

**Enfield Board of Selectmen
Public Works Facility
Enfield, New Hampshire**

MINUTES of December 5, 2016

Board of Selectmen: John W. Kluge; B. Fred Cummings, Meredith C. Smith

Administrative Staff: Steven Schneider, Town Manager; Alisa Bonnette, Assistant Town Manager; Jim Taylor, Director of Public Works; Karol Hammer, Recording Secretary

Others: James Bonner (video); Bob Cusick, Sam Eaton, and others.

BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Kluge offered a correction to the minutes in the third paragraph of the discussion on the 2017 budget. The word “be” should have been the word “been,” making the second sentence read:

Mr. Schneider advised that copies had been placed in the Board members’ mailboxes.

Mr. Cummings made and Mrs. Smith seconded the motion to accept the minutes as corrected. The motion passed unanimously.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Schneider referred the Board to the Tax Collector’s Report for October 2016. He advised that taxes had been due the previous Thursday, and that returns were looking very good. The Town had had a couple of million dollar days, he said. This was encouraging since the next influx of cash wouldn’t come until May. Bottom line collections were right on par with where the Town wanted to be.

IV. BOARD REPORTS

Mr. Schneider said the Budget Committee had met the previous week and that their process was essentially done. He had given them worst-case scenarios to use in their budgeting process, as well as the CIP requests in hand to date. The Committee had requested quotes on rolling stock and for financing deals on other work. Those numbers, when available, would be plugged in to the budget for debt service.

The Committee was considering skipping a meeting because of lack of member availability. Mr. Schneider was not concerned by this, saying the process and progress were in good shape.

Mr. Kluge asked if there had been anything unexpected, and Mr. Schneider said there had not.

The Budget Committee Chair had asked members to spend the time until their next meeting reviewing the draft budget and identifying areas they felt should have further review.

Mr. Schneider said the next step in the process would be to look at the revenue side. This would give a better picture of where the tax rate would need to be set in order for the Town to do what would be wanted during the next year.

V. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Schneider said he planned to attend a meeting the next day with officials in Canaan, who wanted to discuss the school property tax impact on communities. He said the Canaan folks had outlined a long list of items to go over at the meeting.

Mr. Schneider asked the Board members whether they planned to attend and, if not, whether they wanted to send any message through him to the people in Canaan.

Mr. Kluge said he was not inclined to go. Mrs. Smith said she had a previous commitment. Mr. Cummings said he would not be going.

Mr. Schneider repeated his query about whether the Board had any wishes it wanted him to convey. The Board members did not.

Mr. Cusick said there had been a lengthy budget process on the part of the School District; there had been eight (8) to nine (9) meetings of the School District Budget Committee, at which every cost center had to present in-depth defense of its request for the coming year.

He said only one (1) person from Canaan attended any of those meetings. He took issue with Canaan wanting to come in after the process and start talks about reductions. They had mentioned that 28 homes in Canaan had been lost to foreclosure during the past year; Mr. Cusick said that when he asked if those homes could have been kept without the school budget increase, there was no response.

Mr. Kluge agreed, saying it seemed Canaan wanted to reformulate the apportionment of the School District Budget among its towns. Back when the student population was roughly 60% Enfield and 40% Canaan, the Canaan people fought to have budget apportioned according to school population. Now that Enfield's percentage has gone down and Canaan's has increased, they wanted to go back the other way.

2016 Trustee of Trust Funds Transfers:

Mr. Schneider reviewed the list of transfers with the Board, noting that the Board already had approved them; he said that the Town needed the Board's verification that the numbers presented in the list were correct and reflected the amounts to be transferred from the CIP funds to cover capital expenses.

The Assistant Town Manager then would be able to present the list to the Trust Fund Treasurer.

Mrs. Smith made and Mr. Cummings seconded the motion to approve the list as presented and authorize the transfer of funds. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bob Cusick – Town Manager Search:

Mr. Cusick said he was extremely upset that Mr. Schneider was leaving his position as Town Manager. He said this would be a very big loss to the Town, and that the Board would have to be very careful with the selection process because there was a lot going on.

