

**DRAFT**

**New Durham Board of Selectmen**  
**Minutes of Meeting ~ September 17, 2007**  
**Town Hall**

**Members present:** Ronald Gehl, Peter Rhoades, David Bickford

**Also present:** Town Administrator April Whittaker, Amanda Eason, Skip Fadden, Mike Hoffman, Bernard Laughlin

**1. Call to Order** – Chairperson Ron Gehl called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Citizens' Forum** – Cathy Allyn lauded Interim Fire Chief Rod Nelson, EMT Kevin Ruel, and paramedic Kevin Jenckes for their quick response to her husband's injury. She went on to say that Mr. Jenckes went so far as to call "Frisbie Hospital" emergency room personnel to alert them to the Allyn's arrival and to describe the wound.

Chair Gehl said a rumor was circulating that no parking would be permitted in the Town Hall parking lot after hours. He said the rumor was false. The Board and TA Whittaker discussed that as long as people were respectful of the police cruisers, there was no issue with parking. Overnight parking might be questioned, but the police would have final discretion.

**3. Administrative Review**

TA Whittaker said she has gone out to bid for the Town Report and attached the vendors' list for the Board's review. She said if selectmen had any printing vendors they would like to add, to please let her know. She said 1,000 copies were made last year, and they are all distributed. Selectman Peter Rhoades asked Selectman David Bickford if he could see additional value to a larger font, and therefore, more pages. Selectman Bickford said last year's report, with a larger font than the year before, was a better product. Light discussion ensued with respect to adding an additional 250 copies to the final production numbers; this question to be taken up as part of the budget process at a later date.

TA Whittaker provided the Board with copies of the "Fire Station Committee" report received on Friday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007. She advised that she did not know at this point if the report was the product of the committee or one person, when questioned by the Board. Selectman Rhoades said there was only one signature on the report, and the question of group participation needed to be qualified.

She advised there would be excellent lecture topics at the Local Government Center conference, to be held *November 7-9, 2007*, and if the Board wanted to attend to let her know. (Information booklet and agenda details to be left at the Selectboard's desk.) Chair Gehl said after his recent discussion with Assessor Robert Estey, he would like to attend one on assessments, as the regulations are getting tighter on the revaluation process.

TA Whittaker said Mr. Estey could look at the March's Pond properties in December about possible reassessment should the dam bond fail. She said the figures would be necessary for Town Meeting, but that the tax rate needed to be worked out first prior to Mr. Estey's re-assessment formula.

The Board discussed the budget meeting schedule. Chair Gehl said it was sometimes difficult for him to set aside entire work days, as was done last year, but when the information was compacted he would be willing to do it again. Selectman Bickford, referring to holding a selectman's meeting following an all-day budget workshop, said people were not as sharp after many hours. Chair Gehl said he considered an all day budget workshop the same as a normal workday prior to a selectman's meeting. Selectman Rhoades suggested scheduling the first workshop on a Monday that would not have a selectman's meeting afterward. The Board scheduled workshops on October 22 and 29, 2007 starting at 8:30 a.m. Mrs. Whittaker will work on departmental schedules, noting that the Budget Committee will not start their review until November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

#### **4. Schedule Next Meeting**

The Board scheduled its next meeting for October 1, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall

#### **5. Old Business**

Milfoil Committee - Several Milfoil Committee members have been sworn in. A meeting has been scheduled for *September 19, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.* TA Whittaker asked the Board to sign the appointment forms. Chair Gehl said the charge must be finalized, and that at the last meeting, Selectman Bickford presented a modification to the charge to consider. Selectman Bickford stated that the charge should hook the committee into the state regulations, as it will work with the state (DES), and should the State of NH regulations change, so will the committee's charge. Selectman Rhoades asked if the charge could not be changed as state changes occur. Selectman Bickford felt that was possible, but cumbersome. Chair Gehl, in reference and of concern to removing many of the details, said he would like the charge to provide specific guidelines as it does now. He said the committee would follow regulatory DES requirements in effect at the time, but that the charge was a public document and members of the public would then be aware of what was entailed. Selectman Rhoades said the goal of the charge is to follow requirements enumerated in the regulations. Michael Hoffman suggested adding an addendum that stated if the regulations change, the more restrictive state policies would apply.

