

**NEW DURHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**New Durham Town Hall**  
**January 5, 2015, 7:00 p.m.**

*DRAFT: These minutes are strictly a draft copy and are awaiting amendment or approval at a subsequent, duly noticed public meeting. Amendments to these minutes will be noted in the minutes of said meeting. The draft will be posted on the website as a draft copy for public informational use only.*

**Present:**

Chairman David Swenson  
Selectman David Bickford  
Selectman Theresa Jarvis

**Also Present:**

Jeremy Bourgeois, Town Administrator  
Corky Mork, Videographer  
Ron Gehl, Chair, Conservation Commission  
Curtis Richard, Conservation Commission  
Tom Howe, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests  
Elizabeth Cantrall, *The Baysider* Reporter  
Greg Anthes, Resident

**Call to Order**

Chair Swenson called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m.

**Appointments/Announcements**

**Conservation Commission- Clarke Property**

Ron Gehl, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, presented plans by the Commission for discussion regarding a 38-acre parcel of land, adjacent to the existing Cooper Cedar Woods Forest Reservation. It was noted this unique parcel is comprised of a rare Atlantic white cedar swamp habitat and upland pine forest. Mr. Gehl stated this parcel would become an extension of the existing reservation and explained the benefits of doing so.

Tom Howe of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests gave an explanation of the maps presented for review. Mr. Howe also gave an overview of the benefits to putting this parcel into a conservation commission including the protection of an area aquifer.

Selectman Jarvis stated motorized vehicles cannot be used on the current Cooper Woods Reservation although it is open for recreation use. She asked if this parcel would be the same. Mr. Howe replied yes, and it would subject to all the same permissions and prohibitions. Selectman Jarvis stated that due to the wetlands status it is not a property they would want to see timbered. Mr. Gehl replied it is not presently in the vision of the Commission or the Society to do so.

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Selectman Jarvis asked if the Forest Society decides to do something with the timber, would they be obligated to come back to the Board of Selectmen or the Commission. Mr. Howe replied they would come back and be prepared to pay the timber taxes.

Mr. Gehl stated the Commission feels this is the best way to ensure the property is properly managed, and noted the Commission is looking to transfer the title to the Forest Society with the Town maintaining an executory interest to preserve the right of the Town to retain the title to the property. Chair Swenson clarified the \$45,000 that the Commission is requesting to withdraw from the Conservation Fund is to cover the purchase price from Ruth Clarke. Chair Swenson asked what would happen if the funds were not available. Mr. Gehl replied the deal with Ms. Clarke would be cancelled as the agreement is contingent upon funding, and there is not another source of funding at this point.

Chair Swenson asked for clarification on who would have water rights. Mr. Howe and Mr. Gehl replied it would be the Forest Society as the owner of the property. The responsibilities entailed with this were discussed.

After further discussion, it was agreed Town Counsel would review the legal documents prior to an official motion by the Board of Selectmen.

**Public Input**

None.

**Agenda Review**

None.

**Department Reports/Issues**

None of the Department Heads were requested to be present.

Town Administrator Bourgeois stated one of the part time police officer candidates has completed all the background testing and will be starting shortly. The second candidate will be going through the process soon.

**Town Administrator's Report**

Town Administrator Bourgeois stated Spaulding Hill Networks has started the process of upgrading the computers that will hopefully be up and running at their next visit. It was clarified this includes the desktops at the police departments and others as well.

Town Administrator Bourgeois stated there is a copy of the draft warrant articles included in the packets distributed as well as suggestions regarding the zoning amendment wording from Town Counsel. He stated the notice for the public budget hearing has been published.

**Old Business**

**Town Owned Property**

Chair Swenson stated this discussion is an update on the actions previously taken by the Board of Selectmen relative to merging properties. He stated these have now been all completed. Chair Swenson stated a major thing left to do is to determine whether they want to proceed with notifying abutters of properties going to auction or listing them as a real estate sale. Selectman Bickford and Selectman Jarvis both agreed they want to notify abutters and give them the option to purchase properties. Selectman Jarvis stated she would like to see purchases by abutters contingent on them doing voluntary mergers to their current properties.

Selectman Bickford stated that in regards to the Copple Crown properties, they are below standards for development. He asked if they would be selling them at a discount. Chair Swenson replied the prices would be determined based on how they decide to move forward, whether auction or real estate sale.

Chair Swenson asked whether the Board of Selectmen want to go forward with auction or real estate sale. The options were discussed. Selectman Jarvis stated that if abutters are willing to do voluntary mergers, she would be in support of going forward with selling to them for the tax and interest without the 15% penalty. Any properties that abutters are not interested in would be sent to auction.

Selectman Bickford stated he is not ready to make any decisions at this point. Chair Swenson noted there are properties dating back to 1978. Selectman Bickford stated he is not interested in over-developing the area, particularly in Copple Crown. He stated they are not prepared to handle it and already have a higher tax rate than the Town.

Chair Swenson concurred with Selectman Jarvis. He stated that if abutters are not interested in purchasing properties, sending them to auction is the best option. Chair Swenson stated he doesn't want the Town to continue being a landlord for the properties. Chair Swenson asked Town Administrator Bourgeois to contact the auctioneer and provide an updated list.

Chair Swenson asked how the prices should be calculated. The options were discussed and it was agreed to discuss this with the auctioneers for their professional opinions.

