



**Selectmen's Meeting**

**Rindge Town Office**

**Date: Wednesday, August 31, 2011**

**Time: 6:00 P.M.**

**Present: Patricia Lang Barry, Jed Brummer, Sam Seppala, Carlotta Lilback Pini**

**Meeting Minutes -- APPROVED**

**Call to Order -**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Citizen's Forum –**

Robyn Payson, Acting Planning Director, presented the good news that the Town of Rindge won a \$10,000 grant award to determine the feasibility of providing wastewater and disposal at the intersection of Routes 119 and 202. Roger Hawk will lead NH Plan Charrette.

Roberta Oeser read a paper with charges on it including that the tax administrator's salary was approved for an increase of 20%. Jed Brummer said we will we lose personnel if we try to keep them with rates less than other towns, and added that the Personnel Committee is reviewing all salaries.

Roberta then said, "So, the Town Administrator will earn more than the Chief of Police? The Chief is harder to replace than the Town Administrator."

Pat Barry said that Town of Rindge employees have been underpaid for four years in comparison to other towns, and have had no increases. "We're taking employees one by one."

Roberta was livid and said, "People are happy to get 1.5% nowadays. Are you calling Jane Pitt a liar?"

Pat Barry asked Roberta not to put words in her mouth. "That is Jane's position and our position is that it is untrue." Roberta said, "So, now the default budget will go up."

Pat agreed that there would be a high cost to replacing the police. "And the Town Administrator has 10.5 years of experience and we have placed value on that."

Roberta continued, "Thirty percent of the town is unemployed" and then added that she, herself, has been out of work for quite some time. Pat Barry said that it was not accurate to say that thirty percent of the town was unemployed. Roberta then said that when the Town Administrator's assistant left, so many people applied for the position, and if they had been able to get a better job, they would have. She then repeated that the Selectmen should focus on concentrate on keeping Police personnel over everyone else since they're most expensive to replace.

Pat said that, as a Selectman, she makes decisions in the best interest of the Town. "This economy isn't going to rise on its own; we have to make it happen--to make this town work and that includes keeping the employees who provide the Town's services.

Jed Brummer added, "We're on the cusp of facing larger expenses, repairing buildings, etc. We have to do the best we can with what we have, and try to keep who we have."

Sherry Pento then spoke, saying she would like to hold a Zumba fundraising benefit on October 8<sup>th</sup> for the Kersbergen family in Rindge – Mr. Kersbergen was paralyzed from the neck down in an accident recently and their third child arrived the following week. Sherry asked the Selectmen whether it would be possible to waive the Meeting House fee (\$50) for the event so that all proceeds could go to the Kersbergens. Pat Barry motioned to waive the fee, and it was seconded. All were in favor.

Sandra Ruth had sent the Selectmen a letter seeking the waiver of \$42 in interest charges on her tax bill in light of the fact that the interest was accrued since, as a new resident, she had not gotten her mail set up yet. Sam Seppala motioned to waive the interest on the tax bill, and Pat Barry seconded. All were in favor.

Joe Hazelrig of the police force requested that light use of alcohol be permitted at the Meeting House Saturday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> from 2:00-9:00pm for his wedding reception. Pat Barry motioned in favor, Jed Brummer seconded, and all were in favor.

## **Follow-up**

### **Approval of Minutes**

**August 17, 2011** – The only correction to the draft minutes was correction of the spelling of the name Hakala. Sam motioned to approve, Pat seconded, and all were in favor.

## **General Business**

### County Commissioner re: SWNH Fire Mutual Aid

Commissioner Aaron Patt spoke to the Select Board about changes in funding for the County's Fire Mutual Aid and how it may impact our town. Fire Mutual Aid dispatches all fire calls in 23 towns, while the Sheriff's Dept. dispatches all police/law enforcement calls. If you have a fire emergency and dial 911, you get Fire Mutual Aid.

If the Warrant article doesn't pass for Fire Mutual Aid, the citizens of the Town of Rindge won't have any fire dispatch.

Taxpayers fund Medicaid and the nursing homes, both public and private, in this county. Now Medicaid has a shortfall and it's impacting all components of the budget--the municipal assessment has increased \$10M, and 10,000 more people are retiring each day. Should FMA bill directly to the towns? Taxpayers are now paying what's on that sheet, and it's up to them what they want to pay. Aaron said he has spoken with Rick Donovan, the Rindge Fire Chief, and knows it will be difficult to convince towns to add these costs. Rindge is the second highest contributor behind Keene, but we're on a default budget.

