fulfill his commitment. He said he had no ax to grind and his main objective is to do what people want. He said the animosity is so thick right now, it could be cut, and that the town needs to work together. He said the town does not need groups.

He said the biggest issue was to get the town back to working together. He said he supported getting a Public Safety building by pooling interests. Mr. Woods agreed to step aside on any issue regarding the police department, as his wife works there.

Paul Raslavicus said one candidate was not present and he was concerned about due process if the Board nominated tonight. Ms. McHale said no one told her to be here tonight. Mr. Raslavicus said it would be excluding, without proper notification. Mr. Kroeppel said it was incumbent upon the candidates to ask when the meeting would be. Chair Jarvis said interviews were noted on the public notice of the meeting.

Peter Rhoades asked if the Board was going to adhere to the two-week vetting period. Chair Jarvis said she had not thought about it, because if the Board met every week between now and Town Meeting, there would be five meetings. Selectman Bickford asked her if she felt under the gun to appoint. She said she did last week when she had to leave a family funeral to be here at the meeting. She said an even number on a board was not healthy. She said there was new business tonight. Selectman Bickford said they could nominate tonight.

Mr. Kroeppel said to ask the candidates in order to move things along. He said he didn't know whom the Board would need to vet. Chair Jarvis said Selectman Bickford could nominate tonight and the Board could ask the other candidate, Ray Weigle, to come in next week. Selectman Bickford said he disagreed with that plan. He said the Board gets to choose whom it wants. He urged to at least make the choice now.

Robert Craycraft said it used to be that people were appointed to the Planning Board for their beliefs, and not their qualifications. He said just jabbing someone into the Board doesn't make sense. Ms. Allyn said it was unlikely that anything crucial would arise between now and Town Meeting that might be held up by a tie; and if there were a tie on a crucial issue, the tie-breaker should be someone with knowledge on the issue. She said she saw no need to appoint an interim selectman for such a short period.

Chair Jarvis said the Board could ask the remaining candidate to speak next week and then make a decision. Mr. Kroeppel said to appoint tonight, in fairness to the candidates who were here. He said if he were chosen, he would get informed so as to make a good decision. Chair Jarvis said excellent points had been made. Michele Kendrick asked if the appointed person would work next week. Chair Jarvis said if the Town Clerk swore in the person, he or she could start as early as Thursday. Ms. Ingham said if the person were appointed tonight, she can draw up the paperwork, and the Board could sign it.

Ms. Orlowicz said if the process remains open, other candidates could apply. Chair Jarvis said the deadline was noon today. Mr. Gehl said there was a comment made about not fulfilling a commitment. He said he had to vacate prior to the filing period so people could run for the seat. He said he did his utmost to leave everything in good stead, and did not understand the pressing need to appoint someone.

Motion by Selectman Bickford to nominate Carleton Woods as interim selectman as he has had a lot of Board of Selectman experience; second by Chair Jarvis. She said Mr. Woods would need to step aside from any police department discussion to avoid a conflict of interest. He said that would be no problem, and if the Board thought his nomination would be a detriment, there would be no hard feelings. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Chair Jarvis thanked Ms. McHale and Mr. Kroeppel for stepping forward because of their interest. Ms. McHale said, since both she and Mr. Kroeppel are running for selectmen, it might have shown endorsement by the Board if either of them had been nominated. Mr. Woods said he would step aside on issues involving the Boodey House. Mr. Kroeppel said it might have been good for the Board to appoint someone who is running for selectman, so that person would have more experience. Chair Jarvis said she agreed with Ms. McHale. Mr. Raslavicus said he was concerned about what just happened, as there is an existing waiting period in town and there was possible disenfranchisement.

Motion by Selectman Bickford to waive the vetting policy, if it even applies, and recognize the state statute that dictates the process; second by Chair Jarvis. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Raslavicus said waiving the policy should have been done before the Board's action on nomination. Mr. Craycraft said it was true about the state statute, but Selectman Bickford has always held up that two-week waiting policy. He said he was concerned about the way things are going. Chair Jarvis said the Board was a little hasty and should have waived the vetting policy. TA Forrester said to just renominate.

Motion by Selectman Bickford to nominate Carleton Woods for the position of interim selectman; second by Chair Jarvis. The motion carried unanimously.

11. New Business

Uncared For Graveyards – The Board met with Cemetery Trustee Tom Mason and Town Historian Cathy Orlowicz. Mr. Mason suggested dissolving the trust fund for Uncared For Graveyards. Selectman Bickford said the Cemetery Trustees threw out this idea when the Board asked for more money to keep down the budget. Chair Jarvis pointed out that once the fund is dissolved, there are no promises to give those funds back in the future. Mr. Mason agreed that there would have to be a new fund. He said the fund was approved in 1988 and contributions of \$300 and \$1,000 were made to it throughout the years. He said there is now \$25,000 in principle and \$6,000 in interest in the fund. He said it was created to preserve abandoned gravesites, which was a great idea, but in 1995 the state passed a law saying public funds cannot be used for private property. He said the use of those funds for gravesite repair is no longer viable. He said it is possible to declare private property public, but you must go through a process. He said this has been defined by the state. He said the town has been faithful about adding funds, but they have not been used, and now can't be used.

Chair Jarvis asked why the funds couldn't be used. Mr. Mason said because the graveyards are on private property. He said the state has a process to declare them public. Chair Jarvis asked why not go through the process. Mr. Mason said in 2006 a request was made for the locations of the graveyards to scope the project of maintaining 130 sites. He said the information never came forward. He said not all of the sites may be declared public. He said his thought is that in this budget, give the money to the town since the town has been giving money and the money has not been used. He said the alternative would be to go through the process and declare the graveyards public and allocate money to maintain them. He said only \$6,000 is available to spend, as the terms of the fund stipulate only interest can be expended.