It was noted the 30-day notices to abutters would have a deadline of roughly the first week of February with the first part of March for the transactions to take place.

Mr. Gehl asked for clarification on the property of Map 209, Lot 068. He stated it is a parcel that has a unique circumstance in that it is a right-of-way, so it is not a buildable lot. He hopes the right-of-way would be maintained. Selectman Jarvis replied it is one that will be available to an abutter. Mr. Gehl suggested it be contingent on the right-of-way being retained.

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**2014 Board of Selectmen Accomplishment List/Board of Selectmen Goals**

A synopsis of the Board of Selectmen 2014 goals and actions was reviewed and discussed.

Chair Swenson stated he would like to use this as a communication piece to taxpayers and the public in general. Selectman Jarvis suggested including it as part of the Annual Town Report. Selectman Jarvis noted she is still working on the fund explanations to be included in the Annual Town Report.

**Market Compensation Study**

Town Administrator Bourgeois distributed a summary of figures gathered in 2010. Selectman Jarvis stated Don Jutton suggested at that time the compensation levels be reviewed ever three to five years and noted the last compensation schedule is from 2008.

Chair Swenson stated that at a recent Board of Selectmen they gave budget approval for a market study to be done in 2015 and Town Administrator Bourgeois was asked to develop an RFP.

Chair Swenson noted it has been seven years since a study was done and thinks there is an expectation by employees that this will be done this year since it is in the 2015 budget. Selectman Bickford stated his concern is the study will just look at what other towns pay and he sees the pay being ratcheted up if it isn't managed properly.

After discussion, it was agreed by a majority consensus to revise the financial information of the RFP and put it out to bid again.

**Second January Board of Selectmen Meeting/First February Meeting**

Chair Swenson noted the next Board of Selectmen falls on a holiday. After discussion it was agreed to reschedule the following meetings:

The January 19 meeting was rescheduled to January 21 at 7:00p.m.

The February 2 at 7:00p.m. meeting was rescheduled to the same day at 1:00p.m.

The February 16 meeting was rescheduled to February 25 at 7:00p.m.

**2015 Town Warrant Draft & Voter Guide**

Copies of a draft voter guide were distributed and reviewed. Chair Swenson noted that this guide was initially developed for the first deliberative session but he has since learned that much of the information could change at that session. He stated many towns just give the warrant articles at the first session and then develop this voter guide which is more detailed, for the second session. Chair Swenson asked the Board of Selectmen how they want to do it.

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Selectman Jarvis stated that since this is their first time with SB2, she thinks it would be good to have the voter guide for the first session. Selectman Bickford agreed.

The draft guide was reviewed. After discussion, edits were made.

Selectman Bickford stated he thinks there should be clarification noted as to whose budget is being commented on within the guide. Chair Swenson disagreed and explained he used the wording that was used in the warrants. Greg Anthes, resident, asked if it would be noted that the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee agree on the budget presented. Chair Swenson replied the article reads as being presented as an operating budget, not a budget by either the Board of Selectmen or the Budget Committee although the recommendations by each would be noted.

Selectman Jarvis noted that last year the wording used the “Budget Committee budget” and this year it states the “Board of Selectmen budget”. She asked Town Administrator Bourgeois to get clarification on how wording changes with SB2. Mr. Anthes stated he thinks it is important that voters understand there are two separate entities. Chair Swenson stated it would be noted in the voter guide as well as on the ballot. He clarified that he made no changes to the wording of the warrant articles but only added in explanations in the guide.

There was further discussion of the warrant articles and the explanations outlined in the voter guide.

**New Business**

**2015-2016 Health Insurance**

Chair Swenson stated a notice was received from Schoolcare Health Benefit Plans outlining the costs for 2015 that increased 3%. Chair Swenson questioned why their increase was higher than the average increase. He asked Town Administrator Bourgeois to find out why. Town Administrator Bourgeois noted he spoke with Healthtrust, the only other major provider, but they cannot go back to them at this point as they are still within the two-year limit.

**Parks and Recreation Committee– Minute Taker**

Town Administrator Bourgeois stated he received a request from the Chair of the Parks and Recreation that the Board of Selectmen hire a minute taker for the committee meetings. Town Administrator Bourgeois noted the minute taker for the Board of Selectmen stated she would be interested. Chair Swenson asked if the funding would come from Parks and Recreation. Selectman Jarvis asked if they would have sufficient money in the budget based on what the minute taker is currently paid. Town Administrator Bourgeois replied it is about \$1/hour difference. Town Administrator Bourgeois will discuss this option with the committee.

**Public Input**

None.

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**Future Meetings**

January 8, 2015 – Board of Selectmen Meeting, Town Hall (non-public), 7:00p.m.

February 2, 2015 – Board of Selectmen Meeting, Community Room, 1:00p.m.

February 2, 2015 – First Deliberative Session, New Durham Elementary School,  
7:00p.m.

February 5, 2015 - Second Deliberative Session, New Durham Elementary School,  
7:00p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

Meeting of December 22, 2014 – Edits were made. **Selectman Bickford made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Selectman Jarvis seconded the motion. Motion passed, 3-0.**

**Adjourn**

**Selectman Jarvis made a motion to adjourn. Selectman Bickford seconded the motion. Motion passed, 3-0.** The meeting was adjourned at 10:25p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Riel, Recording Secretary