

**New Durham Board of Selectmen  
Minutes of Meeting ~ December 5, 2011  
Town Hall**

Members Present: Theresa Jarvis, David Bickford, Jeffrey Kratovil

Also Present: Town Administrator (TA) Alison Webb, Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer (BI/CEO) Arthur Capello, Fire Chief Peter Varney, Deputy Fire Chief Kenneth Lockwood, Kristyn Bernier, Dot Veisel, Baysider reporter, videographer Mary McHale

**1. Call to Order** – Chair Terry Jarvis called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Agenda Review** – The Board added several items.

**3. Citizens' Forum** – Town Administrator (TA) Alison Webb spoke on behalf of citizens who reported to her that the Senior Dinner was a success, and thanked the Fire Company Association. Chair Jarvis said she presented Everett Rogers with the Boston Post Cane. She said 140 people attended the event, which the Meredith Village Savings Bank and the Parks and Recreation Department also helped sponsor.

Cathy Allyn said the Conservation Commission was looking to plant a hybrid chestnut or other trees as part of New Durham's 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration and asked if the leaves dropped off at the Transfer Station were turned, so as to be used for compost. Selectman David Bickford said the leaves are turned.

**4. Appointments or Public Hearings** – Chair Jarvis announced a public hearing to be held on December 19, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. regarding moving funds for the expendable trust funds transfer.

**5. Department Reports**

*Parks and Recreation Department Raffle Permit*– The Board met with Parks and Recreation Commission Chairperson Kristyn Bernier. Ms. Bernier requested the Board approve a supermarket spree raffle to be held at Hannaford's in Rochester. Tickets would be one dollar each and the winner will have one and a half minutes to collect groceries, with cigarettes and alcohol excluded.

**Motion by Chair Jarvis to approve the request of the New Durham Parks and Recreation Commission for a raffle with one dollar tickets for a supermarket sweepstakes, drawing to be held February 3, 2012; second by Selectman Jeffrey Kratovil. 3-0.**

The Board signed the raffle permit.

*Parks and Recreation Department Budget* – Ms. Bernier expressed her concern about certain cuts the Board made in the budget. She cited a gentlemen's agreement with the Budget Committee in 2009 that would reduce the officiating line to \$2,500 in 2010 and remove it totally from the budget for 2011, in return for

other line items not being touched. She said she has discovered that infrastructure items should have been paid from the General Fund, but the Rec Department's revolving fund has been carrying infrastructure items. She said dues are infrastructure and the department cannot function without that line.

Ms. Bernier explained that fees charged parents go into the revolving fund and the Commission tries to ensure people can play. She said league fees are assessed according to the number of kids playing, and the Commission has no control over those fees. She told the Board the Commission asked for \$2,760 in the Sports Equipment line, and the Board hacked \$1,000 out of ball field maintenance and moved \$600 into another line. She said league regulations dictate certain equipment for children's safety. She noted that equipment has been neglected and the department is rotating bats per team per age group to attain league standards.

Chair Jarvis said Recreation Director Kellie Chase purchased two bats from the 2011 budget. Selectman Bickford pointed out that the original budget request reflected a 13 per cent increase over last year. He said even after the Board's adjustments, the budget has a 9.7 per cent increase.

Chair Jarvis said some of the additional costs were for the 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration. She said monies for celebrations such as that are usually taken from the Executive Budget. She said with extra hours allotted for the Rec Director and part-time hours, the budget includes approximately \$1,500 - \$1,800 for the celebration.

Ms. Bernier said the department's budget in 2009 was more than \$68,000. She said the department has been providing more recreational opportunities than ever before on a budget much less than that, and less than the base salary for Alton's Rec Director. She said there were only seven people on the Commission and they could not fundraise thousands of dollars. She explained that fireworks cost approximately \$5,000. She added that she did not agree with lopping \$1,000 from ball field maintenance, as the fields need scheduled maintenance just as vehicles do. She told the Board the Town was getting a lot of bang for the buck with a budget of \$60,000 and she did not want to see that end.

Selectman Bickford said the Board was looking for justification, and something will have to be cut. He asked about the use of less fertilizer than usual this year. Ms. Bernier said she was unaware of the details of that, so he should check with Road Agent Mike Clarke. She said the Babe Ruth field looked beautiful this year, but added it was maintained by Kingswood. She said the difference was noticeable, as there was no erosion. She said Kingswood did aeration, dragging, and some irrigation, and repacked the mound.

