

SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Minutes of 01/19/04

Selectmen: *Frank S. Michel, Acting Chairman*
Robert C. Flanders

Town Manager: *Carol M. Granfield*

Secretary: *Wynette DeGroot*

Call to Order:

Frank S. Michel called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

Roll Call:

Acting Chairman Frank S. Michel, Robert Flanders, Carol Granfield, Wynette DeGroot and Christine Tivnan.

Acceptance and/or Correction of Minutes:

Bob Flanders made a motion to approve the minutes of January 05, 2004 as presented. Seconded by Frank Michel, and approved 2-0 in favor.

Bob Flanders motioned to approve the non-public minutes of January 9, 2004 as presented. Seconded by Frank Michel. Approved 2-0 in favor.

Bob Flanders motioned to approve the non-public minutes of January 14, 2004 as presented. Seconded by Frank Michel. Approved 2-0 in favor.

TOWN MANAGERS REPORT:

- Carol is concerned with the phone system at the Town Hall. Current phone system does not support voice mail and there are concerns with the public trying to reach the Town Hall and receiving a busy signal. It is a concern due to the fact that we are a public service. Carol has asked Brenda Vittner to look at what options are out there. Any impact on the budget would be brought to the selectmen.
- Next item is to inform selectmen on attorney usage. There are a few law firms that we contact for legal services. Carol will inform the department heads to be sure to contact her first regarding any legal issues. There is also another avenue that may be used which is NHMA.
- Website and cable utilization continues. More use of the website by placing approved minutes, agendas, and other items brought forth. We are a member of the cable channel and they are looking for a representative from Meredith for the board. The schools will be contacted to discuss the filming of the meetings. There may be a cost associated with purchasing the equipment and that will be brought to the board as soon as more information is available.
- Selectmen and Department Heads have been given Goals and Myers-Briggs information. Carol asks for the packet of information to be completed and returned to her in the next week or so. She is looking at a tentative date for the session of working through the goals on February 19 (Thursday night) at 7:00 p.m.

- The February 2nd the meeting on the Tax and Assessing has been scheduled. It is Groundhog Day and hopefully has no bearing on the meetings.

Discussion on the Goal Setting meeting stated that the meeting is a workshop and the public may attend however, this is not where the public may participate. We do not take minutes at this meeting.

Frank Michel brought up the tax and assessing meeting with regards to questions presented. The Board as well as the presenters will attempt to answer questions as long as they are not related to any litigation.

Bob Flanders commented on the phone concerns as well as the attorney usage. He asked if Jim Hughes would be here for the goal-setting meeting (yes, he will be here) and lastly Bob stated he is very pleased with the increased volume in quality of information in his packet.

Carol is working on the consultants for the tax meeting that should be finalized soon.

VISITOR'S AND RESIDENTS COMMENTS: (Non-Agenda items)

Mr. Phil McGowan identified an error on the agenda which should have been January 5, 2004 not 2003.

Phil also asked about the Town's website which is: www.meredithnh.org.

Phil asked how the citizens would know what the format would be at the Tax & Assessing meeting. Discussion followed.

Phil is confused on the consultants to be used for the meeting. He believes the consultant should be the person who had worked with real estate and consulting in the Town.

Frank Michel stated that the meeting would be similar to the informational meeting held last year. The information for the meeting will be available the Wednesday (January 28) at the Town Hall for citizens to review prior to the meeting.

Phil asked if there was any objection to bringing in an expert of their own.

Frank Michel had no objection.

Mr. Raymond Gerard: discussion and comments on taxes and assessments. Mr. Gerard, who has been a taxpayer in Meredith since 1965, had sent a letter to the Assessor stating his concern on his tax rates increasing in 2002 by 12.2% and then again another increase in 2003 of 17.3% for a total increase of 29.5% in just 2 years.

This led to a lengthy, general discussion on school and town budgets.

SELECTMEN COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- **Space Needs:** There has been one meeting which was held on January 6, and the next is a meeting scheduled January 20th @ 7:00 p.m. SNC meetings are normally held on the first and third Tuesdays @ 7:00 p.m. at the Harold G. Wyatt Conference Room.

