



TOWN OF NORTH HAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
SELECT BOARD
APPROVED MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING – MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2011 –7PM
TOWN HALL

These minutes were prepared as a reasonable summary of the essential content of this meeting, not as a transcription

1. Call to order

Chair Maggiore called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Those in attendance were Selectman Miller, Town Administrator Fournier, and Selectman Wilson, via telephone.

Motion by Chair Maggiore to allow Selectman Wilson to participate in the meeting via telephone. Seconded by Selectman Miller.

Roll Call:

Selectman Miller Aye

Chair Maggiore Aye

Motion passes

Selectman Wilson stated for the record that Lisa Wilson was in the room with him.

Chair Maggiore led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

2.1 Regular Meeting Minutes of October 11, 2011

Motion by Selectman Wilson to approve the minutes as emended. Seconded by Selectman Miller.

Roll Call:

Selectman Miller Aye

Selectman Wilson Aye

Chair Maggiore Aye

Motion passes

3. Consent Calendar

Motion by Selectman Miller to approve the Consent Calendar. Seconded by Selectman Wilson.

Roll Call:

Selectman Miller Aye

Selectman Wilson Aye

Chair Maggiore Aye

Motion passes

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4. Report of the Town Administrator

Town Administrator Fournier stated that the town had received the health insurance guaranteed maximum rates (GMR) for July 2012. He further stated that those with Blue Choice 3 Tier will see a maximum increase of 0.43%, Blue Choice 2 Tier will see a maximum decrease of -0.65% and Matthew Thornton a maximum decrease of -1.31%. Dental rates will also see a decrease of 3.8% overall.

Consumer Price Index numbers have been received for the end of September, and the Northeast Regional rate increased 0.4% over the previous month, and the national and Boston update increased 0.3%. Also, the Social Security Administration announced that they will be granting a cost of living adjustment of 3.6%.

Town Administrator Fournier stated that the GACIT Public Hearing is scheduled for October 26, 2011 at 6:30 PM in the Town Hall. This hearing is for public input on the review of a 10-year plan of projects that are to be completed in this area, with Route 1 being the one that affects North Hampton the most.

5. New Business

5.1 Update on Little River Sampling – Chief Dennis Cote

Chief Cote stated that as of October 5, 2011 the water testing process had begun. Three samples with wet and dry comparisons have been done. The tests that were done signified that there were some hot spots or the probability of contamination that are feeding into the Little River. Prior to the testing, Chief Cote and Chris Ganotis sat down with members from Forest Bell Environmental to review and lay out where they wanted to start the testing.

Several points were marked as extremely high, or that have raised significant concern. Those areas of concern are north along the railroad tracks upstream of the mobile home park, south of Atlantic Avenue along the railroad tracks near the town hall, and a culvert at 5 Glendale Road. During wet weather events, “huge” spikes were of concern because of the run off somewhere. Prior to more definitive and specific testing, the Chief and Code Enforcement Officer, Red Mabey walked some of these properties. One property that was walked had a failing leech field or a field that was compromised. These spots have been identified and are key to those feeds going into the Little River, and all three are being addressed. These are all works in progress, the owners have been in contact with design and engineer companies, and they have started mitigation on some of the issues.

Chief Cote stated that one of the fields is a very large field and does have some water pumps that collect and discharge the water to the leech field. During rain events, timers were put on the pumps, and it showed that they were running 16 hours per day as opposed to dry periods when they were only running four hours per day.

Chief Cote stated that without getting into the specifics, those three sites that have been identified are addressing some of the issues. One of the properties already has a signed approval for a new septic system; the Glendale property will be having the state inspector for septic systems coming down. This system appears to be a design issue as opposed to a total failure. There is some concern for a fourth location that seems to spiked when there is a wet weather event, and that testing location is the culvert near Prime Acura that drains along North Road. Tests having shown levels that are four times what the levels should be.

