

**SELECTMEN'S WORKSHOP**  
**Minutes of 03-01-10**  
**4:20 p.m.**

*Selectmen:*

*Peter F. Brothers, Chairman*  
*Miller C. Lovett, Vice Chairman*  
*Robert C. Flanders*  
*Charles G. Palm*  
*Colette Worsman*

*Town Manager:*

*Phillip L. Warren*

*Recording Clerk:*

*Karin Landry*

Call to Order: Chairman Peter Brothers called the meeting to order 4:20 p.m. He introduced the Board, Town Manager, and the Recording Clerk.

The Town Manager asked the Board to review the draft Town Meeting deliberative session handouts and submit talking points for Articles 4 and 5 by March 4. Articles 11 and 12 are petitioned Articles, and the petitioners will have the opportunity to speak to them at the session. The Library Board of Trustees and the Conservation Commission are responsible for submitting talking points for their Articles. The chart utilized at last year's deliberative session to overview the 2009 budget was beneficial and should be used again this year. The amount to be raised for the Town's portion of local taxation in 2010 is no greater than the amount raised for the Town's portion of local taxation in 2008, and subsequently in 2009. The election will be held March 9 and the Town Meeting will be held March 10.

The Town Manager reviewed the Board's schedule through April 19, and forwarded the information to the Board via email.

There was no damage to speak of to any Town facilities during the recent rain and snow event. There were some service outages between utility poles and individual residences.

A "Meet the Candidates" night has been scheduled for candidates for Selectman on Thursday, March 4, at 7 p.m. at the community center. There are four candidates running for two seats on the Board: Bob Flanders, Nate Torr, Miller Lovett and Holly Tetreault.

*(The Agenda order was amended to allow for interested parties from the Humane Society to be present.)*

**W 10-13      Child's Park Status**

In anticipation of voters acting affirmatively to establish an expendable trust fund for improvements to Child's Park, the Park improvements subcommittee is soliciting support from the Board to move forward on the project. A challenge donation has been offered in conjunction with fundraising efforts for the improvements. The Board must consider future road

improvements by the state that could potentially interfere with upgrades to the Park. In a meeting with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT) that was facilitated by Executive Councilor Ray Burton, the Town has learned that no engineering work has been done of the project, and there are no plans to move ahead with road improvements at this point. In addition, if the Town chooses, they can apply some of the state's 2:1 money to move forward with the project.

Selectman Worsman explained that the Park, located on Meredith Center Road in the Chemung area, is likely to be accessed by those living in the southern part of Town. The most recent plans for improvements to the Park do not interfere with the road configuration options currently identified by DOT.

Selectman Lovett would like assurance from DOT in writing that they will not tear up the Park when and if they proceed with road improvements, and suggested drafting a letter to them in that regard.

The Chair agrees that while it is ideal to move forward while interested parties are focusing on the project, there must be at least a dialogue with DOT about working outside the improvements the Town is considering. He expressed his appreciation for the efforts of Executive Councilor Burton.

Director of Parks and Recreation Vint Choiniere has a long standing concern that future state plans will disrupt work that has been completed by the Town, but is comfortable at this point that they will not. He commended the volunteers working on the project, who are challenged to raise approximately 50% of the funding for the improvements, which are estimated at \$130,000. A subcommittee has been established to work on playground planning, and a subcommittee has been established for fundraising. He asked for the Board's permission to publicly announce the challenge donation in the amount of \$30,000 that has been offered by Lou Kahn on behalf of, and in memory of, his wife Bobby Smythe, who was an extremely well respected member of the community. In order to do so, the information will be released to all local media, and a letter will be disseminated to various civic groups and merchants in Town soliciting support for the fundraising efforts.

Selectman Lovett is tremendously gratified that the Town is within striking distance of moving forward with a project that has been talked about for 25 years, and hopes that they are able to get the approvals and funds to do so. He is concerned with safety issues in the area, including accessing and exiting driveways, and children and young people crossing the street to get to the Park.

