

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 28, 2011 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

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

At 7:28 pm, the Chair opened the general meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

The Chair welcomed Boy Scouts Troop 185, who were in attendance.

The Chair also extended condolences on behalf of the Board to the Scamman family; Jo Jo Scamman passed away. He was a well-respected member of the community and he will certainly be missed.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Mr. Canada thanked Mr. Deschaine for giving the Board a copy of the Public Policies Study information on the downshifting of the Governor's proposed budget. He stated that it is unacceptable and shows poor leadership for the Governor to be downshifting almost a million dollars to Stratham. If the proposal were accepted, the amount would be \$937,000, which equates to almost an additional dollar on the Town tax rate.

Mr. Canada reported that the Transfer Station returns to a weekly schedule of Saturdays from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm starting April 2nd.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Kevin Peck reported that he had \$2,575,369.34 in the general checking account.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Assessing: Town Assessor Andrea Lewy was present to 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 for Cassandra Brown, John & Patricia Cummings, Michael Daley, William & Phyllis Duffy, Wilfred & Christine Howarth, Carl & Eileen Kackenmeister, and Beth Petit as recommended by Ms. Lewy. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Canada then moved to deny abatement requests for Robert & Gail Hewins and Elizabeth Palmer as recommended by Ms. Lewy. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy stated they took in 39 abatement requests. There are 9 remaining, which includes 5 that are currently Board of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA) cases and 2 Superior Court cases.

Ms. Lewy then presented one Elderly Exemption application and one Veteran's Credit application (see attached). After review and comment by the Board, Mr. Canada moved to approve the Elderly Exemption application for Mary Vermeersch, and approve the Veteran's Credit for Thomas Madson, as recommended by Ms. Lewy. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy stated that her assistant, Jim Joseph, attended training and was now certified as a measurer and lister.

At 8:14 pm, Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public session to discuss a personnel matter. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 9:04 pm, Mr. Copeland moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the matters discussed. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy stated that Cindy Katz from 25 Brookside Drive came into the office to discuss information on her assessment card. Ms. Katz had filed an abatement in 2002 because she does not have a finished basement and it was reported that she does. The abatement was granted at that time for approximately \$56.00. At some point, after the correction was made, a change was made to Ms. Katz's data card reflecting her basement to be finished in 2009. Ms. Katz claims to have brought this to the attention of the Assessing Office in July of 2010. Ms. Lewy stated that Ms. Katz is looking for a refund for 2010 and 2009, although no abatement paperwork has been filed. Ms. Lewy had apologized to her for the error. Mr. Federico moved to deny Ms. Katz's request. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy stated she was contacted by Norman MacLean, the owner of 94 Portsmouth Avenue. She stated that he asked her to look at the property because it was on the market and he wanted to make sure that everything was listed properly. Ms. Lewy stated that after inspection, there were some areas that were changed in the ell portion and there were sections that need new roofing and some rotting clapboards in the back. From that inspection, the assessment dropped from \$694,900 to \$653,100. At that time, Mr. MacLean was given the new assessment card and he said he would get back with Ms. Lewy. On March 14th, Ms. Lewy received a letter from Mr. MacLean and was advised that the property sold on March 9th for \$400,000 and at that point, Mr. MacLean stated he paid \$28,959.65 in back taxes. The property had been on the market from May 2008 at the starting price of \$745,000. Mr. MacLean requested Ms. Lewy's assistance with the abatement process to recoup the difference between the market value and the sale price and the assessed value. There is no actual abatement paperwork that was filed. Mr. Federico moved to deny Norman MacLean's request for an abatement due to untimely filing. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy later returned to the meeting to inform the Board that the 2010 Equalization Ratio is 104.8%. This means that the assessments are higher than for what the properties are selling on average.

Ms. Lewy reported that Jim Foy seeks to merge two commercial lots on Portsmouth Avenue. The request is being held up pending action requested of Mr. Foy by the Building Department.

Police Department: Chief John Scippa was present at the meeting to request the Chair to sign his Equitable Sharing Program Compliance letter for the Department of Justice. This is an annual reporting form that needs to be sent to the Department of Justice with regard to the Drug Forfeiture Asset Account. Mr. Federico moved to allow the Chair to sign the document. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Scippa stated he had received a document from Marybeth Dever regarding the Kids Pan-Mass Challenge (PMC), which is a bike-riding event. This document outlines the Exeter/Stratham Kids Ride, which will be on Saturday, June 11th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. They are anticipating 80-100 riders with approximately 100 spectators. The route is completely within the Domain Drive Industrial Park. Timberland allows them to use the parking lot. Younger riders will remain within the lot next to the soccer field and the older kids will wind around the Timberland building, never crossing or entering into the flow of public traffic. This is the same set up that they have used for the last three years. Mr. Scippa stated he does not see any public safety hazard. The Board had no objections and advised Mr. Scippa to sign the letter.

Mr. Scippa stated the Highway Safety Committee met and they were able to come up with a list of ideas by priority. This list includes a speed grant for local roads, a selective enforcement grant targeting the Traffic Circle, a school bus safety grant, and a DWI Hunter patrol grant. Mr. Scippa also stated there is an opportunity to get 25 bicycle helmets through a NH Highway Safety grant. Lastly, Mr. Scippa stated he would be exploring a 50/50 equipment grant for a radar device that can conduct road studies that will count speed and volume of traffic.

