

Selectmen's Meeting – October 18, 2006

Present were Selectmen Bruce L. Tatro and Nancy L. Carlson. Selectman Deborah Davis arrived late. Also present was Town Administrator Elizabeth Fox.

Vice-chairman Bruce Tatro called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

Financial Matters. Selectmen reviewed and approved accounts payable and payroll manifests.

Fire Department Organization - SWNH Fire Mutual Aid. Selectmen met with Director Paul Szoc who shared with the board his opinions (not those of the Mutual Aid board) based on 31 years of experience in the emergency services area on effective fire department practices. Mr. Szoc noted that Swanzey was one of the largest towns serviced by the mutual aid system. Successful fire service operations and success as a fire chief is a time consuming process. Many towns have move to full time chiefs and he sees more moving in that direction. The fire service is no longer just about putting out fires but requires administration, budget skills, grant writing personnel management and other functions which are hard to fill on a part time basis. Many of the towns smaller than Swanzey such as Jaffrey, Rindge, Peterborough, Bellows Falls, Hillsborough, Newport and Putney have full time chiefs. Some have other full time personnel as well. Szoc saw the need for a clear chain of command and 2nd in command focused on department wide goals of service and safety. Nationwide retention of volunteers is becoming more problematic and doing so successfully requires more administrative support. Administrative structures prevalent in most of the department he deals with include some sort of deputy or assistant chief position. Department focus versus station or company focus was discussed with Szoc encouraging efforts to develop a single identity for the fire department and giving consideration to ideas such as a common call numbers for trucks. He has seen much progress toward a unified department over the years and that progress should be built upon. Szoc advised selectmen that a minimum training level of Firefighter I should be required of all personnel. Selectmen requested Szoc's assistance in collecting sample position descriptions and he advised that he could provide some feedback to the board in the next few weeks. Selectmen Davis arrived during discussions with Szoc.

Cheshire County Jail Site Selection Process. Selectman Carlson advised that Fred Parsells had contacted her advising that city officials did not object to placing the jail within Keene and had suggested at least 8 sites meeting the county criteria.

Public Hearing – RSA 31:95-e, Police Department Donation of Photography related equipment. Chairman Davis opened the public hearing at 6:35 p.m. reading the notice provided. Memos from the chief detailing the equipment donated by Cannon including 2 cameras and a scanner were reviewed. Chairman Davis closed the public hearing at 6:37 p.m. Selectmen voted to accept the donated equipment with an estimated retail value of \$1,000.

Site Investigation – Town Hall/Fire Station. Selectmen reviewed a proposal from Brackett Geosciences voting to contract with Brackett for the required work. Selectman Tatro advised he had some type of machine that could be of assistance locating the water lines near the building is precise location was required.

NH Department of Environmental Services. Selectmen voted to rescind authority granted October 4th to Solid Waste Manager David Krisch to apply for NHDES grants.

Brown Field. Selectmen Tatro and Carlson reviewed proposals for field work from SUR and Gar-Wal. After reviewing the scope of work in each proposal, Selectman Tatro and Carlson voted to award the work to Gar-Wal. Selectman Davis abstained from discussing or voting on this matter.

Garage at DPW (Former Madrigal Garage). Selectmen reviewed quotes for a 24x42 Alaska slab to place this garage (taken down as part of the Wilson Pond Road relocation) adjacent to the DPW Barn. Selectmen voted to award the work to Ellsworth Foundations at a cost of \$4,200.

Fire Officers. Selectmen met with various fire department personnel. Captain Symonds presented to Selectmen petitions and read a statement to board members and expressed his view that he was not opposed to the reorganization plan proposed but has concerns with the current chief filling those positions. Selectmen advised they were collecting and analyzing information related to the reorganization and that the board hope to bring that process to a conclusion shortly. Need for improved communications was expressed by personnel. Concerns regarding department morale were also expressed.

WH Development Letter of Credit. Selectmen accepted a letter of credit, in the amount of \$300,000, valid through October 23, 2008 as security for incomplete improvements within the development for Phase IIa and IIb – Attachment #1.

Invasive Species. Selectmen reviewed the statute and guidance documents related to invasive species and a concern expressed by a resident regarding burning bushes at Town Hall. Effective January 1, 2007, burning bushes will be deemed an invasive species and state law will preclude their collection, transport, sale, distribution, propagation or transplantation. Selectmen requested a letter be prepared advising they would not violate the law but that the bushes in front of the building donated and planted by the Homestead Garden Club would be allowed to live out their natural life.

Canyon Spring Estates. Selectmen voted to authorize Town Administrator Fox to execute an engineering services proposal for design review received from Underwood Engineers for the development.

Town Hall Staffing. Selectmen were advised that part time employee M. Hurt had resigned. Options related to the part time position were discussed. The anticipated retirement of Town Treasurer Roger Conway was also discussed.

Minutes of Selectmen's Meeting of October 11, 2006. Selectmen approved as written the minutes of their meeting of 10/11/2006.

Correspondence, Permits & other matters. Selectmen executed the following:

- Warrant for November 7th General Election – Attachment #2.
- Notice of Lien, Tax Map 61 Lot 2-5.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by,

Elizabeth A. Fox
Town Administrator