

Selectmen's Minutes
9 August 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 July 26th. Mr. Hines made the motion to accept the regular minutes of July 26th. Mr. Lagassa seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

The selectmen reviewed correspondence and/or signed:

- I. Administration/Business
 - a. Minutes - July 26th
 - b. Payroll
 - c. Manifest
 - d. Intent to Cut application
 - e. Property Tax Abatement - John Cafarella (\$16.96)
 - f. Conservation Deed - Lewis & Hobbs 017-074-000
 - g. Executive Council Newsletter / Rockingham County Nursing Home data
 - h. Abatement request (Joe Fitzgerald) Late filing
 - i. DOT Correspondence / Specialty Risk
 - j. RPC - Build-out contract
 - k. Friends of Centennial Hall - correspondence

The Board reviewed the correspondence between the Friends of Centennial Hall and the Bandstand Committee. There was some confusion between the two entities regarding the established financial practices of the Bandstand Committee. There was a question regarding the fees charged by the Bandstand Committee for use of the Bandstand and whether the Board of Selectmen had previously adopted such a fee schedule. The Board of Selectmen discussed the issue. Mr. Hines noted that the idea of the Bandstand Committee was to raise money to provide for community concerts and the like. Such activities were to be supported by fees charged by the Bandstand Committee so that the Bandstand would be self-sufficient and not reliant upon tax money from the Town. The TA reported that he could find no mention of fee schedules adopted by the Board in previous Board of Selectmen meeting minutes. The TA did provide a copy of the North Hampton Bandstand Rules and Regulations as adopted by the Bandstand Committee. Following a review by the Board, Mr. Steiner noted that the rules and regulations seemed reasonable and suggested that the Board officially adopt them. His fellow Board members agreed. Mr. Steiner made the motion to adopt the North Hampton Bandstand Rules and Regulations. Mr. Hines seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

The TA briefed the Board on a staff proposal to sell the green 1992 crown victoria and replace it with a 1996 black and white cruiser that is being cycled out of the PD fleet. Given the age of the 1992 crown vice and number of miles (105k) it currently has, it makes good business sense to sell it while it still has some useful value. The proceeds of the sale will be used to paint and repair a dent in the front driver door of the 1996 black and white cruiser. The quote for the cost of the body repair and paint job is \$900 from Atlantic Autobody. The Board agreed with the staff proposal and gave the go ahead.

The TA reported that recent DOT correspondence regarding the Board's request for a four-way stop sign at the intersection of Walnut Avenue and Lovering Road near the Winterberry subdivision site, was approved by the DOT.

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Public Hearing - 7:30pm - CANCELLED

*To accept comments concerning a \$2,000 donation to the William P. Fowler
Conservation Fund*

The TA reported that after consulting with the Town Attorney about the proposed gift, it was determined that a public hearing was not necessary. Because the Conservation Commission was a statutorily separate entity from the Board of Selectmen, the Con Comm was empowered to accept gifts in established funds. Shirley Fuller, Town Treasurer added that the nature of the gift was stocks and that the bank would convert the stocks to cash and then deposit the funds into the proper account.

Coalition Communities Lawsuit Status

The TA reported that he had received correspondence in regards to the lawsuit and an outline of a proposed study plan. A meeting was planned for the coalition communities to update everyone on the status of the lawsuit as well as provide background information on current New Hampshire tax policy. The next scheduled meeting was September 1st at the Sheraton Harborside in Portsmouth.

Status of HWW Appraisal

The Board briefly reviewed the professional service agreement as rewritten by Mr. Lagassa. Tim Harned, Water Commissioner expressed some reservation with the wording concerning legal liability and indemnification of Brooks Valuation Services. Mr. Harned was concerned that in case of a lawsuit the town would be forced to indemnify Brooks Valuation without the ability to veto any insurance settlement. The TA noted that the Town's insurance carrier (NHMA's Property Liability Trust) allowed the Town to veto any out of court insurance settlement. Mr. Lagassa concurred, but believed the addition of the language within the document would not hurt and therefore agreed to add it. Mr. Steiner made the motion to authorize the Chair, George Lagassa, to execute the agreement after making the agreed upon changes. Mr. Hines seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

Selectmen Issues

The Board began a lively debate concerning salary increases for department heads. Mr. Steiner noted that work needed to be done concerning salary ranges for department heads. Mr. Steiner preferred the idea of merit based salary increases rather than increases based on longevity. Mr. Hines agreed but added that wages do tend to lose their purchasing power overtime and that COLA's based upon the inflation rate were an appropriate method of insuring that department head salaries did not decline in their level of purchasing power. It was noted that morale was also a factor in light of the recently approved wage increases for the fire department. Mr. Lagassa stressed that the Town's ability to support salary levels was eventually based upon its fiscal capacity. The Board acknowledged that there was 3% in the budget to cover salary increases for department heads. Given the low level of inflation 1.7-2.0% the Board reasoned that salary increases for the time being should not exceed the rate of inflation. After further discussion it was determined that a 2.0% increase to department head salaries was justified. The Board agreed that there was an inherent tension between COLA's and merit-based increases. More weight should be given to merit rather than COLA, but that COLA was important as a means of insuring no real decline in purchasing power occurred. Mr. Hines made the motion to approve a 2% salary increase for department heads. Mr. Steiner seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved. Mr. Lagassa acknowledged that there might be room for further adjustment, but that the discussion concerning merit or performance based increases, should be held in a non-public session.

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Questions & Comments

Lucille Ellingwood commented that a water main had broken recently and left the color of her water brown. She noted that she had a difficult time getting the HWW to respond as to whether the water was safe to drink or to wash clothes in.

Mr. Lagassa reminded the TA that the Police Chief needed to begin the police manpower report. He also requested that the Chief provide a report on the status of the motorcycle patrols.

There being no further business to come before the Board the public meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45pm.

Respectfully,

Russell McAllister
Town Administrator