

Minutes
Nottingham Selectmen's Meeting
April 22, 2013

6:30 PM Chair Rafter opened the meeting and asked all those present to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Hal Rafter, Mark Carpenter and Mary Bonser

Others: Charles A. Brown – Town Administrator, Dawn Wirkkala – Secretary, Gunnar Foss, Joe Welch

MANIFEST SIGNATURE:

Motion: by Ms. Bonser, second by Mr. Carpenter to approve the 4/22/2013 manifest.

Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

OUTSTANDING MINUTES:

Motion: by Ms. Bonser, second by Mr. Carpenter to approve the minutes of the March 25, 2013 meeting as amended.

Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

Motion: by Ms. Bonser, second by Mr. Carpenter to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2013 meeting as amended.

Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

Clarification was made regarding upcoming meeting Agendas. The Selectmen would review the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as a task item and is not meeting with CIP members. The Selectmen asked if a meeting has been scheduled with the LGC to discuss the upcoming healthcare changes. Mr. Brown stated he emailed the Selectmen more information to review and would like the Selectmen to list their questions or concerns before he sets up a meeting.

Police Department: Chief Foss asked if the Selectmen would support the possibility of hiring a part-time officer for the 2014 budget year. The new part-time officer should allow the department an easier time scheduling a continuing 24hour/7day a week schedule in a more cost effective manner. Currently officers work overtime when others are needed for court or other legal matters, are on vacation or out sick. Chief Foss stated he strongly opposes going to an on-call midnight shift. It can be a potentially dangerous when an officer is woken from a deep sleep and takes an emergency call.

Chief Foss stated he has discussed his proposal with the Town Administrator, but his primary goal is to make sure the Selectmen also support the idea before he proceeds with gathering additional information. He is proposing a part-time officer with a starting salary of approximately \$15.00 per hour, with a maximum of 1500 hours per year.

Discussion took place about the needed qualifications and training of a possible part-time officer, in comparison to a full time officer. Chief Foss stated he is very happy with his existing officers and their ability to work well with each other and he wants to make sure the department remains healthy. He will only consider a person who is willing to work part-time and that will work well with the existing officers; preventing possible personnel conflicts.

Chief Foss stated if the selectmen support the decision he would start the process of gathering the necessary information. He will provide budget information for two phases. Phase one will be a lower amount with a March/April 2014 hiring date and officer attendance in June/July to the Part-time academy. Phase two will be a higher amount and will start after graduation establishing a regular part-time work schedule.

Chair Rafter stated if a case can be made citizens will support the idea at Town Meeting. Chief Foss stated if the Selectmen aren't supportive of the position, he won't move forward with plans.

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Chief Foss reviewed general department information and stated he has tentatively agreed to sit on the Town of Fremont hiring committee for their new Police Chief and there was an accident between a cruiser and an unseen bicycle lying in the road during a late night call.

Ms. Bonser stated she supports the new part-time proposal and of the Chief being proactive in protecting the Town and its citizens.

Chief Foss stated the department functions very well with the existing staff and current schedules, but it does mean over-time, and he is opposed to going to on-call shifts. Nottingham is large enough, with enough citizens and police calls to support the need for a new part-time officer.

Mr. Carpenter asked about the average number of call for on-call officers and Chief Foss reviewed his personal history as an on-call officer, stating it is a different time now, the call volume is greater and now there is also the consideration of providing mutual aid assistance.

Chief Foss stated education is more important now than in the past and officers find their own specialties in their law enforcement career. Nottingham officers attend classes annually, putting the Nottingham Police Department ahead of others, allowing Nottingham to offer training to other police departments and officers.

Chair Rafter stated there are justifiable reasons for hiring a part-time position.

Mr. Carpenter stated he supported the new hire proposal, especially given what has happened in the past week and the sacrifice made by those officers. The department and staff are much appreciated.

Chief Foss thanked the Selectmen for their time and support.

