



**Selectmen's Meeting
Rindge Town Office
Wednesday, October 26, 2011**

APPROVED Minutes

Present: Jed Brummer, Pat Barry, Sam Seppala, Carlotta Pini

6:00 P.M. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

I. Citizen's Forum

1. Follow-up & Advisement of Temporary Suspension During Budget Season

Bruce Hall asked about the wisdom of keeping a fire truck at FPU and involving the students in fire dispatch. Town Administrator Carlotta Pini confirmed that the Town sends the officer on duty to calls that aren't either false alarms or very minor. The fire truck is kept in a heated and sprinkler-equipped building at FPU, and keeping it there (instead of at the Rindge Fire Department) saves on mileage and time when there are fire calls at FPU. Discussion followed on what happens when the campus is on holiday. Dick Call said that many FPU calls are false alarms and the Town is paying for them. Select Chair Jed Brummer replied that the Town actually gets reimbursed for false alarms.

Kim McCummings gave the three Selectmen a memo stating the Planning Board's intent to fill the full-time Planning Director position plus hire a part-time Secretary (for up to 25 hours). The Planning Board invited the Select Board to its meeting on Nov. 1st to discuss its staffing plans. Jed noted that this memo presented during Citizens Forum is the first notice that the Select Board received, other than the article that came out earlier in the week in the *Monadnock-Ledger*. Kim stated that the Planning Board unanimously voted to staff these two positions. Acting Planning Director Robyn Payson began employment with the Town in a part-time role that later became full-time. Her posted hours are 9-1 Monday through Thursday, but her hours are really longer.

II. Approval of Minutes

- 1. October 12, 2011** – Pat Barry motioned to accept the minutes of October 12, 2011, Sam Seppala seconded, and all were in favor.

III. General Business

1. Results of Facebook Survey Regarding Scheduling of the Deliberative Session

The survey results were: (1) for Feb. 4th at 9:00am, (7) for Feb. 4th at 1:00pm, (5) for Feb. 4th at 5:00pm with potluck, (4) for Feb. 10th at 7pm with potluck, and (0) for a weekday at 7:00pm with potluck. Unfortunately, with just 17 votes, we don't have a statistically significant sampling. Jed said that in the 30s and 40s, the annual meeting was held in the evening with potluck at the Meeting House. Discussion followed with many saying it would be nice to share food together at the meeting, several wanting to meet during daylight hours, and others voiced concerns about conflicts with daytime athletic events. As far as the date, Carlotta said that, because Rindge is an SB2 Town, we must meet between certain dates – for a Saturday the meeting would need to be held either February 4th or 11th. The earlier date would be helpful since the Town will be scrambling to get the ballots, etc. prepared after Deliberative Session.

Jed said that the Town is hampered by being on a calendar fiscal year that does not coincide with either the school or state fiscal years. Working with the Budget Advisory Committee, we try to anticipate what the state and the school's going to do (their fiscal year runs July – June) and what's feasible for the Town two months ahead of Deliberative Session. If we could correspond our fiscal year to the state's and the school's it would really help, but it would mean funding an 18-month budget one year. The Peterborough Town Clerk said life is easier since Peterborough opted to do that because they can make the right decisions before the town votes.

Dick Call requested that the Town report be published earlier so residents can read it before Deliberative Session. Carlotta explained that unfortunately this is not possible since the figures that go into the Town Report often change after Deliberative Session. The State requires that the Report be done one week before the annual meeting on March 13th. As far as preparing

the Voters' Guide, the *Rindge Connection*, and the Town Report, we don't have enough money to do them all. Pat suggested cutting in half the number of Town Reports we printed last year and uploading the Report to our website.

Motion: Sam motioned to have Deliberative Session on February 11th at 1:00 with food, menu to be decided. Pat seconded, and all were in favor.

Joseph Finder's *Buried Secrets* is an action thriller that mentions Chief Sielicki in the acknowledgments.

6:30 P.M. 2. Capital Improvements Program Committee's Recommendations for the 2012 Budget

The CIP Committee's purpose is to suggest to the Selectmen a schedule over a six-month period that will make the impact of needed replacements and capital improvements more even for the taxpayers, spreading them out as evenly as possible over a span of years. The Committee also suggests how to finance these projects--whether by warrant article paid for through taxation, through a bond, or financed some other way. Dwight Schenk is a new member on the Committee.