Mr. Scippa stated that regarding replacing a cruiser, he received a price (state bid) for a 2011 Crown Victoria of \$23,395. He then contacted Central Chrysler Jeep/Dodge out of Raynham, MA and was quoted a price for a 2011 Dodge Charger of \$24,030.00. Mr. Scippa stated they also quoted a 2010 Charger at \$22,636.00 and a new 2009 Charger at \$18,986.00. Mr. Scippa's recommendation is to go with the 2009 Charger since it is the lowest price and still has a five-year/100,000 power train warranty. Mr. Scippa asked for an additional \$2,000 for outfitting the car with a radio, siren, and emergency lights. Mr. Scippa stated he received an estimate for the frame repairs to the existing cruiser for \$1,496.73. He stated the price might be higher due to difficulty in finding matching parts to do the repairs. The car also requires additional repairs in order to pass inspection at an additional cost. Mr. Copeland moved to allow Mr. Scippa to purchase the 2009 Dodge Charger for \$18,986.00 and allocate up to another \$2,000 for the lights, siren and radio package, funds to come from the Revolving Detail Account. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Federico stated he received a report from a resident that there have been several instances on West Road where people have passed the red light and gone up the on ramp to Route 101. Mr. Scippa is familiar with the issue and spoke with her at the Police Department, and stated it is a valid complaint. He stated that he would remind the officers to keep an eye on it.

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

PARK PERMITS/MUNICIPAL CENTER RENTALS:

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

Mike McDonnell requested the use of the Park for a volleyball tournament to benefit the Second Wind Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation on June 25, 2011. Mr. Copeland moved to approve the use and to waive the fee. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Kranthi Kantipudi requested the use of the Municipal Center on April 3, 10, 17 & 24, 2011 for cultural events. The requests were approved.

Jen Ciaramitaro requested the use of the Park on May 14, 2011 for a birthday party. The request was approved.

Leroy Kane requested the use of the Park on May 21, 2011 for a birthday party. The request was approved.

John Soucie requested the use of the Park on August 27, 2011 for a wedding. The request was approved.

Michael Jordan requested the use of the Park on September 10, 2011 for the Internet & Telephone LLC summer picnic. The request was approved.

Mr. Copeland requested the use of the Firehouse on March 24, 2012. Mr. Canada moved to approve the request with an alcohol waiver and ask that he submit a regular application to have on record. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Administration: Mr. Canada stated that, with the permission from the other Board members, he met with a local realtor at the newly acquired Foss property today. They discussed proposed terms for a lease and the realtor thought that \$1,800 plus utilities would be obtainable. The group discussed various items that will be included in the lease agreement. Mr. Canada requested authorization to sign the agreement for \$1,800 plus utilities, but would like the authority to lower it to \$1,600 if necessary. Mr. Copeland moved to allow Mr. Canada to sign the agreement with the additional authority to lower the rent if necessary. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine stated that Park Ranger Kim Woods is moving out of the Park Ranger's residence at the Park within the next month or so. He stated he is not sure if the Recreation Department has had a chance to assess the building and its ability in its current state to be leased. There is an issue with squirrels and some carpentry items. Mr. Canada stated he would contact the exterminator he reached out to earlier regarding the squirrels at the Gifford House. Ms. Woods will work on the carpentry items. The group agreed to work with the same realtor as the Foss property as far as listing the property.

Mr. Deschaine stated that at the last Economic Development Committee (EDC) meeting they discussed their charter and the upcoming election of officers. He stated it is part of the appointing authority of the Board of Selectmen that they would name the Chair of the EDC. Mr. Canada stated they have three options: they can take nominations from the EDC, they can have a Board of Selectmen member automatically be the Chair, or the Commission can choose their own Chair. Mr. Federico moved to allow the EDC to make their own appointments without directive. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: Mr. Deschaine presented the Board with a complete list of committees with positions that need to be filled. They will review this list at a later date. Mr. Deschaine asked the Board if they would like to continue with an Ad-Hoc Committee for Stevens Park. The group agreed to keep the Committee in place for another year.

NEW BUSINESS: Mr. Deschaine stated the Wiggin Memorial Library has requested a Raffle Permit. They would like to hold a raffle between March 29th and April 15th to raffle off a Barnes & Noble Nook that was donated by a volunteer. The prize is worth approximately \$170.00. Tickets will be \$5.00 each or five for \$20.00 with the proceeds benefiting the Library's capital campaign for library needs. Mr. Copeland moved to approve the Library's request for a Raffle Permit. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Canada stated he took a sample of Town water to be tested and it was found that it is very hard water and there is some iron in it, which can cause odor. It was recommended installing a water softener and also disinfecting the well. Mr. Deschaine stated that Town Custodian Charlie Browne had disinfected the water tank itself and took it off the timer so it cycled normally and the odor has not returned. Mr. Browne did not do anything with the well because the well cover is so encrusted that it might break. Mr. Canada will speak with Mr. Browne and look into disinfecting the well.

Mr. Canada stated that there will be no Selectmen meeting on April 4, 2011.

Mr. Canada stated that he received information from Dave Emanuel regarding a Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant program. Mr. Canada asked the Board if they were interested in the idea of a pump house and twin pumps for fire suppression purposes. The group discussed it and agreed to apply for the grant, which is due by May 14th. Mr. Deschaine stated that he and Town Planner Lincoln Daley would work on this. Mr. Canada will ask Mark Stebbins if he would give the Town the land.

At 10:37 pm, Mr. Copeland moved to go into non-public session to discuss a matter that may affect the reputation of another, not a member of the Board. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 10:47 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 10:48 pm, Mr. Canada moved to adjourn. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reviewed By,

Stacey J. Grella
Executive Assistant

Paul R. Deschaine
Town Administrator