

Board of Selectmen  
Minutes of 10/31/05  
**Approved 11/14/05**

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Don Gould called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. There were present, Emily Creighton, Selectwoman, Jon Rineman, Selectman and Michael Pardue, Town Administrator. Mr. Pardue served as the Recording Secretary for this session.

**II. Selectmen Items**

**A. Review of 2006-2007 Department Budget Drafts**

The Board met individually with department heads to discuss their respective 2006-2007 budget drafts. The Board met with:

Highway Department – Road Agent Robert Strout  
Recreation Department – Recreation Director Diane Wheeler  
Code Enforcement – CEO Richard Maybe  
Police Department – Chief Brian Page & Lt. John Scippa  
Fire Department – Chief Tom Lambert & Deputy Chief Corey Landry  
Tax Collector – Ms. Margaret Neves  
Town Clerk – Ms. Delores Chase

Each department head provided a high level overview of their proposed budget, citing contributing factors that impact their respective budget proposals.

**Factors contributing to increases in each budget included** a projected 20% increase in health care cost; a 33-50% increase in fuel costs including gasoline, diesel, heating oil and propane. Departments with unionized personnel reviewed the requirements of the Collective Bargaining Agreements, focusing on the negotiated wage increases.

**Road Agent Strout cited** that he is having difficulty hiring part-time personnel due to the fact that North Hampton is not currently paying an hourly wage that meets or exceeds surrounding communities.

Ms. Creighton mentioned that last year Mr. Strout informed the board that he was having problems getting and keeping new help and now again this year. She asked him what he thought the reason was. Mr. Strout informed the board that the pay does not attract responsible employees. Ms. Creighton asked Mr. Strout how his salaries compared to other Towns. The board requested Mr. Strout to research what other surrounding communities are paying their part-time highway department personnel and bring back a recommendation to the Board for consideration.

Ms. Creighton suggested compensation be reviewed department-by department in order to determine how North Hampton fairs when compared to other seacoast communities.

Mr. Rineman cited the importance of keeping “in-step” with area communities so as to retain well trained, highly qualified personnel. Mr. Rineman stated that it is his opinion that North Hampton should “keep-up” with our neighbors.

Mr. Gould agreed with both Ms. Creighton and Mr. Rineman as to the importance of “keeping-up” with the communities with whom we compete for the best personnel.

**Mr. Strout presented the Recycling budget draft.** Much discussion ensued between Board members as to whether or not the Recycling Center should be kept opened another year (or more). Discussion centered around the appropriateness of encouraging recycling and affording residents a site to bring their recyclables or, whether it made sense to close the site due to what Mr. Gould cited as the apparent loss of \$20,000 or more annually. It was noted that the Town does have curbside recycling available for residents that choose to contract trash pick-up service privately.

Mr. Rineman cited that a recent Planning Board initiated survey determined there is a high interest amongst respondents to keep the recycling center operational.

The Board discussed imposing a “timeline”, allowing residents an opportunity to increase their recycling efforts at the Center, prior to the Board deciding whether or not to close the site. The discussed timeline ranged from one to five years. It was agreed by the Board, for now, that they would likely retain the Recycling Center for another year and discuss this matter further over the next several months.

Mr. Strout discussed the need to have a budget line item for MS-4 Stormwater work, citing that a member of the Highway Department was performing many of the duties associated with the MS-4 effort. Mr. Strout stated that he feels a line item amount of \$11,000 would be appropriate. The Board agreed to incorporate a line item in this amount in the proposed budget.

**Ms. Diane Wheeler, Recreation Director addressed the Board.** Ms. Wheeler cited that her budget increases were mostly tied to her position returning to a full-time status. As a full-time position, the recreation director is afforded benefits by the Town. It was noted that returning the position to full-time did bring the position back into compliance with the will of the voters.

