

**TOWN OF NEW HAMPTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OFFICES
NEW HAMPTON, NH 03256**

December 1, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT: Selectmen Paul Tierney, Charles Bartley and Kenneth Mertz

OTHERS PRESENT: Barbara Lucas, Town Administrator

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. The purpose of the session was a budget workshop and any other business that came before the Board. Mrs. Lucas advised CNP would be coming this evening to meet with Selectmen to discuss property appraisal work.

Tax Rate Set Mrs. Lucas advised the Board the official documents setting the tax rate were received and she was preparing the information for the Town's website and New Hampton Connection email. She anticipated the posting would be done tomorrow. The overall rate went from \$15.97 to \$16.45 per thousand for an overall increase of 2.9%. The town portion of the tax rate went to \$4.59 per thousand. This rate is up from \$4.05 per thousand last year.

DRA Parcel Count Request A form from the DRA was received requesting property parcel counts, and this work was completed by Mrs. Lucas using the Vision MS-1 software. The form requires signatures from the Selectmen, who reviewed the information and signed the forms.

Mrs. Lucas noted she has questions on how CNP classified some of the properties and requested Mrs. Vose to review the materials. Mrs. Vose has already identified several entries for clarification when CNP representatives come to the Town Offices.

Brook Road Bridge Notification was received from DOT on Wednesday afternoon at approximately 4 p.m. notifying Mrs. Lucas of a "significant deficiency" in the Brook Road Bridge which goes over Blake Brook and connects Blake Hill Road and Coolidge Woods Road. Nancy Mayville of DOT was contacted at 4:30 that same night and she explained a "critical deficiency" means the bridge needs to be closed immediately. A "significant deficiency" does not. This bridge did not require closure.

While this bridge was reported by the town as requiring work in an earlier proposal to DOT, there were not sufficient funds raised by the town to address this bridge as well as the other two which were also deemed in need of replacement or repair. Mrs. Lucas advised the Board that more money should be considered for the Capital Reserve to address the Brook Road bridge. She outlined some of the report's suggestions for interim repair. Mrs. Lucas recalled that a quote for replacement was received by the town from the State a couple years ago. The Selectmen decided Mr. Boucher will be advised of the situation and asked to get the replacement quote updated by DOT which would also meet a requirement of the State's Bridge Aid application process.

*Central Street Bridge
Email Updates
Nancy Mayville, DOT to
Wade Brown, SEA*

Mr. Brown's previous correspondence regarding the possible retention of 5% of the costs for work the towns still had issue with, received a response from Ms. Mayville of DOT. She advised that retention was no longer allowed as of a 2004 policy change to reflect the Prompt Payment requirements for state and federal law. She suggested that if there were outstanding issues (for example, the sidewalk and rails) that the town should not pay for them and hold the value but advised the Town cannot hold a "retention fee" for work completed.

Complaints Received

Mrs. Lucas advised of some complaints received which may require a letter from the Selectmen:

A citizen advised town offices that there are 3 junk cars on an abutter's property and his own discussion with the owner had not been fruitful. The citizen was advised by Mrs. Lucas that if the vehicles are deemed roadworthy or if they are registered, they may be permissible. The matter will be investigated.

Another complaint reported a possible apartment installation in a barn without a permit. Mrs. Lucas will call the landowner and clarify the situation.

Mr. Mertz asked if there was any update on the two property complaints previously received on Drake Road and Mrs. Lucas advised the Police Chief and she were going to go view the properties but had not done so as yet.

*Police Department
Computer System Issues*

Chief Salmon came before the Board to discuss computer systems upgrades for the Police Department. He explained that last week they were getting pop-ups advising that normal automatic updates could not be installed. The support company, Certified Computer Solutions (CCS), was contacted and advised him there was no space available on their in house backup (which was essentially a shared drive on an older CPU) The technician was able to do some work to get some

space but it was only a temporary fix to avoid a system crash.

The Chief outlined several options offered by the technician. One was to go with an on-site network server which would require replacing the existing three computer stations that currently could not be hooked up to such a system. This could cost \$8 to \$10,000 including replacing the 3 stations, labor, service and maintenance of the system would be an additional monthly fee.

