

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – April 7, 2015
Swanzey Town Hall, 620 Old Homestead Highway, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER

Present were Selectmen W. William Hutwelker III, Deborah J. Davis, and Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. The meeting was called to order by Chair Deborah J. Davis at 6:05 p.m. at the Swanzey Town Hall. Also present was Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

OTHERS PRESENT

Consultant Barry Brenner of Brenner Associates, Jim and Wray Murdough, Fire Chief Norm Skantze, Town Clerk Donna Munson, Residents Wally Smith, Gus Lerandeau, Charles Beauregard Jr. and Michael Goldschmidt.

CITIZEN CONCERNS

MINUTES

- The regular meeting Minutes of March 30, 2015 were considered. There was a **motion** by Colby to accept the regular meeting minutes of March 30, 2015. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The regular meeting Minutes of March 31, 2015 were considered. There was a **motion** by Colby to accept the regular meeting minutes of March 31, 2015. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The Non-Public meeting Minutes #1 of March 30, 2015 were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to accept the Non-Public meeting Minutes#1 of March 30, 2015. The motion was seconded by Colby with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The Non-Public meeting Minutes #1, #2, #3 and #4 of March 31, 2015 were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to accept the Non-Public meeting Minutes #1, #2, #3 and #4 of March 31, 2015. The motion was seconded by Colby with no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Unseal Non-Public Minutes

The Board unsealed the following 9 non-public sessions that took place during the period September 2014 through October 2014:

September 2, 2014 #3; September 9, 2014 #1; September 16, 2014, #3
October 7, 2014 #3; October 14, 2014 #1, #2, and #3; October 21, 2014 #1; October 28, 2014 #1

Motion was made by Hutwelker to unseal the non-public minutes of September 2, 2014 #3, September 9, 2014 #1, September 16, 2014 #3, October 7, 2014 #3, October 14, 2014 #1, #2, and #3, October 21, 2014 #1, and October 28, 2014 #1. There was a second by Davis, and all were in favor, except Colby who abstained. ***Motion passed.***

FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Board of Selectmen reviewed and approved accounts payable and payroll manifests.

O'Keefe left the meeting at 6:09 p.m. to join the members of the public in the audience.

OLD BUSINESS

Recruitment for Town Administrator

The Board met with Barry Brenner of Brenner Associates Municipal Consultants to discuss recruitment services for hiring of a new Town Administrator. Brenner passed out brochures for his firm and explained that the firm does executive searches for municipalities and also provides interim management. Brenner said he has 35 years' experience in municipal management. He passed out a proposal to the Selectmen referring to the Scope of Services. He discussed placement of advertising for the position in various publications, including websites. He said his role would be to glean out the top candidates for the Board, provide sample questions for interviewing, conduct background checks, and conduct negotiations for an employment agreement. Brenner said he estimated a timetable of 90 to 120 days to complete the process. His said his fixed fee is \$6,500, plus expenses.

Hutwelker asked for a typical number of responses and Brenner said that he has obtained as many as 40 applications for a position such as this. Hutwelker asked how Brenner would interact with Human Resources and Services Coordinator Edna Coates. Brenner said that while information for conditions of employment and benefits coming from a Human Resources Coordinator is helpful, he said he would be collecting resumes, and communicating with the candidates so the Coordinator would not be burdened with additional work. When asked about the amount of expense that might be added to his fee, Brenner responded that expenses are primarily for advertisements. He noted some publications will publish for free but others will charge a fee. Colby asked for a ballpark figure for expenses. Brenner said about \$1,000 is typical for advertisements and beyond that would be possibly another \$1,000 for miscellaneous expenses. Davis asked if Brenner could begin the process immediately and he said he would be able to do so.

Discussion continued regarding next steps which would consist of a meeting with the Board to set priorities, and selection of publications for advertising, among other tasks. Hutwelker said he would want Edna Coates to be included as much as possible should the Board decide to hire Brenner.

Brenner provided a list of references to the Board. The Board thanked Brenner and told him they would be back in touch.

