

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
Minutes of 12/29/08
5:30 p.m.

Selectmen:

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

Co-Interim Town Managers:

John C. Edgar
Brenda L. Vittner

Recording Clerk:

Karin Landry

Call to Order: Chairman Peter Brothers called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He introduced the Board, Co-Interim Town Managers, and the Recording Clerk, and made announcements pertaining to fire exits, listening assisted devices, the use of microphones, and the silencing of cell phones.

ACCEPTANCE AND/OR CORRECTION OF MINUTES:

W 08-88 Minutes of December 1, 2008 Regular Meeting, December 8, 2008 Workshop, and December 15, 2008 Workshop

Selectman Worsman motioned to accept the minutes of the December 1, 2008 Regular Meeting, December 8, 2008 Workshop, and December 15, 2008 Workshop. Seconded by Selectman Flanders. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- In anticipation of the next snow event, snow removal in the downtown area will proceed tonight.
- The Transfer Station will be closed on Wednesday for its regularly scheduled day of closure, and Thursday in observance of New Year's Day.
- The Town Hall offices will close at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, and reopen at 8 a.m. on Friday in observance of New Year's Day.
- The public hearing scheduled under 08-89 was incorrectly posted under RSA 31:95-b. The hearing will be reposted under RSA 31:95-e and scheduled for the January 12 Board meeting.

VISITOR'S AND RESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

Resident Dave Sticht suggested eliminating information from the Vision Appraisal website that could contribute to break-ins and burglaries. The website includes information on heating systems that indicates if the residence is occupied year round, as well as diagrams that include points of entry. The Chair pointed out that the rise in break-ins and vandalism consists of primary, secondary, and commercial properties. The break-ins can be tied to the current economic crises, and he is not inclined to remove any information from the Vision Appraisal website. Police Chief Kevin Morrow concurred with his assessment. Dialogue ensued regarding steps that can be taken to deter a break-in. Selectman Palm pointed out that plowing and shoveling also facilitates emergency access.

SELECTMEN COMMENTS

Selectmen Flanders announced that the Planning Board is coming forth with Warrant Articles to make a few changes to the Zoning Ordinance. The changes are mostly to language, but include some changes to zoning districts. The specific changes are available at the Planning Office on Highland Street.

08-90 Meredith Community Center Garden Dedication Request

The Greater Meredith Program asked the Selectmen to consider the dedication of the Community Center garden to those that contributed time, materials, and financial assistance to develop the garden. There was remarkable support for the garden from individuals, companies, and organizations from within the Town, as well as from surrounding communities. Chris Williams coordinated the volunteer efforts on behalf of the Greater Meredith Program Design Committee, and highlighted the details of the garden for the Board. The plantings will be native shrubs, plants, and flowers. A diagram of the garden identifying the plantings will serve as an educational aid. An individual has requested to adopt the spot in terms of maintenance. The implementation and maintenance of the garden comes with no cost to the Town. Mr. Williams acknowledged those that serve on the Greater Meredith Program Design Committee and some of the major contributors to the effort. The Board agreed that the garden should be dedicated to the efforts of all volunteers involved in the implementation of the garden. Details for a plaque in recognition of those volunteers and the Adopt-a-Spot location will be worked out between Town Staff and the Greater Meredith Program.

Selectman Palm motioned to approve the dedication of the Community Center garden in recognition of the many volunteers who contributed to the effort and to further allow posting of a plaque at the Community Center in recognition of this effort. Seconded by Selectman Flanders.

Chair Brother suggested that the motion include language that there is a consensus that the details will be worked out between the Town staff and the Greater Meredith Program.

Selectman Palm agreed to the additional language. Seconded by Selectman Flanders. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

08-91 Acceptance of Resignation – Steven Bennett, Emergency Management Director

Steve Bennett served as the Town's Emergency Management Director for 25 years. The Emergency Management Director is responsible for coordinating emergency operations in Town when the need arises. On December 17, 2008 he submitted his resignation from the position effective January 1, 2009. Selectman Palm expressed his thanks to Mr. Bennett for his part in making his transition as the Town's fire chief easier by having the emergency plan in place. The Board expressed their gratitude for Mr. Bennett's efforts in developing the emergency plan and subsequent updates to the Plan. The Co-Interim Town Managers will coordinate the acknowledgements in appreciation for Mr. Bennett's service to the Town.

Selectman Lovett moved that the Board accept the resignation of Steven Bennett as Emergency Management Director, and express the appreciation of the Board and Town for his 25 years of service. Seconded by Selectman Palm. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

08-92 Appointment of Emergency Management Director

In order to provide a seamless level of coverage for the community with respect to emergency management, the Board must appoint a new Emergency Management Director, effective January 2, 2009. The matter has been discussed with critical department heads and the recently re-convened Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee. The position is far different than it was 25 years ago, and the new director must be able to meet the time commitments required by the position. There is a consensus that the appointment should be internal and come from the safety services/emergency services professions. Chief Morrow and Jones are in agreement that the position should be filled by Police Chief Kevin Morrow at this time. Chief Morrow currently attends Emergency Management meetings as a participant, and assured the Board that acting as Director will not significantly increase his time commitment. The Board expressed their appreciation to Chief Morrow for assuming the position, and to the departments that are willing to work together so well in emergency situations.

Selectman Flanders moved that the Board appoint Kevin Morrow, Police Chief, as Emergency Management director, effective January 2, 2009. Seconded by Selectman Lovett. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

A budget workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, December 30, at the Town Hall Annex. The public is invited to attend.

Selectman Worsman motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Flanders. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

John C. Edgar, Co-Interim Town Mgr.

Peter F. Brothers, Chairman

Brenda L. Vittner, Co-Interim Town Mgr.

Miller C. Lovett, Vice Chairman

Karin Landry, Recording Clerk

Robert C. Flanders

Charles G. Palm

Colette Worsman