



Selectmen's Meeting  
Rindge Meeting House  
Tuesday, November 22, 2011

## **APPROVED Minutes**

Present: Jed Brummer, Samuel Seppala, Carlotta Lilback Pini (Patricia Barry was teleconferenced in for the Non-Public Session)

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

I. Approval of Minutes: November 9, 2011 – Sam Seppala motioned to approve the minutes, Jed Brummer seconded, and all were in favor.

II. General Business

1. Energy Commission re: Police Station Project - Pat Martin and Dwight Schenk represented the Energy Commission, with Chief Mike Sielicki present. The Energy Commission received \$41,000+ in grants in March, 2010 which was used for professional energy audits of Town buildings (completed), conversion of Town lights to high-efficiency sodium (completed, with \$5,000 left over which will be applied to increasing efficiency of the interior lighting at the Fire Station, Library, and maybe the Town Office, so we're waiting for a quote from PSNH), and weatherization of the Police Station (in process—the Energy Commission needs authorization to proceed based on the Energy Audit's findings).

Pat Martin said it needs to be determined whether a newly insulated Police Station could withstand the load of snow, ice dams, etc. Aside from Southwest Planning Services, which did the energy audit, three other agencies looked at the Police Station and everyone remarked on the condition of the roof; it is very old and has been leaking. To spend between \$5,000-\$10,000 on insulating the building only to have the roof leak and ruin the insulation would be wasteful. Pat Martin talked to the NH Office of Energy and Planning – they may have some money left in contingency funds to cover the extra \$5,000 cost. If we aren't awarded the additional \$5,000 from TRC, we'll do all the sealing and leave the insulation out of it. Margaret says the payback from the insulation is three years. If we proceed, the job has to be wrapped up by mid-February.

Town Administrator Carlotta Pini said that we might look at using the safety impact fees since the Town has roughly \$30,000 in that fund. Since the Police Station roof would cost about \$10,000, she would suggest putting the roof and weatherization projects out to bid and revisiting the Board in December. Police Chief Sielicki says that having multiple antennas on the roof is causing some of the leaks. Removing the antennas and putting them on a 50' mast up from the ground to save future roof damage will cost \$4,915.00, and he agreed that using impact fees would be a good way to pay for it. Carlotta also noted that the Energy Commission members removed air conditioners from the Town buildings this week after noticing the air leaks occurring. Jed thanked the Energy Commission for their work to date.

MOTION: Selectman Sam Seppala motioned to put the roof and weatherization projects for the Police Station out to bid, and to construct the mast for the antennas. Jed Brummer seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2. Planning Board re: Staff Positions – Chair Kirk Stenersen asked what transpired during the Selectmen's Meeting two weeks ago after the Planning Board members left. Jed Brummer said that, during the course of conversation, Board members voiced concerns about filling a second position at this time. The consensus was to advise filling the Director's position and then see what the incumbent's needs are with respect to filling the other position. Also, there's concern that the Town cannot know exactly what will happen at February's Deliberative Session. There are residents who want to cut the Town's budget \$300,000-\$500,000 which would require cuts to personnel and services. So, the Board is not sure how next year's budget will look if those cuts happen. Large cuts like that probably would affect the Planning Department, as well as all the other Departments, so the Board considered that it would be prudent to hold back until after the Town election as to the state of the Town budgets.

Kirk agreed that the Planning Board's idea was to allow the Planning Director to have input on the Planning Secretary. Jed said that the last time a full-time Planning Director was hired, the Town wasn't sure it needed Southwest anymore since membership cost about \$6,000. Sam agreed that the Planning Director should be the one to decide whether to use Southwest or additional staff, but said it could be unnecessary duplication to have both. Kim McCummings said that initially the Planning Department had a Planning Secretary and was using Southwest Regional. At some point, the decision was made to bring in a consultant who advised having a full-time Planning Director at the same time as a full-time Secretary. Town Administrator Carlotta Pini said that Joanne Carr was hired in January, 2007, asked for a secretary, and hired Robyn part-time. Kim said that the Department evolved from having a Planning Director with a part-time Secretary to having a Planning Director and a full-time Assistant. Now, the Planning Board is requesting to revert to the original Planning Director and part-time Secretary. The Town cancelled its membership with Southwest because of the default budget. With Southwest, there was some duplication and still things we had to pay for on top of the membership fee. Jed: Because we had a good Director, we weren't sure we needed Southwest's services. Carlotta: Even so, there's value in belonging to the Regional Planning Commission – there are nine regional planning commissions in the state that help municipalities look at things in a regional way, not as isolated towns, and that can advise on cost-effective, efficient ways of pooling resources, etc. Southwest has assisted Rindge with energy conservation and hazard mitigation planning without our even being a member. And they were why we were considered for the Fast Roads grant which will bring high-speed internet to Rindge. We're benefitting from their services that other towns are paying for but we're not.