O'Keefe rejoined the meeting and Brenner left the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

Events permit process – Motorcycle swap meet

Wray and Jim Murdough, who run the twice-yearly motorcycle swap meet at the Cheshire Fairgrounds, met with the Board to discuss a billing issue related to a previous event permit approved last fall, and also to discuss a proposed event permit application. Fire Chief Skantze also joined this portion of the meeting.

Jim Murdough began the discussion by saying he was surprised to learn there was an unpaid bill from last year's event and that the permit for this year would not be issued until the unpaid bill was paid. Wray Murdough said that in 40 years that he has sponsored this event there has never been a need for

the Fire Department presence. He stated that he had not reviewed the previously issued permit that included a requirement for payment of Fire Department coverage, and that he had received the service invoice from the Town. Davis referred to the Special Events Permit Policy which includes Fire Department presence. Jim Murdough said they hire Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), police, and security, and they don't see a need for the Fire Department. Hutwelker asked Chief Skantze about why three Fire Department personnel are needed for coverage of the event. Skantze explained the responsibilities of the Fire Department for events. The event application for this event used to show 5,000 people, but Wray Murdough said that the number is now closer to 3,500. Skantze said that the requirements are dependent upon the number of attendees. Skantze said that when an event brings 3,000 people into the Town, it is his duty to provide a safety plan to the Board. Skantze said that the stations are manned to augment regular Saturday coverage. Colby asked if the firemen could be on call instead of manning the station. There followed a discussion about the time needed to reach the equipment should the station be unmanned. Skantze said he only charged \$640.00 for the event and he said that a minimum of three people are needed to man the equipment and without paying the firemen, it is difficult to get a commitment to be on call on a Saturday. Skantze proposed a possible reduction in the hours of coverage to reduce costs.

Discussion occurred about Safford Drive opening and having access to the road for traffic control.

Hutwelker said he is concerned about moving forward. He noted that the permit policy in place requires Fire Department involvement. Hutwelker suggested that Murdough make an adjustment in revenue to help offset the costs for the September event.

O'Keefe asked the Board whether he should process the new permit with an outstanding past invoice for fire services due to the Town.

The Board agreed to expedite the permit for the May event and have Skantze work with the Murdoughs through the normal permit process to work out the costs for the May event, without consideration of the unpaid bill for the time being.

The Murdoughs left at 7:12 p.m. Beaugard left at 7:14 p.m. Goldschmidt and Smith also left the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3II(a) Personnel Matter(s)

Motion by Colby to enter Non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3II(a) Personnel Matter(s). The motion was seconded by Hutwelker. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into non-public session at 7:14 p.m. **Motion passed.** Present were the Board members Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., Deborah J. Davis, W. William Hutwelker, III, Town Clerk Donna Munson, Town Administrator Shane O'Keefe and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

Motion was made by Colby to leave non-public session and return to public session. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker, with all in favor. **Motion passed.** Non-public session ended at 7:31 p.m.

Motion was made by Colby to seal the minutes of the non-public session. The motion was seconded by Hutwelker. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to seal the minutes. **Motion passed.**

Munson left the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

Smith and Goldschmidt rejoined the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

Conservation Commission Update

Conservation Commission Vice-Chair Wally Smith spoke about the resignation of Chair Jeanette Cook from the Commission as of April 10, 2015. Vice-Chair Smith will be acting Chair until a new Chair can be elected. He also informed the Board that April 18, 2015 will be the roadside cleanup. He mentioned that Matthews Road is filled with litter. Davis referred to a possible committee to be organized to study an illegal dumping ordinance per the recent Town Meeting vote. Colby suggested that Smith be a part of that committee. There was a brief discussion about some of the opposition from townfolks regarding the proposed illegal dumping ordinance impact on the rights of private property owners. Colby pointed out that there have been private properties that have been a problem for the Town and that needed to be addressed. Smith suggested two separate ordinances to cover different circumstances.