Chair Gehl said it was important to spell out what should be done. He called the charge a guidance document, in accordance with current state regulations. TA Whittaker noted language could be included that allowed for any time the charge is in conflict, state regulations will prevail. Chair Gehl said that statement could appear in the preamble, but that he would like the numbered items in the charge to be retained.

TA Whittaker opined it was good that a report from the Milfoil Committee will appear in the Town Report and supported this inclusion into the Charge. Chair Gehl said the charge is compact at two pages and enumerates what he would like to see the committee do.

Motion by Chair Gehl to maintain the charge as originally presented by Town Administrator April Whittaker, with the addition of a qualifier, a correction to the website reference, and inclusion of a compiling report for the Town Report. TA Whittaker suggested by way of compromise, that she could incorporate information from Selectman Bickford's suggested preamble into what exists. Chair Gehl therefore requested TA Whittaker to embellish the Charge as discussed, so a vote could take place at the next meeting. He withdrew his motion.

Selectman Bickford said it would be best if the local experts referred to were not named. TA Whittaker advised that Robert Craycraft, who works at UNH where water quality research is ongoing, had offered his assistance only for questions as he was too busy to attend meetings given all his other volunteer work, but he was adept at obtaining grants and was always available by phone to answer questions. His offer of help together with Mr. Neister's assistance appeared to be good resources for the newly formed committee.

The Board decided to vote on the matter at the next meeting.

***Continuing Review of Draft Financial policies***

Purchasing Policy - TA Whittaker provided the Board with a sample purchase order. Chair Gehl advocated purchase orders for documentation and accountability. TA Whittaker added that they also protect department heads by displaying due diligence with taxpayers' money. The Board discussed cut-off figures for Section VII of the purchasing policy. Department heads have authority to make purchases up to \$1,500. The town administrator has authority to approve purchases between \$1,501 and \$3,000. Purchases between \$3,001 and \$15,000 require three quotes. Purchases above \$15,001 shall be bid pursuant to competitive procurement guidelines. Under (E) of Section VII, regarding multiple unit purchases under one purchase order, a purchase order is to be used if the total cost of the combined units is in excess of \$1,500.

Under Section X, TA Whittaker noted Selectman Bickford wanted it outlined who would be authorized to approve a request if the designated person is unavailable. Selectman Rhoades said the designee could be the town administrator. TA Whittaker offered it could be any available selectman. She said she was the designee under section VII, and the Board is for anything over \$3,000. Selectman Rhoades said if a department head is unavailable, a designee has already been assigned within that department.

**Motion by Selectman Rhoades to approve the Purchasing Policy as amended, for public hearing; second by Selectman Bickford. The motion carried unanimously.**

TA Whittaker said she would schedule a public hearing and concurred with Mr. Bickford that a public hearing was not a requirement, but under the Right to Know law, it was a courtesy extended to bring the matter into a public forum. Selectman Rhoades said he would like to see a faxable Town seal on the purchase order forms. Mrs. Whittaker will ensure that this is taken care of too.

Credit Card Policy – Selectman Bickford cited the portion outlining flagrant abuse of the credit card program and asked if it was appropriate that the town administrator would determine what action to be taken in the case of an unauthorized purchase. TA Whittaker said the town administrator would bring the matter directly before the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman Bickford asked about documentation required if the purchase was made over the telephone. TA Whittaker stated that some form of paper trail was needed for back up, even a handwritten note. Selectman Rhoades said the section on “Missing Documentation” covered that scenario. Chair Gehl concurred that it was simple to ask the vendor to fax a sales slip.

