

Selectmen's Meeting  
9 November 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 reviewed the regular meeting minutes of November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Lagassa made the motion to accept the minutes as written with corrections to spelling as suggested by Mr. Steiner. Mr. Steiner seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

The selectmen reviewed correspondence and/or signed:

1. Mason & Rich - Management Letter (Selectmen's Signatures)
2. DOT - Driveway Permit Extension (Nancy Beveridge)
3. RPC - New hourly Rates / \$35-hour

#### **Town Administrator's Report**

The TA briefed the Board on the status of the DES field inspection regarding the Peck property. A report from the DES explained that trees cut on the Peck property were outside of the tidal zone and therefore the cutting was not regulated under the shoreland protection act. Mr. Steiner asked whether a copy of the report was sent to the Brosseau's. The TA responded that he would forward a copy of the report to Mr. Brosseau the next day.

The Board discussed recent developments in the HWW well owner's response policy. Attorney's representing the HWW had alerted two participants under the well owner's response program that they would be ineligible to participate for the following reasons:

1. The first well owner allowed a dog to run freely about their property while employees of the HWW performed the well monitoring. The letter asked that the well owner provide the HWW with written assurances that the dogs would be restrained in the future while employees performed their well monitoring duties.
2. The second well owner received a letter, which alleged that during a pump inspection by the HWW, the owner's pump showed signs of leaking petroleum products. The HWW informed the owners that they would need to replace the pump and that failure to do so represented the potential to contaminate not only the owner's well but, that the of the surrounding drinking water supplies.

Mr. Lagassa commented that he had spoken with this individual and asked whether or not the information was accurate. The individual was uncertain but wanted to do the right thing and had, therefore, called the EPA and asked for them to perform the testing. In this way the individual believed she would have an unbiased test. The TA mentioned that he had also spoken with the individual and a representative of the HWW concerning the problem. The TA asked the HWW representative to keep in mind that they were not perceived as neutral. The HWW was, in the eyes of many, were viewed with suspicion and perceived as being a hostile company intent on taking their water. The HWW representative said that they would keep that perspective in mind in future dealings with the well owners. Mr. Lagassa reported that overall the monitoring program was well received by residents.

#### **Warrant Article Review**

The TA presented a warrant article for a telephone upgrade for the Town Offices, Fire, Police, Highway and Library. The new system was to be server based and would provide the ability to transfer calls among all departments and library. Presently, if one department receives a call from a citizen that is meant for another department, or the library, then the caller must hang-up and redial the correct department number

rather than simply being transferred. The new system would also handle the routing of all faxes to individuals, provide individual voice mail and allow future email capabilities for all designated employees. The system would also partition out the cost by department and allow better tracking of usage. The single system would replace the four individual systems now serving the Town. The cost was approximately 40K.

A warrant article for a new police cruiser was discussed. It was explained that the rotation and replacement program begun last year was now in place. The current program called for replacing one cruiser per year. The replacement schedule was designed to decrease the maintenance expenditures for the cruisers. By replacing the cruisers every 100-120k maintenance would be reduced and resale value increased. Resale value offset the purchase price of the new cruiser.

The warrant article for the replacement of the FD Suburban was discussed. Mr. Lambert explained that the current vehicle was 15 years old. Mr. Lagassa asked how many miles the vehicle had. Mr. Lambert indicated that the vehicle had approximately 65K, but that it had been used for plowing. Mr. Lambert explained that the vehicle would not pass inspection due to body rot. The vehicle was used primarily to transport 4 firefighters with their equipment to other towns for back-up, or to training sessions requiring gear. The necessity for another truck was debated. The Board agreed to review the total warrant article amounts prior to recommendation.

#### **Rob Parsons / NexTel Telecommunications Tower**

##### **CANCELLED**

The Board briefly discussed the necessity of having Mr. Parsons return to the Board. Mr. Steiner suggested that Mr. Parsons issue get onto the planning board agenda. While the Board was generally supportive of NexTel's proposal, it was largely a planning board issue and therefore Mr. Parson needed to discuss the feasibility of the project with the PB. The TA agreed to contact Mr. Parsons.

#### **John Hannah / Public Employees Retirement (457) Plan**

Mr. Hannah addressed the Board regarding his proposal to offer a public employees pension plan. Mr. Hannah explained that the initiative began with Mark Oullette, an attorney representing the NH Fire Fighters. The 457 plan was the public version of the private sector 401 retirement plan. The 457 plan was entirely voluntary and would involve no cost to the municipality. Employees participating within the plan would determine the amount of money they wanted to contribute from their paycheck (a maximum contribution of up to 8k per year) into their retirement plan. Mr. Hannah discussed the fees that would be charged to the employee for maintenance of the plan. The fees consisted of an annual \$18 participation fee and a three-quarter of one- percent plan management fee. Both fees were described as industry standards. The 457 plan was also portable meaning that the employee could participate in the same plan in another state of NH community. The plan was designed to closely resemble the International City Managers Association (ICMA) retirement plan that was initiated in the early 1970's. Mr. Hannah explained that Kemper Funds would be managing the plan. He described Kemper, a subsidiary of the Zurich Group, as having over 50 years in asset management and currently managing \$220 billion in funds in the US. Kemper was the 7<sup>th</sup> largest mutual fund company and the 9<sup>th</sup> largest defined contribution manager with over 20 years retirement plan experience while also being the largest qualified plan provider. Mr. Hannah explained that education of employees about their pension investment options was a key offered by the plan. Such education would include the basics of what a stock is and is not, how to decide the right investment strategy, long term, aggressive, conservative, ect. The TA pointed out that there would be a small cost to the Town in the form of payroll service costs wherein ADP would charge a nominal fee to the Town for direct deposit of an employee's contribution to the plan. The Board felt that the benefits to the employee and the very minimal cost to the Town were a favorable situation. The Board directed the TA to arrange the particulars and review the documentation for further review by the Board.

