

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
Minutes of 1/12/09
5:30 p.m.

Selectmen:

(Absent with Notice)

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

Co-Interim Town Manager:

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 Manager, and the Recording Clerk, and made announcements pertaining to fire exits, listening assisted devices, the use of microphones, and silencing cell phones.

ACCEPTANCE AND/OR CORRECTION OF MINUTES:

W 09-93 Minutes of the December 22, 2008 Workshop, and the December 29, 2008 Workshop and Regular Meeting.

Selectman Flanders motioned to accept the minutes of the December 22, 2008 Workshop, and the December 29, 2008 Workshop and Regular Meeting. Seconded by Selectman Worsman. 4-0-0. Motion passed.

INTERIM TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

- A meeting was held last Friday at the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services regarding a possible stimulus package that would provide funding for "shovel ready projects." Brenda Vittner met with Brian Carroll and Ray Korber to identify projects that meet the criteria for funding. She will continue to monitor principal forgiveness funding that becomes available from the federal or state government.
- Rick Van de Poll will present the second part of the Town's Natural Resource Inventory on Thursday, January 15th from 7:30-8:00 p.m. at the Community Center.
- The Town closed on the Page Pond and Forest project this morning.

VISITOR'S AND RESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

None

SELECTMENS COMMENTS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:**09-94 Recognition of Steven G. Bennett**

At the December 29 Workshop, the Board accepted a letter of resignation from Steven Bennett, who served as the Town's Emergency Management Director for 25 years. Selectman Palm introduced a formal recognition of Mr. Bennett's efforts and contributions to the Town of Meredith's emergency preparedness program. He thanked him for his efforts personally, and on behalf of the Town.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair read a letter addressed to Mr. Bennett expressing their appreciation:

It is with deep regret that we accept your letter of resignation from the position of Emergency Management Director. Words cannot express the level of gratitude that we feel for your 25 years of dedicated service to the Town. We understand that this position has evolved to a level that requires a greater level of commitment for a volunteer, and appreciate all that you have done to promote emergency planning for the Town of Meredith. As the author of the first emergency management plan, you have left your mark on the history of the Town of Meredith, and we have been provided with a solid foundation moving forward, and are better prepared to assist our residents and visitors in time of need. The Town of Meredith truly appreciates your hard work and commitment.

The Chair presented a plaque to Mr. Bennett in recognition of his service to the Town. Mr. Bennett thanked those who have supported him through the years, and supports the selection of Chief Morrow as his successor.

PAGE POND:

The Chair announced that Page Pond and Forest has been conserved as of January 12, 2009. He thanked the Board for their unanimous support, and also thanked Greg Caporossi and Betsy McGean of the Trust for Public Lands ("TPL") for their expertise. He thanked TPL for the funding of soft costs, the Meredith Conservation Commission, and the private fundraising committee. The acquisition was the culmination of a 14 month effort by a multitude of individuals and various groups. He acknowledged the support of the project by taxpayers at Town Meeting, and the donors both small and large who contributed to the \$100,000 matching grant. On behalf of the Board, he thanked everyone for this glorious achievement.

Don MacFarland, Chair of the Meredith Conservation Commission, recognized the Board for their support of the project.

Greg Caporossi, Project Manager for TPL, congratulated all those who worked on the campaign, including the greater Meredith community, his colleagues at TPL, the Meredith Conservation

Commission, the campaign committee, the Co-Interim Town Managers, and the Board of Selectmen. TPL will be organizing a formal celebration to mark the achievement and to recognize all the individuals and partners who made this project a success.

Resident Mark Billings told the Board that he is thankful for the opportunity he had to meet new people and make new friends during the preservation process, and commented on the sense of community he observed while getting the story out.

09-95 Public Hearing – Acceptance of Gifts, Grants and Donations per RSA 31:95-e.

A Workshop was held in December to discuss the donation of two snowmobiles by Laconia Harley Davidson. RSA 31:95-e requires a public hearing be held for property donated to a Town or Village District over \$500. The value of the donation is approximately \$13,500. In addition, Winnepesaukee Motorsports donated four helmets, which are valued below \$500.

Selectman Flanders motioned to open the Public Hearing at 6 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Palm.

Chief Morrow and the Town Manager met with residents of Bear Island last summer, who expressed their concerns with the ability of the Police Department to access the islands for the investigation of crimes. A petition to purchase snow machines for the police and fire departments was signed by 87 island residents and presented to the Board last September. In November, Chiefs Morrow and Jones approached Laconia Harley Davidson with a request for a donation of two snowmobiles to enhance emergency rescue efforts and crime investigation on the Lake and islands. The fire department currently uses an Argo or privately-owned snow machines for Lake and island access, and the Police Department relies on Fish & Game, or privately-owned snow machines. These methods can result in a delay in response time. The additional costs of putting the snow machines in service include the purchase of a trailer, trailer registration, and annual insurance. Standard Operating Guidelines will be put in place for the use of the machines. Training will be provided by Fish & Game and will be covered in the Police Department's training budget.

There were no questions or comments from the public.

Selectman Palm motioned to close the public portion of the hearing at 6:07 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Flanders. 4-0-0. Motion passed.

Selectman Worsman is not in favor of accepting the donation. She acknowledges that it is a great benefit, but is concerned with having to absorb additional costs at a later time. She is also concerned with officer safety, and pointed out that Fish & Game personnel are highly trained on the Lake, while police officers are highly skilled on the road. She is also concerned that accepting the donation will lead to expectations from residents that their properties be adequately monitored when access to the islands is not possible by snow machine or boat. She does not support expanding services with snow machines and will vote against accepting the donation.

Selectman Flanders congratulated the chiefs on their creativity in procuring the donation. The machines will also be used to assist EMS services on snowmobile accidents in the woods. He

supports the use of properly maintained equipment by properly trained personnel. He pointed out that most of the residents on Bear Island receive proportionately less for their tax dollar than those on the mainland. Selectman Flanders supports accepting the donation of the snow machines.

Selectman Palm also supports the donation of the snow machines. The police and fire department are not able to respond to emergencies on the islands, Lake, or snowmobile trails in a timely manner. The machines will be properly maintained, and standard operating guidelines will be in place. There will be little in the way of additional equipment that is necessary to put the snow machines into service. He acknowledges that there will be an ongoing cost for maintenance, and some day for replacement, but will vote in favor of accepting the donation because he thinks it is a valuable piece of equipment. He expressed his appreciation to the owners of Laconia Harley Davidson.

Chair Brothers concurs that the benefits of accepting the donation will outweigh the initial costs and maintenance of the equipment. Personnel will be properly trained and operating guidelines will be in place. The snow machines will enable us to cover territory and offer services that are not possible with other equipment. He supports the approval of the donation.

Selectman Flanders moved that the Board accept the gift of two snowmobiles with an overwhelming thank-you to Laconia Harley Davidson. Selectman Palm seconded the motion.

The Chair moved to amend the motion to include the anticipated value of the donation of \$12,398, and recognize the donation of helmets from Winnipisaukee Motor Sports. Selectman Palm seconded the amendment. 3-1-0. Amendment passed.

3-1-0. Motion passed, as amended.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

The Board moved into a Non-Public meeting per RSA 91:A 3(2)(b) for personnel purposes, following a short break beginning at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Vittner, Co-Interim Town Mgr.

Peter F. Brothers, Chairman

Karin Landry, Recording Clerk .

Robert C. Flanders

Charles G. Palm

Colette Worsman