The Town needs to have a savings goal to set money aside every year to replace vehicles, equipment, and facilities. Perhaps this goal could be tied to an index, like the Town's total assessed valuation, which includes mostly residential, but some commercial, real estate. If we put aside ½ percent a year towards capital projects to have funds as the town grows and expands its tax base, we can take care of the assets and equipment we have.

Right now, we have to let people know that the Town has no savings and we'll have to finance everything until we do. Our assessed value is \$580 million, so ½ percent is \$290,000. The CIP says \$795,000 is needed next year, but at least this would be a consistent methodology to apply. Back when Carl Little was the Town Treasurer, he implemented a \$275,000 savings figure each year for capital improvements. That went on for several years until the Town voted not to do it anymore, and ever since then, the Town has scrambled to fix or replace anything.

Jed believes unemployment will stay high, the economic mess in Europe will affect us, and with the Town's current level of debt, we could get into some serious inflation because it means printing more money. So whatever money we can put away now for our capital expenditures will be prudent, rather than paying for future improvements with cheaper inflationary dollars. Sam Seppala agreed: Do the work now or bond it before inflation strikes. Borrowing costs are so low now that they can only go up. Anything the Town can do now will be very inexpensive for the taxpayers compared to what it will cost in the future.

Adrienne Hudson of the CIP Committee said, "Every year, the CIP has recommended saving money but the voters keep voting it down." Dwight added, "And every year, the bill gets bigger because nothing is done. If we start leasing instead of buying equipment that needs to be replaced, we're ultimately going to spend more money. So everyone looking at their own pocketbooks should hear this rationale: that putting money aside for these expenses now will save everyone money in the long run."

With \$795,000-worth of equipment needing to be replaced this coming year and no money set aside, the Town could ask for \$400,000 to go into the reserves if we lease \$350,000 of equipment—but, again, leasing will be more expensive in the long run than buying. Carlotta said that residents need to know now what assets they own—the Town Department Heads will be glad to meet with them and give them a tour of the facilities or a ride in the Town's vehicles. We want to show residents the tools we have to do our jobs. Pat agreed that we need to do a better job of communicating to taxpayers why they need to invest in these things and how doing so will positively impact their life in this Town.

John Kauer had requested that his unused punch card be credited towards a new transfer station sticker in March since there is a "no refund" policy on punch cards. The Select Board said that when the punch cards were established, the intent of the "no refund" policy was to prevent cash requests for the balance of partially used punch cards at the Town Office. We do have a register for receiving funds for punch cards, transfer station stickers, and copies, but we don't have a petty cash box for payments. Pat said if the card was unpunched and could be re-sold, she didn't see a problem with giving a refund. Jed agreed and confirmed that Carlotta has authority to make decisions of this type without the Select Board.

3. Highway Department: Results of Sand Bid

DPW Director Mike Cloutier presented the Selectmen with a memo outlining the results of Winter Sand Bid #04-11, with a recommendation that the Town purchase sand from C & C Trucking at \$9.25 CV. Jed motioned to purchase sand from C&C, Pat seconded, and all were in favor.

4. Payroll Manifest: Jed motioned to accept the Payroll Manifest, Pat seconded, and all were in favor.

5. Accounts Payable Manifest: Pat motioned to accept the Accounts Payable Manifest, Sam seconded, and all were in favor.

IV. Town Administrator's Report

1. Ongoing Business

V. Informational Items / Communication

Cheshire County Fire Mutual Aid:

Fire Mutual Aid will be billing the towns directly now, and if we have to collect another \$40,000-\$60,000, it could be a problem.

The Meeting School: Status of 2012 Tax Exemption:

Dave DuVernay sent a letter to the Meeting School advising them of their potential to owe about \$40,000 in taxes if they won't be operating as a school (which is tax-exempt) in 2011-2012.

Argent Cable:

The Select Board will hold a conference call with our attorney regarding our options with Argent at 5:30 prior to the next Selectmen's meeting.

Jed Brummer motioned to go out of Public Session and into Non-Public for Personnel, Pat seconded, and all were in favor.

VI. Non-Public Sessions per RSA 91-A:3 II.(d, a) for Real Estate and Personnel

Pat Barry moved to go out of Non-Public for Personnel and seal the minutes, Sam seconded, and all were in favor.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:17pm.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Stonehill, Administrative Assistant.