APPOINTMENTS: 7:00 pm: Joe Welch/Historical Society

7:00 pm: Mr. Welch, a member of the Historical Society, presented his proposal to establish plans and committees for the Town of Nottingham 300th Birthday Celebration. It is one of only three towns celebrating that birthday in 2022. The celebration should be a town wide celebration and help can come from any Town official, department, committee, in addition to desired citizen participation; it should not only be a function of the Historical Society. Mr. Welch stated he appreciates the Selectmen creating the non-capital reserve fund to pay for celebration plans.

Mr. Welch asked for Selectmen to create a series of committees to cover all planning stages. Proposed committees might work in three year shifts, with a long-range group in years 2013 to 2015, a mid-range group in 2016 to 2019, a final plan group in 2020 to 2022, and then any Execution and Sub-Committee's as needed.

The goal of the Long-range committee will be to create a list of tasks and responsibilities that can be continued and completed by future committees. Tasks could include, determine what type of celebration it should be – year long or a two/three week celebration, establish a finance plan, revenue possibilities, possible grant funding, rough event plan, time line to complete tasks, establish a pool of volunteers, review new information and/or edit existing Town History information, meet with the other towns celebrating their 300th birthday to identify potential conflicts or possible multi-town events, etc.

The Committee might include seven members, one person each from the Library, Historical Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), a member of the 275th Committee, public safety representative, and two citizens at large. The Long-range committee would work from 2013 to 2015, the Mid-range committee from 2016 to 2019, and the Final Plan committee from 2020 to 2022; with occasionally overlapping planning phases. No one has been asked to participate on any committee yet, as Selectmen approval is needed prior to planning a committee and appointing their initial responsibilities.

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Ms. Bonser stated it is the intent of the Selectmen to continue with annual funding of the celebration and citizen support for the plan to do so was expressed during town meeting. Despite the appearance of starting too early there is a lot to get done to celebrate this accomplishment.

General discussion took place about possible celebration events and locations, planning committee's tasks, and possible volunteers.

Mr. Brown stated his support for Mr. Welch and his organizational and planning skills.

Motion: by Mr. Carpenter, second by Ms. Bonser to create a Tri-Centennial Committee.

Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

Mr. Carpenter asked Mr. Welch if he would come back to discuss the planning of the committees and liked the idea of setting clear goals to keep plans moving towards the end goal. Mr. Carpenter thanked Mr. Welch for putting together a great plan, making it easier for the Selectmen to start the process for a great celebration and is especially supportive of the long range plans.

Mr. Welch stated he would provide the Selectmen with his suggestions for beginning plans that are more specific; including what other towns have done or are doing for their own birthday celebrations.

The Selectmen thanked Mr. Welch for coming in and looked forward to working with him more.

Town Office: Mr. Brown reported a recent small accident with a police cruiser and a bicycle and another accident with a Highway truck last week.

Signature Folder: Mr. Brown reported he received a notice from the Library Trustees regarding the appointment of Ms. Melanie Metz as a new Library Trustee.

Motion: by Mr. Carpenter, second by Ms. Bonser to approve Ms. Melanie Metz as an alternate member to the Board of Library Trustee.

Vote: 3 - 0 in favor.

Recycle Center: Mr. Brown reported a Recycle Center employee submitted his resignation, and while the position has already been filled, applications are still being requested. The new employee has worked for the Town before, completing general maintenance type work, and started training at the Recycle Center on Friday, April 19.

Mr. Carpenter stated he had received information that employees are having a hard time keeping up with the work load on Friday with only two people on the schedule and asked if a decision had been made about changing schedules, to provide for more employee coverage on Fridays, especially in anticipation of the arrival of summer residents.

Mr. Brown reported he has not received word about changing schedules but would look into the situation. There is still time for review as summer residents typically only start to arrive around Memorial Day, more often when warmer weather arrives.

Board of Selectmen Department/Board/Committee Reports:

Budget Committee: Mr. Carpenter stated the next meeting is May 23 and will review Town first quarter and school third quarter actual expenditures.

Ms. Bonser reported the CIP Committee, Nottingham Day Committee and the Building Advisory Committee haven't had meetings and there is no information to report.

