

Selectmen's Minutes  
24 May 1999  
7:00pm

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

The Selectmen reviewed the meeting minutes of May 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Steiner made the motion to accept the regular minutes of May 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Hines seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

The selectmen reviewed correspondence and/or signed:

- a. Minutes - May 10<sup>th</sup>
- b. Payroll
- c. Manifest
- d. ZBA Appointments (Russell Jeppeson member 2002, Russell McCann alt 2002)
- e. Abatements (Edward McGarry \$669.54 / Jerrold Dupont \$134.35)
- f. Abatement Application Review (Anne Moore)
- g. Coakley (SRF II loan agreement execution.)
- h. Brooks Valuation Services - RFP

### **Police Department Review**

#### *Review cost / benefit of implementing Motorcycle Patrols*

Police Chief Michael Maloney briefed the Board about the findings of his report on the cost / benefit of utilizing motorcycle patrols during the summer season. Chief Maloney explained that the idea for utilizing a motorcycle within the department during the summer was suggested by Seacoast Harley Davidson. The motorcycle would be leased to the town, yet the least costs would be paid for by local businesses. Those costs included insurance, training, equipment such as helmets, boots and breaches and maintenance. Fuel would be the only cost to the town. The Board asked about the total equipment costs involved and the number of officers that would be outfitted. The approximate cost was \$800 per officer. The Board was also interested in the potential liability from the perspective of workers compensation, additional insurance premiums and deductibles in case of accident. Mr. Maloney explained that the insurance deductible was \$500 and that the officers were already covered by workers compensation. Mr. Lagassa asked how the donations were solicited from local businesses to cover the costs of the motorcycle program. Mr. Maloney indicated that he had approached business owners personally to gauge their interest and support for the program. Five businesses had offered to cover the costs of the program. The total costs, excluding fuel, was \$3,500. The TA asked if the program costs paid by the business owners would go through the police association's benevolent fund, which, in turn would pay the program costs. Chief Maloney replied in the affirmative. Mr. Lagassa asked what the long term cost ramifications of the program might be if at a later time business support for the program waned. The Board voiced concern about the future additional costs that might accrue to the department and whether there was adequate community benefit to offset the cost. Mr. Maloney explained that the present benefits of the program included positive public relations, somewhat lower operating costs for a motorcycle compared with the operating costs for a cruiser. The motorcycle would never be the only vehicle on patrol in the town. Further, the motorcycle would not be operated during evening hours. The motorcycle patrol would be primarily used for traffic control such as speeding. Mr. Maloney explained that the addition of a motorcycle was more of a 'want' than a department 'need'. Mr. Steiner noted that from a safety perspective cruisers were more visible than motorcycles. Mr. Hines reasoned that if economic support for the program by the business community provided an opportunity to test the program at very little cost to the town, then it made sense to initiate the program on a test basis. Mr. Lagassa asked that all documentation be reviewed prior to moving ahead, but that present circumstances made it feasible to test the viability of the program. Mr. Hines made a motion to approve the motorcycle patrol program and allow payment from supporting NHH businesses via the police

association's benevolent fund, which in turn would pay the costs of the program. Mr. Steiner seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

### **Highway Department**

#### *Review of Road Surface Management program utilizing RSMS software package.*

Robert Strout briefed the Board about a proposal to implement a road surface management system (RSMS) by explaining what such a system did. The system was designed specifically as a database to inventory roads and their respective conditions. The software provided a database that held attribute information such as name of the road, length and width of the road, its ditches and number of culverts. The database also contained information about the condition of the road such as the number and type of cracks, their length and width. The information provided a matrix from which the condition of the road and the cost of repairing it could be calculated and compared with other town roads and their cost of repair. Road surfacing and repair priorities were then calculated by the package using a ranking system. The RSMS program was user friendly and did not require specialized knowledge. The package was designed so that everyone in the highway department could easily use it to classify road conditions and update the database as necessary. Mr. Lagassa asked about the cost. Mr. Strout explained that the cost was \$2,500 and included the software and the services of an engineer who would conduct the initial inventory of all the Town Roads and input the inventory data into the package as well as provide user training with the package. Mr. Strout also added that the cost of the system and engineering services would come out of next year's paving account. Mr. Steiner asked if the package could also be used to calculate and categorize costs associated with highway activities. Mr. Strout did not believe the software did so directly, but that data in the system could be used to help calculate other highway maintenance activities. Mr. Steiner made the motion to approve the expenditure of \$2,500 from next fiscal year's paving budget to purchase the software and engineering services associated with training and inventory. Mr. Hines seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

### **Historical Society**

#### *Priscilla Leavit space needs for items.*

Ms. Leavit addressed the Board concerning the Historical Society's need for additional space to store their items. Ms. Leavit described the collection of items and their disposition commenting that the space provided to the Historical Society by the Library had simply been filled. The space above the Police Department and the present plans, approved at Town Meeting, to outfit the room directly above the Mary Herbert Conference Room was discussed. Mr. Steiner asked how much space would the Historical Society need. Ms. Leavit replied that the items were stored in acid free bank size boxes and that the total volume of storage space should not be more than 6' H x 3' W x 3' D. Mr. Hines asked about the level of security the Historical Society would need, indicating that the level of security would not be greater than at the library. Ms. Leavit replied that such a level was acceptable. The Board agreed that space needs were of a growing concern to the Town, and that it was important to accommodate the needs of the Historical Society. Ms. Leavit agreed to stay in touch and the Board agreed to provide the space requested.