### Selectmen's Issues

#### *Records Needs*

Mr. Steiner commented on the "Record Needs Assessment" report conducted by Peter Parker & Cynthia Swank of the *Insight Group*. The assessment was performed for free by the Insight Group. One of the recommendations was to form a Records Committee as outlined under RSA 33-A:3 to better determine the necessary strategy for storing, archiving, retrieving, managing and providing access to public records. Mr. Steiner suggested that the TA could head-up the committee that would involve participation by other employees and members of the public. The TA agreed to research the implication of RSA 33-A:3 and report back to the Board. Mr. Steiner felt that the creation of a line item in the budget with nominal funding of even \$1.00 would start the ball rolling.

#### *Town Newsletter*

Mr. Hines discussed the idea of a Town newsletter and the costs involved as well as the necessity of keeping the citizenry well informed and interested in the various Town activities. Mr. Lagassa thought that it was a good vehicle for informing folks and presenting important issues to folks. The costs of providing such a newsletter were anticipated to cost approximately \$4,000. The TA pointed out that it was an excellent idea that involved some training costs, but would prove a valuable vehicle to help build employee's technology skills.

#### *Town Web Site*

Mr. Hines also encouraged the development of a Town website noting that even the Town of Colebrook had one. Mr. Hines believed that it would be beneficial for those folks whose schedules were such that they were unable to attend public meetings, but were still interested in familiarizing themselves with the issues. Brief discussion regarding website costs ensued. The TA pointed that he had previously developed a municipal website and that domain name registration was approximately \$175 for two years. Monthly ISP costs associated with hosting a website were approximately \$50 per month. The costs for development, depending upon site size, may be around \$1000. However, maintenance of the site, inclusion of banner ads by local businesses, would add up. The TA suggested that employee skill levels need to go up in the areas of technology. He suggested that an intranet site be developed by employees first. In this way the necessary skills could be learned and this would in the long run decrease the costs of maintaining a Town website.

#### *Town Office Signage*

A discussion regarding the costs of erecting a sign in front of the Town Offices ensued. The TA reported that Allen Sisson, the artist who had donated a drawing of the Town Office and worked on the Town Seal, had offered to design a sign. The costs of the materials would need to be determined by a builder. The Board discussed the necessity of having the sign and the many citizen comments they had received advocating such a need.

#### *Moving Town Offices Over the Police Station*

Mr. Lagassa asked Mr. Steiner how his work on estimating the costs of the move. Mr. Steiner reported that he had costed out the work on the handicap lift, the suspended ceiling, electrical and plumbing costs, new entrance way and training room, case work, and lighting. He estimated these costs to be approximately \$105k. Furniture, cubicle dividers and data wiring were not included. Mr. Steiner indicated that he would continue to work on the numbers.

#### *Citizen Complaint*

Mr. Hines asked what the story was on the trailers that were parked behind Rite-Aid. Paul Charron explained that they were temporary storage for the builders who were currently renovating and expanding the Rite-Aid in the plaza.

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*Snow-Plowing and Mowing*

Mr. Steiner reported that the school board was inquiring into the possibility of having the Town plow the elementary school parking lot and mow the athletic fields during the summer. Mr. Strout explained that the costs of having the Town do the work would not be very different than having a contractor do it. The reason, as explained by Mr. Strout, was that employees were paid time and half after midnight. Most of the roadwork was completed before midnight, therefore plowing the school lot would involve overtime that may not lead to less expense to the school. As for the mowing of the school fields the Town's 52 inch mower was too small to be efficient on such a large field given that the highway department consisted of only three full-time employees. Mr. Steiner asked if Mr. Strout would put some numbers together to show his supposition. Mr. Strout agreed. The Board agreed that the tax rate is the tax rate and that if a means existed to lower costs, then it would be utilized.

**Questions & Comments**

Bob Strout asked if the Recycling center employees, who worked part-time, could have the day off when holidays fell on the days when the center was open. Mr. Strout explained that there was no overtime or holiday pay involved because all the employees were part-time. It was also noted that the number of holidays falling on regular recycling center hours was, depending upon the calendar, no more than 2-4 days per year. Given the limited amount of impact a change of policy in the hours of the center would have, Mr. Lagassa made the motion to allow the Recycling Center and Brush Dump to be closed on holidays. Mr. Steiner seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and was so moved.

Mr. Strout next inquired whether or not the Selectmen would consider placing \$75,000 on a warrant article for road reclamation. The reclamation project would cover a stretch of North Road from the Rye Line to Route One. The Board agreed to review the request.

Lucille Ellingwood asked when Bob Landman would be turning his sprinkler system off. Ms. Ellingwood commented that her car got dirty just by driving past his residence. A comment was made that the reason the sprinkler system was left on was because helped to mitigate the effects of road salt on the maple trees. Ms. Ellingwood wanted to know what he proposed to do during the winter. Someone noted that he would probably use warm water. Ms. Ellingwood objected reasoning that the runoff would freeze in the road creating a slipping hazard for passing motorists.

There being no further questions to come before the Board a motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The public meeting adjourned at approximately 9:06. Mr. Steiner made the motion to convene in non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) to discuss a personnel issue. Mr. Lagassa seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

Respectfully,

Russell McAllister  
Town Administrator