

Selectmen's Meeting  
26 January 1998  
7:00pm

The regularly scheduled Selectmen's meeting was called to order by the Chair, Dick Wollmar, at 7:00pm. Those present included Allen Hines, George Lagassa (Selectmen), and Russell McAllister (Town Administrator).

The Selectmen reviewed the previous meeting minutes and Mr. Lagassa voted to accept the minutes as published. Mr. Hines seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

The selectmen reviewed correspondence and/or signed:

- Payroll
- Manifest
- Current Use Application - John & Barbara Larkin
- Auditing Services Contract - Mason & Rich
- Appointment of Deputy Tax Collector - Margaret Neeves
- Planning Board - Meeting Dates & Times
- DES Wetland Permits - Turner Porter / Donald Knowles
- Executive Council Newsletter - Ruth Griffin

### **Topics of Discussion**

The first order of business addressed by the Board concerned the recent billing for fire hydrants by the Hampton Water Works. The bill total was slightly more than \$57,000 and represented a semi-annual billing. Mr. Lagassa asked whether there wasn't a break out of costs associated with the bill, i.e., the number of fire hydrants the service charge represented? The TA responded that the bill did not contain any breakout information, but rather represented a total bill for the entire hydrant service charge. Some discussion ensued regarding the issue with the result that the Board directed the TA to draft a letter to the HWW requesting more detail and supporting information with their billing. The TA agreed to do so.

The TA reviewed a Mason & Rich contract proposal for auditing services for the upcoming year. It was explained that the proposed cost of auditing services was \$4,950 with an additional fee of \$250 for preparation of the MS-5, a financial report required by the state that illustrates fund activity and balance at year end. A brief discussion ensued regarding quality of work and timeliness of work product. Mr. McAllister reported that Mason & Rich performed well and as a large statewide auditing firm, Mason & Rich remained current on changes made by the State in the area of government accounting standards. Mr. Hines made the motion to renew the contract for auditing services from Mason & Rich. Mr. Lagassa seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and was so moved. The TA was directed to sign the contract proposal submitted by Mason & Rich.

The Board next reviewed Jack Begley's (Town Tax Collector) appointment of Maragaret Neves as a Deputy Tax Collector. The Board accepted the Mr. Begley's appointment. The TA explained that Ms. Neves was helping out with the supplemental bills. It was further explained to the Board that there were approximately 330 supplemental bills of which 280 represented roughly \$54,000 in additional revenue, but the remaining bills represented almost \$115,000 in revenue. The latter supplemental bills represent non-billings on the second issue, while the formers represent the complete valuation on the properties whose second bill reflected incomplete assessment values.

The TA briefed the Board upon the on-line availability of the NHMA Legislative Bulletin and the ease of which such information can be tracked and archived.

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The TA next briefed the Board concerning some recent correspondence from the Town of Hooksett regarding SB-2 Town that also have alternative fiscal years that end June 31<sup>st</sup>. The letter addressed upcoming legislation (**HB-1482**) slated for discussion in the House. HB-1482 will allow alternative fiscal year Towns to return to, or adopt, a May Town Meeting schedule. The intent is to allow Town Meeting to occur more towards the end of the fiscal year than it now does. Preparation of the budget would occur more towards end of the budget cycle/fiscal year rather than at the beginning of the budget cycle/fiscal year as it now does.

Review of a position paper for article XIII of the Town Warrant addressing the policy implications of Chapter 38 and the Hampton Water Works was the next order of business taken-up by the Board. Mr. Wollmar began the discussion by stressing the importance of the handouts explaining the policy implications of the action requested by the Board to investigate the feasibility of buying the Hampton Water Works and converting it to a Municipal Water Works. Mr. Wollmar stressed that the Warrant Article addressing this issue authorized the Selectmen to **only** investigate the feasibility of the endeavor including preliminary financial analysis as to the viability of such an undertaking. Any further action or decision to move ahead with purchase of the Water Works would require authority of the Town's people voting by official ballot. Mr. Lagassa commented that some money will be spent on the preliminary financial analysis and research which may indicate that it is not a good investment for the Town. On the other hand the research and analysis may indicate that it is a good investment for the Town. In any event the research and analysis will shed light on the issue and particularly in the areas of which part of the Hampton Water Works makes the most sense to buy—only the assets in North Hampton, or the all of the HWW assets. Mr. Lagassa commented that it appears that the net book value is approximately \$15 million as suggested in the last quarterly report for the company filed with the PUC. Mr. Wollmar questioned the validity of those numbers.

The TA mentioned that he and a Board member were invited to a dinner meeting sponsored by EarthTech for Water Superintendents in Maine on February 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm in Portland. The Board thought it a good idea to attend as it would provide an opportunity to meet and speak with folks operating municipal water works. Mention was made of HB-375 sponsored by Senator Burt Cohen that had been tabled for further review. The legislation would have provided greater municipal oversight of water operations within their jurisdictions.

Recycling was next discussed. The TA explained that a citizen had asked to be placed on the agenda to discuss the topic with the Board almost six weeks previous, but had failed to attend the meeting. Mr. Strout spoke on the status of the Solid Waste Committee and their efforts to date.

The TA briefed the Board on the status of refinancing the General Obligation Bonds previously borrowed by the Town to construct the Police Station. It was explained that the tax-free bonds provided investment vehicles for independent investors looking for a return on their investment. While the Town had received a small refund on the refinancing of the bonds by the Bond Bank, the terms of the loan remained in force. Therefore, early payment had no effect upon reducing the required interest payment.

### **Selectmen's Concerns**

Mr. Hines indicated that he had none at the present time. Mr. Wollmar first invited the TA to a Planning Board meeting to brief the Board on the Little River Watershed Grant recently submitted by the Town to the USDA Forest Service. Mr. Wollmar next began a discussion concerning the issuance of permits under the interim growth ordinance placing particular emphasis on Mr. Strout's role of issuing driveway permits. Mr. Wollmar explained that the Building Inspector had a check list and on the list was a provision for a

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driveway permit, without which a building permit could not be issued. Brief discussion ensued along this line of reasoning and its applicability to the issue.

**Questions & Comments**

Lucille Ellingwood asked about the status of the three wells on Winnicut Road. Mr. Wollmar answered that the wells had been capped and were not being pumped.

There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting adjourned at 9:13pm.

Respectfully,

Russell McAllister  
Town Administrator