Goldschmidt and Smith left the meeting at 7:39 p.m. O'Keefe left the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Non-public session(s) per RSA 91-A:3II(a) Personnel Matter(s)

Motion by Hutwelker to enter Non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3II(a) Personnel Matter(s). The motion was seconded by Colby. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into non-public session at 7:40 p.m. **Motion passed.** Present were the Board members Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., Deborah J. Davis, W. William Hutwelker, III, Fire Chief Norm Skantze and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

Motion was made by Hutwelker to leave non-public session and return to public session. The motion was seconded by Colby, with all in favor. **Motion passed.** Non-public session ended at 8:02 p.m.

Motion was made by Hutwelker to seal the minutes of the non-public session. The motion was seconded by Colby. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to seal the minutes. **Motion passed.**

Discuss Proposed Fire Station and Municipal Facilities Study

Fire Chief Norm Skantze met with the Board to discuss next steps subsequent to defeat by the voters of the proposed Fire Station on Safford Drive. Hutwelker spoke about establishing an advisory committee to determine next steps. This committee would be appointed. The status of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Committee was discussed. Davis suggested a more specific goal for the advisory committee to delve deeper into the idea. The goal of the advisory committee would be to take the report and drill down what the CIP recommended and get more citizen input. Hutwelker said a committee with business experience can bring a different perspective to the process.

O'Keefe rejoined and Skantze left the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Tax Abatement – Pine Grove MHP, 37 Anthony Circle, Map 87, Lot 2-5037

The Board considered a request to abate \$162.42 in taxes paid by the Pine Grove MHP Co-op, Inc. for an abandoned and structurally unsound mobile home that the organization took over from Ronald and Alana Woods.

Colby **moved** to approve an abatement of \$162.42 for 2014 taxes related to property at 37 Anthony Circle, Map 87, Lot 2-503, pursuant to authority granted under RSA 76:16,1(a). There was a second to the motion by Hutwelker and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Cresson Bridge Scour Countermeasures

O'Keefe reminded the Board that this topic was last discussed on October 14, 2014, when representatives of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) visited to explain the scour countermeasures being proposed for this bridge. This project has been in the works since 2009 and is being funded through the Federal National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Program.

The Board was asked to authorize the signature of Local Project Agreement for the project, which calls for the Town to pay 4% of the \$405,000 project, or \$16,200, which is recommended to come from the Covered Bridge Capital Reserve Fund, which had a balance of \$68,037 on December 31, 2014. This Town contribution is \$2,000 higher than estimated 3 years ago.

Colby **moved** to authorize the Town Administrator to execute the Local Project Agreement with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for the Cresson Bridge Scour countermeasures project on behalf of the Town, and to authorize expenditure of up to \$16,200 from the Covered Bridge Capital Reserve Fund for this purpose. There was a second by Hutwelker and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

2014 Audit – Management response

Town Administrator O'Keefe informed the Board that the Town has received preliminary documents for the 2014 audit and the Town has been given the opportunity to respond to two management letter matters. The Board considered a draft response to the management letter written by O'Keefe. Colby said he thought the letter was fine. The Board agreed.

Recruitment for Town Administrator

A brief discussion occurred about meeting with Municipal Resources Inc. (MRI) to consider the firm's proposal to assist in the search for a new Town Administrator. Discussion occurred about comparing costs with Brenner Associates, and according to the presentation of Barry Brenner, Brenner Associates can do the job for less money than stated by MRI. The Board decided to meet with Brenner one more time next week.

Next Board Meeting

There was a brief discussion about topics planned for the next Board meeting. O'Keefe mentioned that Welfare Guidelines should be discussed; also consideration of the Health Officer position would be on

the agenda. In preparation for those discussions O'Keefe was asked to send out the draft Welfare Guidelines on Friday and look into how other communities of similar size handle the Health Officer role.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Colby, second by Hutwelker, and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

- Certification of Yield Taxes Assessed and Yield Tax Levy. Todd & Stephanie Hunter, 270 Cobble Hill Road, Map 87, Lot(s) 7.

In addition to items discussed as part of the agenda, the Board received the following documents:

- Carpenter Home Revenue report – March 2015.
- Letter of March 27, 2015 from the NH Department of Revenue Administration providing equalization information for tax year 2014.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Hutwelker, second by Colby. No further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.** Adjournment occurred at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary

Approved on April 21, 2015