

**New Durham Board of Selectmen
Fire Station Community Room
Minutes of the Workshop of March 21, 2013**

Members Present: Chair Theresa Jarvis, Vice Chair Kratovil, Selectman Swenson

Others Present: Fire Chief Peter Varney, Captain David Stuart (Arrived @ 10:50 AM)

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Theresa Jarvis called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM
2. **Fire Chief Posting:** Chair Jarvis gave Selectman Swenson a summary of the history of the Fire Chief's appointment (action of Town Meeting) and of the establishment of a "Chief Officer's" position at 32 hours a week. She explained that when looking at time sheets the position is not 32 hours. A 2010 Local Government Center (LGC) study done for the town the range for the wage of a Fire Chief was \$ 26.91 minimum; \$ 28.98 mid point, and \$ 31.04 maximum (of those communities studied). Based on the 2012 LGC Wage and Benefit document for a population of 2,000 to 4,999 Fire Chief rates were \$ 25.40 minimum and \$ 28.06 maximum. Chair Jarvis stated that New Durham can not afford those rates.

Selectman Kratovil stated that his problems with the current system are:

1. There is no incentive to keep the number of hours worked down;
2. There seems to have been lots of experimentation ;
3. He doesn't agree with LGC's salary numbers; and
4. The Fire Chief convinced the BOS that a 32 hour/week position was needed in the 2012 budget and now it is not needed.

Chief Varney explained that through the use of the Fire House software they have been able to streamline some activities.

Selectman Swenson asked for and was given an outline of the Fire Department's organization structure. (One Chief, one Deputy, 2 Captains, 4 Lieutenants and the rest of the staff are privates.) He questioned if the Fire Department was "brass heavy". Chair Jarvis explained that the department's regulations allow for this number of Officers and that it is the Chief's decision as to whether or not he fills all the positions. The Chief is also responsible for determining what duties are assigned to the officers.

NOTE: The identification of issues and thoughts expressed are summarized below and occurred before and after the recess.

Through discussion the following issues were identified:

- There is a need to appoint someone as Fire Chief for a 3 year term.
- Should the position be exempt (like all other Department Heads) or non-exempt?
- Is pay to be salary vs part time hourly vs hourly
- Is there a reason to change the current system (i.e. non-exempt)?

Thoughts expressed included:

- 30 hour, exempt, salaried position;

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- Salaried position @ \$ 17/hour for 30 hours/week. Any additional time over 30 hours to be paid. (It was noted that you can not have a salaried position get paid this way due to federal and state laws.)
- Salary based on 30 hour/week @ \$ 21/hour;
- Pay as is currently done (Hourly @ \$16.32 – *rate to be verified*. Given the rate of pay for the Fire Chief the Town is getting a deal;
- Determine wage based on a 30 hour work week;
- A need to set specific days and hours that the Station would be staffed. (Currently Chief Varney is here every Monday morning until at least noon – sometimes longer.)
- Need for long range planning for Fire Department staffing.

By consensus the Board recessed from 10:24 AM until 10:50 AM.

Since no final decisions were reached the Board decided to continue their discussions regarding the Fire Chief position on Monday March 25, 2013 at 1 PM in the Fire Station Conference Room if all Board Members of the Board are available.

Selectman Kratovil spoke about the March 14, 2013 Financial Report. He expressed concern that a department's part time line (sub account # 115) is already overspent. He stated that the Department Head told him that he had requested \$ 15,000 however only \$ 9,000 was approved. Selectman Kratovil also pointed out that sub account line 411 – oil – is also very low. Chair Jarvis expressed her concern with all the departments' oil line as it appears we are spending far more then was budgeted. The Chair stated that when Commissioner Lessard met with the Board of Selectmen on March 4, 2013 he spoke to possible ways to save towns money. She asked the Board if the objected to her contacting Commissioner Lessard to see if New Durham could bulk purchase oil, gas, diesel and propane with the county. No one objected

MOTION: *To enter into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(a) The dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee or of the disciplining of such employee . . . and RSA 91-A:3(c), to discuss matters, which if discussed in public, would likely adversely affect the reputation of another person.. . . Kratovil/Swenson. Roll Call Vote: Jarvis – aye, Kratovil – aye, Swenson - aye.*

The Board entered non-public session at 11:37 AM.

The Board returned to public session at 12:19 PM. In non-public session the Board discussed a personnel issue.

Selectman Kratovil asked if we should motion to seal the minutes of the non-public session. Neither Chair Jarvis nor Selectman Swenson saw a need to seal the minutes.

MOTION: *To adjourn Jarvis/Swenson. 3-0*

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Theresa A. Jarvis, Chair