

SELECTMEN'S MEETING – JANUARY 7, 2009

*Minutes are not final until reviewed and approved by the Board.
Review and approval of minutes generally takes place at the next regularly scheduled meeting.*

ATTENDANCE

Selectmen Nancy L. Carlson, Bruce L. Tatro, and Deborah J. Davis. Town Administrator Elizabeth Fox also was present.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Selectmen reviewed and approved accounts payable and payroll manifests.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Carlson called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

INFORMATION

Ashuelot Rail Trail project Selectmen received notice that Bruce Bohannon has scheduled a public informational meeting for the project on Wednesday, February 18th, as part of the Selectmen's meeting.

Fire Department statistics Selectmen reviewed 2008 incident totals compiled by Bob Symonds.

Sidewalk Committee Selectmen reviewed a January 6, 2009 e-mail message from the Committee addressing public notification of the dog ordinance and Committee contribution to funding for the replacement sidewalk plow. Carlson reported that Committee members are investigating tractors used for sidewalk plowing at Keene State College.

CITIZEN CONCERNS – none presented

DEPARTMENT REPORTS –

6:20 – 6:30 Bruce Bohannon (see **OLD BUSINESS**)

6:30 – 6:50 Deputy Town Clerk Lori Bellete (see **NEW BUSINESS**)

6:50 -- 7:15 DPW Director Lee Dunham (see **OLD BUSINESS**)

8:15 –9:30 Fire Chief Norm Skantze (see **OLD BUSINESS**)

APPOINTMENTS –

7:30 – 8:15 Bruce Barlow (see **NEW BUSINESS**)

NOMINATIONS – none scheduled

CONFIRMATIONS – none pending

ENFORCEMENT – none pending

PUBLIC HEARINGS – none scheduled

CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

Fire Department protective clothing To reflect actual costs of shipping (\$61) and lettering jackets with rank (\$142), Selectmen discussed amending their prior authorization to expend \$10,039 on protective clothing.

Motion by Tatro to authorize expenditure of \$10,242.22 for purchase, lettering and shipping of protective clothing. Second by Davis. All in favor.

Keene Paramedic Intercept Selectmen reviewed a 12/15/08 letter from the City of Keene in response to Attorney Bradley's letter, and discussed the matter with Fire Chief Skantze. Selectmen agreed that any agreement regarding intercept services should be between the Town's provider – DiLuzio Ambulance Service – and the City of Keene. Fox noted that, despite Swanzey's repeated requests for information over the past three years, the City of

Keene has failed to quantify the number of times Swanzey has required Keene's intercept service. Skantze offered to research the rate of use.

Fire Department report Chief Skantze presented an overview of the following topics. Skantze advised the Board that several proposals are pending discussion with Department captains.

Determination of employee status Selectmen and Chief Skantze discussed a proposed system for on-going documentation of employee status and participation in training. The system also is designed to standardize periodic employee reviews and formally document recommendations for termination. Fox said that the existing point system includes an annual review, with terminations as appropriate. She noted that confusion sometimes arises when a terminated member of the Fire Department continues membership in the association.

Payroll policy Chief Skantze elaborated on his proposed approach to work towards compensating firefighters with an hourly wage in certain situations. At a later date and supplied with additional information from Skantze, Selectmen agreed to consider Skantze's recommendations as a future direction. Considerations will include evaluation of the policy's cost, complexity of managing the system relative to managing the current point system, and how best to accomplish a transition, if desired.

Minimum criteria to retain call firefighters Skantze outlined policies proposed to define call firefighter status, and also to give room for volunteers who don't meet call firefighter standards to serve in some other capacity. As designed, the policies would raise expectations for participation in responses, training and drills, yet allow flexibility through waivers granted by the Fire Chief.

Personnel action report Skantze described use of a form he proposes to help maintain personnel files, keep Selectmen informed, and help with Department organization.

Revision of call firefighter position descriptions Selectmen and Skantze discussed requirements for firefighter positions developed by the Board prior to Skantze's employment, as well as Skantze's interest in adjusting the requirements to reflect his increased familiarity with employees and their qualifications. Skantze expressed his desire to select and develop managers who can best help bring maximum effectiveness to the Department, and asked Selectmen to discuss the issue at greater length in the future.

Forestry pickup truck Skantze advised the Board that the truck has a bent cam shaft, and is out of service. Installing a re-worked motor would cost approximately \$3,400 but, given the age of the truck, other mechanical problems may keep the truck out of service. Skantze advised the Board that he intends to get the truck or its replacement into the capital improvement cycle.

Renovations to West Swanzey Fire Station Skantze and Selectmen discussed progress of the work, as well as the potential for volunteer assistance with some of the construction and finishing.

Minuteman invoice Skantze and Selectmen discussed payment of a \$187 invoice for an unapproved chrome tail pipe, ordered prior to Skantze's employment by the Town. Fox and Board members advised Skantze that the Board specifically had not authorized purchase of the tail pipe; Selectmen stated that the Board is unwilling to be responsible for unnecessary embellishments of equipment, and unable to expend any more meeting time on the matter.

