

## **MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 3, 2011 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING**

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

The meeting was opened by the Chair at 6:50 pm. Mr. Canada move to go into non-public session to discuss contract negotiations with the Fire Chief and Police Chief. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. At 7:10 pm, the Fire Chief left the meeting. At 7:28 pm, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the matters discussed. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 7:33 pm, the Chair opened the general meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Kevin Peck reported that he had \$7,541,782.96 in the general checking account.

### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

**Assessing:** Town Assessor Andrea Lewy was present to give her monthly report. Two residents were present to discuss their abatement applications with Ms. Lewy and the Board.

Ms. Lewy presented a letter that Karen Bell of 18 Cortland Avenue had written to the Board of Selectmen stating her reasons why she would like an abatement on her 2010 taxes. Ms. Lewy stated that Ms. Bell's home was destroyed in a fire on June 23, 2010. Ms. Lewy stated that as far as the law is concerned (RSA 76:2), whatever structure is there on April 1<sup>st</sup> is what is to be assessed for that year. Ms. Bell approached the Board and stated that she understands what the law says, but just from a fairness perspective, she does not understand how the property is worth \$342,000 when all that is left of the property is debris. Mr. Canada noted that Ms. Bell is currently rebuilding her home. On April 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, the value will likely be 50% or so of the final completed project, so from sometime around June through next April she will be taxed at \$100,000, for example, not \$300,000, which would be a reverse advantage at that point. Ms. Bell stated that is assuming she continues to live there, but after what happened at her residence, she is planning to sell. Mr. Canada stated the Board is certainly sensitive to Ms. Bell's situation, but they also have to look at this from the Town's perspective. The Board agreed that they have to follow the law and agreed to deny the request.

Ms. Lewy presented an abatement application from James Peplinski at 93 Tidewater Farm Road. He has filed for an abatement because of the change in assessment from 2009 to 2010 with no changes having been made to the home. The final assessment resulting from the 2009 re-valuation was \$590,900. Once a field review was done in 2010 and various adjustments up and down were made, including the correction of errors made in office calculations, the assessment came to \$615,400. Mr. Peplinski approached the Board and stated that he is objecting to the increase from the \$590,900. He has made no changes to the house and the assessment went up without any kind of notification. Ms. Lewy noted that almost every other home in the neighborhood is listed as "very good." The increase to Mr. Peplinski's property was well below what the rest of the neighborhood was seeing. Ms. Lewy stated the house itself was originally \$374,900 and now it is at \$399,400 and the land was \$240,000

and came down to \$211,000. Mr. Canada asked Mr. Peplinski if he would sell his home for \$615,000 to which Mr. Peplinski answered, he would not. Mr. Canada stated that he understands Mr. Peplinski's confusion, but does not feel that he is over-assessed. Mr. Peplinski stated that he did not have all of this information until just now and stated he understands the value of a home is only what someone will pay for it. The final assessment after all corrections is \$615,400. The difference was from \$621,700 to \$615,400, which is a negative \$6,300 times our current tax rate for an abatement of \$118.00. The Board thanked Mr. Peplinski for his time.

Ms. Lewy continued her report to the Board on her recommendations for actions on various abatement applications (see attached). After review and comment by the Board, Mr. Canada moved to approve the abatement requests as recommended and to deny Karen Bell's request as recommended. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy then presented three Veteran Credit applications (see attached). After review and comment by the Board, Mr. Canada moved to approve the Veteran Credit applications for Lawrence Lucey, Richard O'Neill and Tyra Lynn Ott, as recommended by Ms. Lewy. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 8:54 pm, Mr. Federico moved to go into non-public session with Ms. Lewy due to the litigation strategy to be discussion. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 9:10 pm, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the matters discussed. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**Highway Department:** Highway Agent Fred Hutton was present at the meeting to discuss his Department's activities. He stated that all of the vehicles ran well during the recent snowstorm. He stated there were a total of 9 people plowing, which was plenty of help. Mr. Federico commented that when the walkway at the Historical Society building was plowed, the ground was torn up quite a bit. Mr. Hutton stated they have always plowed that walkway with a truck. Mr. Federico stated that last year, the Board asked that the walkway be done with a snowblower. Mr. Hutton will take a look at it.

Mr. Hutton reported that the Transfer Station will be open this Saturday, January 8<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> and then next month, will go back to the regular schedule.

Mr. Hutton stated that depending on the weather, his crews would be cutting brush along roadsides this week. He stated they would also try to remove more stumps from out in back of the Municipal Center. He stated approximately 20% have been removed and some of them are a bit hard to find because they are cut so low.

Mr. Hutton stated there are some boards in the Gifford Barn that are unsafe and need to be replaced. There is a rack of boards there, but Mr. Hutton is not sure if they are good or not. Mr. Canada said he should pull the boards down and either use them or dispose of them. Mr. Hutton will follow up on this matter.

Mr. Federico asked what has been done at Stevens Park to keep vehicles out. Mr. Hutton stated there is still a windrow of snow there.

There was discussion amongst the group on the practice of the Town paying for meals for the snowplowing crews during snowstorms.

