

SELECTMEN'S MEETING – JULY 8, 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 Deborah J. Davis, Nancy Carlson, and Bruce L. Tatro. Town Administrator Elizabeth Fox also was present. The Selectmen's Meeting was conducted at the Swanzey Police Station – Community Room.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Selectmen reviewed and approved accounts payable and payroll manifests.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

INFORMATION

Keene *Sentinel* editorial Selectmen received a copy of a July 6, 2009 editorial regarding a lawsuit filed by the City of Keene in response to the Swanzey Planning Board's site plan approval of the proposed Market Basket retail development on Route 10.

Carpenter Home Selectmen received a six-month revenue report.

Cheshire Fair Association Selectmen received a July 7, 2009 e-mail message from Fox to Police Chief Busick, Captain DeAngelis and Fire Chief Skantze, and correspondence from the Cheshire Fair Association pertaining to a training exercise proposed for the 2009 Fair. Fox provided Selectmen with the complete training exercise plan -- *Emergency Operations Plan: Cheshire Fair 2009* -- for review prior to discussion with Chief Busick and Chief Skantze on July 15. Selectmen requested information regarding costs of the exercise, and proposed sources of the funding.

CITIZEN CONCERNS

Status of Mill K plantings Grace Lilly appeared before the Board to report on observations resulting from the three-hour hike throughout the Mill K property she conducted on July 7, 2009. Lilly stated that she made over 300 photographs. Her general concerns are as follows:

- One retention fence has not been removed
- Several steep slopes in the central area are eroded
- Only about 20 of the new trees (aspens) appear to have been planted
- Throughout the area, wildflowers appear to be limited to white clover, purple clover, crown vetch; diversity further lessens closer to Matthews Road, where sedges, knotweed and purple loosestrife predominate.
- Expected insects such as butterflies and dragonflies are few or lacking altogether; birds also are not evident

Lilly said that her primary concern is invasive knotweed, discovered throughout the project. She said that, without prompt action, knotweed and loosestrife will overtake the area, eliminating biological diversity and restricting public access and recreational opportunities. Lilly recommended that the Town retain a professional land restorer, at the developer's expense, to ensure that the project meets the goals of the Town.

Selectmen discussed the status of the project, the process of knotweed eradication, and concurred that a conversation with Jim Phippard (Brickstone Masons) is in order.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

6:30 – 8:00 Fire Chief Skantze – see **OLD BUSINESS**

APPOINTMENTS – none scheduled

NOMINATIONS – none scheduled

CONFIRMATIONS – none scheduled

ENFORCEMENT – none scheduled

PUBLIC HEARINGS – none scheduled

CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

Revised accounts payable policy Selectmen reviewed version #5 of the accounts payable policy, revised to reflect previous Board discussion and staff recommendations. Tatro suggested a global replacement of the word “should” with “shall;” he also suggested adding “or their designated agent” to instances of “department supervisor.” Fox said that she will present the amended policy to the Board at the July 15 meeting.

Request to open Class VI road network to ATVs Selectmen reviewed and discussed June 30, 2009 correspondence from Christopher Rurka, Southern County ATV Club president, requesting permission for club members to ride on Class VI roads town-wide. Board members concurred that the new request greatly expands the scope of the original request for permission to ride on specific Class VI roads, and may create issues when riders move from one section of Class IV road to another. Selectmen concurred with Fox’s recommendation to solicit comments from department heads, and agreed that the expanded proposal may require a comprehensive regulatory structure.

Liberty Elm tree Selectmen discussed text for a plaque to dedicate the elm tree recently planted at the Swanzey Historical Museum. Tatro recommended that the words express the idea of continuing Swanzey rural character. Fox said that she will prepare draft language – in the allotted 30 characters or less -- to that effect.

Forest View Estates litigation Fox noted that the motion for reconsideration was e-mailed to Board members late last week. Selectmen briefly discussed the matter’s possible financial impact to the town.

Town Hall hours Fox requested Board members’ consideration of amending Town Hall hours of operation, in an effort to make services more accessible to citizens. Selectmen reviewed a spreadsheet, prepared by Fox, listing hours of operation of municipalities of 5,000 or more. Those present noted that larger communities do not appear to be changing hours to realize energy savings. After discussion, Fox said that she will discuss the matter further with staff, propose hours, and draft a rationale for making the proposed change.

Fire Department quarterly report Fire Chief Skantze presented a report via PowerPoint (Selectmen also received a hard copy of the data). Overall, Skantze said, the department’s service demand – particularly for inspections -- is huge.

The quarterly report details the status of the Department’s budget, and reviews unexpended and committed budget lines. Skantze alerted Selectmen to the anticipated expense of a systematic hose replacement. The report also enumerates capital improvements

that Skantze is currently putting out to bid. Skantze said that portable chargers for apparatus are a priority item.

Skantze reported on training exercises conducted during the quarter. Listing community activities conducted by firefighters, Skantze said that planning for the emergency operations exercise proposed for Cheshire Fair 2009 has resulted in the development of greatly enhanced interagency coordination among emergency service providers.

To report on fire prevention activities, Skantze listed a sample of Department tasks. The group discussed staffing for fire inspections and reviewing plans for development. Skantze feels that developers' requests for plan review have increased significantly with the availability of a full-time chief. Given the volume of requests, Skantze said that it is his opinion that the Town needs a fire inspector.

