

**Enfield Board of Selectmen
Whitney Hall
Enfield, New Hampshire**

MINUTES of January 3, 2011

Board of Selectmen: John W. Kluge, Chairman; B. Fred Cummings

Excused: Donald J. Crate, Sr.

Administrative Staff: Steven Schneider, Town Manager; Alisa D. Bonnette, Executive Assistant; Richard A. Crate, Jr., Chief of Police; Jim Taylor, Director of Public Works

Others: Paul Mirski, Shirley Green, Kim Withrow, Lori Saladino, Meredith & Doug Smith, Richard Martin, Curtis Payne, Doug Pettibone – Budget Committee Chairman, Dan Kiley and other members of the public.

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kluge called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Cummings moved to approve the minutes of December 20, 2010, Mr. Kluge seconded, vote unanimous in favor of the motion.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

Town Clerk's Report ~ December 2010:

The 2010 total Town Clerk revenues came to \$722,605.57, a bit more than budgeted. 2011 revenues are budgeted at \$715,000. Based on 2010 revenues Mr. Schneider would feel comfortable adding \$10,000 to the 2011 revenue projections. While the revenues are higher than anticipated they are still \$55,000 lower than 2008 revenues.

Tax Collector's Report ~ December 2010:

2010 taxes were about 90% collected at the end of the year. The 1st issue is at 97% collected. Taxes will continue to come in over the coming months and Mr. Schneider expected to be close to that for the 2nd issue soon.

Comcast Cable Franchise Agreement Submitted to Comcast for Acceptance

IV. BOARD REPORTS

None.

V. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**Rail Trail Meeting:**

Mr. Schneider rechecked with the State about moving the meeting date to discuss the Main Street crossing of the Rail Trail, currently scheduled for March 1st. Mr. Schneider also checked with the Enfield Village School principal about using the school gym, the schedule of which is fairly open and would allow the meeting to be moved up. However, the State is still comfortable with the March date. Mr. Schneider expects to speak more with the State now that it's after the holidays.

TIF Committee:

The Tax Increment Finance Advisory Committee had a good meeting before Christmas. The committee spoke about the Route 4 water and sewer extension costs. Mr. Schneider spoke to the Bond Bank and Mascoma Savings Bank about loan possibilities for the project.

The engineer came back with some changes that could reduce the cost of the project by about \$600,000.

The Committee still plans to have a Town Meeting presentation and discussion. Because the engineer hasn't surveyed to the Town line, having stopped at the Enfield House of Pizza, the Committee isn't ready for more than a presentation.

Timing of the project was discussed. Money could be saved if the project is done just before the State repaves Route 4.

Besides a presentation at the regular Town Meeting, another choice is to hold a Special Town Meeting to discuss it. Because it's a bond a vote at Town Meeting is required. Only TIF funds will be used to pay for the bond.

The Bond Bank estimates a payment of \$288,000/year for 30 years. Mascoma Savings Bank would extend a loan for no more than 20 years in spite of the fact that sewer infrastructure is expected to last 50 years. If payments are in the \$250,000/year range there's a good chance the TIF fund would be able to pay for it. Mr. Schneider is also talking to the Assessor about the potential for property values to increase due to the line passing by the property.

Mr. Kluge pointed out that firm figures are better than theoretical figures.

Mr. Schneider said they have the property identified for the pump station at the corner of US Route 4 and McConnell Road. The cost of the property easement is included in the \$2.5 to \$2.6 million cost. The Committee discussed the building style, such as on Pine Street, versus a buried pump station. The Committee is optimistic that we can get this done.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VII. OLD BUSINESS**Huse Park:**

The ice rink was delivered today, at a weight of 450 lbs. It will take a while to figure out how and when it will be installed.

The Recreation Commission submitted proposed rules for the use of the ice rink as follows:

- Ice Rink is open from 6:00 am until 9:00 pm
- Hockey is permitted from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm
- Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult 18 years of age or older
- Skating is at your own risk
- No leaning, climbing or stepping on the sides of the rink
- No horseplay
- No throwing ice or snow
- Please deposit all trash in appropriate receptacle. Littering is prohibited
- No pets except service animals
- No alcoholic beverages or drugs
- No smoking at town recreational areas

These rules are here for your safety and will be enforced per order of the Enfield Board of Selectmen.