There was an agreement among the Board that the fundraising campaign will not move forward until a letter is obtained from DOT confirming that future road work won't interfere with the latest design for Park improvements, and the expendable trust fund in the amount of \$60,000 is voted on at Town Meeting. The Town Manager recommends working through Nancy Mayville of the DOT to present a letter regarding the matter to the Commissioner. There was general agreement among the Board to send the letter, with a copy to Executive Councilor Burton so that he is able to facilitate a response.

The matter is scheduled for action at the March 22 meeting.

### **W 10-12      Stray Animal Services**

The Agenda item is a follow up to dialogue on stray animal services that took place at the public hearing on the proposed 2010 budget.

There were two responses to the RFP for stray dog kennel services. The RFP was sent to local kennel services that were identified from the phone book, the Lakes Region Humane Society (LRHS), and the New Hampshire Humane Society (NHHS). Responses were received from LRHS and NHHS. If an agreement is entered into with LRHS, the animals must be transported by the Town to their location in Ossipee, which is not viable. Dialogue ensued regarding the services provided by NHHS including their no-kill policy and policies regarding the humane treatment of animals. The Board generally agreed that the humane treatment of animals is extremely important, and should be taken into consideration when making decisions regarding stray animal services.

Selectman Palm acknowledges that outside agencies provide services the Town cannot provide efficiently or cost-effectively, but would like to consider how much of a contribution to an outside agency is used for overhead as opposed to facilitating the services they provide. As stewards of the taxpayers' money, the Board's goal going forward is to implement a uniform vetting process that is followed by all agencies and vendors. In addition, he has questions about how much of the costs for servicing animals from Meredith are offset by pet owners who are billed for and pay for services.

Selectman Lovett pointed out that the contribution from the Town of Meredith to the Humane Society is far less than the actual cost of the services they provide to the Town, and believes they should have been treated as an outside agency for some time. While the Town Manager understands that there has been a contract for services provided by the Humane Society in the past, he has not seen it. Selectman Lovett pointed out that any vendor purchase over \$5,000 must go out to bid, and that the Town's policies require that the vendor enter into a contract with the Town. He believes it is clear that the Humane Society should be treated as an outside agency.

The Town Manager pointed out that there are no legal requirements that the Board continue to treat the Society as a vendor.

Selectman Worsman is a little uncomfortable with exactly how costs are passed on to residents in the form of fees and charges in addition to the \$10,000. The RFP leaves a number of unanswered questions, including charges to resident for claiming an animal, dropping animals off, adoption fees, and what happens to animals that are not sold after seven days? If the NHHS is ultimately considered a vendor, the RFP should be for a calendar year as opposed to a 12-month period beginning in March. Finally, there was a consensus among the Board to level fund all outside agencies; therefore NHHS should be funded in the amount of \$9,500, the same level as last year; as was done with all agency funding requests.

Selectman Flanders spoke in support of Selectman Worsman's position.

Chair Brothers summarized by saying it is the inclination of the Board to treat the organization as an outside agency and do so based on a calendar year. The Board's wishes to get responses to unanswered questions in order to move forward and maintain the good relationship with NHHS.

The matter is scheduled for the regular meeting following the workshop to allow input from representatives of the Humane Society.

Resident Jenna Mousava is involved with the New Hampshire Feral Association, and understands the many costs associated with the services provided by NHHS. She believes the NHHS will be able to answer the Board's questions regarding fees very well. The Chair clarified the difference between an outside agency and vendor for Ms. Mousava, and explained the Request for Proposal process.

In closing, Selectman Lovett reiterated that the Board acknowledges that a much better vetting process must be put in place, and that steps will be taken to do so this year.

*Selectman Flanders motioned to adjourn the Workshop at 5:25 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Lovett. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Phillip L. Warren, Town Manager

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Peter F. Brothers, Chairman

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Karin Landry, Recording Clerk

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Miller C. Lovett, Vice Chairman

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Robert C. Flanders

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Charles G. Palm

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Colette Worsman