

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

MINUTES of January 4, 2016

Board of Selectmen: Donald J. Crate, Sr., Chairman; Fred Cummings; John W. Kluge

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

School District Representatives: Patrick Andrew, Superintendent; Wayne Morrison, Board Chair; Danielle Thompson, Board Member; Debra Ford, Business Administrator.

Others: James Bonner (video); Kurt Gotthardt, Dan Kiley

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Crate called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Kluge moved and Mr. Crate seconded the motion to accept the minutes of the December 21, 2015 public and non-public minutes. The motion passed 2-0, with Mr. Cummings abstaining in favor of a correction to the non-public minutes, which could not be discussed in open session.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

None

IV. BOARD REPORTS

None

V. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Schneider had two items to discuss:

- 1) He attended a meeting about the Lakeview project, with its board, plus engineers and their property manager. The bond hearing is scheduled for January 19. In order to qualify for rural development funds, they must conduct a salary survey of all sewer users in town. The survey will need over 200 responses to be considered a valid representation of the population

and qualify the group for grant monies of 40% of the project cost.

Townpeople should expect door to door visits of survey takers, who will carry proper identification.

Mr. Kluge asked who would be conducting the survey. Mr. Schneider replied that a University of New Hampshire group will do it, and that all individuals' information will be kept confidential.

He said the door-to-door effort will be necessary to ensure that residents are the ones being surveyed, and not property owners (in cases of rental properties).

Mr. Schneider stated that the Lakeview Board seems to appreciate the Town's willingness to work with them and support the effort. The group will be meeting every other week for the time being.

They have selected Stearns as their hauler, so the truck traffic on Kluge Road should decrease now, while more trips will be happening on Route 4a as the effluent is brought to our facility.

The group is still working on the MOU, and guarantee language is in the works. He said they are not happy about the Town's insistence a performance bond.

Mr. Kluge stated that they could do without the guarantee, but they'd be on their own – the Town would not support them.

- 2) Mr. Schneider asked the Board for a fourth quarter water and sewer commitment to issue funds.

Mr. Cummings made and Mr. Kluge seconded the motion to commit the needed water/sewer funds. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kurt Gotthardt – Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Funds:

Mr. Gotthardt asked who was responsible to paying for the survey, and Mr. Schneider said that Lakeview would bear the cost.

Mr. Gotthardt also wanted to let the Board know that the Upper Valley Land Trust (UFLT) would be asking the Town to release funds from its Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund for the UFLT purchase of 995 acres on Smith Mountain (including Smith Pond and the Shaker Forest). He strongly believes in the project and has been researching ways to raise the money needed for the purchase.

Mr. Gotthardt researched the Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund and found: The Town created it in 1997, and added money to it each year through 2002. No additions have been made to the fund since 2002, and no expenditures have been made from it. In fact, there is no mention of the fund (that he can find) in any Town Board or Committee meeting minutes since its inception, except for a failed effort to cut the fund in 2008.

Mr. Gotthard feels the project will protect and keep open 995 acres, and that it is the type of effort for which the fund was created. He said the UVLT will be requesting a meeting with the Selectboard to add two Warrants to Town Meeting; one to determine whether the project meets the fund criteria, and the second to approve the expenditure of fund monies for the purchase.

Mr. Kluge asked who would own the land. Mr. Gotthardt said the UVLT would take ownership.

Mr. Schneider noted that the expenditure from the trust may not pass DRE review if the Town wouldn't end up owning the land. Mr. Kluge asked him to check with DRE.

Mr. Gotthardt noted that the Town has been in favor of selling land it wasn't using in the past. Mr. Cummings said he thought this case would be different, since the expenditure of funds really would end up being a contribution to the UVLT. He told Mr. Gotthardt he may be fighting a losing battle.

Mr. Gotthardt said he believed Mr. Cummings was misinterpreting the Town's feelings on conversation, especially with Smith Pond. Mr. Cummings replied that he couldn't see that the Town would pony up under the presented scenario. If the Town got equity for its investment, then it might be different.