Mr. Canada asked about the water cooler rental at the Highway Garage. He stated that in checking his past notes, the Board authorized Mr. Hutton to purchase a water cooler for up to \$150. Mr. Hutton had no recollection of this, but said he will buy one this week.

Mr. Deschaine stated that during Town Custodian Charlie Browne's absence in the upcoming weeks, there is no one picking up his duties at the Municipal Center. He asked Mr. Hutton if it would be possible to have someone from Highway Department assist with that and Mr. Hutton said they could do that.

**MEETINGS:** The Chair then reviewed the meetings scheduled for the coming week and reviewed the meetings held this past week.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Mr. Canada moved to approve the amended minutes for 12/20/10. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**Administration:** Mr. Deschaine stated that Mr. Hutton and Ms. Lewy have submitted their vehicle evaluation and mileage reports. Mr. Canada stated he had asked Fire Chief Stan Walker if his has been done. Mr. Walker stated he did not know, but would see to it that it is done. Mr. Canada will check in with Police Chief John Scippa tomorrow and noted that one is still needed from Building Inspector Terry Barnes and the hours on the generator outside. Mr. Deschaine will follow up on those.

The group then discussed the proposed Cemetery Regulation Amendments at length and some minor changes were made to the language of those amendments.

The group then discussed a draft Memo of Understanding (MOU) for the Greater Exeter Regional Public Health Network. Mr. Deschaine explained that the State of NH is split into different regions, so if there was a public health emergency and there needed to be a mass inoculation, for example, residents would be divided by region as opposed to all going to one place. Since Stratham is centered in the Exeter region, in order to organize this response in an orderly fashion, this Multi-Area Coordination Entity (MACE) has identified the Stratham Fire Department as a potential staging area. This MOU is a draft of what terms and conditions the Town would offer the Fire Department building as a potential site. The group discussed amendments to the MOU. Mr. Canada will convey the Board's concerns to Emergency Management Director Dave Emanuel so they can incorporate them into their final draft.

Mr. Canada stated he had made some proposed changes to the Animal Control Ordinance for Stevens Park. The Board did not have any concerns. Mr. Deschaine will create a clean copy and have it published for a public hearing process.

Mr. Canada stated he would like to add items onto the next meeting agenda for Fire Chief Stan Walker. The Board would like to discuss the creation of SOP's with him and see what his timeline is on those. They would also like to discuss a quote or possibly putting out a Request for Proposal (RFP) on a tanker replacement. Mr. Deschaine will add those items to the agenda.

Mr. Copeland brought up mosquito legislation. He stated the legislative office approved his legislative proposal and the attorneys there approved the language. Mr. Copeland signed it and got four legislators from our district that signed on immediately as co-sponsors and he will be reaching out to our Senator as well. Mr. Canada thanked Mr. Copeland for all of his work on this matter.

Mr. Canada stated that last year he developed some numbers for Town Meeting to show the voters what percentage of the tax bill residents paid as opposed to commercial entities. He stated he would like to have Town Assessor Andrea Lewy do that this year. All agreed and Mr. Canada will meet with Ms. Lewy to discuss this further.

Mr. Federico stated he noticed some commercial flyers sitting on the Recreation Department desk and asked if that is allowed, since they are not affiliated with our Recreation Department. Mr. Deschaine will discuss this matter with Director Seth Hickey.

Mr. Canada stated he would like to have the Budget Committee meetings taped this year. There was some confusion over who said what last year. They do not necessarily need to be transcribed, but would like to have a record to refer to. The Board agreed.

Mr. Canada stated they had talked about a warrant article to present to voters to not publish the assessments in the Town Report anymore and to put them on the website only where they would be more accessible. This may also save on the cost of printing the Town Report. The Board will leave the decision to Town Meeting.

Mr. Canada stated there was some negative feedback from the Planning Board last year about the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and how it was handled. Mr. Federico thinks that explaining the Selectmen's understanding of the development of the CIP and the Planning Board's role as to what they are supposed to do would be helpful. Mr. Deschaine and Mr. Federico will meet with the Planning Board to discuss this.

Mr. Federico would like Power Point presentations set up for Town Meeting this year so it would be easier for the audience to follow warrant article discussions. The Board agreed since there will be some complicated issues discussed.

At 11:10 pm, Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public session to discuss a matter that would affect the reputation of another not on the Board. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 11:25 pm, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the nature of the matters discussed. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**PARK PERMITS/MUNICIPAL CENTER RENTALS:**

The following Park permits and Municipal Center rentals were discussed and acted upon:

Kranthi Kantipudi requested the use of the Municipal Center on January 9, 15, 16, 23 & 30 for cultural events. Mr. Copeland moved to approve the requests. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Sue Hunter requested the use of the Municipal Center on January 22, 2011 for the Glengarry Condo Association meeting. The request was approved and the fee waived.

The Exeter Lions Club requested the use of the Park on June 5, 2011 for a bicycle tour. Mr. Canada moved to approve the use of the Park and to waive the fee. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 11:35 pm, Mr. Canada moved to adjourn. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reviewed By,

Stacey J. Grella  
Executive Assistant

Paul Deschaine  
Town Administrator