

Selectmen's Meeting
26 May 1998
7:00pm

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

The Selectmen next reviewed the previous meeting minutes of 4/27 and 5/11. Mr. Steiner made the motion to accept the minutes of 4/27 as published. Mr. Hines seconded the motion. Mr. Lagassa was unable to vote on the issue due to his absence at that meeting. The motion to accept the 4/27 minutes as published passed. Mr. Steiner made the motion to accept the minutes of 5/11 as published. Mr. Lagassa seconded the motion. Mr. Hines was unable to vote on the issue due to his absence at that meeting. The motion to accept the 5/11 minutes as published passed. Mr. Lagassa made the motion to approve the minutes of the non-public meeting held at Attorney John Ryan's office on 5/14. Mr. Steiner seconded the motion. Mr. Hines abstained from voting on the issue due to his absence at the meeting. The motion to accept the 5/14 minutes as published passed.

The selectmen reviewed correspondence and/or signed:

- Payroll
- Manifest
- Conservation Commission letter to Wildlife Preserves, Inc.
- Ruth Griffin - Executive Council Newsletter
- DOT / DES - Driveway Permit / Letter of Compliance
- Media One - Rates
- Purchase Order for Hwy Truck (98-99 warrant article)

Topics of Discussion

The TA provided information on the status of various projects.

The NH Estuaries Project grant submitted by the Conservation Commission to the Office of State Planning was accepted.

The purchase order for the new Highway Truck was presented to the Board. Bob Strout (DPW) explained that the PO would be paid when the Town takes delivery of the truck. The early ordering was to insure that the Town made the State contract list. Lead time for ordering was very lengthy and the Town may not take delivery until January of 1999.

The TA reported that the Town had won the Compensation Funds (CFNH) 1% award for estimating the yearly payroll within 1% of actual expenses. CFNH uses payroll estimates by category of work performed to calculate worker's compensation rates. Jan Facella, Administrative Assistant is directly responsible for providing these payroll figures to CFNH. Accuracy in the estimates helps keep worker's compensation costs down. Board members agreed that it was a job well done.

The TA reported that the District Court's order allowing the Town to proceed in the clean-up efforts on Ladd Carmen's property was in hand. The TA explained that this particular issue was new to him, but that he would confer with Town Counsel regarding the RFP and other details before proceeding. The Board agreed directing the TA to confer with John Ryan on appropriate procedures for issuance of the RFP.

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The TA gave a brief status report of the Little River Watershed Project. The aerial photography of the watershed was completed the previous Wednesday. The photo interpretation will begin on June 1st and fieldwork would immediately follow. Grant payments would be handled by Health & Human Services and directly deposited in the Town's General Fund. The TA encouraged all present to attend the 7:00pm 5/28 meeting of the Little River Watershed in the conference room.

A brief discussion regarding the Economic Development grant the Town was preparing for establishing a Regional Development Corporation through the Seacoast Business Alliance (SBA) ensued. The town's of Hampton & Hampton Falls had written letters of commitment agreeing that they would become part of the SBA's service area as part of the grant. The TA had drafted a similar commitment letter, as previously directed by the Board, for their review and signature. The Board signed the committal letter designating North Hampton as part of the SBA's service area.

Henry Fuller, Water Commissioner, next addressed the Board concerning the need for another member to the Water Commission due to the recent resignation of John Larkin. Discussion of potential nominees ensued. Mr. Lagassa made the motion to appoint Tim Harned as a Water Commissioner to serve out the remainder of Mr. Larkin's term. Mr. Steiner seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Fuller went on to report that HB374 has passed. The bill provided local input into any well pumping operation that extracted more than 52,000 gallons of water a day. Mr. Fuller asked if the text of the bill was available at the Town Office. Mr. McAllister replied that it was not. Mr. Lagassa asked whether Mr. Fuller had web access and he replied that he did not. Mr. Lagassa suggested that the TA look into downloading the text from the State's web site. The TA agreed.

Judy Day addressed the Board with her concerns regarding access to information. Ms. Day mentioned that she had encountered problems with locating the planning & zoning board minutes. She reported on the ease with which she was able to locate and access the Selectmen's minutes. Ms. Day went on to explain that she believed people working on the Boards were doing a good job, her chief concern was over the difficulty she encountered in her efforts to use and access the appeals process during a recent land use case. Part of the issue of access centered on the location of records and reports and the staff's knowledge, or lack thereof, of the whereabouts of the requested records and documents. Ms. Day also expressed frustration with contradictory information she received. She explained that she was informed that appeal was only afforded abutters when in fact any citizen with a valid concern could appeal. Mr. Hines explained that the issue of the Mill Road subdivision had been public knowledge and that the planning board had advertised the hearing on the proposed subdivision as required by statute in several local newspapers. The problem that seemed vexing, from Mr. Hine's perspective, were the folks who weighed in on the issue after the completion of the planning board. Mr. Hines admitted that the process was a complicated one. Ms. Day agreed that her experience with the issue did confirm that the process was indeed a complicated one. It was suggested that John Ryan, Town counsel, might be able to provide some information on the steps involved in an appeals process and also be of some assistance in providing case study examples. The NHMA was also suggested as a potential source of information. Ms. Day also expressed frustration with the acoustics of the Town Hall where the planning and zoning board hearings are held. She cited the difficulty of hearing any of the discussion among the planning board members. She also suggested that agenda items be more descriptive. Ms. Day felt that her questions regarding the validity of the soils and hydrology studies were never adequately addressed. Mr. Lagassa commented that the participatory process of government is an open one when viewed from his perspective as a Board member. After hearing of Ms. Day's frustration with the process, he did concede that the process was difficult when viewed from her perspective. Mr. Steiner largely agreed noting that some changes that can be made in the process are simply mechanical. He cited the use of microphones and a PA system coupled with the rearrangement of the seating as one solution to help alleviate the problem of poor acoustics. It was generally underscored that citizens are the government and that participation, like Ms. Day's input, was vital. The TA asked Ms. Day if she would be

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willing to contribute a written piece highlighting some of her frustrations with the process for the employee newsletter. Ms. Day agreed. The Board directed the TA to discover the costs of a PA system that could be used at planning and zoning board meetings.

Questions & Answers

Lucille Ellingwood commented that she had been attending planning and zoning board meetings for a very long time and that it was up to individuals to attend and learn the process. She also expressed her concerns regarding the potential use by Town citizens of the Town Attorney. The Board reassured Ms. Ellingwood that the use of legal counsel was limited to authorized personnel only.

Mr. Strout addressed the Board concerning the problem of stones being left in the road. He explained that many folks are extending their lawn's to the road's edge. Mr. Strout ventured the opinion that many residents are unaware that the Town's right-of-way extends beyond the pavement. Mr. Strout commented that lawns extending to the edge of the pavement prevented proper drainage of the road. In turn, this lack of drainage led to cracking in the pavement. Mr. Strout also mentioned that the covers of the test wells associated with the Coakely Landfill and located in Lafayette Terrace needed replacement.

There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting adjourned at 9:40pm.

Respectfully,

Russell McAllister