He said it would be up to everyone involved to exercise extreme caution, and to not let the Town's progress be slowed down.

He said the Search Committee would have to make sure that it 'worked the process' to make sure that the chosen replacement would be the right fit for the Town. He stressed that the fit would have to be right for what the Town had become, not what it had been in the past.

Mr. Kluge said he didn't disagree.

VII. BUSINESS

Lakeside Park:

Mrs. Smith said she and Mr. Schneider had an encouraging exchange with Lou Barker (head of the Division of Rails and Transit). Mr. Barker had been ready in 2003 to deed Lot 44 to the Town, but it never happened. Mrs. Smith felt it would be very important, if there was any chance of completing that deed, to do it before the State declared the neighboring Lot 46 as surplus.

Mr. Schneider said he and Mr. Barker had had a few conversations about various properties, and Mr. Barker did the transfers of property for the State.

Mr. Schneider said Mr. Barker had helped him understand the process. He felt they had a good relationship and that the Division of Rails and Transit likely was willing to do what the Town would like. One potential catch would be the way the State had acquired the lot in the first place; if with Federal funds, there could be problems. Mr. Barker was researching the ways in which the State would be able to transfer the property to the Town.

Mr. Schneider said it wouldn't be a quick process, but that it was good that Mr. Barker was willing to be part of the conversations. There would be a good six (6) months of paperwork to filter through the State system.

Mrs. Smith agreed, saying it all would be needed to finish what was started in 2003.

Mr. Schneider said that it may even require an act of Legislature; if that turned out to be the case he suggested reaching out to the local delegation.

One thing that would help the Town's case would be the assurance the Town could make that the land would remain open for public use.

Mrs. Smith asked where the Town's push should be; transfer ownership to DRED, with a long-term lease to the Town?

Mr. Schneider said it came down to Lot 44 being important, and Lot 46 being the one that would have the most improvements done to it. Ownership may be difficult, he said; nobody at the State (so far) had been able to identify a clear path.

A 30 year lease would be good, but maybe not long enough to justify asking the Town to commit resources. Fifty to ninety-nine (50-99) years would be better, because then the Town would be able to apply for grants and other funding.

Mrs. Smith noted that DRED has mentioned thirty (30) years as the longest term it would consider.

Mr. Schneider suggested that there might be other partners who would be interested in the arrangement that had been considered with DRED, but with the more desirable longer terms. He mentioned the Department of Transportation and Fish & Game as two possibilities.

Mr. Kluge asked what the financial impact might be to the Town.

Mr. Schneider said the Town could extend the TIF district down to the Lakeside, then TIF money would become available. It would require alteration of the district.

Mrs. Smith said the Town had been encouraged to resubmit its application for a Northern Borders grant.

Mr. Schneider added that extending the TIF district also would let the Town extend its lighting plan, noting that this would create a corridor theme, from the village to Route 4a.

He reiterated that thirty (30) years may not be a long enough term. The Town should want the term to outlast the investment/improvements. More conversations would need to be had with DRED and with the Bureau of Trails, he said.

The Town also needed a firm answer from the State on whether the lot could be transferred to the Town.

Mrs. Smith agreed, and added thanks to the Department of Public Works for the fence that had been installed for snowmobile season. She asked if there was any chance of having boulders, too. Mr. Taylor said that boulders were planned, but that the department needed to wait for a good, frozen morning to install them with minimal damage.

Town Manager Search:

Mr. Schneider said he had reached out to MRI and Primex, and had heard of another firm, Mercer Group, that had been used by another local town. He gave MRI and Primex a heads up that Enfield would be conducting a search.

MRI and Primex were willing to make presentations/proposals to the Board. He had yet to reach out to the Mercer Group, but was willing to speak with them.

He said he would be comfortable making contacts for the Town, but wasn't sure he should be involved in the process beyond that other than to staff the Board's needs.