**Motion by Chair Gehl to approve the credit card policy as amended for public hearing; second by Selectman Rhoades. The motion carried unanimously.**

Investment Policy – Selectman Rhoades asked if Town Counsel should approve the policy. TA Whittaker suggested the auditors. Chair Gehl said he would be happy to have the auditors review it. The Board decided the Treasurer should report annually to the Board regarding depositories, and revise diversification strategies annually for the Board’s review. Selectman Bickford requested a clearer explanation from the auditors of the second paragraph of section 4. TA Whittaker said it was the “sweep” account and is something the bank deals with. Selectman Bickford brought up the Reporting paragraph of section IV dealing with quarterly reporting. Selectman Rhoades said to report quarterly was good. He explained that when TA Whittaker first took her position, she discovered that the Town was not getting the best interest rates. Chair Gehl stated the Town then had an instant new source of income.

Selectman Bickford suggested the part about the Trustee of the Trust Funds should be removed from the policy. He said the Board should just okay their policy, which still needed to be composed by the Trustees. TA Whittaker said the section only sets out what the Trustees do. She said people need to be assured of where the money is entrusted. Selectman Bickford said the Trustees get direction from the Attorney General. Chair Gehl said he was not averse to simplifying the section, but that it should be made clear within the policy that there are statutory requirements for the Trustees. TA Whittaker said she would attach the statutes that are referenced. Selectman Bickford said the best way to get people to read something is to keep it short. TA Whittaker opined that for brevity’s sake, just the first sentence related to the Trustees could be retained.

**Motion by Chair Gehl to forward the investment policy as amended to the auditors for review; second by Selectman Rhoades. The motion carried unanimously.**

Two-Week Vetting Policy

Selectman Rhoades indicated no need for any odd kind of research into candidates. He explained with a policy in place there would be no pressure to vote right away for someone you don’t know. He said selectmen could call the candidate and get acquainted. Chair Gehl said he wanted no situation that invited “hearsay”. He suggested replacing the term “vetting” and instead calling the policy the “Board of Selectmen Appointment Policy”. He

suggested a minimum of two weeks before having a candidate introduced and subsequent voting; and waiving the policy when “time was of the essence”.

Selectman Rhoades said since the Board could waive any policy in an emergency, there was no real need to include that reference in the policy. Chair Gehl asked if employment would be included in this policy. He cited the example of Police Chief Shawn Bernier who will come to the Board soon with a candidate for employment and he would hate to hold up the process when there has already been research and final recommendations. Selectman Bickford felt all appointments were important, and employment should be included.

**Motion by Selectman Bickford to accept the Board of Selectmen Appointment Policy; second by Selectman Rhoades. The motion carried unanimously. (See attached copy to Minutes)**

TA Whittaker reported that Charles McKay has given his permission for the site walk on the McKay’s private road and confirmed the scheduling for Sept 22, 2007 at 8:00 a.m.

TA Whittaker requested the board’s permission to compose a memorandum to the Tax Collector namely Carole Ingham to confirm the board’s review of the proposed tax deeding list and apart from one mobile home which the board understood the town had now received a partial payment to delay deeding, directed that she continue with the process for the other nine properties as enumerated. The Selectboard concurred.

Next item for discussion was the final payment due for the Town Hall Painting.

**Motion by Selectman Rhoades to increase the authorized expenditure of Town Hall painting to \$43,016; second by Chair Gehl. The motion carried unanimously.**

## **6. Approval of Minutes**

**Motion by Chair Gehl to table consideration of the minutes of September 10, 2007 until the next meeting; second by Selectman Bickford. The motion carried unanimously.**

## **7. Any Other Business**

Selectman Bickford clarified that his concern regarding a fire station addition is the proposed joining of two wooden buildings and therefore the greater potential for fire to damage two buildings instead of one. Selectman Rhoades said a cinder block break wall would separate them. Selectman Bickford replied that would not be as effective as an air break.

## **8. Adjournment**

**Motion by Chair Gehl to adjourn at 9:20 p.m.; second by Selectman Bickford. The motion carried unanimously.**

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.