

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
Minutes of 02/02/09
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 5:35 p.m. He introduced the Board, Co-Interim Town Managers, and the Recording Clerk, and made announcements pertaining to fire exits, listening assisted devices, microphones, and cell phones.

ACCEPTANCE AND/OR CORRECTION OF MINUTES:

W 09-07 Minutes of the January 2, January 5, January 7, and January 8 Workshops

Selectman Palm motioned to accept the minutes of the January 2, January 5, January 7, and January 8 Workshops as distributed. Seconded by Selectman Worsman. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

INTERIM TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

- The Boynton Rd. project will commence this week. The project is being coordinated with the Laconia Area Community Land Trust by Ray Korber, Public Works, Water & Sewer, Code Enforcement, and the Planning Department. Residents in the area have been notified and were provided with an emergency contact number.
- The Water Department Committee vacancies will be advertised in two different papers this week. An application can be obtained at the Town Manager's office or on the website. The applications must be submitted by February 13.
- A potential fundraiser for Special Olympics is in the process of being organized. The smaller version of the Hampton Plunge would take place in the vicinity of Bay Point. Various departments are working with Special Olympics and New Hampshire Fish & Game to ensure public safety. The anticipated date for the event is March 8. There will be a press release once the details are finalized.
- The draft warrant discussed last week was sent to the Department of Revenue Administration for review. They will notify us of any changes in language.

- There was an issue with the computers at Town Hall today, and they are currently not in service. It is hoped they will be up and running tomorrow.

VISITOR'S AND RESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

None

SELECTMENS COMMENTS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:**09-08 Public Hearing – 2009 Proposed Municipal Budget per RSA 32:5-1**

Selectman Worsman motioned to open the Public Hearing on the 2009 Municipal Budget per RSA 32:5-1 at 5:43 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Flanders. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Brothers opened the public hearing with a brief presentation. Through the cooperation of department heads and the Interim Town Managers, the budget came in level funded in terms of appropriations. Upon review the overall impact of the 2009 budget on taxpayers, the department heads and Interim Town Managers were asked to identify further cuts in the budget, as well as additional sources of revenue, in order to compensate for a \$381,000 shortfall in revenue in 2008. The Board was able to identify \$360,000 worth of adjustments between increased revenues and decreased operating expenses. The Board strived to maintain service levels. The addition of a new position will be closely considered, as well as refilling existing positions. A hold has been placed on equipment purchases. Employees will receive a partial COLA of 2.5%. Step increases were frozen for this year. There was a consensus to keep 7.25% in the general fund.

The Department heads were present to answer questions from the public.

Michelle Taft inquired how to apply for funds on behalf of the newly formed Center Harbor Soup Kitchen. The Kitchen is a non-profit organization that will serve those in need in Meredith, Sandwich, Tamworth, Moultonborough, and Center Harbor. Ms. Taft was instructed to write a petitioned Warrant Article and obtain at least 25 signatures from Meredith residents who are registered to vote. The Warrant Article must be submitted to the Town Clerk's Office by 5 p.m. on February 3. Ms. Taft pointed out an error under Regional Agencies for the Greater Meredith Program. Ms. Vittner will correct the error. Dialogue ensued regarding the level funding for Regional Agencies this year, and a better process for vetting in the future.

Resident Pat Mack inquired about the \$19,000 appropriation for the Conservation Commission. The \$19,000 represents the annual operating budget for the Commission. The Commission

pledged that they would not request funding for the ETF until the debt for Page Pond is eliminated.

Resident Keith True expressed the employees appreciation for the 2.5% COLA. He inquired how long the step increases will be frozen, and whether the Board will have to adopt a new pay plan since the current one is being taken out of place. The Chair told Mr. True that the intent at this time is for a one-year freeze in step increases. The step increases will be reconsidered next year. A new pay plan will not have to be adopted because the existing plan will still exist after the one-year freeze.

Resident Pat Mack inquired about the chemical toilets under Buildings & Grounds for \$2,200. The chemical toilets are at Shep Brown's. The chemical toilet provided for boaters last season while building the bathhouse will no longer be necessary.

Resident Dave Sticht asked for a breakdown of the ETF's included in the 2009 budget, including the balance of each. Ms. Vittner will email the information to him.

Peter Russell, who sits on the Board of Genesis Behavioral Health, thanked the Board for their continued support of the Agency in providing mental health needs in Belknap County.

Resident Karen Sticht inquired how public access television is funded. It is funded by the Cable Franchise Fees Special Revenue Fund. Ms. Sticht would like to see the dues for Motorcycle Week listed under Regional Agencies. She suggested using the interest in ETF's toward the operating budget. Ms. Vittner told her that using interest for another purpose is not allowed by the DRA, however, an ETF can be reduced by Warrant Article. Selectman Worsman took the opportunity to point out that all the pieces of the budget are integral, and that it is important that the Warrant Article for reducing the Downtown Parking Fund by \$100,000 is passed.

Department of Public Works Superintendent Mike Faller reviewed the Batchelder Hill Rd. project. Completing the project in two phases represents a decrease in 2009 appropriations of \$100,000.

Resident Pat Mack asked about the \$3,000 increase in the Parks & Recreation's line item for telephone services. Ms. Vittner will investigate the increase. Ms. Mack suggested using the cable franchise fees to upgrade the microphones used at the Community Center. Ms. Vittner will inquire if the Town can get a credit for the microphones being used at this time. Ms. Mack asked for additional information on the Main Street Rehabilitation ETF. The funds will be used for soft costs including surveying and engineering. She also asked about the Waterfront Infrastructure Trust. Mr. Edgar told her that the scope of the ETF was expanded a few years ago at Town Meeting to include all Meredith waterfront structures. Cattle Landing has been identified as the priority project at this time.

Resident Dave Sticht inquired about the two lines for legal consultation under Operations and Maintenance. Ms. Vittner explained that one is for general legal consultations utilizing various attorneys and the other is for union negotiations, which is a specialized area of law. The Town will call upon those services to negotiate a collective bargaining unit that has been taken under

advisement by the Public Employees Labor Relations Board. Dialogue ensued regarding the potential for additional costs in connection with union negotiations in the future.

Resident Pat Mack encouraged the Board to fund water protection. The Chair pointed out that the Board appropriated \$15,000 in this year's budget for the treatment of milfoil. There is no specific project in mind for the funds.

The Board and Town Managers expressed their appreciation for the work of the Water Committee and Water Department Superintendent, Brian Carroll. They have done a phenomenal job in finding economies within the Department and substantially increasing the output of the facility.

Mr. Edgar recognized the department heads for the outstanding work they did in preparing their respective budgets for 2009.

Resident Pat Mack inquired about the \$10,000 for volunteer firefighter insurance. Selectman Palm explained that the funds were appropriated last year to establish a retirement program for volunteers based on time, level of participation, and training. The program was not established this year due to various changes within the Department. The funds have been reserved for 2009.

In an effort to gather broad based support for the budget, the Board, Interim Town Managers, and department heads are available to answer any additional questions that might arise.

Selectman Palm motioned to close the public portion of the budget hearing at 7:15 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Flanders. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Following a short break, the Board will review the tentative schedule for Workshops and Board Meetings through April.

ADJOURNMENT:

Selectman Palm motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Lovett. 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