Chief Cote stated that “major” steps have been taken as far as locating some of the potential sources of contamination; one is a major one, and one is going to be a major renovation of remodeling of the septic system, and they will be working very closely with them, and once the design has been approved by the state an action plan will be put in place.

Selectman Miller asked what the time line would be on these projects.

Chief Cote stated that he could not give a time line at this time. He further stated that one of the major contributors to this needs to have all of the piping re-laid to the septic system. He further stated that the older pipes are leaking ground water into them which transverses to the septic system, so that there is actually more water going into the system than it is designed for. It is not only the water from each unit that it services, but it is also getting all of the ground water.

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Town Administrator Fournier stated that when it comes to septic systems and enforcement, it is a state issue and they are the ones that enforce the laws through the Department of Environmental Services. He further stated that one of the systems that Chief Cote is talking about is not one home to a septic system; it is actually a number of campsites and mobile homes to a septic system, which will take a significant amount of time to rebuild.

Selectman Miller asked what a significant amount of time would be.

Chief Cote stated that Red Mabey is meeting with the engineers and the design company for this system, and to put into place an action plan to lessen the water that is going out there; whether it be having to pump the systems on a more regular basis or cycling their pumps, and then they will look to see how effective this new system is going to be. This is going to be very cost prohibitive for the owners.

Selectman Miller stated that he still does not have an answer to what amount of time this is going to take.

Chief Cote stated that currently they have a situation that has been identified and that the property owners have been cooperating fully and not "dragging their feet" regarding this issue. He further stated that this process would be monitored very diligently.

Selectman Miller stated that he would expect to know every month what the progress is, and would like to be updated on this issue so that the public knows what is happening, and so that the town does not forget about it.

Chief Cote stated that more definitive testing further upstream needs to be done before starting the next phases of the Little River Watershed. He further stated that testing was done to the inlet of Mill Pond as well as the outlet has been tested and has shown high readings, but they do not know how much of the high readings are coming from the west side of the railroad tracks.

Selectman Miller asked if anything had been found on the south side of Atlantic Avenue.

Chief Cote stated that one test site was very high, but that one septic system is in complete failure. This septic system is a commercial one so there is high water usage, and they have the approved septic system design for a pretreatment system similar to the one that was recently installed behind the town offices.

Chris Ganotis, Chair of the Conservation Commission, stated to the Select Board that the contract with Forrest Bell Environment includes several days of direct inspections by a Chief Enforcement Officer of the Department of Environmental Services, who is also part of the team working with the town on this issue. The head of the Water Quality Division of the Department of Environmental Services has also promised to give the town technical support from the Department of Environmental Services and make this high priority.

Mr. Ganotis stated that the meeting that is being held on Thursday, October 27, 2011 will look at the sampling of the four different events that they did the sampling on, and on those bench mark sites they will come up with a geometric mean of the results so that there is a pretty good idea of where the critical areas are.

Selectman Wilson asked if the weather plays into the installation of new septic systems.

Chief Cote stated that the weather does play a role because the frozen ground will prevent some of the run off to the septic field. He further stated that there has already been some mitigation to one of the systems as far as the monitoring the time that the pumps are actually running. In the past, septic systems that have failed have been ordered to pump out their tanks on a more frequent basis.

Selectman Wilson asked that if in conjunction with the town's own testing of sites along the Little River, did the Department of Environmental Services do any testing of the water at the beach where the E-Coli problem arose to see if consistent with the town's findings there were hot spots on Little River, and that there was some sort of spike in E-Coli in the beach water as well.

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Town Administrator Fournier stated that they do test the water at the beaches periodically so they probably would have found it, if it were a high level, sometime during the summer. At the times that they did get a high level, it was usually after a significant rain event.

Selectman Wilson stated that he felt the Select Board should consider a line item in the budget to allow the testing of the Little River in various spots. He further stated that he did not feel that the Conservation Commission should continue to use their funds to pay for these tests. Selectman Wilson stated that he did feel this is a relevant issue for the water quality for the entire town, and that the town should be deliberating on how much money should be budgeted every year to regularly test Little River until it comes to some point in which to say there is no E-Coli, to speak of, in it anymore, and don't have to budget for it.

