

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 December 27th. Mr. Steiner made the motion to accept the regular minutes of December 27th. Mr. Lagassa seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

The selectmen reviewed correspondence and/or signed:

Administration/Business

- a. Minutes - December 27th
- b. Payroll
- c. Manifest
- d. Reduction in Bond Mill Place / Winterberry / Ridgemont
- e. Discretionary Easement - Jean Fisher
- f. DOT - Driveway Permit (Josephine Lamprey)
- g. Executive Council Newsletter

The Board reviewed the planning board recommendation to lower the bond amounts for Mill Place, Winterberry and Ridgemont subdivisions.

Mill Place from \$613,791.50 to \$90,746.25
Ridgemont from \$620,791.50 to \$125,000
Winterberry from \$482,826.25 to \$120,179.95

Mr. Steiner made the motion to reduce the bond amounts [listed above] as recommended by the Planning Board. Mr. Hines seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

The Board reviewed a request from Jean Fisher to continue her discretionary easement on her property 019-022-000. The length of the easement is for 10years. The land is classified under current use as farmland and will be taxed at a rate of \$425/acre. Changing the land use prior to the expiration results in a land use change penalty. Mr. Steiner made the motion to grant the discretionary easement. Mr. Hines seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

Town Fire Alarm System - 7:15pm

Discussion of costs and implementation of user fees.

Mr. Lagassa provided a brief synopsis of the issue explaining that the Board was interested in the implementation of a fee-based service for those businesses using the municipal fire alarm system. Letters stating the Board's intent were sent to businesses using the system asking for comment and feedback on the proposal. The letters also invited them to attend the evenings meeting. A letter from Regal Limousine commenting on the proposed fee schedule was reviewed. Fire Chief Thomas Lambert provided an overall technical explanation of the municipal fire alarm system. It was explained that there are four major types of alarms systems, municipal auxiliary circuit, central fire alarm/receiving station, proprietary system, and a supervised system. It was noted that line conditions are monitored 24 hours a day by the municipal system versus private system line monitoring of once to several times a day. The type of businesses required to have fire alarms is mandated by State code. There is currently \$11,000 in the fire department budget of which \$8,500 was earmarked to upgrade the fire alarm equipment (Form 4) in the station. The Form 4 upgrades the current system from analog to digital. It will enable trouble shooting of the system at the

console rather than from inside the panel. Entering the panel can be a safety issue because of the live current. Police Chief Michael Maloney provided an overview of Police response to home alarms. He noted that from January 1st through December 31st of 1999 the department had responded to 468 home alarms. Out of that number 467 had been false alarms. The Police Department responded to as many as 3 alarms from the same household per week. Because of the number of false alarms Mr. Maloney reported that the department was looking at the feasibility of crafting an alarm ordinance, which would require a permit for installation and institute fines for false alarms over a certain number. Dick Wollmar talked about the fire alarm problems with the system installed in Centennial Hall, which is connected to the municipal system. It was explained that Kohlhas Electric eventually fixed the alarm system in the building. Mr. Steiner explained that no one was required to hook into the system. Mr. Lagassa noted that Kohlhas had repaired the internal system and not the line maintained by the Town. Mr. Landman asked who was the alarm company? What was the origination of the system? Mr. Landman also questioned the annual maintenance costs (\$252) of the system. In reference to false alarm rates he noted that everyone [system] has problems. Mr. Landman was not in favor of cross subsidization. Richard Goeselt, Library Trustee, noted that the Library was probably under-insured and that while the building had smoke and heat detector, it did not have a sprinkler system installed. Therefore, the Library as part of the municipal system depended on a speedy response. He asked whether, given the tone of the discussion, whether there were any plans to scrap the system? Mr. Landman expressed that it should. Mr. Hines believed the issue to be one of fair play. He asked why only 32 out of some 264 businesses connected to the system should be subsidized by the other businesses and residents in Town. Mr. Steiner asked Lt. O'Connor if residences could be hooked into the system. Lt. O'Connor explained that the cost is expensive and traditionally the system was used for commercial industrial zones. It was noted that fire hydrants were an example of a benefit received in a limited part of Town, yet subsidized by all the residents in Town. Mr. Lagassa noted that the businesses had represented themselves through a letter from Regal Limousine, which indicated that they would be willing to pay for a fee. The school and library, for obvious reasons were not in favor of paying a fee. Mr. Goeselt asked whether there was a strategy for resolving the issue. Mr. Lagassa noted that the system was working fine and the urgency of the issue lay in the appropriations for the upgrade of the system. He noted that there were other issues that related directly to the larger issue of the municipal alarm system such as the inequities of the fire hydrants, the number of false alarms. Therefore, the Board would consider removing the appropriations for the system upgrade this year along with fees, while further research was done on the issue. Mr. Goeselt approved of a fee based system.

Selectmen's Issues

Mr. Lagassa noted that the Town now had a web site *north-hampton-nh.com* and that it was still under construction, but that the site would evolve and improve with time.

PUC Settlement of Hampton Water Works Rate Increase

Mr. Lagassa provided a brief synopsis of the rate case issue noting that Henry Fuller did a very good job as Water Commissioner. An outline of the settlement agreement was presented. The return on equity portion of the agreement request by the HWW called for an 11.7% increase. The settlement agreement is 9.5%. The increase in annual revenue requirement portion of the agreement request by the HWW called for \$978,500. The settlement agreement is \$584,824. The percentage of revenue increase portion of the agreement request by the HWW was 28.89%. The settlement agreement is 16.2%. Mr. Lagassa explained that the increase is spread across categories of customers with seasonal customers seeing the greatest increase. Mr. Fuller noted that there had been no rate increase for 9 years. The current rate increase averaged less than 2% per year. Mr. Steiner made the motion to approve the agreement as outlined by John Ryan (Town counsel). Mr. Lagassa seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

Citizens Petitioned Growth Management Ordinance

Mr. Lagassa provided background to the issue for those present and highlighted the Board's discussions with legal counsel. Mr. Lagassa explained that the current citizens petitioned growth ordinance imposes limits on the number of permits issued by the building inspector as the primary means of regulating growth. It was noted that limiting building permits under the citizens petition was problematic because there were no provisions that addressed the issue of previously approved subdivisions that were bonded and under construction. Subsequent discussion and review of the issue with the Town's legal counsel indicated that previously approved subdivisions had a vested interest which was an overriding interest with respect to the growth ordinance. Mr. Steiner made the motion to,

"Authorize the Building Inspector to issue building permits with respect to any development which qualifies under RSA 674:39 or RSA 676:12 as exempt from the proposed Growth Control Ordinances, until the action of the Town Meeting on the Growth Control Ordinance. The Building Inspector is instructed to consult with Town Counsel regarding the above."

Mr. Hines seconded the motion and noted that the Board was seeking to minimize the Town's liability from any claims brought by those people whom had vested interest rights. The vote was unanimous and so moved. Henry Mixter (Conservation Commission) informed the Board that despite rumors to the contrary, the Conservation Commission has not discussed nor approved plans for buying developable land as a means of taking it off the market. Mr. Mixter reported that the culvert installation beneath Appledore Avenue is now complete.

Questions & Comments

Lucille Ellingwood noted that fire alarms are a business, but the current system should be in place for Town buildings.

Mr. Steiner noted that there were discussions of locating a telecommunications tower on land that would be donated to the Town for that purpose. Attorneys were currently discussing the proposal and potentially drafting language that would be placed on the Town Warrant.

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

Respectfully,

Russell McAllister
Town Administrator