Skantze outlined work completed on fire station maintenance, inspected by Selectmen at a recent site visit.

As part of his detailed update of vehicle maintenance, Skantze alerted Selectmen to a need for future discussion of the results of pump tests, historically conducted bi-annually. Given the age of the fleet (five of the trucks are over 20 years old), Skantze recommended annual pump testing. Results of recent testing indicate the need for rebuilding pumps and replacing valves in several of the vehicles, replacing a radiator, and replacing the pressure governor of Engine 2. Skantze recommended continuing to use vehicles that are not pumping at capacity until funds are available for their repair.

Fire Department organization report Fire Chief Skantze presented a report via PowerPoint (Selectmen also received a hard copy of the data). The report includes a chart illustrating the organizational structure of the department and command staff. Response to the recent house fire on Blake Road demonstrated the Department's overall well-run organization effort, Skantze said.

Reviewing provisions of RSA 154, Skantze said that his interpretation of the statute grants broad organizational and administrative control of the Department to the fire chief, including authority to promote firefighters and officers. Skantze highlighted indemnification clauses of the statute.

Skantze discussed the cultural change that has accompanied the transition from an all-volunteer department to one with a full-time chief. One component of the transition, he said, is a higher expectation of quality.

Skantze presented an overview of proposed future action items. He said that he anticipates the complete revision of Department policies and procedures to consume a year. Skantze expressed his intention to revisit the selection process for filling positions, to consider job descriptions for all positions and membership qualifications, and to explore implementation of hourly wages to replace the point system. Skantze said that he is considering requiring physical exams every two years, and plans to make training Department-wide, including expanded on-site training for firefighters' greater convenience. He predicted that his approach will yield the results expected and desired by Selectmen.

Donation of obsolete turnout gear Skantze presented a letter asking the Board to declare sets of turnout gear obsolete for firefighting, and to authorize the Department to donate the gear to DiLuzio Ambulance Service for their protection when responding to motor vehicle accidents. Selectmen took the request under consideration.

Ventilation saw purchase order Skantze presented a purchase order for a Center Station saw purchased on approval at the trade show price of \$1,468. Skantze said that three quotes came in on the order of \$2,400, and said that funds are available in the operating budget. Selectmen took the purchase order under consideration.

2009 Budget Selectmen reviewed and discussed a spreadsheet, prepared by Fox, comparing operating budget figures approved by Town vote with apparent expenditures through the end of June 2009. Fox said that she will return to the Board with additional information on anticipated expenses. Selectmen discussed a second spreadsheet, detailing year-to-date revenues. Fox recommends maintaining fund balance as protection for the Town against financial instability. Fox said that she hopes revisit the budget in greater detail by the end of July, and hopes to include discussion of pay rate adjustments deferred following Town Meeting.

In response to questions from Selectmen, Fox reported that the number of delinquent water/sewer bills and tax collections stand at a percentage that is similar to prior years. Fox noted that the next tax billing – reflecting re-evaluation – may be more difficult for citizens as the final billing will include changes due to the assessment update as well as any attributable to appropriations of the Town, School District and County.

Non-public session RSA 91-A:3IIb, Hiring – Assessing Coordinator -- see **NON-PUBLIC SESSION**

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Selectmen agreed to defer consideration of the regular meeting minutes of July 1, 2009 and the non-public minutes of July 1, 2009 until the July 15 meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Letter to Ellsworth regarding noise sources.
2. Open Container Permit – Old Homestead Association, 7/17 to 7/19 6:30 to midnight.
3. Posting by Health Officer, 140 Warmac Road.
4. Additional LUCT warrant to correct error, \$900, Lane Construction. (Note: Bill was correct, warrant to collector was incorrect.)
5. Notice of Intent to Cut – 12/21-2.
6. CDBG payment request #5: \$198,793
7. Raffle permit #2009-17
8. Timber tax warrant – \$685.61

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

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Session I

Motion by Carlson, seconded by Tatro at 8:50 p.m. to enter non-public session, pursuant to RSA 91-A:3IIe, to discuss pending litigation. Vote by roll call. All in favor. Present were Carlson, Tatro, Davis and Fox.

Selectmen left non-public session at 8:57 p.m. Selectmen voted by roll call to seal the minutes of the session indefinitely.

Session II

Motion by Carlson, seconded by Tatro at 8:57 p.m. to enter non-public session, pursuant to RSA 91-A:3IIb, to discuss hiring. Vote by roll call. All in favor. Present were Carlson, Tatro, Davis and Fox.

Selectmen left non-public session at 9:17 p.m. Selectmen voted by roll call to seal the minutes of the session until conditions of the offer extended are satisfied.

Session III

Motion by Carlson, seconded by Tatro at 9:18 p.m. to enter non-public session, pursuant to RSA 91-A:3IIb, to discuss hiring. Vote by roll call. All in favor. Present were Carlson, Tatro, Davis and Fox.

Selectmen left non-public session at 9:25 p.m. Selectmen voted by roll call to seal the minutes of the session indefinitely.

OLD HOME DAY

Selectman Carlson passed on a message from Old Home Day Committee member Bill Carson regarding water jugs and use of the Town Hall. Fox advised she had investigated but not yet communicated the results back to Mr. Carson. She would do so on Thursday.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Tatro to adjourn; seconded by Carlson. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Reck Barlow,
Recording Secretary

Non-public session and adjournment by Town Administrator Fox

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.