The next option was to create an off-site server with a VPN or Virtual Private Network. This would mean an expenditure of about half as much but would still require replacement of 3 computer stations and would include a monthly fee for maintenance and service. The system would require either cable or telephone connection with the company but would allow a number of maintenance, upgrade and service options to be done remotely by CCS. The PD would also have a dedicated website as part of this system.

The selectmen discussed the options and reviewed the information provided by CCS. Several issues were brought up. Currently the police department equipment is very dated and was built piecemeal by another company a number of years ago. While replacing a drive or memory might buy some time, the general age of the CPUs and their ability to have more modern components added to them is in question as is the cost efficiency. Another issue is the fact that because it is a police department, old information has to be accessible and retained. Questions to be put to CCS include determining if the prices reflect a stand-alone system for the Police, or can the price be improved by folding in other services currently paid for by other the town departments. Another issue to clarify is the effect of any possible power failures or downed telephone lines and what protections are provided to maintain operations in the PD as well as data protection.

Mr. Bartley asked to clarify the possibilities of replacing existing components like memory or purchasing an ancillary drive to reduce the potential cost. He asked, and the other selectmen concurred, that other municipalities should be contacted for their experiences with various options. Any of the options discussed would have life-expectancy issues that would have to be considered. The Chief noted he was aware of 3 other police departments in the area he could contact for their input and will report back to the Board.

*Police Department's
Explorer*

Chief Salmon reported that efforts getting heat working in the Explorer without more substantial work were unsuccessful. The failed part is not expensive, but entails removing the center panel console with the police components and radio. Meredith Ford gave a

quote of \$1,100 to do all the work but it is not clear if they could handle work on the console's police equipment. The Chief wants to check with Ossipee Mountain Electric, who installed the console equipment, and see if the police equipment is modular or hard wired.

Mrs. Lucas noted that the Explorer was the primary vehicle for winter service to the more rural areas of town. While discussion of an external heater plugged into the cigarette lighter was briefly discussed by the Selectmen and Chief, it was agreed that this was not a safe or reliable option.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

Motion to go non-public under RSA 91A:3 II (i.) was made by Selectman Tierney, seconded by Mr. Bartley. The motion was approved at 5:46 p.m.

PUBLIC SESSION RESUMED:

Mr. Mertz made the motion to come out of non-public session at 6:05 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bartley. The vote passed unanimously. A motion to seal the minutes of the non-public session for a period of 25 years was made by Mr. Tierney, seconded by Mr. Bartley. The vote was approved unanimously.

Sheriff's Department Service

Chief Salmon advised the Board that a Writ of Possession was served by the Sheriffs at a Main Street property. Tenants are no longer there and the property is back in the hands of the owner. There is personal property on the premises which the landowner has to safe keep for 28 days.

Parking Violations

Mr. Mertz advised the Chief of two instances of repeated parking violations on Main Street. The Chief was aware and would be following up.

Health Insurance

The Selectmen reviewed information provided on both plan options offered by LGC. Staying with the present coverage the town uses now for employee insurance would mean cost increases to the town budget of 16.4% more than last year's rates, assuming the Town stayed at an employee cost sharing at the current 10% rate.

An alternative two-tiered plan offered by LGC would offer employees to stay with the Blue Cross II plan currently used by the Town, as well as a second plan option with Matthew Thornton HMO. The Matthew Thornton plan would require only a 6% cost increase to the town over the current expense, assuming the same employee cost share of 10%. The Matthew Thornton HMO could result in a \$22,000 less additional expense to the budget for the coming year. It was noted there are differences in coverage and requirements with the HMO.

If the Town stays with the current plan, the difference in additional cost (approximately 16.4%) would be borne by the employees and the town budget. If the HMO plan was adopted and employees continue to pay a 10% contribution to cost of the health insurance, a single person could see rates go from \$58.73 per month to \$62.71. The two person plan would go roughly from \$117 to \$125 and the family plan would go from \$158 to \$169. Staying with the current Blue Cross plan could almost double the cost for employees.

It was noted that co-payments at the time of service would be greater with Matthew Thornton than they are with the current Blue Cross plan. Matthew Thornton has an out of pocket deductible which does not exist in the Blue Cross plan. Lifetime out-of-plan limitations exist in both plans. The Selectmen noted that it was important that options be offered to the employees as some may determine the additional cost, while significant, would be worth paying in order to keep their current coverage or providers.

