



home supervision. It is now being extended to adults who touch up against the criminal justice system.

Police Dispatch - The Commissioners are hoping to continue discussions with police chiefs and sheriffs regarding dispatch. The discussions surround how the service is paid for, and to what extent it is done by towns and the County.

Town Administrator Meetings - The meetings are no longer taking place. The Commission believes there is value in having a connection on a regular basis between the County and towns, as well as among towns, and would like to see the meetings resumed.

Selectman Brothers wishes to explore opportunities for cost savings by combining purchases for more buying power. He would like to see the nursing home continue to be operated as a County function, but acknowledged the cost of doing so. He would like to combine forces with other communities to counteract the downshifting of costs from the state. He is appreciative of the efforts made by the County to keep a level budget, and hopes to keep dialogue with the County open. It would be advantageous to have a Belknap County legislative agenda crafted. He suggested streamlining the County's vetting process for outside agencies, and presenting the information to the Delegation prior to delivering the budget.

Vice Chair Worsman believes that state and county budgets must be based on revenues. In addition, she agrees that a process should be in place for outside agencies that identifies the services that are received in exchange for taxpayer support. There needs to be a comprehensive approach to how outside agencies are funded. Vice-Chair Philpot indicated that it is the County's intention to address this as part of the next budget process.

Dialogue ensued regarding the Gunstock Area Commission. The Belknap County Commissioners have no control over the operation of Gunstock. The County owns the property. The County took a bond issue for Gunstock over ten years ago. Gunstock makes a payment to the County on an annual basis in the amount of \$150,000, and pays the County a percentage of its annual income, which was \$160,000 last year. Gunstock has met all obligations to the County. They are paying the County in excess of what they are required to pay as a result of the bond issue.

Selectman Torr inquired if any nursing homes have been privatized in the other counties in the state. Vice-Chair Philpot explained that although other counties have been approached to do so, none have been privatized at this time. The deficit in operating nursing homes is a result of not being compensated in full by the state for the difference between what is funded by Medicaid and the cost of patient care.

Selectman Lovett believes that millions can be saved through more efficient ways of running the government, and that open discussions with the County is a big step towards doing so. He is concerned with the way the government is run in general; the two party system results in hostility, so conversation is limited. Leaders must find ways to find common ground and be respectful in order to be successful. In good economic times, money needs to be spent and indebtedness paid down, but reserves must be built so there is a pool to draw upon in bad economic times to help a recovery take place. In his opinion, there is no way for the state to absorb the level of reduction in revenues and operate as they need to. The County should be managed in a way that protects it against the difficulties that will come when there is a recession. Commissioner Philpot reported that in addition to delivering a slightly lower budget last year, the County contributed to its fund balance. He credited a high level of professional management at the County for the advances that

have been made over the past year, and is happy to report that he has been successful in working with those belonging to the opposite party to focus on what is best for towns and constituents.

Resident Jim Hughes has performed services for the nursing home and has a lot of pride in the facility. He inquired how much of the nursing home deficit can be attributed to costs associated with assisted living. Commissioner Philpot explained that there are no assisted living facilities at the nursing home. There are skilled care services provided at the nursing home that operate at a profit. The deficit stems from the fact that those who can't pay for a bed and are eligible for Medicaid have their room paid for at the rate the federal government sets, which is below the cost of providing a bed.

Commissioner Philpot told the Board that the farming program that is being revitalized at the corrections department has been very successful. The produce is being served at the nursing home, and there is a small vegetable stand that brings income into the House of Corrections. The program is expected to expand next year.

Delegation Chair Alida Millham told the Board that the nursing home cannot be leased or sold without the approval of the Delegation. A subcommittee will be reviewing the issue very carefully. The issues we are facing require good communication at all levels.

Representative Kate Miller told the Board that communicating with constituents is a priority for the Delegation.

Representative Richard Stewart sits on the Gunstock Commission. He told the Board that future plans involve making Gunstock a year round resort, and that some very exciting things are going to happen.

#### **ACCEPTANCE AND/OR CORRECTION OF MINUTES:**

##### **10 -37 Minutes of the August 2 Workshop and Regular Meeting.**

*Selectman Torr moved to accept the minutes of the August 2 Workshop and Regular Meeting, as presented. Seconded by Selectman Brothers. 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

#### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:**

-The Town will participate in the New Hampshire High Risk Rural Road Program this year. The state will assess roads for marking improvements and signage. It is not known to what extent the cost of marking improvements and signage will be covered by the Program. The Town Manager will update the Board when the contract is received.