Recreation Department: Ms. Bonser reported the previously ordered conference tables and cart have been received, however the cart was damaged and is in the process of being repaired. April

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School Vacation camp started today and the Pirates of Penzance play with the Nottingham Theater Group was great the past weekend.

Planning Board: Chair Rafter reported concerns have been presented regarding the proposed Oak Ridge Road cul-de-sac development, which is located near Case Road. The original plan was to develop the parcel into three sections - two exterior residential areas with a central conservation area. The cul-de-sacs plan provides more land for conservation; however, the proposal prevents a through road way, limiting road access during possible emergency and guaranteed weather related situations. Chair Rafter stated the developer was requested to seek the approval from the Highway Road Agent and Fire Chief, supporting the proposed cul-de-sac and single road entry.

Mr. Brown reported it is a problem when cul-de-sacs are built too small, as it is difficult for plow trucks and emergency vehicles to get in and turn around. Ms. Bonser stated the size of the road can be increased if the cul-de-sac is permitted; access should be a consideration. Mr. Brown stated cul-de-sacs are preferred by developers because they are typically cheaper to develop. It was stated the Conservation Commission prefers the cul-de-sac method because less land is developed.

Chair Rafter stated there may be federal grant funds available for the purchase of the easement, but it hasn't been confirmed.

Mr. Carpenter asked about the time length that the application has been open and Chair Rafter and Mr. Brown stated it has been open for a while; approximately six to nine months.

Kennard Property Closing: Ms. Bonser reported the Conservation Commission land purchase from Mr. Kennard has a scheduled closing for Tuesday, April 30 at 9:00 am.

New Road Name: Mr. Brown stated a proposal for a new road name was submitted for the Merry Hill development, for either Strawberry Lane or Blueberry Lane. However, a 911 objection has been received regarding Blueberry Lane because it is too similar to Barderry Lane.

Motion: by Ms. Bonser, second by Mr. Carpenter to approve Strawberry Lane as the new road name for the Merry Hill sub-division.

Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

Lee Farm Property: Ms. Bonser reviewed an email from Mr. Brown reviewing the ownership history of the property, which for the past several years has been referred to as the Lee Farm. Mr. Brown suggested renaming the property to either Marston Farm or Marston Homestead, allowing the Town to move away from the more recent negative history associated with the use of Lee Farm name.

The Selectmen and Mr. Brown agreed the renaming didn't need a motion or vote, and a final name was not determined.

Bridge Contract: Mr. Brown stated he will open the received bids on Friday and was requesting Selectmen authorization to sign the cement culvert contract for the Pit Bridge project. The engineering firm is moving quickly and he would review the proposed contract with the Selectmen on May 6.

Motion: by Ms. Bonser, second by Mr. Carpenter authorizing the Town Administrator to sign the bridge contract for the cement culverts.

Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

DARE Graduation: Chair Rafter stated he has been requested to attend and speak at the DARE graduation. He asked if one of the other Selectmen could attend DARE, as he has a conflict with a Planning Board Meeting on the same day.

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Mr. Carpenter stated he would be willing to attend and speak, but he might also have a conflict. Ms. Bonser stated she had already planned to attend the graduation. Mr. Carpenter and Ms. Bonser agreed to coordinate between themselves who would speak for the Selectmen.

Upcoming Agenda Items: Mr. Carpenter requested to discuss the proposed Marston Farm Committee at the May 6 meeting, to establish a possible task list for committee members to keep the project moving forward. Mr. Carpenter stated Mr. Perron from the School Board may also attend the May 6 Selectmen's meeting and this is an item they are also interested in. Chair Rafter requested Mr. Carpenter to be the liaison to the committee and he agreed.

Mr. Carpenter asked Ms. Bonser to be the liaison for the Tri-Centennial Committee and she agreed.

Chair of Selectmen Roles & Responsibilities: Chair Rafter stated he emailed a new version of the document based on the prior meeting discussion. The title was changed from Job Description to Roles and Responsibilities, the School Board ex-officio position has been removed based on the concern from Ms. Bonser, and additional language was modified and updated.