The Town is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

It was noted that hockey is permitted from 5-9 PM. Mr. Kluge feels that might be a lot of time for sticks and pucks vs. free skating.

Mr. Schneider replied that Norwich and New London have specific hockey time, but they're established. He also informed the Board that lighting will be investigated. Where the rink will be set up will be closer to the pavilion where the ground is flatter. As soon as we're comfortable with it we'll arrange for the Fire Department to flood it.

According to the instructions it takes 12 minutes to put new ice on the rink; not a big time commitment.

Shaker Bridge:

Mr. Schneider reported that the Shaker Bridge loading has taken more stone than they thought. At the end of the day the stone will be above the water and by the next day it's below the water. Work won't be done this week as expected.

Problems have arisen with some access to the lake, but the more we allow them to work the better.

Shaker Bridge Park Land:

Doug Smith came before the Board to urge them to find a way to acquire the property at 217 Main Street owned by Peter Bill. The property is zoned R1, but the suitability for residential use is compromised by the bridge construction. The property could be purchased for a reasonable negotiated price. The critical reason is access to the lake. The shoreline of Mascoma Lake is almost entirely privately owned. The Town beach is small and in a dangerous location. The Bill property has 400' of frontage and there's room for recreational uses.

Mr. Smith asked for the establishment of a community center for recreation and education, primarily for residents. The location is ideal for a community sailing center, a charity that uses sailing to teach children and young people the things they need for life. These types of organizations typically operate as non-profits on town-owned property. He thinks this type of activity would be a real winner.

The property includes an existing 3-bedroom house. It would be ideal for winter activities. We have resident of Enfield that is a hockey coach with extensive experience teaching children. We can fill a critical need if we acquire the property. If the Town can purchase the property, townspeople can raise money to fix it up for a recreational/educational center for the community.

Paul Mirski said Doug Smith made an excellent start. More than sailing and a beach, what this property provides is a terminus for a large recreation area on the lake. We can improve property values. Wonderful access is screened by trees and the overpass. Mr. Mirski is in favor of this property acquisition as an important long-term benefit to the community. There is no reason for the time being not to lease the house as a residence. It may also be possible to lease the lower level as space to a tenant. This would allow the building to generate funds to pay for bond payments.

Mr. Mirski went on to say that over the years we've lost some tremendous opportunities. We're a fairly well off region compared to the nation. The regional economy is good. We can be optimistic and should find some way to acquire the property to allow Enfield to make this great access work for us.

Mr. Smith informed the Board that if the Town provided the land, private citizens could put together a non-profit to put toward fixing up and managing it for the Town. Private citizens can't do it without the Town.

Discussion ensued regarding the asking price for the property which is believed to be about \$499,000, unless the seller retains a portion at the eastern end, in which case it is \$400,000. This would require subdivision. It is up for sale as two lots but it's shown as a single lot on the Town tax maps and it isn't believed to be subdivided at present. This property is not contiguous with the old motel property. In between the two properties is 50' of frontage that is privately owned.

It was noted by a member of the public that it would be a shame to let this go. The Town could easily put in a big skating oval. Occom Pond was sited as an example of a great facility where they clear one end of the pond for skating and have changing rooms and a place to put your skis. There are things that can be done without a lot of money.

Mr. Cummings said it makes sense for the Town to own from NH Route 4A to the old motel property. There's no guarantee, however, that we'll own the old motel property. There are State agencies that are also interested in that property. Even tougher is to bond for the purchase in the current economy. No doubt fundraising can be done. He thinks it's a great idea but he's not sure the cost will be supported by the Town with the way the economy is now.

Mr. Smith recognizes this, but with the Board of Selectmen behind it he feels it may have a chance.

Mr. Kluge agreed with Mr. Cummings. It would be a benefit to the community but would be a hard sell.

Mr. Smith asked if it wasn't true that the Public Works Facility loan would be paid off. He was informed that it would be paid off in 2011, but there are many ways to spend that money including fire apparatus and Public Works equipment.

Lori Saladino said with the economy the way it is we might be able to get the property at the best price ever. She suggested the Town have a snack bar or café to raise money. Ice fishermen could get warm and have a snack.

Doug Pettibone asked about the possibility of using capital reserve funds.

The Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund currently has a balance of about \$100,000 but use of a portion of that is planned for purchase of State owned property off McConnell Road as part of a land swap for wellhead protection. The remaining portion could be used in the beginning to pay for the loan.

Mr. Cummings asked if the group of citizens supporting this proposal want this on the Town Meeting warrant this year. If so, they should come up with a funding plan with the cost per year for a bond. He wants to see firmer numbers on the impact on taxes. The Selectmen will meet again two weeks from tomorrow. Mr. Schneider can assist with numbers from the Bond Bank.

Mr. Schneider added they would need to flesh out the use of the building in more detail.

The process was discussed briefly, including the possibility of a purchase & sale agreement contingent upon Town Meeting approval.

Mr. Schneider will reach out to Sunapee and Meredith about what it means to have a dynamic public space such as this.

Mr. Cummings pointed out the need to make sure the underpass goes away. There are some things we don't know yet. The viability of the property will be limited if other issues remain unknown, such as the underpass and disposition of the old motel property.

2011 Budget / Ambulance Billing:

Ambulance billing has been discussed with the Budget Committee. This meeting is an opportunity for the Budget Committee to share their perspective and for the FAST Squad to

provide input to the Board of Selectmen. To bill or not is a policy decision under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen.

Doug Pettibone said it appears the Town is leaving a lot of money on the table by not billing insurance companies. The Budget Committee was unanimously in favor of investigating this further. There's a potential for tens of thousands of dollars in potential revenue.

Richard Martin reported there were 353 calls. Projections based on 2009 data were provided to the Selectmen. These are 2 year old projections and they are significant. The Board was also provided an actual bill, with personal information blacked out, as an example of what patients would receive.

Soft billing is what the FAST Squad is looking for. By law, everyone has to be billed, but there is nothing that says everyone has to pay. The FAST Squad often has insurance companies calling looking for bills. Certified Ambulance Group (CAG) provides billing services. A representative of CAG would be willing to come in and answer any questions the Selectmen may have. Canaan uses CAG for billing and has no problem with them.

The numbers provided in the 2009 data projections were for Enfield calls only. Mr. Pettibone wondered if the proposal would be just for the Enfield side. He was informed by Mr. Martin that it would as long as the Town is contracted with Lebanon. There's a simple form the FAST Squad would need to provide to CAG or whatever third party billing service is used.

Mr. Kluge thought the Town wasn't going to bill individuals. He was informed that if the Town bills anyone it has to bill everyone. With soft billing those bills that individuals can't pay are not sent to a collections agency. Mr. Martin informed the Board that the Town is not ready for hard billing. Soft billing protects residents when Enfield picks them up.

Mr. Cummings said he'd be in favor of billing if the Town improved service. Billing could provide more than enough money to support improved services. He can't support billing if we're not going to improve services.

Mr. Pettibone said that, theoretically, he wouldn't mind if the FAST Squad was independent.

Mr. Schneider explained that the FAST Squad could be run as an enterprise fund which means they'd run solely on funds received from billing. The current budget is about \$70,000 to \$75,000. Mr. Schneider has not looked at the numbers in depth but will do so if directed by the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Kluge asked what percentage of patients are picked up by Lebanon. He was informed by Mr. Martin that about half are picked up by Lebanon and Enfield is not seeing the money from that.

Lebanon hard bills. Whether a patient pays for ambulance service or not depends on the time of day they become ill.

Discussion ensued regarding response times from Lebanon which can vary depending on availability of the ambulance in downtown Lebanon and whether the ambulance from West Lebanon has to be dispatched.

Mr. Cummings said his goal would be to have two full time staff on duty Monday through Friday. His proposal would include an ALS (Advanced Life Support) person. That's an intermediate position. We could have intercept service with Lebanon with a paramedic.

Mr. Schneider said Lebanon would probably be open to being a mutual aid provider.

Mr. Kluge pointed out that there are two issues: one is a billing issue, the other is a staffing issue.

Mr. Martin recommends dealing with the billing issue, then let the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager deal with the staffing issue.