Mrs. Lucas advised the Board that she had contacted another company, Primex, which offers Harvard Pilgrim health insurance plans. Mrs. Lucas will pursue getting that information. She advised that the Primex plan year begins in July and experienced an 11% cost increase from their current year costs. Primex will quote out a 15 month service agreement if the Board is interested, but LGC would need a thirty-day notice prior to switching plans. She also noted that Primex does not offer dental or disability compensation so the Town would have to stay with LGC for those items. Mrs. Lucas will update the Board as the information becomes available. Any move to Primex would have to be decided in February or March, but renewals through LGC are effective January 1st and must be decided.

Mr. Tierney stated the first issue to consider is whether the town is going to continue the employee contribution of 10% of the costs or change the percentage figure. The second issue to consider is whether the Town will stay with the current health insurance plan or offer the two-tier plan with Matthew Thornton HMO as the second tier or option for employees. Mr. Mertz stated he would prefer to offer the employees the option of choosing; noting that if it was decided to stay with the current plan, their current contribution of 10% of the costs would have to go up. Mr. Tierney made a motion that the percentage of employee contribution remain at 10% and offer the two tier program with an employee meeting to explain the situation and options. Mr. Mertz seconded. The vote was unanimous.

All town employees to discuss the health insurance options will be December 10th at 3 p.m. at the town offices, pending confirmation

*Property Appraisal
Planning Meeting
CNP Representative,
Mark Neider*

with the LGC representative who would attend the meeting.

Appraisals of town properties are required every five years. The town is currently in the second year of the five year cycle and is considering options to reduce the costs for the taxpayers or making the costs easier to budget by spreading the work out. Recertification is required 2013.

A quote previously submitted last year by CNP was for \$158,800 total for starting a cyclical system in 2010. One approach was to do appraisals of one third of the town each year at \$39,700 per year and doing finalizing of statistics, call backs, any hearings in 2013. The other option was to start a cyclical review in 2011. This would entail costs of \$52,933 per year to do half the town each year in order to have the work complete in 2013 as per the state requirements. Mr. Neider stated he had no preference for which plan (review in thirds or by halves of the town) was better other than to strongly suggest the work be complete for 2013.

While some residents might have some issues with being reappraised so soon, he noted there would be no changes in their appraisal unless errors were found or new improvements were noted. The idea with cyclical review is that fewer errors would go unnoted and the reliability of the information would be greatly enhanced as the cycles went on.

Requirements are that revaluations must be submitted every five years, but it does not require that every property must be physically visited. The problem is in the veracity of the information. It was noted by Mr. Mertz that if the town had a compliance officer, some of the errors might be caught however the town has no such position at this time and the cost for a compliance officer visit would be greater than the visit for appraisal work.

If the economy were to continue to slide, abatements will probably go up. A bare bones statistical update and analysis could be done but there could be issues with the veracity of the information if the cyclical assessment were not done before the analysis.

Money in the 2010 budget (\$45,000) covers CNP, Sansoucy on the DirectTV (\$25,000) issue as well as appeals, timber, pickups and normal expenses. The budget would have to be increased to include the work discussed tonight. Mrs. Lucas noted that the current figure was developed with the idea that assessment work would begin in 2011 and after the presumed resolution of the DirecTV issue in 2010. Selectman Tierney was of the opinion that spreading the costs over three years was better than two. However, it was pointed out that in

2011 the budget figure would be \$25,000 less if DirecTV was resolved and this would be an offset to the cyclical assessment costs.

Mr. Mertz asked that after the issuance of a building permit how long does it take to catch the pickups. Mrs. Lucas advised that she goes through on a case by case basis. Mr. Neider advised that in the other municipalities his company serves there is no set methodology and it is generally done on a case by case basis. He advised they could call property owners to ask if projects are complete and they may or may not get accurate information. However, in a cyclical review generally fewer pick ups are required because properties are reviewed regularly. The proposed annual contract rate price for regular pickup work has gone up, but the overall payment by the town to CNP will go down. The contract will be updated to reflect the reduced number of pickups anticipated.