Ms. Bernier brought up the fact that a department head put in for merit raises at the Board's last meeting, while she had been under the impression that employees might not even get a two per cent raise. Chair Jarvis said the department head announced that he was going to request merit raises for four employees. She said he withdrew the request for one. Ms. Bernier asked if the Board was entertaining the idea of merit raises. She asked if the Rec department could do the same.

TA Webb said she told department heads at the department head meeting they could request merit raises if they felt strongly about an employee. Ms. Bernier

registered surprise, saying she has watched this budget process and been aware of the uncertainty of even a two per cent raise across the board.

**Motion by Chair Jarvis that the Parks and Recreation Department budget, account 4520, be approved in the amount of \$60,959, which is what the Budget Committee reduced it to; second by Selectman Bickford.** Selectman Bickford said he thought the Rec Department's "deal" with the Budget Committee was just for that year. Ms. Bernier said that was not the case. She said there was an understanding that the Budget Committee wanted uniforms removed from the Operating Budget and the Rec Department agreed to also phase out the officiating line. She said equipment is a Town asset. Selectman Bickford said we might want to work out of that. Ms. Bernier opined that it gives kids something to do, and without recreation, the Town may pay for it at the other end. Selectman Kratovil asked for a budget breakdown. **Chair Jarvis called for a vote. Jarvis – aye, Bickford – aye, Kratovil – abstain. The motion carried.**

*Fire Department Radio Equipment* – The Board met with Fire Chief Peter Varney and Deputy Fire Chief Kenneth Lockwood concerning the fire department's conversion to Strafford County Dispatch Services. Deputy Chief Lockwood said they were requesting approval to purchase 20 new pagers with cases for \$9,145 from Belknap Communications, and toning equipment and reprogramming for \$1,900 from Ossipee Mountain Electronics, and to pay a \$200 licensing fee to use the new frequency. He said the equipment needed to be in place and operating by December 31, 2011. He reported that he'd received three bids and that the purchase price represents an \$11,525 decrease from the initial pricing. He said there was also the possibility that the licensing fee may not have to be paid, as he was a member of the Association of Public Communications Officials.

He and Chief Varney indicated it was unknown if any 2011 money would be left, as hydrotesting and ladder testing still have to be performed. Deputy Chief Lockwood said if any money were left, it could go toward this purchase. He said he was confident he had gotten the best price as he'd haggled it down 28 per cent from the initial proposal. He said there was a five-year warranty.

**Motion by Chair Jarvis to authorize the fire department to spend a total of \$11,525 to purchase pagers, toning equipment and other communication equipment for the changeover to Strafford County Dispatch Services; second by Selectman Bickford. 3-0.**

Selectman Kratovil said he knew of a firefighter III who was interested in speaking with the chief. Chief Varney said to have the person pick up an application. Chair Jarvis said Financial Officer Vickie Blackden could reduce line 632 in the department's budget. She thanked them for all their hard work on the conversion.

## **6. Old Business**

*Determining Hardship Threshold for Comstar* – Chair Jarvis indicated the Board needed to maintain current levels of determining hardship or consider others. She said Comstar used the threshold for fuel assistance eligibility for its hardship threshold. Selectman Kratovil said he thought a threshold was unfair. Chair Jarvis said determining hardship would be for a person with no insurance and would

result in waiving the ambulance cost or setting up a payment plan. Selectman Kratovil suggested increasing the number so people who earn less still have to pay some. He presented a chart he'd developed. Chair Jarvis said it would be a good guideline for submitted applications. She explained if a person is above a certain rate, that person would be ineligible to apply for hardship. She said she was unsure if the current contract with Comstar covers this specificity.

Chief Varney said the department's concern is not with the rate setting. He said it is a reflection on the fire department to send people to a collection agency and called it bad karma. TA Webb noted that a collection agency is not an effective means of collecting. Chief Varney reminded the Board that ambulance fees pay only for replacement. He said the department is not here to make a profit and that monies to operate the ambulance are more than sufficient with the way it now stands. Deputy Chief Lockwood said he would check with Comstar regarding Selectman Kratovil's proposal.

Selectman Bickford asked if fuel assistance used a sliding scale. TA Webb told the Board that the Strafford County Community Action program is receiving appreciably less money for fuel assistance than anticipated, and felt sure the Town would see a group of people who are no longer eligible for that.