Mr. Gotthardt said he feels the funds would be good seed money to show the Town's support, and that the gesture would be helpful when UVLT goes for grant monies. It's money that has been sitting there since 1997, and nobody knows what to do with it.

Mr. Kluge believes it will be a tough Town Meeting, but that Mr. Gotthardt and UVLT are welcome to pursue the support.

Ms. Bonnette indicated that the deadline for submitting Warrant articles by petition is in February, so there is time.

VII. BUSINESS

Patrick Andrew – Presentation of Warrant Articles to Selectmen:

Mr. Andrew thanked the Board for welcoming him and representatives of the School District. He said they were doing outreach visits to all towns in the school district in an effort for everyone to get to know each other.

He introduced Mr. Morrison, Board Chair; Danielle Thompson, a Board Member working on SAU Communications; and Debra Ford, Business Administrator.

He provided the Board with a copy of the SAU's draft Warrant for Town Meeting, cautioning the Board that the School Board had not yet conducted the public hearing for its proposed budget, so the draft Warrant should not be considered final.

He summarized the budget as including money for:

- Budgeted normal expenses,
- The negotiated personnel agreement for three years (which has a lesser amount for its first year because of a change in health coverage),

- Capital Reserve Fund (to fund improvements like roofs, paving, etc)
- Special Ed Reserve Fund (because the SAU can't turn students away, a reserve fund is required to meet the needs of new students or changing circumstances of existing students). He noted the current Special Ed Reserve Fund contains \$322,000.
- Computer Technology Capital Reserve

The School District Budget Public Hearing will be held Wednesday, January 13, after which the proposed budget and the Warrant article would be finalized.

Mr. Andrew encouraged the Board to follow the Clerk of the Works blog for progress on the school renovation effort. Because of the warm weather, some of the project has been able to accelerate. Site work that had been scheduled to happen next June and July, for example, is already being done.

Mr. Cummings asked how the budget for the current school year stood. Mr. Andrew replied that the district has spent about 40% of the approved budget through December, so it is in good standing.

Mr. Cummings asked whether the SAU would return surplus funds to the Towns as it had last year. Mr. Andrew said yes, but only part. The enrollment of students we send to the Hartford Area Technical Center (HATC) has been increasing, so \$35,000 of last year's surplus was retained in anticipation of that trend continuing – and he expects to do the same this year. The same applied to \$50,000 that was retained last year for Special Education.

Each Town's portion of the School District Budget is based on the percentage of students from that town in the overall school district student population.

Mr. Schneider asked what the historical averages were. Mr. Andrew said that Enfield's percentage of about 60% has been fairly stable, since it is the largest town in the District. Canaan, with its increasing population, is gaining.

Mr. Cummings asked what would be the percentage increase to taxpayers if the bond amount was removed from the proposed budget. I want to know what operating increase taxpayers will see over last year? The Town budgets are based on a target percent increase. What we see from the school, he said, is much larger increases each year. That limits what the Town can do.

The SAU representatives did not have the figure.

Mr. Morrison stated that Special Education, in addition to the bond, was a big driver in the increases. Three years ago, the District had 195 students who were identified as needing Special Ed services, and there are 252 today. He said part of that increase is because the instruments used to identify students in need are more sensitive than in past years. There also is an increased need simply from demographics. That really drives the budget.

Mr. Cummings asked how many new staff positions were in the draft budget. Mr. Andrew listed them:

- 1 full time Athletic Director (there currently are 2 part time people serving this role)
- Full time Art and Music instructors for each elementary school
- 1 additional Special Ed teacher in the elementary schools

- Incidental coaching positions at the middle school
- 2 custodians for the high school (1 full time with benefits, and 1 part time with no benefits)

Mr. Cummings asked if the custodial positions had ever been discussed during efforts to obtain support for the high school renovation. Mr. Morrison said that yes, the custodians were specifically discussed and included in the plans.

Mr. Cummings asked what a typical full time custodian would cost. Mr. Morrison said an experienced custodian would expect to be paid about \$16 per hour, plus \$10,000-\$30,000 in benefits.