Chair Bonser stated she wants to make sure the duties proposed stay within the legal parameters that Selectmen are allowed to work within.

Mr. Carpenter stated Chair Rafter did a good job. Mr. Carpenter stated he wasn't sure a liaison from the Selectmen to the School Board was needed, especially now that the School Board has a liaison who has proposed to meet regularly with the Selectmen; the Selectmen liaison is a redundant position. Chair Rafter stated the Chair would be the liaison, or contact person, when the Selectmen decide a matter should be presented to the School Board. Mr. Carpenter stated he would be more comfortable with the idea of a liaison if it is proposed on an as needed basis.

Ms. Bonser stated the Board of Selectmen is a separate entity from the School Board, similar to the Library Trustees and the liaison position isn't necessary. The School Board meetings are televised and can be watched or even attended by any Selectmen if they choose, in addition to the fact that the Selectmen don't hold regular meetings with any other department. The Selectmen liaison for Town Departments was created to assist employees when they were having trouble with their department head. In addition, Selectmen are busy with other existing duties.

Chair Rafter stated there are no specific duties or schedule listed with the liaison position, and as a prior member of the School Board communication history hasn't always been consistent between the two boards. Making contact more formal on the part of the Selectmen will hopefully allow for continuing communication, even though the current relationship between the two boards is good.

Mr. Carpenter stated current communication between the Selectmen and School Board members is positive and healthy, and does not want to limit conversations by requiring that information be filtered through the Chair. If the intent is for the Chair to bring information to the School Board when applicable, that is great, but otherwise it isn't needed. Mr. Carpenter asked to have the paragraph re-written indicating it is on an as-needed basis.

Chair Rafter stated there should be some type of structure that allows the Board of Selectmen to try and maintain consistent communication if it becomes a problem in the future.

Ms. Bonser stated the guidelines will be reviewed annually by each new board and can be removed or added during every review depending on who the board members are. There is currently no need to have a liaison and it isn't really needed, even on an as needed basis.

The Selectmen discussed removing the duty of School Board liaison from the guidelines and a decision was made to table the discussion on the matter, for possible consideration at a later date.

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Motion: by Ms. Bonser, second by Mr. Carpenter, to table the discussion of the duty of Chair as liaison to the School Board.

Vote: 3 - 0 in favor.

Mr. Carpenter stated the only other area he wanted to discuss was the duties as media contact.

Chair Rafter stated typically contact is provided by the Selectboard Chair; there should be a single voice representing a town, especially with a contentious issue. Chair Rafter stated he has told the media to contact the Chair, when he wasn't the Chair.

Mr. Carpenter stated if there is a contentious issue there should be an emergency meeting for the Board to decide on a unified answer together.

Ms. Bonser stated the media will reach out to all members until they reach someone. Mr. Carpenter asked if the Selectmen should create a policy about speaking to the media and Ms. Bonser stated no.

Chair Bonser stated one Selectman can not speak for the Town or board, speaking as an individual with your own opinion is one thing, but it should not be an opinion on behalf of the Town. Past situations have shown that the existing process of the Town Administrator polling each Selectmen for their opinions to draft one a single statement, that is reviewed by town counsel, for a single distribution to the media has worked very well, eliminating some confusion and possible future problems.

Mr. Brown reported in eleven years he has only had one media representative he has had positive experiences with, and there are many situations where he was misquoted by the media.

Chair Rafter stated Selectmen are public officials and part of being an elected official is learning to be careful when they speak publicly; regrettable statements can be made by anyone at any time.

Mr. Brown stated the Selectmen can speak their individual opinion, but must agree as a board for an opinion of the Town.

Chair Rafter and Ms. Bonser agreed a written policy limiting Selectmen contact with the media might be needed; the Town Administrator will poll all members of the board and draft a single press release for the media.

Mr. Carpenter stated there should be some leeway with media contact; the media will always find a way when they are looking for information. The Town Administrator, Police Chief and Fire Chief have all spoken to the media; Ms. Bonser has spoken to the media.