The Board next discussed the appraisal RFP for the Hampton Water Works Company (HWW). It was noted that the original respondents had been winnowed down to four and interviewed. Subsequent to that interview two other firms had been winnowed from the group of four. The remaining two had been asked to respond to a more detailed RFP. The TA mentioned that the office had received one reply to the detailed RFP. The Board discussed the potential impact the education-funding plan might have on the appraisal of the HWW. Under the education-funding plan the State would tax the utilities directly for the State portion of the statewide property tax and the Town would issue tax bills for the local share separately. The State assesses utilities by using the unit method, whereas the Town may end up utilizing the business value approach. The differing approaches may lead to different assessment values. The concern among Board

members was whether or not both assessments would be valid, and which assessment value was likely to be the more valid. Mr. Lagassa suggested that the Board make their final recommendation regarding the RFP award during their next meeting on June 14<sup>th</sup>. The TA agreed to contact the remaining appraisal firm that had not responded to the more detailed RFP and inform them of the deadline.

### **Recreation Commission**

#### *Frank Petrino - Summer Hires*

Mr. Petrino explained that he was standing in for Jill Brandt and wished to introduce Megan Grassl to the Board. Ms. Grassl had been chosen to fill the position of Assistant Director for the summer recreation program. Ms. Grassl had recently completed her Med. At UNH and had interned at the elementary school. The Board welcomed Ms. Grassl aboard. Mr. Petrino noted that the program was moving from Dearborn Park to the school because the school provides shelter during rainy days. It also serves as a place for indoor activities during inclement weather. Mr. Asked whether or not the Board would be amenable to accepting a gift of land from him. Mr. Petrino explained that there was currently a lack playing fields for the youngsters in Town and that lack of playing fields limited recreational activities for everyone. The Board agreed that more playing fields would make a difference. The Board noted that the Conservation Commission was looking into the issue as well.

### **Selectmen Issues**

#### *Education Funding Meeting by Donor Communities in Portsmouth*

Mr. Lagassa briefed those in attendance about the Boards attendance at a meeting in Portsmouth of "donor" communities earlier in the day. The 'donor' communities were "coalition communities" and the topics discussed at the meeting included the formulaic problems with the education funding law itself, and the unfunded mandate enactment of the education funding legislation had created. Mr. Lagassa explained that the coalition was not against funding for education, but rather the board disagreed with the methodology used to determine which Town's shouldered most of the burden. Mr. Steiner noted that many towns "receiving" education money used the proceeds to simply lower their tax rates. It seemed that the intent of the legislation was to raise money for education purposes and not for property tax relief. Particularly if that tax relief was at the expense of another town. The unfunded mandate issue was covered by the NH constitution, which prohibited the legislature from enacting legislation that burdened municipalities with additional costs without corresponding revenues to offset those costs. The education funding legislation shifted the burden of administration and collection of the statewide property tax to the municipalities. The legislature had appropriated one million dollars to cover any additional costs to the municipalities during the first year only! No additional appropriations were addressed in the legislation to cover the administrative burden in subsequent years. During the afternoon meeting in Portsmouth a representative from the "donor" town of Lincoln noted that the average per capita income of residents in that town was \$17,000. Yet, they would be sending money to a "receiver" town like Bedford that had per capita incomes of \$35,000. After further discussion and expressions of frustration Mr. Steiner made a motion to support the efforts of the coalition communities by directing the town's counsel to work in conjunction with other attorneys so engaged in the law suit against the State by other "donor" towns. Such costs associated with this effort to be separately accounted for. Mr. Hines seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

Mr. Hines brought up the issue of the method of appointing members to the Heritage Commission. The method of appointment was proscribed by a previous vote of Town Meeting. The planning board appointed members to the Heritage Commission. Those appointees were then referred to the Board of Selectmen for approval. The Heritage Commission was in need of new members, but there had been some confusion over the method of appointment. The TA was directed to send a note to the planning chair about the method of appointment and the need for new members to serve on the commission.

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Mr. Steiner expressed interest in having the town office use recycled paper and initiate a trash study. The TA agreed to look into the costs of recycled paper. The TA noted that the office now used print drivers in the applicable printers that enabled the printer to print up to 8 pages of text on one side of paper. It was noted that for readability, two pages of text were usually printed on one side.

Mr. Steiner also asked that an RFP for test borings be drawn-up in preparation for test borings at the Brush Dump on Cherry Road as approved at the last Town Meeting. The TA agreed to do so.

Mr. Steiner also noted that Bob Neville was preparing a proposal for a build-out analysis on the wqestern side of town and that he would soon report back to the Board.

**Questions & Comments**

Lucille Ellingwood noted that many of the people and businesses that go through the effort of procuring a yard sale permit and readying their wares, seldom, if ever, bother to take their signs down after their yard sale. Ms. Ellingwood believed that something should be done to correct the situation.

There being no further business to come before the Board the public meeting adjourned at approximately 8:50pm.

Respectfully,

Russell McAllister  
Town Administrator