Mrs. Smith recalled that the process used in the selection that resulted in hiring Mr. Schneider had been a good one.

Mr. Schneider agreed, saying it had been outstanding. The Town could, if it wished, simply present that process to the firms and ask them to prepare cost estimates based on it. He said the Town would want to be comfortable that the firm it chose understood the Town's wishes.

Mr. Cusick asked if there was a documented plan from the previous hiring process. Mr. Schneider said there was a file that could be reviewed.

Mrs. Smith said there had been a committee of 10-12 people.

Mr. Cusick suggested that there must be meeting minutes somewhere and that it would be good to review them. He didn't see any reason to reinvent the wheel.

Mr. Kluge suggested that perhaps the process could be streamlined a bit.

Mr. Cusick said not too much.

Mr. Schneider said that from his application to his date of hire the process took about five (5) months. He submitted his resume in May, had an interview in July, and then was brought to Town for larger interviews as a finalist in September.

Mr. Kluge recalled that there was committee time before all of that. He asked if the Board felt it would have time to manage the process as part of its regular meetings.

Mr. Cummings said that was why the Town should hire a consultant; to do a lot of the leg work.

Mr. Schneider said the Town hired MRI last time. Whichever firm the Town hired, it would meet the timeline set by the Town, within reason. Six (6) months seemed to be the average time from first ads to hire – that might be a good rule of thumb, he said.

Mr. Cummings said there shouldn't be more Board meetings, but that the Board should develop a selection committee and they would have meetings.

Mr. Kluge agreed, saying the committee would need to form as soon as possible.

Mr. Cummings asked how many people should be on the committee, and said the Board needed to think about who would be good members to have.

Mr. Cusick said the Town would be lucky to complete the process in less than six (6) months. He had never hired a senior manager in under seven (7) months, and this search would be more complicated.

Mr. Schneider encouraged the Board to take its time, not to go as quick as it could just because his departure was coming or he wouldn't be here. He noted that the Town had senior managers who had been in their departments for years. The Town wouldn't notice the absence of a Manager for two to three (2-3) months because of its solid group of department heads and its Assistant Town Manager. He noted that the Town had decided during his tenure who would be in charge in his absence (the Assistant Town Manager). The Town didn't have that when he started; it would be going into this search in a better position.

Mr. Cummings agreed, saying that the Town had become more complicated and had a lot of stuff booking.

Mr. Schneider said he had asked the staff to be prepared for more activity. He would be committed to the Town until June 1, but also needed to find new work. He said he may not make it until June 1.

Mr. Kluge said the Board needed to determine committee membership and that it should be of people prepared to put in the meeting time.

Mr. Cummings said there would probably need to be more meetings to start.

Mrs. Smith said that all Board members were part of the last Selection Committee.

Mr. Cusick suggested that different meeting times be considered, like Saturday mornings. That might result in more attendance, he said. There were a lot of busy people in town with jobs, commitments to other committees, etc.

Mr. Kluge noted that his job involved Saturday mornings.

Mr. Cummings said he wasn't sure the Board should be on the committee.

Mrs. Smith agreed.

Mr. Cummings would rather have one or two (1-2) of the Board members spearhead the committee. He said he had spearheaded the press release and initial stuff, and that he could continue.

Mr. Kluge asked if he could do Saturday mornings; Mr. Cummings said he could. Mr. Kluge asked Mrs. Smith the same question. Mrs. Smith said Saturday mornings were good for her.

Mr. Cummings said he'd like the Town to get the word out to generate interest in the committee.

Ms. Bonnette said that three (3) people had expressed interest at the Town Offices so far.

Mr. Schneider said that he had suggested to the Budget Committee that it make itself available to the selection process. It would be important to have them as part of the process because the Budget Committee and Town Manager work so closely.

He said he also asked the Town staff to share their perspectives on what would be important to them.

He recalled that one of his interviews for the job was with 10 staff, who grilled him for an hour. He remembered being very impressed that such a large percentage of the staff would commit that time and effort.