Motion by Carlson to authorize payment of the \$187 invoice from 2008 funds. Second by Davis. Carlson and Davis in favor; Tatro opposed. Motion passes.

Training Selectmen and Chief Skantze discussed payment for an EMT refresher course and test Skantze has arranged for Swanzey firefighters. The training will be offered every two years.

Motion by Tatro to authorize expenditure of up to \$3,500 for the EMT refresher course and test. Second by Davis. All in favor.

Gocht septic system Fox reviewed the matter, which is on the agenda of the January 19, 2009 Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting: The initial plan for the septic system failed to properly depict the property line. According to Town records, the septic system is located where it was supposed to be; on those same plans, the property line was improperly depicted. The system proposed to replace the existing system would be sized to accommodate an additional bathroom and bedroom, but would occupy a similar footprint due to advances in technology. The original Town vote authorized repairs.

Fox and Selectmen reviewed some options:

- Correct Town records to reflect existing conditions
- Determine whether the Board considers the proposed system to be equivalent to the original system, based on its continued location in the same area and its smaller physical size, or
- Determine whether the Board considers the proposed system to be a new system (due to its increased capacity) instead of a repair of the original system.

Selectmen noted that a failure of any system would create an overflow on Town property, and observed that comparable situations could exist elsewhere in Town.

Fox will draft language to reflect conclusions reached by the Board in September 2008, and will initiate public hearings pursuant to RSA 41:14-a.

Winchester Route 10 bridge project Citizen's Advisory Task Force membership Fox reported that she is pursuing Westport Village representation.

Point of origin In response to an e-mail message from Time Warner, Selectmen expressed their preference for locating the point of origin at Monadnock Regional High School rather than at Town Hall. Selectmen noted that school representatives had requested and Selectmen supported that MRHS be the point of origin.

Hazard Mitigation Plan update Board members reviewed and signed a letter prepared by Emergency Management Director Bohannon inviting department heads to attend or send a representative to an initial meeting to begin the Plan update process, which must be completed by June 2009. Selectmen designated Davis to represent the Board. The first meeting will be held on January 22, 2009; Bohannon anticipates completing the update in five meetings.

Thompson Bridge scour protection project Selectmen previously received the engineer's report, and reviewed additional figures breaking down costs of the pier project and fire suppression. Fox noted that the preliminary construction cost estimate assumes that the project is done as a stand-alone project. Based on these estimates, she said that the Town lacks sufficient funding to accomplish both the scour project and the sprinkler systems for the Thompson and Cresson Bridges (currently at the beginning design stage). She said that allocating additional funding in capital reserve for covered bridges would provide some insurance for these projects. Fox recommended waiting until costs are firm on the pier project before evaluating whether sufficient funding remains to move beyond design for the sprinkler systems.

Fox reported that she is coordinating a meeting on January 9, 2009 with NH-DOT representatives to discuss the report's findings and project implementation.

Budget 2009 Selectmen reviewed and discussed worksheets reflecting the proposed budget and the first draft of the default budget. Fox reported that she will prepare the narrative for the default budget shortly, as well as any other presentation materials. Selectmen agreed that their work on the budget itself now is complete.

CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

Resignation of Town Clerk Selectmen acknowledged the resignation of Town Clerk Deirdre Geer, effective December 26, 2008.

Town Hall Organization Deputy Town Clerk Lori Belletete and Selectmen discussed coverage of the Town Clerk's office until election of the new Town Clerk, as well as needs for future staffing, and certification requirements for office employees. The group discussed deferring advertising the position of full-time Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector until election of the Town Clerk. Selectmen authorized Fox to begin advertising to fill a part-time assistant clerk position to support and provide coverage for the Town Clerk.

The group discussed obtaining short-term assistance with the upcoming election from former Town Clerk Carol DeRocher, who is willing to help with setting up and testing machines, counting ballots, and other pre-election and election day needs.

Motion by Davis to authorize Fox to retain DeRocher to help with election-related responsibilities, at a rate to be determined. Second by Tatro. All in favor.

Selectmen authorized Belletete to act as municipal agent.

Selectmen reviewed draft job descriptions for the positions of Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector and Assistant Clerk.

Non-public session, RSA 91-A:3IIa and RSA 91-A:3IIb, personnel (see **NON-PUBLIC SESSION**)

Award of Town Report & voter guide bid Fox reported that Howard Printing (Brattleboro) submitted the low bid of approximately \$4,600 to print and bind the Town Report and voter guides. Selectmen authorized Fox to award the job to Howard Printing.

Request for withdrawal of Mt. Caesar Union Library expendable trust funds Selectmen reviewed a 12/22/08 letter from Mt. Caesar Union Library treasurer Christine Betts, and discussed repairs proposed for the library roof.

Motion by Davis to authorize withdrawal of \$6,825 from the Mt. Caesar Union Library expendable trust fund to finance roof repairs. Second by Tatro. All in favor.

Town Meeting 2009 warrant, first draft Selectmen reviewed the draft warrant. Fox directed the Board's attention to Article 7 and Article 8, pertaining to expenditures from the Conservation Fund. Fox said that the warrant requires Selectmen's signature by January 20, 2009.