The Board discussed with Ms. Wheeler the fees associated with the Summer Camp program. Ms. Creighton asked Ms. Wheeler how much income the Rec. brings in. Ms. Wheeler informed the board that \$20,000 was reported last year. Ms. Creighton asked how our charges for Rec. programs compared to other Towns. Discussion ensued which brought forth that many are charging more than North Hampton. Ms. Creighton

suggested that fees be increased by at least 20% which is still less than a resident would pay for a baby sitter and does not affect residents who can't afford to pay as the scholarship program exist to help those in need.

The consensus of the Board was that the Town should increase the fees associated with Summer Camp tuition by a rate of 20%. Ms. Wheeler stated that she will make the adjustment and thanked the Board. Ms. Wheeler shared with the Board that she has had concerns that the Town has been "giving away" this program for many years, especially when compared to the fees charged for similar programs in neighboring communities.

The Board discussed beach parking revenues, confirming the number of spaces "owned" by the Town and the number of beach stickers sold annually.

**Code Enforcement Officer Richard Maybe met with the Board.** Mr. Maybe cited his largest proposed increase was a result of a recently received Sign Ordinance Draft as authored by the Planning Board. Mr. Maybe expressed concern related to the potential impact an ordinance of this nature might have on his department. Mr. Maybe spoke of the need to "document" existing signage, the potential for litigation and the need for additional staff should this article be approved as written.

**Chief of Police Brian Page and Lieutenant John Scippa met with the Board** to discuss the proposed police department budget. Chief Page cited that the majority of the increase in the proposed budget was related to the addition of two new officers (as approved by voters last March) and the negotiated increases as cited in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

**Fire Chief Thomas Lambert and Deputy Chief Corey Landry met with the Board.** Chief Lambert cited the majority of the increase shown in the proposed fire department budget is a result of six (6) fire fighters coming off probation, each meeting the requirements for a "step increase" as negotiated with the union. Chief Lambert further cited that the fire department overtime budget line is increased in this proposal as the fire fighters coming off probation are now eligible for vacation, thus resulting in "open" positions that need to be filled if staffing levels are to remain constant.

Ms. Creighton inquired about grant funds related to breathing apparatus, noting that Rye, NH had been granted funds recently. Deputy Landry explained that he had, on multiple occasions, personally applied for grant funds for this resource and that the granting of these funds was, in his opinion, "the luck of the draw". Deputy Landry stated that he was very comfortable with the language used in the grant and remained hopeful that North Hampton would be awarded funding in one of the many grant rounds.

**Tax Collector Ms. Margaret Neves met with the Board.** Ms. Neves advised the Board that she expects to retire at the end of her current term, March 2007. The Board discussed a transition period with Ms. Neves, asking if she would be willing to contract her services (share her knowledge) from March 2007 to June 30, 2007 during this time

of transition. Ms. Neves agreed to this approach with the Board agreeing to add \$3,500 in the Tax Collector budget to cover this effort.

**Town Clerk Ms. Delores Chase met with the Board.** The Board discussed the Clerk's salary and fee compensation level when compared to hours worked by Ms. Chase. The Board and Ms. Chase engaged in discussion regarding the number of hours she is present at her office to serve customers. The Board expressed concern that it is their responsibility to ensure that any Town employee being granted New Hampshire State Retirement work the prescribed number of hours in order to qualify for such benefit. Much discussion ensued in an effort to establish a work pattern that met the "hours worked" requirement as per the RSA's governing the New Hampshire State Retirement Fund.

Ms. Chase assured the Board that she would develop a new work schedule that complied with the "hours worked" requirement.

Mr. Strout reentered the room and advised the Board that his research of wages for part-time highway department personnel found a rate of \$13.00 per hour to be the prevailing wage for personnel working in venues similar to the Recycling Center. He further cited that part-time plow personnel were commanding wages in the vicinity of \$17.00 hourly. The Board supported Mr. Stout making the necessary changes to his budget so as to remain competitive in this job market.

## **V. Adjournment**

Being no further business to come before the Board, Ms. Creighton made a motion to adjourn at 1:15 p.m. Mr. Rineman seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved. 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Pardue  
Town Administrator