

## **MINUTES OF THE MARCH 30, 2009 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman David Canada, Selectman Bruno Federico and Tim Copeland, and Town Administrator Paul Deschaine.

The meeting was opened at 6:50PM. Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public session to discuss a personnel issue. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. At 7:30 PM, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to personnel issues discussed. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. At 7:35 PM, the Board reconvened and heard the Treasurer's Report.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Kevin Peck reported that he had \$601,132.41 in the general checking account and \$2.6 million invested. Two school checks will be cut tomorrow when the investments mature. At the same time, the investments will be cut in half.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Members of the Conservation Commission and Ad Hoc Conservation Bond Subcommittee were present. For the Conservation Commission, the following members were present: Pat Elwell, Donna Jensen, and Brad Jones. For the Ad Hoc Bond Subcommittee, the following members were present: Laura Lee, Roger Stephenson, Tammy Hathaway, and Edie and Gordon Barker. At 7:36 PM, Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public session to meet with the Conservation Commission and the Ad Hoc Subcommittee to discuss a potential acquisition of property. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. At approximately 8:00 PM, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the discussion of a potential acquisition of property that occurred. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Colleen Lake was present to make a presentation to the Board regarding her thoughts about the Town Library. She first stated she is not asking for any money. She summarized the results of Town Meeting and the prior meetings that she had attended. She has several ideas about how to proceed. What she is proposing is what she calls "bringing the Wiggin Memorial Library back to the Town Center." She would like to have Mr. Deschaine's assistance in making this happen. Ms. Lake then presented a package of materials regarding her research to allow this to happen without any additional tax money. She advocated that the Library be part of the center of the community and she made several references to parallels with a University of Massachusetts Dartmouth study.

Ms. Lake stated she has approached an abutter to the Fire House and herself to see if there was any possibility to get some additional land from him to let this happen. Initially, the abutter said that was not possible. He then said he would be willing to do a land swap. She then suggested using a portion of the Gifford property to do a land swap with that owner. If so, then she could present the construction of a new Library in the Town Center. While the new Library building is being built, the Library can be sited in the old Cornerstone Church building that would come with the land swap. This would abut the already conserved Town land of Brad Jones. Ms. Lake said the church school has been closed so it would be advantageous for all.

Mr. Federico asked what exactly the landowner was looking for. Ms. Lake said she thought it would be a one for one acre swap, but she has not done any of the negotiations. Mr. Copeland asked if the Library moved out of the Municipal Center what would happen to the remainder of the building. Ms. Lake felt that it could be abandoned in place since it is in such poor shape.

Mr. Copeland asked how much the new construction costs would be. Ms. Lake said she did not know but that was the next part of her research. She then alluded that she can fundraise and others have approached her about a benefit for the Library. Others have expressed an interest to her to build a computer wing for the Library. She next asserted that a Library bookstore or gift shop could be self-sustaining at the new site. Her research indicated that a bookstore or gift shop could have gross revenues approaching \$110,000 to \$120,000. As a result, it would be self-sustaining and contributing to any financing cost for the new construction. Mr. Canada asked how old the old Cornerstone Church/school building was and how many square feet it was. Ms. Lake thought it was twenty years old and approximately 10,000 square feet. Mr. Federico thought that a swap had been discussed prior to the construction of the Fire House but those negotiations were unsuccessful.

Carol Gulla, of the Library Trustees, pointed out that the functions of the Library are governed by the Library Trustees. This presentation should have been made to the Trustees first. Ms. Lake felt that until she knew the Selectmen were willing to do the land swap, it would be a moot issue. She just felt that the Town should do better things with the assets we have. Bruce Cotter, of the Library Trustees, noted that the Library has investigated some of these issues. The average income from bookstore/library sales in this area has been approximately \$2,000 a year. The space demands of the Library have grown such that meeting space is very limited for their programming. They had an event last week that they had to turn people away. Hence, they cannot wait any longer.

Mr. Federico offered to speak with the landowner. Mr. Canada felt that a solid business plan would need to be done. Ms. Lake offered to do such a plan. Mr. Cotter qualified that any effort in this direction be done sooner rather than later. Mr. Federico agreed to talk with the landowner this week. Mr. Canada said that it would only move forward if it makes sense for everyone. Mr. Canada thanked Ms. Lake for her efforts, enthusiasm, and for all her ideas.

#### **PENDING ISSUES:**

The Board then reviewed outstanding minutes. Mr. Canada moved to approve the minutes of 1/27/2009, 2/2/2009, 2/3/2009, 2/9/2009, 2/17/2009, 2/19/2009, and 2/23/2009. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Board then reviewed the meetings scheduled in the coming week and the meetings held this past week. Mr. Deschaine will post a meeting of the Board on April 7, 2009 since a quorum will be present when listening to the State Stimulus Package webcast.

Mr. Canada and Mr. Copeland reported on the Public Utilities Commission hearing in Exeter held last week regarding the ice storm response. Mr. Canada said that it was not a total Unutil bashing event. It also included various comments on how to improve the Town's emergency responses.

Mr. Deschaine summarized the content of the meeting with the Assistant Attorney General regarding the Fire Department financial operations. She will provide a written synopsis of her comments for the Town to use.