With regard to a separate matter going for appeal, Mrs. Lucas confirmed with Mr. Neider that appraisers will review the case file and decide if the property needs to be re-visited. If it doesn't need to be revisited, a meeting of all concerned will be set up. Mr. Neider left with the thanks of the Board.

The Board then discussed whether they favored a 2 or 3 year cyclical review. Mr. Mertz advised he was in favor of a 2-year plan because the budget line item would be more manageable with the resolution of the DirecTV matter. Mr. Tierney was inclined to the 3 year review as the expense would be more spread out. Mrs. Lucas noted that while the equalization ratio was looking fairly good right now, explaining the expense in 2010 could be problematic. However, depending on the economy, in 2011 equalization ratios may not look as good. Starting the cyclical review would then be more readily acceptable to property owners who found their valuations further from market values at the time. Mr. Mertz also noted that with resolution of the DirecTV case, the potential increase in that property's revaluation may be helpful to the budget as well.

Motion was made to start a 2-year cyclical review in 2011 by Mr. Mertz and seconded by Mr. Bartley. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Boynton Road

Brian Lombard of DOT contacted the Town regarding Boynton Road at the railroad tracks off Winona Road. The agreement with DOT and the town was that the town was to pave up to and between the rails. The work was not complete at this time. Mr. Lombard has a problem with protecting the new rails from plows over the winter. If DOT were

to do the work, it would be very expensive. If the Town was doing the paving in next year's budget he advised DOT would put 6 inches of gravel to protect the tracks in the interim and dig them out in spring. Mr. Tierney stated that Mr. Boucher was not available, so he suggested ensuring the location was on the to-do list for next year and Mr. Boucher would have to cover the expense from his operating budget if it was not on the list already.

Straits Road

Mrs. Lucas advised the Board that an issue at the Hofling property on Straits Road was referred to Mr. Boucher.

Scheduling Dates

The Board reviewed a number of scheduling items and set the following dates:

- The Public Hearing on the budget will be scheduled for January 14th at 7:00 p.m. at the Selectmen's office with the Grange as a back up location if attendance numbers require additional space.
- Deliberative Session will be scheduled on Wednesday, February 3rd with a snow date of February 4th at 7:00 p.m. at the Community School.
- March 9th is the Town meeting and vote at 10:00 a.m. at the Meeting House.
- The Selectmen's budget session for December 7th will be moved to December 8th at 5 p.m. because of scheduling conflicts. Mr. Boucher will meet with the Board that night to review his 2010 budget. It is hoped that the budget work will be complete on the December 14th, but the 24th will be tentatively scheduled in case it takes longer.
- The Board will meet 9AM on Wednesday, 12/23 to sign manifests and any other necessary items before the end of the month.

Christmas Tree Lights

Mrs. Lucas advised she had an email from Karen Mitchell advising their open house was on Sunday. Wes Hays was going to do work on the tree lights. Mrs. Lucas emailed for a follow-up and has not heard back from Mr. Hays.

*Town House Road,
Tree in the Right of Way.*

Below the Meeting House, a resident is having an issue with a tree in the right of way. His discussion with Mr. Boucher was not satisfactory and he has requested a meeting with the Selectmen.

Selectmen's Budget Work. Mrs. Lucas printed off two budgets for highway and transfer station and a detailed budget worksheet for the highway department. There is also a budget worksheet for all departments which will need to be changed to reflect tonight's decision with regard to health insurance.

Mrs. Lucas explained to the Selectmen that there is a balance showing in the current budget as of this date. However, there are a number of expenditures left to be paid in December as well as health insurance charges to be recalculated.

Proposed Ordinance Update Mr. Mertz noted that the Planning Board Ordinance wording changes needs to be discussed at the next meeting to have it ready before the next Planning Board meeting.

Cemetery Conditions Mr. Bartley advised the Board he went to the Cemetery behind the Town offices and found it not looking very good. The Selectmen have the new by-laws and Constitution for the Cemetery Association.

Central Street Bridge Mr. Bartley also noted that a joint in the new bridge on Central Street was very wide and posed a potential safety issue. He was advised that it needed to be replaced and the issue was already given to SEA and Winterset.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None was heard.

ADJOURNMENT: It was moved by Selectman Bartley to adjourn, seconded by Selectman Mertz. The vote passed and the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin J. Harmon