Selectman Miller asked Chief Cote if he had a suggested figure that might be included as a budgetary item.

Chief Cote stated that they would probably have a better idea after their meeting on Thursday.

Chris Ganotis stated that every single one of the sample tests showed bacteria levels in excess of the safe standard; therefore, he felt it is reasonably safe to conclude that the likelihood would be that the beach would have been contaminated during those events as well.

Mr. Ganotis further stated that while the Select Board is working on job descriptions, he would strongly urge and suggest that more time of the Code Enforcement Officer, in the new job description, be allocated to routine septic system monitoring, because he believes that at the moment, the Code Enforcement Officer has too much on his plate, and so that has not been high priority issue with the town up until now.

Chair Maggiore thanked Mr. Ganotis for his excellent suggestion.

5.2 Update on Prescription Drug Take Back Program/Drop Box Legislation – Chief Brian Page

Chief Page stated that on October 3, 2011 he was invited to a Prescription Drug Strategy Summit. This summit involved both federal and state people from the education and medical fields, safety and law enforcement officials and members of the legislature.

Chief Page stated that one of the steps to getting prescription drugs off the street is obviously the “take back” programs. He further stated that what he learned at the summit is that the problem is not going to be solved by having drug drop boxes or one or two prescription “take back” days per year. Unfortunately, the legislature has ignored the fact that the state needs a prescription drug-monitoring program. The legislators that the Chief has spoken with have concerns with privacy issues and these privacy issues are becoming a public epidemic. Chief Page stated that it seems to him that people are telling law and safety enforcement that this is a serious problem, yet these rules and procedures have been being worked on at the federal level for seven years. The legislature did make a move to attempt to give law enforcement enabling legislation back in July, only to find out after speaking to some of the State Representatives that they are all very surprised to find out that these rules could be formulated in a relatively short period of time.

Chief Page stated that nationally in 2009, there were 3.99 billion prescriptions. The monitoring program would allow doctors to report to law enforcement agencies that someone was “doctor shopping.”

Chief Page stated that the good news for North Hampton is that the drop box program is on its way to being approved from the Drug Enforcement Agency. He further stated that he has asked to start the program with relaxed rules whereas leaving the Police Chief as one of the key holders for the box, out of it. There will be two evidence technicians from the police department that will be removing the items together out of the box, and then they will weigh, catalog, and secure them in the evidence room together. When it goes to Concord, it will need to be taken out of the evidence room by the two technicians and transported to Concord by both of them. This process will involve two police officers for every step of the way. Once the rules are formulated, it appears by reading the draft or interim rules, the Police Chief is going to have to be involved in the process.

Chief Page stated that on December 16, 2011 there is a public hearing scheduled to take place in Concord at the Legislative Office Building with a final presentation to be made to the Governor regarding the monitoring program

Chief Page urged the Select Board to talk to State Representatives and Senators to encourage them to take this program a little more seriously than they have and to get the prescription drug monitoring programs in place.

Chair Maggiore suggested composing a letter from the Select Board to the State and Local Representatives regarding their support for the prescription drug-monitoring program.

Chief Page reminded those present that on October 29, 2011 there will be a drug collection set up at the police station from 10 AM until 2 PM with a police officer present to take the items.

Closing Comments

5.1. Closing Comments by Visitors

5.2. Closing Comments by Select Board Member

The Select Board discussed putting together a series of dates for workshops to be reviewing pending policies that need approval by the Select Board and/or by the voters.

Selectman Miller asked about the status of a list of repairs that need to be done at the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office.

Town Administrator Fournier stated that the John Hubbard and Red Mabey had gone over the building with a "fine-tooth comb" and is in the process of securing prices for the numerous repairs that will need to be done. He further stated that in all likelihood there would be the need for a warrant article to cover the costs.

6. Adjournment

Chair Maggiore adjourned the meeting at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Facella
Administrative Assistant

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