Sam Seppala noted that the Fire Mutual Aid fiscal budget is January to December, which is out of synch with municipal budgets. Commissioner Patt said, "Yes, we're voting in March on money that's been spent in January and February. Dublin ran on their kitty fund until the budget period started, and hasn't had to borrow money for four years."

Beautification Committee – Barbara Wells started with the Beautification Committee in 2005, and she said, "This is the sixth year we've been working on gardens in Rindge, specifically, at the Library, the Police Department, Wellington Field, the Recycling Center, the Gazebo flowers, and in front of the Meeting House. There are nine of us. We all work together as a group to put down mulch, etc. in the beginning of the year, and then we split up and each take care of a garden." Five organizations are currently donating to the Beautification Committee: WalMart, Market Basket, Hannafords, Tenney Farm (which gives a discount), and Sunrise Farm. There are others, too: RAMS, Rindge Women's Club, Rindge Police Association, Sunny Slopes Farms, Mr. Donald Smith, and many more that Barbara would like to mention, and also the committee members buy plants and don't ask for reimbursement.

In the beginning of the year, the Committee generally writes letters to their five faithful corporate donors asking for contributions. The supermarkets give the Committee a choice of the plants left after July 4<sup>th</sup> (and there are many nice ones), excluding hanging plants. But they still need to buy seven

hanging plants for the gazebo, which are very expensive, as well as plants in barrels for the Wellington Community Center. Recently, the Police Association gave the Beautification Committee \$300, and WalMart gave them a \$50 gift card. It was suggested that the Beautification Committee approach Rindge's new businesses, Tractor Supply and Aubuchon, as well, as they may have fertilizer.

The Committee was reminded of the need to comply with Right to Know law; as a recognized Committee, they need to post their meeting announcements, minutes, etc. and this would be a good opportunity to recognize the Committee and the businesses supporting them in making the town of Rindge beautiful. Stephanie moved away, so she was removed from the Committee's listing and replaced by Marilyn Griska. She and Diane Brown have done all the watering and caring for Wellington Field.

The Beautification Committee and its members will be listed in the 2011 Annual Report. Barbara Wells was re-elected Chairman for three years. It was voted unanimously that Barbara as Chair should be able to buy plants as appropriate. The Town Office will keep a notebook for the Beautification Committee going forward.

Pat Barry motioned to appoint Marilyn Griska as a committee member, and to accept the \$50 donation from WalMart as well as the \$300 donation from the Police Association. Sam seconded and all were in favor, adding words of thanks to the volunteers that have done this work for the town.

#### Hazard Mitigation Committee

Town Administrator Carlotta Pini said the Board agreed to contact everyone who originally wrote the Hazard Mitigation plan, and she recommended that the Board officially appoint Robyn Payson, Rick Donovan, Mike Cloutier, Tom Horne, Mike Sielicki, Bob Cleland (representing historical society), and herself, and try to meet Thursdays once a month for approximately four months at 1:00pm for two hours. The town was awarded a grant for the preparation of this plan at no charge. Sam Seppala motioned to proceed with this plan, Pat Barry seconded, and all were in favor.

#### Cemetery Trustee

Amy Raymond generously agreed to serve as Rindge's third cemetery trustee so Carlotta asked the Board to appoint her until voting day, March 13, 2012 since the Town will elect the Trustees then. Pat motioned to appoint her until then, Sam seconded, and all were in favor.

#### Police Detail Fees

Carlotta said that she and the Chief incorporated the Board's agreed changes to the ordinance and settled the NH Retirement issue, calculating that the NH Retirement would add \$1.33 to our costs which the detail fees were adjusted to cover. Then, discussion continued about whether there should be an adjustment to the wages for the officers. Considering that the wages had been in place since 2006, they thought it would be appropriate to adjust detail fees 3% for the first and second times that employees' salaries were raised in 2006 and 2007, which would raise the detail fees to \$55.75/hour (from \$52.00/hour previously).

Sam Seppala asked whether this was competitive with surrounding towns, and Police Chief Mike Sielicki responded that "Jaffrey gets \$47.50; we're making \$42.50 so we're not getting rich but we're getting something."

Sam motioned to accept the new draft town ordinance for police details, Pat seconded, and all were in favor.