Ms. Ford noted that the bond last year presented a 6% increase. It will be 5.5% next year, and then it will be level through the life of the bonds.

Rather than going with a Municipal bond, which would require all funds drawn at one time, the School District worked with the local branch of Mascoma Bank and were able to obtain a stepped disbursement schedule. This schedule reduces the cost of the debt considerably, for which Mr. Andrew and Mr. Morrison expressed their thanks to the local Mascoma Bank personnel.

Mr. Kluge asked for confirmation that the SAU Budget Committee has yet to vote on the budget. Dan Kiley (a member of that committee) confirmed this, saying they expect to have a good public hearing.

Mr. Andrew thanked the Board, saying that the SAU had approached each of the five District Towns, asking for an opportunity to visit them, and were happy that all five granted the request.

Mr. Cummings said he'd like an opportunity for all the Selectboards to have a joint meeting with the School Board. He said a lot of people don't feel comfortable going to School Board meetings, and encouraged the School Board to make themselves more approachable and change their meeting format. People might go if they feel that they have been heard.

Mr. Andrew said he would caution boards to define when public comment is permitted and give everybody the same amount of time to talk.

Mr. Cummings noted that this was the current format and people don't feel heard. People don't go to meetings because they bring something up and the Board doesn't respond right then. People don't have any indication that what they have said or asked will be taken into consideration.

If you allowed more public participation, and if you ran it like we do (he referred to the conversation earlier about Mr. Gotthardt's efforts with the UVLT land acquisition), and actually have a discussion, people will feel better about how you do things.

Mr. Morrison acknowledged that he had come from a much larger district and that they had to limit public comment or lose control of the meetings.

Mr. Gotthardt stated that he occasionally reads the School Board meeting minutes and sees people's questions, but never sees that the School Board has taken action or even considered the question in the minutes for that meeting or in the ones for subsequent meetings.

The SAU representatives each indicated support for the way they currently conduct their meetings. Ms. Ford encouraged people to contact her directly.

Mr. Gotthardt said that wasn't the same as being able to go to a meeting and feel heard.

Deeding Update:

Mr. Cummings made and Mr. Kluge seconded the motion to go into Non Public Session. The motion passed unanimously at 6:50 p.m. RSA 91-A:3 II (c)

The Chair called the Public session back to order at 7:08 p.m.

2016 Budget:

No new information.

Discussion of Donation of \$1,400 to Enfield Food Pantry:

Mascoma Savings Bank sent the Town a contribution for the food pantry.

Mr. Cummings made and Mr. Kluge seconded the motion to accept the donation. The motion passed unanimously.

Ambulance Bill Hardship Application:

The Board unanimously approved the Ambulance Bill Hardship Application.

Administrative Items:

The Board executed two appointments:

- Rita Seto to the Planning Commission
- Jennifer Seiler Clough as Alternate Library Trustee

Other Business:

Mr. Schneider noted that the next meeting, to be held on *Tuesday*, January 19 at the Department of Public Works, will include four bond public hearings (for Lakeview, the Library, CIP Vehicles, and CIP Bridge and Boat Launch).

Mr. Cummings asked if there was any update on the boat launch. Mr. Taylor said that the project would cost \$100,000 without doing the parking area, and \$148,000 with the parking area.

Mr. Schneider said the Public Hearing will address both together.

Mr. Cummings said that if people support doing both, then fine. Mr. Schneider said that the full number will be put in the Warrant for the Public Hearing, but that the number could be modified by the Public Hearing.

Mr. Kluge said there was a garage falling into the river and asked if someone should be alerted. Mr. Crane asked if there was a building permit for the property. Mr. Schneider promised to look into the situation.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 19, 2016, Public Works Facility
(This meeting will include four (4) public hearings for bonds or notes over
\$100,000.**

CONFERENCE

I. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kluge made and Mr. Cummings seconded the motion to adjourn at 7:15 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Donald J. Crate, Sr., Chairman

John W. Kluge

B. Fred Cummings
Enfield Board of Selectmen