Ms. Bonser stated in the past public statements have not gone over well and the possibility is too great of saying something that will have serious consequences. The existing process of giving information to the media has been very effective and should be the process used. Mr. Carpenter stated he wants to prevent getting to the point where a written statement is always required.

The Selectmen agreed to continue discussing media contact at a later date.

Ms. Bonser stated she doesn't agree that the Chair should be the alternate representative member to any board the Selectmen cover. Chair Rafter stated he would agree with removing the language.

Ms. Bonser stated she is concerned with tying the hands of the Selectmen by having written guidelines for tasks.

Mr. Carpenter stated he likes the idea of having some task items formalized, for operational planning purposes it helps guide individuals during an emergency situation.

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Selectmen Goals: Chair Rafter stated he would like to see job descriptions for all Town employees. Mr. Brown stated there are some types of job descriptions for almost every position in the town, but nothing that has been formally adopted.

Ms. Bonser stated a job description is a moving target and can be continually changed. Mr. Brown stated the descriptions are broad and kept in general because in most cases, any employee can help cover the position of another employee and it is done automatically without question.

Mr. Carpenter asked in theory why job descriptions are typically put in place and Mr. Brown stated they protect both the Town and Employee.

Mr. Brown reviewed some of his job evaluations, indicating he doesn't always have the time to complete the tasks on an annual basis. Some tasks he should complete on a yearly basis; however the answers and information he would provide is exactly the same from one year to the next.

Mr. Carpenter stated employees should be requested to write their own job descriptions, opening the dialogue between the employee and management providing better communication between the employee and management. Mr. Brown stated he recently read the same.

Mr. Brown reported he disagrees with policy of one standard set cost of living increases for all employees. While every employee thinks they are doing a good job, he doesn't always agree with that opinion. Mr. Carpenter stated if the employee is initiating the process, of job description or annual reviews they are typically not aware of the perceptions of the Supervisors.

Ms. Bonser stated her goal is to consider completion of the remaining back areas of the Town Offices for possible recreation, school and storage space uses. Mr. Brown stated he has been contacted by the Building Committee who is willing to start work on possible projects.

Mr. Brown reviewed the current uses of the back area spaces of the Town Offices. Ms. Bonser stated she would like the Selectmen to walk through the space to see exactly what might be available for Town and community use. The proposed new space could include exterior access for public use.

Mr. Brown asked if the Building Committee should be contacted to review the space for potential use.

Chair Rafter stated he approved of having the Building Committee start reviewing the possibilities.

Mr. Carpenter stated he would like to see some type of needs assessment and analysis to determine what may actually be needed by each department or group, instead of making changes based on a want for a special interest.

Mr. Carpenter stated one of his goals is to work on a possible plan for the Marston Farm, creating a community project. The project should involve more than the school kids and the project and property should be developed for all community members to use.

Mr. Carpenter and Ms. Bonser agreed the building should be removed, by a professional. Mr. Brown stated the building doesn't have to be removed immediately in order for others to start using the fields but the area would have to be secured.

Ms. Bonser stated she is concerned about public use of the fields while the buildings remain from a liability stand point.

Chair Rafter asked if someone could be found to remove the building and material at no cost to the Town. Mr. Brown stated he would look into the process, but would like to have a local individual review the area to determine if any portion of the building is useable.

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Mr. Brown stated he would contact someone to remove the junk and debris while the building is reviewed.

Chair Rafter stated an idea was expressed to save some of the wood from the barn for potential use in renovation plans or as a possible art project. There was agreement some of the wood could be saved for town use.

Mr. Carpenter suggested a new type of funding, called crowd funding. The process involves starting a project and putting information on the internet, through specific websites, and anyone who chooses can donate funds toward the project.

The Selectmen gave their approval for Mr. Brown to contact companies to start the building removal and cleanup process.