Kim Withrow mentioned that the bill can include an 800 number for people to call if they can't pay the bill due to hardship. If they are unable to pay the bill it gets written off. If an enterprise fund is established, billing would mean you pay for the service if you use it rather than the taxpayers paying for something they don't use. Mrs. Withrow is not sure about staffing. She feels the department needs revenue coming in to help replace equipment and perhaps save toward a new ambulance.

Mr. Kluge said he would be in favor of investigating billing further.

Dan Kiley said that Medicare and Medicaid might be a problem if some people are hard billed and others are soft billed. Everyone has to have the same follow-up. He also asked what CAG is basing their invoicing on, the amount billed or the amount collected?

Mr. Martin believes they base their invoicing on the amount collected.

Lori Saladino asked if the question of billing would go before the Town. She was informed that this is a policy decision and does not need to go to Town Meeting for a vote, however there would be public discussion with the Budget Committee and the Town could have a public hearing to discuss the issue. It could also be discussed at Town Meeting.

Mr. Pettibone asked where the Town stands with its contract with Lebanon.

Mr. Schneider believes 2011 is the second year. He doesn't think they would mind not being the Town's provider. He can discuss with the Lebanon Fire Chief if they want to do something long term. Mr. Schneider will provide an update at the next Board meeting.

McConnell Road Property:

We are moving forward with this project.

Solid Waste ~ Collection of Bulky Items:

Jim Taylor reported that it would cost \$175 to pull and dump a container for bulky items, plus the Town would be charged \$120/ton for disposal. If items are carefully stacked in the container it could hold a maximum of 3 or 4 tons. If the items get wet the tonnage increases and the fees

collected might not cover the costs. Two of Lebanon's communities do this type of collection a few times a year. There is a little space at the Transfer Station if the overflow containers are moved. Mr. Taylor doesn't want a bulky items container where people won't have assistance. Do the Selectmen want him to keep the container there or provide it a few times a year?

Mr. Cummings would be in favor of whatever Mr. Taylor wants for collection.

Mr. Kluge recommended bulky items collection at least quarterly.

Mr. Taylor doesn't want it there in the winter as it's already difficult to plow the site.

After a brief discussion the Board approved a plan to provide collection four times a year, perhaps once each during spring, summer and fall and one other date during the year. The container would be brought in for a one week period each time with the dates well advertised.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Property Tax Abatement Settlements:

Mr. Schneider had three hearings with the Town's Assessor and three property owners that appealed their assessments to the Board of Tax and Land Appeals: Esler, Barr and Bacon. A settlement was reached with each of them. The Town is down to one case which has been appealed to Superior Court. The Board approved the necessary paperwork.

Streetlight Request ~ Birch Lane & Methodist Hill Road:

Mr. Pettibone informed the Board that it was his request for the Town to take over the streetlight at the intersection of Birch Lane and Methodist Hill Road. The cost is about \$9/month and is currently paid for by the homeowners the Fieldstone Ridge development.

Mr. Cummings moved to take over the expense of the streetlight at the intersection of Birch Lane and Methodist Hill Road, Mr. Kluge seconded, vote unanimous in favor of the motion.

Chief Crate has a contact at National Grid. He simply needs the pole number in order to proceed.

Water Line on Livingstone Lodge Road:

Mr. Taylor explained that there was a gentleman living on Livingstone Lodge Road that let the Town run a trickle of water at his residence to prevent the water line on the street from freezing. The new owner of the property, Jean Patten, would like a waiver of the fees they are paying for the winter months since the mobile home is unoccupied.

Mr. Taylor went on to explain that due to ledge in the area the water line in the street is not very deep and the town uses a small copper line, very close in size to the small water line that would be used on a refrigerator, to run water during the cold winter months to prevent the line in the street from freezing. The line last froze in 2006 causing expense to the Town and problems for the other customers on the street. Mr. Taylor feels it's fair to waive the base charge for the winter months on this property.

Mr. Cummings moved to waive the base charge for the Patten's property on Livingstone Lodge Road for half the year as recommended, Mr. Kluge seconded, vote unanimous in favor of the motion.

Administrative Items:

The Board reviewed and approved a Veterans Tax Credit application.

IX. OTHER ITEMS

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, January 18, 2011, 6:00 PM, Whitney Hall

CONFERENCE

I. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Cummings moved to adjourn at 7:26 PM, Mr. Kluge seconded, vote unanimous in favor of the motion, meeting adjourned.