Mr. Kluge asked what else needed to be done right away.

Mr. Schneider suggested that advertising could begin. The Board could set deadlines for people to express interest in serving on the committee.

Publication could be through another press release, over the list serves, and on the Town web site.

Mr. Cummings said he would write something.

Mr. Cusick was concerned about using the list serve, saying things could go awry.

Mr. Schneider said it would be just a notice.

Mrs. Smith noted that the Board wouldn't have to say yes to someone just because they said they were interested.

Mr. Cusick said there'd be 15-20 volunteers. Mr. Cummings said he'd like to see the committee have 10-12 members. Mrs. Smith agreed.

Mr. Eaton asked if the Town would hire recruiters.

Mr. Cummings said that at the moment, the Board was just talking about forming a selection committee. He said the Town would hire a firm to do the heavy lifting and identify seven to eight (7-8) candidates.

Mr. Schneider said that the consultant last time had brought 15 candidates to the Committee for consideration.

Mr. Cummings said it wouldn't be cheap, but that there was a lot riding on it.

2017 Budget:

Nothing more to discuss.

Lakeview Sewer Extension:

A meeting the following Wednesday might be postponed, Mr. Schneider said. The shore land permit had been signed that day for work at the pumping station within 250 feet of the lake.

Water and Sewer Rates:

Mr. Schneider said the Selectboard's next meeting would be the rate setting meeting for water and sewer rates.

Mr. Cummings said he was very concerned about the 15% increase in sewer rates.

Mr. Taylor said the Town had been building a deficit for sewer, and it needed to be corrected.

Mr. Cummings said he was more concerned that Lebanon had raised their rates by nine percent (9%) every year for the past three years, and the Town had gone up only that much each time.

Mr. Taylor said there were other expenses and the Town wasn't keeping up with them.

Mr. Cummings said he'd prefer a phased approach to the correction.

Mrs. Smith asked if Mr. Cummings had a figure in mind. He responded that he wanted to know if there could be a graduated plan over two to three (2-3) years.

Mr. Schneider said a proposal for that could be created.

Mr. Cummings said the sewer work on Route 4 was supposed to decrease what people had to pay.

Mr. Kluge agreed that he'd like to see alternative figures as well.

Mr. Cummings noted that the Town was running a surplus in water, but raising the rate by five percent (5%).

Mr. Schneider said that was to deal with infrastructure replacements.

Mr. Taylor said some wells had been running 20 years. There was a big expense coming, which the increasing surplus was intended to address.

Mr. Schneider said the Town would give the Board a chart. He noted that the water rate is significantly lower than the sewer rate, so a five percent (5%) increase in water was much less than it seemed.

Mr. Eaton asked if it would be in the CIP plan; Mr. Schneider said it would.

Mr. Cusick observed that projects should be scheduled in.

Mr. Schneider said they were; every 120 years or so, the Town replaced the pipes.

Mr. Cusick said those things should be in the CIP plan.

Administrative Items:

The Board executed a Redemption Deed.

The Board also executed Deeds for the properties it recently sold at auction.

Mr. Cusick asked how the auction went. Mr. Schneider said the Town would net about \$140,000 if everything closed as it should. The auction went well; all properties sold, and all present seemed pleased with the process, which only took about half an hour.

Other Business:

None

Next Meeting: Monday, December 19, 2016, 6:00 PM Public Works Facility Conference Room

Non-Public Session:

Mr. Cummings made and Mrs. Smith seconded the motion to enter into Non-Public session at 6:54 PM, RSA 91-A:3 II (b). Roll call vote: Mr. Cummings – aye, Mr. Kluge – aye, Mrs. Smith – aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Cummings invited Mr. Cusick to stay for the Non-Public session.

Mr. Cummings moved and Mrs. Smith seconded a motion to come out of Non-Public session at 7:30 PM; vote unanimous in favor of the motion.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

John W. Kluge, Chairman

B. Fred Cummings

Meredith C. Smith
Enfield Board of Selectmen