Chair Jarvis said that would have to be on the warrant, and a two-thirds vote would be required. Mr. Mason said if the money were returned this year and the Cemetery Trustees wanted some money next year, a new fund could be created.

Ms. Orlowicz said she wanted to clarify that the Town Historian is not in charge of cemeteries. She said the former Town Historian took on the project because the Cemetery Trustees asked her to. She said when she became Town Historian, those responsibilities fell to her and she tried to carry on. She said she has spent time reviewing the Town Meeting minutes, and read aloud a written request by Eloise Bickford in 1983 for \$300 to repair old graveyards. She said the community has shown a long-term commitment to care for these graveyards.

She said the Town did not declare them abandoned in 1995 when the law came into effect. She said the plan was to do so, and discussions on the matter were held with the Board. She said she requested that the Board follow that plan. She said it has pretty well met its budgetary

goals. She said she appreciated what the Trustees want to do, but asked that they move slower. She said once the money was gone, it would be hard to pay back. She said eligible abandoned cemeteries don't have perpetual care, and that was the intent of the trust fund. She asked if a capital reserve fund could be set up for that purpose. She said an expendable trust offers protection. She asked to give the process a chance to work out.

Chair Jarvis asked if the Town declared the graveyards abandoned. Ms. Orlowicz said she believed the Board holds a hearing for the Cemetery Trustees. Chair Jarvis asked if the sites are under the supervision of the Cemetery Trustees once they are public property. Mr. Mason said that was the case. Mr. Drummey said there could be legal fights over family graveyards, as permission was needed from the descendants. He asked how the Board could then declare them abandoned. Chair Jarvis said the Town has to contact the descendants and then a public hearing is held. Ms. Orlowicz said it used to be possible to consider graveyards abandoned, so the Town could take over, if they were neglected for 20-25 years. She said many graveyards in town met those state statutes at the time. She said an ad must be taken out that identifies the cemeteries and indicates family members can retain their property. She said some sites have descendants caring for them. She said the declarations could be done in small lots or in one fell swoop. She said there are 130 cemeteries in the community, but 130 would not be considered abandoned. She said she is working on getting that information for the Cemetery Trustees.

Selectman Bickford said the Board discussed taking out one ad for all properties to keep advertising costs down. The figure at the time was \$800. Mr. Mason said the Trustees have been asking for this information since 2006, so he was unsure how much slower they could go. He said the \$800 ad money was in last year's budget and was not spent. He said it was not put in this year. He said the fund cannot be used for its original purpose. Mr. Woods said if public money cannot be spent on private property, could the public vote to expend for that purpose. Selectman Bickford said the change in the law was key. Chair Jarvis said the feelings were for maintaining old graveyards. She said she was concerned about dissolving it at this late date. She said she wanted to preserve our history. Selectman Bickford said the Board asked for more money and Mr. Mason offered to dissolve the fund. Chair Jarvis said we are not ready to dissolve it.

Tax Maps – Chair Jarvis summarized that this was a two-year project and the update was completed in 2009.

Motion by Chair Jarvis that the Board of Selectmen adopt the tax maps as completed by Cartographics Associates, Inc. in the fall of 2009 as the official tax maps for the Town of New Durham; second by Selectman Bickford. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Jarvis said the Town Hall staff is in favor of putting the tax maps on the website. She asked TA Forrester to determine the cost of doing that.

Fire Department Communications – Chair Jarvis indicated Selectman Bickford requested this item be added to the agenda. Selectman Bickford said that former Fire Chief Rod Nelson said only one person would be responsible for communications coming from the fire department. He said that person wrote in the newspaper, claiming that \$6,000 was spent getting the skid unit on the forestry unit. Chair Jarvis said earlier discussions indicated the cost of mounting the skid unit could vary depending on the platform. She said she believed the repairs to the forestry vehicle came in well under \$500. Selectman Bickford said \$6,000, as well as the time put into putting on the skid unit, was mentioned in the newspaper.

Ms. McHale asked if the comments in the paper were written by the individual as a resident or as a fire department member. She said Selectman Bickford did the same thing last year when he wrote a letter to the editor regarding the Planning Board's proposal of a business district. Chair Jarvis said under the previous fire chief, this person was appointed to be the only person to communicate on behalf of the fire department. She said she saw the comments as written by an individual, reflecting a personal opinion. Selectman Bickford said that is a policy change then. Chair Jarvis said the department is now under a new chief, and suggested Chief Peter Varney attend the next business meeting to see what he has to say on the matter.

Mr. Drummey asked if it was Selectman Bickford's position that no member of a board, department, or committee could write a letter to the newspaper. Selectman Bickford answered no, but that this was the fire department's policy under the former chief, and Tom Swett was the sole communicator for the department (IPO). Chair Jarvis said it was her opinion that the comments were written as an individual. She said the Board would check with Chief Varney. Selectman Bickford said he was curious where those numbers came from, as the Equipment Mechanic says they are not his numbers.

Next Meeting – The Board scheduled a work session for February 8, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall to work on the Town Warrant and any changes from the Budget Committee as a result of its public hearing. The Board scheduled its next business meeting for February 15, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

12. Adjournment

Motion by Chair Jarvis to adjourn at 9:55 p.m.; second by Selectman Bickford. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Allyn

A video recording of this meeting is on file with the Office of Town Clerk, is available for public viewing during normal business hours, and will be retained in accordance with the New Hampshire Municipal Records Board rules established under RSA 33-A:4, or for a minimum of 24 months.