Mr. Carpenter stated he also wants the Selectmen to establish a 2014 department and Town budget goal. Ms. Bonser stated the Town Administrator has had the goal every year to try and remain level funded for the last several years. Mr. Brown stated that is something that can't be done every year and the 2013 budget was an exception.

Mr. Carpenter stated he would like to consider all possible methods for tax savings, and although there might not be any, but everyone should think outside the box to determine what the Town needs versus wants and especially to encourage citizens to participate in the planning discussion.

Mr. Brown stated wages and benefits are a large portion of the budget and all department heads should be involved to determine what should be acceptable.

Mr. Carpenter stated he is concerned with the lack of citizen participation and asked if there is a way to reach out and get people to participate. Chair Rafter stated the Selectmen meetings are re-broadcast and quarterly newsletters are mailed letting citizens know of what is going on. Mr. Carpenter suggested providing a survey about how to increase participation. Chair Bonser stated many are just too busy with everyday life and family.

Mr. Carpenter stated he also didn't want to forget about water rights, making sure the Town is prepared with the possibility of development of the property. Mr. Carpenter stated there should be further work on possible local water use plans.

Chair Rafter stated state law changes depend, in many cases, on the mindset of the administration of State of NH agencies and the legislators. In regards to USA Springs, the Town ZBA was the first step in that approval process and while NH DES initially denied the permit request it was later approved when a new department commissioner was hired. Ms. Bonser stated she wanted to meet with the ZBA stressing that they should utilize town counsel, especially with commercial requests, to determine the entire plan being proposed by the entity instead of the minimal information they choose to provide. The ZBA doesn't always have all the details regarding a proposal prior to making a decision on something that could have a big impact.

Chair Rafter asked to continue quarterly meetings with the Representatives and Senators. Ms. Bonser stated the LGC/NHMA can also be utilized to help in lobbying with desired issues, such as requesting support to present legislative changes, notifying other municipalities at the same time.

Mr. Carpenter asked how the meetings with the Representatives and Senators could be more effective. Chair Rafter stated there is strength in numbers and including the School Board in the process gives a greater voice. Concerns the Selectmen should continue to bring forward are the shifting of costs to the local municipality, especially benefits and retirement costs.

Ms. Bonser stated property tax should not be solely responsible to support education.

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Chair Rafter stated the Selectmen should plan to review the Implementation Guide of the Master Plan and select items they can consider addressing.

Chair Rafter stated he would like to get back to considering upgrades and updates to the Town Website.

Chair Rafter stated he would also like to plan for permanent safe storage for documents the Town is required to keep and general discussion took place about possible options for paper and electronic file storage. The new "cloud" method for storing electronic data was reviewed and the Selectmen agreed it wasn't necessarily a method the Town should use.

Fire Department: Mr. Carpenter stated he was asked to sit in on the interview process for the third fire fighter.

Non-public Session: Ms. Bonser stated she had personnel issues to discuss and it was stated non-public minutes also need approval. There was agreement the minutes and discussion both fall under the same category for holding a non-public. The Selectmen also agreed they would adjourn the regular meeting once the non-public session was complete.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION: The Board entered non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II(a).

9:05 PM Motion: by Ms. Bonser, second by Mr. Carpenter to enter non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II(a).

Roll Call Vote: Bonser – Yea, Carpenter – Yea, Rafter – Yea. 3 – 0 in favor.

Motion: by Ms. Bonser, second by Mr. Carpenter to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2013 Non-Public meeting as amended.

Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

Motion: Ms. Bonser, second Mr. Carpenter to exit the non-public session at 9:30 pm.

Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

Motion: Ms. Bonser, second Mr. Carpenter to seal the non-public minutes of April 22, 2013.

Roll Call Vote: Bonser – Yea, Carpenter – Yea, Rafter – Yea. 3 – 0 in favor.

The Selectmen made a decision about offering compensation to a resigning employee and Ms. Bonser would contact the LGC for proper documentation regarding another personnel matter.

ADJOURNMENT: Having no further business,

9:32 PM Motion: by Mr. Carpenter, second by Ms. Bonser to adjourn.

Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Wirkkala