MEREDITH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

JANUARY 19, 2004

- **Planning Board:** The Planning Board had their third hearing on the Shep Brown issue last week and the board was polled at the end of the meeting to get a sense of where the board was headed. It was unanimous that the board was not in a mood to support either of the applications for various reasons.
- **The Community Center Search Committee will be added to the agenda again.** There will be a meeting on Friday morning at 7:30 (January 23).

NEW BUSINESS:

- **04-07 Discussion on appointment to Carol Granfield to the Municipal Records Committee.**

Bob Flanders moved to appoint Carol Granfield to the Municipal Records Committee, seconded by Frank Michel. Approved 2-0 in favor.

- **04-08 Discussion on size of Board of Selectmen.**

Bob Flanders feels the three-member board is working just fine. Now that all positions are filled, Town Manager and Administrative Assistant, he feels we can handle what is before us.

Phil McGowen voiced his opinion on the three-member board in relation to having only two selectmen present for many of the meetings and decisions having been made.

Frank Michel would explore the idea of a five-member board. If someone wanted to do a warrant article they would have to do it by next week. It (if voted in) would go into effect the following year. Frank would not propose the five-member board.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **04-03 Elderly Exemption:** Town Manager discussed exemption numbers and current amounts. The amounts and credits were adopted back in 1990 and 91. Fiscal impacts discussed.

New Optional Amounts	Current Meredith Amounts	Current Recipients
Veterans Credit from \$ 51 to \$ 500	\$100	389
Disabled Veterans from \$701 to \$2,000	\$1,400	15
Surviving spouse of a person killed on active duty credit from \$701 to \$2,000	\$1,400	1

Meredith adopted the current credit amounts at the 1990 and 1991 Town Meeting.

Regarding the Elderly and Permanently Disabled at the current asset and limits for elderly and disabled in Meredith have historically been the same.

Fiscal Impact:

The impact of increasing the Veteran's exemption by \$100.00 would have an impact of receiving an exemption additional \$38,900 based on current participants and an additional \$1,600.00 by increasing the Disabled Veterans and Survivor by \$100.00.

Recommendations:

The following is recommended:

Increase Veterans from \$100 to \$200
Increasing Disabled Veterans from \$1,400 to \$1,500
Increasing Survivor Veterans from \$1,400 to \$1,500

Elderly and Disabled income and asset levels increase to:

Single \$20,000, married to \$25,000 and asset limit \$60,000.

These changes would go into effect April 1, 2004.

Bob Flanders moves that the Selectmen put forth a warrant article to increase the benefits as outlined in Carol's staff report that being \$100.00 for Veterans and \$100.00 for disabled Veterans and \$100.00 for survivors and also what is outlined for the elderly. Furthermore, before the Town meeting of 05, we review to see where we fit. We will do this now and take a look at this next fall to see if we need to do anything further. Frank Michel seconds the motion. Vote is unanimous.

- **04-04 Town of Meredith Tape Destruction Policy:**
Discussion on tapes and the destruction of those tapes. The Board cannot establish policy for other board and commissions.

Bob Flanders makes a motion of a policy relative to retaining tapes of Board of Selectmen minutes is as follows:

1. *Taped minutes will be kept for thirty (30) days from the acceptance of the typed minutes.*
2. *If there is an appeal period, tapes will be held for thirty (30) days from the expiration of the appeal period.*
3. *Upon the expiration of the time limitations, tapes may be recycled or destroyed and the hard-copy minutes, as accepted by the Board of Selectmen will be the Public Record.*

Bob Flanders also recommends that the other boards and commissions in the Town accept this policy.

Frank Michel seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

MEREDITH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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OTHER BUSINESS:

Frank Michel mentioned the fatality on Route 104 and the importance of using seatbelts.

Reiterated by Bob Flanders in respect to another accident on 106.

Voting on Tuesday, January 27 will be held at the Flagship Room located at the Chase House.

The RSA's state that the polls must be manned the entire time they are open. Bob Flanders will be there for most of the day. Frank will be there in the morning and then in the afternoon. Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:37 PM by Bob Flanders, seconded by Frank Michel, vote unanimous.

Respectfully submitted:

Wynette DeGroot, Secretary

James F. Hughes

Carol M. Granfield, Town Manager

Frank S. Michel, Acting Chairman

Robert C. Flanders