Mr. Copeland reported that the Fire Department Blood Drive went very well. At one time, there was almost a three-hour wait to give blood. The Red Cross will be better prepared for the next time the drive is held.

Ms. Lake returned to ask about the process by which the Town assesses the Land Use Change Tax. She questioned the Town's need for the \$91,000 assessment against the Nissan property that was discussed last week. She asked if the Town could take \$60,000 for the tax and have the remaining balance waived for a similarly valued car that could then be raffled off. The Board felt that there was not any statute that would permit such an effort. She ended by stating how she was hurt that the Board's first response to her previous proposal was a comment concerning traffic.

**PARK PERMITS/MUNICIPAL CENTER RENTALS:**

Shirley Crandall's request to use the Municipal Center on June 13, 2009 for a Talent Show was approved.

Doris Chapman requested the Front Pavilion for a reception on September 12, 2009, which was approved.

Lois Lawrence requested use of the Park for a lobster bake on September 19, 2009, which was approved.

Walter Sanderson, also for a lobster bake at the Park, on July 16, 2009 was approved.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

**Administration:** Mr. Deschaine presented a request by the Reach the Beach program for a parade permit from NHDOT. They have a relay race that goes along Route 111 and a small portion occurs in Stratham. Mr. Federico moved to approve the request to be held on September 19, 2009. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine presented the MS-2 for signature of the Board. The Board proceeded to sign the Statement of the Total Appropriations from Town Meeting.

Mr. Deschaine presented an abatement request from Noreen Owen with the recommendation from Andrea Lewy for its approval. The Board approved the request.

There was a discussion regarding brush removal efforts by the Highway Department. The Department has found an outlet for all the brush to be trucked offsite and later chipped at a nearby facility. The Board concurred with that effort. The cost of trucking is \$100 per truck per time.

Mr. Canada asked about reestablishing the \$500 spending limitation rule for the review of Departmental expenditures over and above that amount. He felt that until the revenue streams from the State were clearer, the Board might want to review these types of expenditures. Mr. Federico agreed until there is more certainty regarding State revenues, this may be important to have implemented. Mr. Deschaine expressed the reluctance to set the limit at \$500 and that we are not quite in the same budgetary crisis as we were at the latter part of 2008. Since it is still early in the 2009 Fiscal Year, he suggested a \$1,000 limit. Mr. Canada moved to put a \$1,000 restriction on purchases without expressed Selectmen's approval of such an expenditure. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Deschaine did point out that decreasing the Fiscal Year 2009 expenditures will not lower the tax rate. All unexpended appropriations will go into the fund balance to be applied against next year's taxes. The Board acknowledged that insight.

Mr. Deschaine brought up the ACT transportation summit that is scheduled for April. He brought to the Board's attention that the registration deadline is April 1, 2009.

Mr. Deschaine and Mr. Canada shared with the other Board members the content of a meeting with the President of the Great Bay Community College. The Community College expects to be out of their building in Stratham sometime in August of this year. The building will then be closed. Concerns were expressed regarding security for the building given that it will be unoccupied. The College is considering putting a gate or a chain to prevent people from going to the rear of the building. A key to the lock on the gate will be offered to the Police Department and the Fire Department for access to the rear of the building and the Recreation Department in order to allow them to continue to use the Babe Ruth field behind the building. The President expressed a need for added security since there will be no State personnel in the building on a daily basis. Town departments will note that change and act accordingly. Mr. Deschaine did mention to President Will Arvelo that some winter maintenance would have to occur around the building to allow Police and Fire equipment to access the rear of the building and to be able to turn around and return. President Arvelo said that that could be accomplished.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

Mr. Canada asked Mr. Deschaine how many applications had been received for Board appointments. Mr. Deschaine said he had only received two so far. Mr. Canada has contacted all the Chairs of the Boards, Commissions, and Committees to determine if there will be anyone who wishes not to be reappointed. He should have responses by the next meeting. The possibility of meeting next week was discussed since Mr. Deschaine will not be here due to his vacation. The Board agreed not to meet on April 6, 2009. Consequently, the discussion and action on the 2009 appointments will occur at the April 13, 2009 meeting.

There was next a discussion regarding the Comcast franchise agreement and the ascertainment hearing that needed to be held. Possible dates to hold the hearing were discussed. June 1, 2009 was the date selected. Mr. Deschaine will look into the logistics of holding the hearing on that date.

Mr. Federico asked about the condition of the floor at the Fire House. He thought the meeting room floor has not been as durable as expected. Mr. Canada noted that the cost of finishing that floor was equal to the cost of replacing the floor in two to three years. Hence, he recommended taking a wait and see approach to find out how long the floor will last.

Mr. Deschaine reported that he is getting estimates for the relocation of the audio equipment from the existing hearing room to the new hearing room. He has one quote and another is coming by the end of the week.

The discussion resumed on the cell tower vote. The Board asked about the possibility of repositioning the tower at a different location at the Municipal Center site. Mr. Federico said that many people have approached him who have asked to bring it up again because of the need for service and that it was lost income to the Town. Mr. Deschaine will see if there is further interest by the cell tower company for this alternate site.

Mr. Canada moved to adjourn at 10:10 PM. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reviewed By,

Norma Corrow  
Recording Secretary

Paul Deschaine  
Town Administrator