

SELECTMEN'S MEETING – JANUARY 14, 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 6:10 p.m.

INFORMATION

Petitioned warrant article Fox informed Selectmen that the Town received one petitioned warrant article, with 27 signatures: "To see if the Town will vote to approve the following resolution to be forwarded to our State Representatives, our State Senator and our Governor: "Resolved: We the citizens of Swanzey, N.H. believe in a New Hampshire that is just and fair. The property tax has become unjust and unfair. State leaders who take a pledge for no new taxes perpetuate higher and higher property taxes. We call on our State Representatives, our State Senator and our Governor to reject the 'Pledge,' have an open discussion covering all options, and adopt a revenue system that is just and fair."

NHDOT & Fuel Contracts Fox reported receipt of correspondence from NH-DOT notifying of the development of a fuel contract that caps gas prices at \$2.09 for 18 months. Fox has adjusted gas lines in the police and DPW budget to reflect this maximum price. Fox reported that NH-DOT is working on a similar contract for diesel fuel.

Conservation Easement Fox reported that the Monadnock Conservancy closed on the Pullen easement, Atkinson Hill Road.

CITIZEN CONCERNS (6:25 – 6:45) Carol Haley and Lena Whipple presented concerns about access to Stratton Free Library. Issues include timeliness of clearing snow from the sidewalk, and the steep angle of parking spaces in front of the building. Selectmen outlined DPW staffing and practices relative to scheduling snow removal tasks. Those present agreed that snow removal crews must make road plowing a priority. Selectmen and Fox offered to remind DPW Director Dunham about the Library's hours of operation, and to ask Dunham to set the Library sidewalks as a priority whenever possible, when crews are in the area.

Regarding the condition of parking spaces, Fox explained that Main Street improvements will be undertaken in combination with the Thompson Bridge project. Fox said she expects that she will not receive notification from the State about initiation of the State's portion of the work until sometime after May, 2009; timing of the State portion of the work will drive scheduling of Town improvements. Haley recommended a parking area design that would provide room for three cars.

Those present also discussed the condition of South Grove Street sidewalks, which are not scheduled for repair in 2009. The need to re-locate utility poles will complicate repairs, as will the narrow right-of-way.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS – None scheduled

APPOINTMENTS – None scheduled

NOMINATIONS – Old Home Day Committee

CONFIRMATIONS – none pending

ENFORCEMENT – none pending

PUBLIC HEARINGS – Budget hearing

Town Moderator Lerandeau called the public hearing to order at 7:30 and read the public notice provided. Lerandeau read figures proposed for each budget category, and invited members of the public to present questions regarding the proposed figures. Town Administrator Fox, DPW Director Dunham, Recycling Center Manager Krisch, Police Chief Busick, and Emergency Management Director Bohannon responded to questions.

Discussion of budgeted expenses included

- Restoring the Town Clerk's office to full staff
- Pending litigation (some costs likely to be recouped after successful judgments)
- Costs associated with land use applications and enforcement
- Increased workers' comp premiums, increased general property and liability premiums, and reduced health insurance premiums (Fox reported that approximately 40 of 200 Town employees are eligible for coverage by the Town's health plan.)
- The new Fire Chief's salary, and the Town's commitment to NH Retirement System. (approximately 16% of salary, the balance contributed by the State)
- Emergency management drills (Vermont Yankee)
- Hazard Mitigation Plan (required for successful grant applications)
- Road salt, DPW overtime and equipment repairs (DPW Director advised those present that, depending on weather conditions between the public hearing and deliberative session, he may be forced to request increased funding for salt, repairs and/or overtime.)
- Staffing changes at Mt. Caesar Library
- Police Department information management system
- The new Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Proposed 2.5% across-the-board cost-of-living wage and salary adjustment, relative to savings generated by proposed increased insurance premium cost sharing (shifting prescription costs to employees)

Discussion of budgeted revenues included

- Projected decrease in vehicle registrations
- Tax delinquency rates (Fox reported that the percentage of uncollected taxes has remained steady, at approximately 9%, since the prior billing period)
- Projected decrease in revenue generated by interest on deposits
- Projected decrease in revenue generated by the land use change tax

Fox reported that the Town has paid off the note for road improvements around Wilson Pond. She said that other recent positive economic activity includes the re-location of Moore Nanotechnology Systems, LLC to Swanzey, the transition of California Brook Estates to cooperative ownership, and a pending proposal for development at the former Bardwell farm parcel on Route 10.