Deputy Chief Lockwood confirmed that the Board wanted additional information on dues and fuel regarding the department's budget. Chair Jarvis asked that the department send Selectman Kratovil its Budget Committee presentation as he was not at the meeting.

Chief Varney said his department did not want people to refrain from calling for an ambulance again, if they did not pay their bill another time. Selectman Kratovil said even if the ambulance service is in no danger of running out of money, he thought leveraging responsibility across the board was fairer. Chief Varney said leveraging was a harsh term. He said some people have no money, so how hard did the Town want to leverage them. He said the ambulance call is a small percentage of a person's bill when there is a medical emergency. Chair Jarvis said a payment plan could be established. Deputy Chief Lockwood said the Town needed to strike a balance, so people pay some, but are not intimidated to call for service. Chief Varney said he hears all the time that people didn't call for an ambulance because they have no insurance. He said people's taxes contribute toward the cost of running the ambulance.

*Highway* – TA Webb is to email the highway department to refresh the issue of the South Shore turnaround.

*North Shore Beach Association Deed With No Covenants* – TA Webb said she drafted the deed on the discontinued road, but the format may need to be revised. She told the Board that Town Counsel indicated the wording was suitable. She summarized that the 1960 Town Meeting provided two properties with a quick claim deed indicating abutters owned to the center of the discontinued road. She said a deed was given in 2002 to this party's neighbor and now this party wants something in writing, also.

**Motion by Chair Jarvis to move forward with a deed with no covenants to the discontinued portion of Marsh Hill Road issued to the ten owners; second by Selectman Bickford. 3-0.**

TA Webb is to redo the deed in the Registry of Deeds format.

## **7. New Business**

*Selectmen's Report* - TA Webb set January 6, 2012 as the deadline for annual reports for the Town Report. Chair Jarvis said she would like contributions by Monday morning so the first draft of the report can be reviewed at the December 19, 2011 meeting.

*DES Exotic Aquatic Plant Control Grant* – The Board discussed the awarding of a 50/50 matching grant for milfoil control at Jones Pond and the Merrymeeting River just above Jones Pond.

**Motion by Chair Jarvis to accept the DES funds in the amount of \$4,275 for herbicide treatment and to enter into a contract with New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services; second by Selectman Kratovil. 3-0.**

**Motion by Chair Jarvis to authorize the chairperson to sign any documentation as needed; second by Selectman Bickford. 3-0.**

*Cartographic Associates Software* – Chair Jarvis indicated part of the cost of the tax map software is in the 2011 budget and the remainder is in the 2012 budget. The contract with Cartographic Associates is for \$4,300.

**Motion by Selectman Bickford to sign the contract for \$4,300 with Cartographic Associates; second by Selectman Kratovil. 3-0.**

The Board signed copies of the contract.

## **8. Future Meetings**

The Board scheduled budget meetings to be held December 8, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. and December 12, 2011 at 9:00 a.m., a workshop on the personnel handbook on December 7, 2011 at 9:00 a.m., a business meeting on December 19, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. in the fire station community room, and a public hearing on December 19, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

## **9. Approval of Minutes**

**Motion by Selectman Kratovil to accept the minutes of the public meeting of November 21, 2011, as amended; second by Selectman Bickford. 3-0.**

The non-public minutes of November 21, 2011 are to be reviewed at the Board's next meeting.

**Motion by Chair Jarvis to approve the public budget meeting minutes of November 28, 2011, as amended; second by Selectman Bickford. 3-0.**

**Motion by Chair Jarvis to approve the non-public budget meeting minutes of November 28, 2011, as amended; second by Selectman Kratovil. 3-0.**

The minutes of the December 1, 2011 budget meeting are to be reviewed at the next budget meeting.

## **10. Non-public Session**

**Motion by Chair Jarvis at 9:03 p.m. to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (c), (d) and (a); second by Selectman Bickford. A roll call vote was taken. Jarvis – aye, Bickford – aye, Kratovil – aye.**

Chair Jarvis advised the only other business to be conducted in public session would be to announce any decisions that may be made in non-public session.

**Motion by Chair Jarvis to come out of non-public session at 10:18PM; second by Selectman Kratovil. 3-0.**

**Motion by Selectman Kratovil to seal the non-public minutes of December 5, 2011; second by Selectman Bickford. 3-0.**

**11. Adjournment**

**Motion by Chair Jarvis at 10:19 p.m. to adjourn; second by Selectman Bickford. 3-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Cathy L. 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.