

The Chair, Jack Steiner at 7:05pm called the regularly scheduled Selectmen's meeting to order. Those present included George Lagassa, Lloyd Sullivan (Selectman), and Russell McAllister (Town Administrator).

The Selectmen reviewed the meeting minutes of November 27th & 29th. Mr. Sullivan made the motion to accept the minutes of November 27th & 29th. Mr. Lagassa seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

The selectmen reviewed correspondence and/or signed:

- a. Administration/Business
- b. Payroll
- c. Manifest
- d. Cemetery Deed
- e. Winter Maintenance Agreement - Winterberry Subdivision
- f. Current Use Abatement - Peter & Karen Worrell
- g. Abatement Request - Maureen & Douglas Cummings \$212.69
- h. Abatement Request - Charles & Aktina Pearson \$2,537.43
- i. Abatement Request - Ed Jewel \$540.33
- j. [DRA - 2000 Equalization Assessment Sheets Certificate](#)

The TA explained that the Town Assessor's (Howard Promer) preliminary analysis of the sales data indicates that the Town's sales ratio is approximately 76%. This means that a property that sells for one million dollars is assessed at 76% of the market value making the assessed value of that property \$760,000. The sales ratio is applicable to all recent sales. Therefore, properties selling for \$100,000 are currently assessed at \$76,000. The problem with a declining sales ratio is that the burden of taxation no longer falls evenly across all classes of property.

- k. Veterans Tax Credit - James D'Eon
- l. Executive Council Newsletter

Mr. Thomas Lambert (Fire Chief) addressed members of the Board and those present. Mr. Lambert announced that Mr. Corey Landry (Deputy Fire Chief) had received the certification of Fire Protection Specialist from the National Fire Academy. The number of certified Fire Protection Specialists worldwide was 1,400. Mr. Landry was one of 3 Fire Protection Specialists in the State of New Hampshire. Members of the Board and those present congratulated Mr. Landry for his achievement.

Dick Wollmar - 7:20pm *Water Protection Grant*

Mr. Wollmar addressed the Board noting that as a member of the Conservation Commission he was looking to submit a water protection grant with the NHDES as part of an effort to acquire a conservation easement on approximately 60 acres of farmland located just off Winnicut Road. It was part of a larger effort by the Conservation Commission to preserve open space in Town. Mr. Steiner asked if there would be any change in the taxes presently levied on the property. Mr. Wollmar explained that it would not because the land is taxed as current use and would continue to be in the future. Mr. Sullivan asked if the land placed in a conservation easement would be accessible by residents. Mr. Wollmar indicated that it would be accessible.

Selectmen Issues

<i>Resignation - Byron Kirby</i>	<i>TABLED</i>
<i>Bandstand Appointment</i>	<i>TABLED</i>
<i>Trustee of Trust Fund Appointment</i>	<i>TABLED</i>

New Hire in the PD

The TA briefed the Board that the Police Chief had run a hiring process and the field had narrowed to one candidate. The candidate was presently a part-time police officer in the Town of Rollinsford. His name was David Pridham and his background check was complete. The TA asked if he could extend a job offer to Mr. Pridham. The Board agreed. The TA explained that another officer was currently going through the process and if it panned out the department would be back up to staffing levels.

Cable Contract Review

Mr. Landman reviewed the shortcomings of the 1997 cable contract. He was concerned that the current provider, AT&T Broadband, was not offering the same level of services that other Towns were receiving—particularly in the area of high speed internet services. Other concerns raised by Mr. Landman included whether or not AT&T had the proper insurance and requisite bonding in place. Mr. Landman questioned whether the Town had the right to renegotiate the cable contract, as he believed that the recent purchase of MediaOne by AT&T Broadband might involve a transfer of the franchise agreement. Mr. Landman explained that programming like QVC actually paid AT&T to broadcast on their system. Mr. Landman questioned whether the Town received franchise payments based on gross revenue and whether or not revenue from telephone service offered via cable would be included in the franchise payment. Mr. Landman suggested that the Board create a Utilities Commission that would broaden the role of the Water Commission. Mr. Landman suggested that additional members might include himself and Mr. Lagassa. While this was not formally adopted Mr. Sullivan suggested that a letter be composed by Mr. Lagassa, to be sent to AT&T asking for proof of fulfillment of specific elements of the cable contract.

Mr. Landman next briefed the Board on his MPO activities. Mr. Landman noted that he was chair of the Route 1 Committee. Mr. Landman explained that he was looking into a special projects grant that would be used to re-examine the Kimbal Chase Study of the Route 1 Corridor. Part of the grant might lead to access management corridors that are managed by local jurisdictions. Mr. Landman explained that the Bike Lanes for North Hampton had been awarded and that the Town needed to provide a match to get the work done. Mr. Landman recalled that the amount was between 10-12k. The work itself involved re-striping of the fog lines. Mr. Robinson commented that it was a waste of money as Atlantic Avenue may be re-striped but the road would not get any bigger and traveling by bicycle would still be dangerous especially by the elementary school.

Municipal Fire Alarm System

Mr. Sullivan explained that there had been much discussion about the municipal alarm system from folks who had private systems. Mr. Sullivan proposed introducing a fee-based system. He noted that it would be irresponsible and burdensome to businesses currently using the service to abruptly terminate it without adequate notice. It was noted that surrounding municipalities operated fee-based services ranging from \$120 to \$250 per year. Mr. Lambert was asked about the yearly cost associated with alarm maintenance. Mr. Lambert noted that the cost was about \$600 per year and that there was cable replacement costs of approximately \$1,100 per year. Mr. Sullivan suggested that a fee schedule of \$150 per year multiplied by the 30 current users would yield \$4,500, which would more than cover the cost of the service. Mr. Landman did not believe that those costs reflected the true cost of maintaining the system and that it was a kind of subsidy provided by the Town. Mr. Steiner noted that Mr. Landman's business received a type of subsidy because it is classified as a home occupation. As such the property tax was based on residential and not commercial use as would be the case if he were located in the commercial/industrial zone. The TA

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explained that the municipal fire alarm was designed only for fire. Newer systems integrate many different security services as well as fire. Newer buildings were opting for more comprehensive security and fire packages and that this trend would eventually result in current customers opting out of the municipal system. Mr. Sullivan made the motion to maintain the current system and implement a fee of \$150 per year beginning in 2001, excluding Town owned buildings and non-profit organization (the two connected churches and Centennial Hall) from the fee. Mr. Lagassa seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

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

Respectfully,

Russell McAllister
Town Administrator