Pat Bauries expressed disappointment that budget information was not available on the Town website for a longer period in advance of the public hearing. Fox agreed that she, too, would prefer more time for public review. Fox explained that legal requirements of SB2 lead to

compression of the budget cycle relative to the end of the fiscal year, requiring her to strike a balance between accuracy and timeliness. The deliberative session is set for February 3, 2009.

P. Bauries and Linda Faulkner complimented Fox for the high quality of her work in preparing the budget.

Motion by Davis to close the public hearing. Second by Tatro. All in favor. The public hearing closed at 8:33.

Motion by Davis to recommend to voters the budget as presented. Second by Tatro. All in favor.

CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

Gocht septic system -- 46 East Shore Road, Tax Map 45, Lot 12 Selectmen reviewed and found satisfactory a draft letter to Ronald Gocht prepared by Fox. Selectmen signed the letter.

MRSD School Board size & representation. Selectmen reviewed and discussed an article printed in the January 7, 2009 Keene *Sentinel*, "Town's number of the regional school board may be reduced." A proposed warrant article would maintain existing weighting of School Board votes, but would reduce from six to five the number of Swanzey representatives. Selectmen were unsure whether the warrant article also would affect Swanzey's representation on the Budget Committee. Members of the Board agreed to alert members of the community to the proposal, which will be considered at the February 7, 2009 school deliberative session.

Route 10 Bridge Project Fox reported continued lack of success in contacting a potential task force member from Westport. Selectmen deferred the matter until a future meeting.

Budget 2009 Selectmen reviewed the handout, including default budget calculations prepared by Fox for the 7:30 budget hearing.

Draft Town Meeting warrant Selectmen reviewed the draft warrant.

Thompson Bridge scour protection Fox reported that she met with representatives from NH-DOT on January 9 to discuss findings and project implementation. She advised Selectmen that the cost for scour protection is still undetermined, and recommended finishing the design for but deferring construction of fire protection. (The Town may need to re-allocate fire protection funds to the scour protection project.)

Selectmen discussed the draft wetlands permit, still uncompleted after a year, and considered potential alternatives for expediting the scour protection. Fox said that she intends to discuss the matter with DPW Director Dunham and get comments to the engineers and NH-DOT by January 16.

Insurance plan agreements

Motion by Davis to authorize Chairman Carlson to sign the Flex Benefit Plan Adoption agreement, the Flex Benefit Administrative Services agreement, and the HIPPA Business Associate agreement. Second by Tatro. All in favor.

CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

Home Occupation Application Hadley, 888 West Swanzey Road. Davis recused herself from the discussion.

Tatro and Carlson reviewed the application for a home occupation, consisting of computer service and repairs, to be conducted in an attached building with space not to exceed 300 square feet. Selectmen determined that they would need a floor plan to determine the

intended location and to measure proposed square footage. Selectmen noted that the Planning Board will require a letter from the property owner indicating support of the proposed home occupation.

Cresson Bridge repairs Selectmen discussed damage resulting from a January 5, 2009 collision of a box truck with the Cresson Covered Bridge.

Motion by Tatro to accept and expend, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b, up to \$1,700 of insurance proceeds for repairs of damage to the bridge. Second by Davis. All in favor.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Letter to NHDOT – Stop or Yield Cram Hill & Carlton Roads.
2. Notice of Lien, Tax Map 32 Lot 25.
3. Intent to Cut, Tax Map 69 Lot 2-1 & 69 2-2.
4. Letter to the Editor, Custom Design's Sign Donation.

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Corrected title: SELECTMEN'S MEETING – JANUARY 7, ~~2008~~ 2009

Motion by Tatro to approve the minutes of the January 7, 2009 regular meeting, as corrected, and minutes of the January 7, 2009 non-public session. Second by Davis. All in favor.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

At 8:44, 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 9:27 p.m., voting by roll call to seal minutes of the session indefinitely.

OTHER MATTERS

Appointment of Troubadour Laureate Selectmen discussed details of a brief ceremony to take place at the beginning of the deliberative session.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Tatro to adjourn; second by Davis. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:40.

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.