### Boat Agent Agreement:

Our Town Clerk, Nancy Martin, has taken the initiative to serve the residents of Rindge by processing boat registrations. Since Valley Marina stopped registering boats, people have had to go to Jaffrey the last two to three years. The fee will be deposited in the navigation safety fund. Nancy can add a fee for herself with each transaction, but a town vote is needed to approve that. Discussion ensued on exactly where these fees go—to the state or to the town? The town must get something for doing them. Pat motioned that we follow the recommendation of our town clerk and authorize the boat agent agreement as mentioned. Jed seconded, and all were in favor.

John Kauer asked whether, by being an agent for the state Fish and Game by collecting fees, we'd be inheriting responsibility for maintaining state-owned landings, etc. that the town doesn't currently have. Carlotta replied that having them for general use doesn't create an obligation to maintain them.

Kim McCummings asked whether anyone checked how much the former boat registration collector kept. Jed said that all Fish and Game activity is supported by licensing and that when the town collects motor vehicle registrations, we keep the town portion while the state gets its part.

**Payroll Manifest** – Motion to accept the payroll manifest was made by Brummer and seconded by Seppala. All members were in favor.

**Accounts Payable Manifest** - Motion to accept the accounts payable manifest was made by Brummer and seconded by Seppala. All members were in favor.

### **Town Administrator's Report**

#### **Ongoing Business –**

Upgrade of electrical at the Fire House: Public Works Director Mike Cloutier and Fire Chief Rick Donovan met with Grace Electric last week and they've ordered the parts required to do the job. The contract price is \$12,500. Jed Brummer remarked that it's a shame to put money into a building that doesn't meet code. Unfortunately, the alternative of investing in new space would not likely ever be approved.

Carlotta said that the Town offices' energy audits are back from SEEDS, and the Rindge Energy Commission is hosting a presentation on Wednesday, the 21<sup>st</sup> of September. It's an off-selectmen's meeting week, so she encouraged the Board to attend at 7:00pm at the Rindge Community Center at Wellington Park. Discussion will be about the improvements proposed as a result of these energy audits.

Carlotta commended the Rindge Public Safety Department for the great job they did in handling the Hurricane Irene emergency. Fire Chief Rick Donovan and his team were on top of it and constantly monitoring the situation. A meeting will be held to recap the event and talk about what could be done better and what went well.

Pat Barry said Toah Nipi had many advantages as a shelter, and Carlotta agreed that one of those was space. Another reason it was chosen is because Wellington does not have a generator. Moreover, Toah Nipi has beds and accommodations, etc. Carlotta said that the University had been considered as a possible shelter, but there's a lot of red tape involved, and the folks in Toah Nipi have been extremely accommodating. The community center has been designated right now for municipal use only; we needed someplace other than the fire station for the municipal workers to gather and get warm and take a break and eat, and we designated that facility for that purpose.

Pat Barry said, regarding the radio station at Franklin Pierce that disseminated the emergency information—station 105.3--Dr. Kristen Nevius of FPU volunteered to camp out at the radio station during the hurricane to be available to provide that service. Due to the FPU layoffs, there was no one to man the station and get information to Rindge residents, so she stayed there during the storm. Dr. Nevius and Rick Donovan coordinated the information to be broadcast. Pat said that Dr. Nevius has submitted a request to FPU to purchase equipment allowing Rick to call information into the radio station remotely, but it hasn't been purchased yet.

John Kauer noted that there was no signal from 105.3 FM beyond the community center, and Carlotta acknowledged that they've discussed that, but would need funds to expand its range, and no one knows how that will go.

Kim McCummings asked how townspeople would access emergency information if they have no internet or cable? Carlotta said the Emergency Management team thought of including a magnet with the radio station call letters on it and including it with a future mailing to all residents of the *Rindge Connection*, but the fire station has no money to create magnets after having bought the electronic sign, and some Rindge residents are out of range of the radio station anyway. It was suggested to put emergency information on the Town's website in addition to its Facebook page. Carlotta said this event demonstrated the need to get the emergency team back together, so this meeting that Rick's coordinating is the first step.

A preliminary estimate of the storm damage is \$25,000; we've submitted this request to FEMA but it's unlikely that this will be declared a disaster area so we'll just have to eat the cost. FEMA has undergone reductions too. Public Works Director Mike Cloutier was frugal with the gravel because he felt we wouldn't be reimbursed.

Some people are upset that we've paved Forristall because now people go too fast.

Jed Brummer motioned to go into non-public session for real estate, Sam Seppala seconded, and all were in favor.

After the non-public sessions, the meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Stonehill, Administrative Assistant to the Town of Rindge.*