-Assessor Jim Commerford has applied for an extension to file the MS-1.

-The legislative update synopsis indicates that there will be no changes to the revenue from the rooms and meals tax. In addition, revenue will be received from the assessment of telecommunication polls and wires.

-The Lake Host Program is attributed with a total of 188 saves in facilities located in Meredith this season. Funding is available to run the program through Labor Day. Police cadets at Hesky Park are acting as Lake Hosts and collecting sticker fees.

-Informal surveys indicate that residents are pleased with the improvements at the Waukewan boat ramp. Labor Day weekend will be the real test of its success.

-The Town Manager updated the Board on the Winnepesaukee River Basin Project. The Advisory Board that was put in place at the time the Project was formed has limited authority. In view of the capital improvements on the horizon, it is agreed that the Advisory Board must have a mechanism for approval of contracts and budgets. A form of legislation will be crafted to strengthen the role of the Advisory Board, with the intention of getting it through this legislative session. The legislation will include specific language that requires the approval of a majority of the Advisory Board on capital improvements and contracts over a certain amount. Every community represented at the table will have one vote, regardless of its size. The Town Manager has the full support of the Board in moving forward with efforts to strengthen the Advisory Board.

-The Selectboards of Center Harbor, Sandwich, and Meredith will meet with school district representatives at 6 p.m. on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The meeting will be held at the Carey Mead Room in Center Harbor. A copy of the agenda is posted on the website.

-The Department of Environmental Services will hold a hearing on the level of Lake Waukewan on Tuesday, August 17, at 6 p.m. at Church Landing.

#### **SELECTMEN COMMENTS: (Reports on Committees 2nd meeting each month)**

Selectman Torr thanked the Public Works Department and town crew for the fast, expedient work with minimal disruption at the Waukewan boat ramp. Signage indicating that taxpayer's dollars are responsible for the project will be posted once the final invoices are in.

Selectman Lovett received inquiries from residents regarding political signs that are posted around town. The Town removes the sign if it is in its right of way. It refers the matter to the state if it is in a state right of way. The Town Manager will investigate if the town can remove a sign in a state right of way or on private property if it obscures the vision of drivers.

#### **10-39 Water System Committee Report**

The Board voted to accept the report of the Water System Committee at a recent workshop. The Report is the culmination of the work of the Committee in analyzing the operation of the main facility. The Report, including the committee's recommendation for rate changes, is posted on the website and in packets available to the public. The Committee identified a single rate as a more realistic way to charge customers for water and sewer. There are no tiers, summer, winter, residential, or commercial rates. The proposed rates are based on connections and consumption, and are derived from the American Waterworks acceptable use table approved by the Department of Environmental Services. The Board thanked the Committee, and particularly Chair Dave Thorpe, for savings in engineering and consulting fees estimated at \$1 million. A presentation is scheduled for the Board meeting of October 18 that will include a look at how the proposed rates will affect a sampling of 10-15 users. There is a consensus among the Board that doing so is an excellent way to help the public understand how they will be affected by the new rate structure. Selectman Torr suggested using the media whenever possible to get the information to the public.

*Selectman Brothers motioned to schedule the hearing to consider amendments to the Water and Sewer rates on October 18, 2010, at 5:40 p.m., during the regularly scheduled Board meeting. Seconded by Selectman Torr. 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

**10-40 Consider General Assistance Guidelines**

The General Assistance Guidelines must be reviewed by the Board on an annual basis. In doing so, the Board has determined that the 2009 fair rent schedule that is being used at this time should not be revised. The rents suggested by the state for 2010 are predominantly based on the rental market in southern New Hampshire, where rents are higher. If rates are increased, the Town will be required to consider requests up to the adjusted amount. In addition, there may also be a chance that the 2009 rates are inflated. Selectman Lovett expressed a concern that landlords might react to those levels by raising rents, but supports leaving rents at the 2009 level. Selectman Torr pointed out that the commitment is for one year, and the matter will be reviewed after that time. The Board directed the Town Manager and Administration to monitor the levels throughout the year to make sure they are reasonable and realistic.

*Selectman Brothers motioned to approve the General Assistance Guidelines revised as of August 2, 2010 with all amendments to it with the exception of the section on fair market rental values. Those values will be maintained at the 2009 levels. Seconded by Selectman Torr. 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

**ADJOURNMENT:**

*Selectman Lovett moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Brothers. 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Phillip L. Warren, Town Manager

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Colette Worsman, Vice Chairman

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Peter F. Brothers

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Miller C. Lovett

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Nathan J. Torr