



Selectman Torr agrees that reserves must be established. The Town must plan for anticipated increases from the Winnepesaukee River Basin Project.

Water System Committee Chair Dave Thorpe told the Board that the rates were calculated as though they were implemented for all of 2010. Any shortfall will have to come from the general fund. It is proposed that \$50,000 in reserves are set aside in 2011, and \$100,000 in reserves are set aside in 2012 and 2013.

Although Acting Chair Worsman utilizes a privately owned well and septic system, she believes that it is logical for the general taxpayers to support the businesses in the community and the Town offices with the 31% contribution towards capital costs. If the rate increases are not approved, brought to public hearing, and the ordinance passed, there could be trouble.

Selectman Lovett noted that residents have had cheap water for a number of years, and that the new rates will be in the average range. Meredith has been very good to property owners in terms of property value. Everybody has benefited from what Meredith is.

Selectman Brothers pointed out the benefits to the community of a municipal water and sewer system, including better fire ratings, higher density, and an active business community. The concept that heavy users should contribute a higher percentage is reasonable and supportable, both short and long term.

Mr. Thorpe presented the option of retaining the same rate structure and raising the rates with the existing structure. Doing so will result in residential customers picking up the burden in favor of commercial customers. There are additional inequities in the system that would continue by doing so.

*Vote on Motion: 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

A public hearing on the matter will be scheduled for the next Board meeting.

Selectman Lovett cautioned about getting in the habit of taking votes in workshops. It is easy to do, but the same thing can be accomplished in a Board meeting, and is more visible to the public.

#### **W10-34 Meredith Garden Proposal - Holly Tetreault**

Meredith center resident Holly Tetreault came before the Board for approval of a community garden at the Meredith Center traffic island. The proposal involves the removal of three trees, and the planting of a new tree. Ms. Tetreault explained that the three trees on the island have been assessed by local landscape professionals and that it has been determined that all three appear to be dying from the tips, which typically indicates a severe decline of the tree. The trees will become a safety hazard when they begin to die and loose branches. In addition, the trees interfere with visibility at the intersection, particularly during the winter months. There is one resident who believes the trees provide a sound barrier. Ms. Tetreault proposes that the trees be replaced with a single maple that will be surrounded by a perennial flower bed. The garden will be called the Meredith Center Community Garden, and dedicated to the Meredith Public Nursing Association in memory of Ms. Tetreault's mother, Donna Bilodeau. Donovan Tree Experts of Meredith have offered to remove the trees free of charge. The Greater Meredith Program has agreed to donate \$100 towards the project. The perennials in the garden will be donated or purchased with fundraising contributions. There will be no cost to the Town for the planting, maintenance and watering of the tree and garden. It is believed that the existing trees were

planted in memory of a Korean War soldier, but that individual has not been identified at this time. Various Meredith Center residents commented on the condition of the intersection, particularly in view of the beautiful gardens in downtown Meredith. Ms. Tetreault familiarized the Board with the life of her mother, Donna Bilodeau. The trees fall within the right of way of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, and the Department supports the removal of the trees.

Acting Chair Worsman suggested leaving the trees in place and sprucing up the island. Ms. Tetreault explained that the acid created by the trees will not allow other plant life to thrive, and that there is no way to treat the trees so they become healthy.

Selectman Brothers noted that the project needs to be coordinated with various Town departments.

Although the Board generally supports the project, reasonable efforts must be made to ascertain who the existing trees were dedicated to. The matter will be tabled at this time, and various avenues will be pursued to identify who the trees were dedicated in memory of. The matter will come before the Board at a future meeting.

#### **W 10-35            General Assistance Guidelines**

The Town is required to update General Assistance Guidelines on a yearly basis. The New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA) website and the New Hampshire Health and Human Services (NHHHS) food stamp program were referenced to make recommendations for rental and food assistance. Director of Administrative Services Brenda Vittner recommends updating the fair market rents set forth on page 20 to \$724 for a one-bedroom unit, \$904 for a two-bedroom unit, and \$1,193 for a three-bedroom unit. Dialogue ensued regarding fair market rents in Meredith and surrounding communities. A review of local advertising indicates that rents in the Meredith area are lower than those from NHHFA and NHHHS. A concern was expressed that raising the rates set forth in the Guidelines will encourage landlords to raise their rents. There was a consensus among the Board that fair market rents should remain at 2009 levels at this time. The Board requested that the Town Manager keep them apprised of any changes in the rental market. The Board will take action on the matter at the next Board meeting.

*Selectman Lovett motioned to adjourn the Workshop at 5:25 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Torr. 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

---

Phillip L. Warren, Town Manager

---

Colette Worsman, Acting Chair

---

Peter F. Brothers

---

Miller C. Lovett

---

Nathan J. Torr