Non-public session, RSA 91-A:3IIb, hiring – DPW (see **NON-PUBLIC SESSION**)

Personnel policy updates. Selectmen reviewed updated personnel policies. Fox identified corrections of several minor typographical errors. Fox's proposed corrections all were acceptable to the Board. Fox advised the Board that creation of a Town policy book – addressing vehicle, safety, etc. issues as well as personnel issues -- is in progress.

With DPW Director Dunham, Selectmen discussed a proposed policy amendment that would extend to DPW workers the ability to combine the two daily paid breaks into a paid lunch, thereby shortening the workday. Dunham reported successful testing of the policy with the Cemeteries, Facilities & Parks Maintenance crew during the past summer.

Fox pointed out an inequity in Town policy: Some employees (Police Department, recreation staff, and Carpenter Home staff) receive paid lunch and paid breaks. Selectmen agreed that a universal policy should apply to all employees, but questioned how to effect a change that might take paid breaks from employees who historically have received them.

Motion by Tatro to approve the policy changes as presented – Attachment #1, with the exception of Chapter V (policies pertaining to work week, overtime, breaks and lunch periods). Second by Davis. All in favor.

Troubadour Laureate Selectmen discussed and approved Bruce Barlow's request to designate Walt Calkins as Troubadour Laureate. Barlow said that a collection of Calkins's songs was an unanticipated byproduct of the "Swanzy Rural Character" film project. Barlow asked the Selectmen to proclaim a song by Calkins -- "Swanzy: Not Your Village, Not My Village, but Our Town" -- Swanzy's official town song. Selectmen listened to a recording of the song, and approved Barlow's request. The proclamations will be announced at the March deliberative session – Attachment #2 & 3.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Vote to authorize Chair to sign on behalf of the town letter of participate in Household Hazardous Waste Day program with Keene.
2. Vote to authorize Chair to sign on behalf of the town the required Semi-annual report on the Town Page Homestead CDBG Grant.
3. DRA Equalization Survey 2008.
4. Authorization for L. Belletete to serve as a Municipal Agent.
5. Raffle Permit, 2009-1
6. Authorization designating Glenn Page, Sewer Commission, to act on behalf of the town relative to State aid sewer payments.
7. Notice of Lien, Tax Map 20 Lot 38.
8. Vote to authorize Police Chief Rich Busick to execute statement of concurrence for the Town of Webster's use of 153.92 MHz.

Motion by Davis to approve the consent agenda. Second by Tatro. All in favor.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Motion by Davis to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2008 regular meeting and non-public session. Second by Tatro. All in favor.

NON-PUBLIC SESSIONS

I. At 6:51, Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to enter non-public session, pursuant to RSA 91-A:3IIb, to discuss hiring. Present were Carlson, Tatro, Davis, and Fox. DPW Director Dunham also was present.

Selectmen left non-public session at 7:02 p.m., voting by roll call to seal minutes of the session until finalization of the matter.

II. At 9:59, Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to enter non-public session, pursuant to RSA 91-A:3IIa, to discuss personnel. Present were Carlson, Tatro, Davis, and Fox.

Selectmen left non-public session at 10:32 p.m., voting by roll call to seal indefinitely the minutes of the session.

OTHER MATTERS

Department reporting Selectmen discussed options for spreading out department reports over the month's meetings. Fox said that she needs supporting materials by the Monday prior to the meeting, in order to distribute materials to Board members with time for their review.

Road salt use DPW Director Dunham advised the Board that continuation of the current pace of salt use (560 tons of salt through the end of December) may require a revision of his budget request.

School Board Community Relations Committee Bruce Barlow, Committee chair, outlined Committee plans and activities. Barlow said that School Board functioning appears to be improving.

Barlow alerted Board members to a potential change in proportional weighted votes, an outcome of the withdrawal from the District of the Town of Surry.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Tatro to adjourn; second by Davis. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:35.

Submitted by

Victoria Reck Barlow
Recording Secretary

LIST OF FUTURE AGENDA/PENDING ITEMS

1. Personnel policy updates – drafting of updates ongoing.
2. Disposition of South Grove Street Land acquired by tax deed - pending.
3. RFP – Town Facilities assessment.
4. Subdivision Road Standards. Draft developed by DPW Director Dunham distributed to Selectmen. Review pending. Winter Maintenance draft – BOS suggestions re-worked at provided to Dunham 1/5 for final review before forwarding to Town Counsel as requested for an opinion.
5. Street Addressing Committee. Review of file and project status underway. Committee meeting to be scheduled.
6. Discussion, defining roles and responsibilities between Selectmen, DPW and West Swanzey Sidewalk Committee. Research underway. 2009 work plan discussed with committee.
7. Town ordinances – Fireworks. Further consideration deferred to allow for input of full time fire chief following hiring.
8. Carpenter Home Properties – Discussion with counsel re: options. Authorization to investigate pending.
9. Westbrook Court – Class VI – Camuso (Richmond).
10. Old Home Day Committee recruitment.