Sam Seppala: So the discussion is to hire the Planning Director and let them decide which is more beneficial: to hire a Secretary or belong to Southwest. Kim: But the other week, you said we could go ahead with both. Jed: We're not ruling anything out, but we'd just like to put the Secretary or Southwest on hold until we know how the vote goes in March. I think it might also not be wise to hire the full-time Planning Director until March. I think Robyn's done a good job, and so until we know what funds we have and the positions we can fill, wouldn't it be wise to wait until the election to see where the budgets stand?

Kirk: As a Select Board, you're not helping yourself on the budget thing by supporting raises. Jed: We may, in fact, be promoting some other raises; we think that in order to preserve good, experienced help that we have to address those issues that we haven't addressed for four years. It comes down to what's the most intelligent way to maintain the services we have. The Selectmen are not going to cut the budget a third. Residents are not going to save half their taxes by cutting the Town's relatively small portion of the overall budget. We're trying to run the town in a most fiscally responsible way and to maintain the services the townspeople have voted in – school system, library, rec dept., fire, police. If someone came in here and did an evaluation from the state, they would say we're understaffed. We have three part-time people doing our accounting while other towns have a whole Finance Department. This Town cannot be run as it was 15 years ago; there are too many liabilities out there. We're now running at the bare minimum, even less.

Hank: I think what we're saying is that Robyn's Acting Director right now and she needs help. We're not looking for a Planning Assistant; we're looking for a Planning Secretary. We're upset about the fact that we thought it was all set, but now find the Planning Secretary is in question. We're looking for less than what we had before to maintain our services.

Sam: My question is if we hire a Planning Director, what happens to Robyn? Kirk: She's doing the job now and she will be applying for it.

Kirk: The Planning Board has budgeted \$36,000 a year plus wages for the full-time Planning Director and, now, the part-time Secretary, and I'd like to know what other departments are going to do. Jed: We're looking at all the budgets; that's our job. Recreation has come in under budget. There are tough questions and decisions to make, and Planning has to prove its budget as much as any other department. Sam: From my point of view, if you're going to look at giving increases, you have to look at cutting personnel; if you want to reward people who are performing, there's only one way to do it in business. Kirk: So are we working our tails off to support raises for others? Sam: Everyone's tax bill went up. Kirk: I think it was irresponsible to award raises. Kim: With the conversation about Southwest, in what ways was the Board thinking that Southwest could help the Planning Dept. to the point we might not need a Secretary? Sam: We understand that they do things that the Planning Director does. Our thought was that if Southwest can do some of the work that the Secretary can do, that would free up the Planning Director, plus we get other benefits from membership. Kim: I did not see that they offered secretarial services. Kirk: if Southwest does some planning work, then it would free the Planning Director to do some secretarial work. Kim: But then you'd have a Secretary, not a Director.

Pat Martin: Southwest is oriented towards the region; they can drive some things for the Town; I see some benefit but not necessarily linked to what our planning people do. Carlotta: Tim Murphy said that their local assistance program focuses on

being advisory; the Planning Board is a regulatory body and the Southwest Planning Commission will offer advice to assist the Planning Board. It's the type of advice that a Planning Director would offer. Sam: The way you cut costs is to eliminate duplication. So when the question came up whether we should be part of Southwest, what was important to me was not to duplicate.

Kim: At the rate we're going, we won't have a Director until January/February because we have to post the position, go through the resumes, and conduct interviews. Then the Director would be in place awhile before the Secretary would be posted maybe in March/April. Jed: Before you post, can you share the description with the Selectmen? Kim: Yes. Jed: We would like to have input on the job description. Kim: You have access to all the job descriptions. Kirk: I have no problem having a discussion before we have a part-time planning Secretary. Kim: We all want to work together but the Planning Board hires its own staff. The practice has been that there is a courtesy meeting with the final candidate and the BOS.

Hank: Are we going to put the Planning Secretary in the budget for next year? Jed: That can go in the budget, but we don't know what will happen at the vote in March.

Jed: The Planning Department has done a great job, brought in three new stores. Of course, development adds to the services we need--police force, fire--it's a balance. To put things in perspective, the Town of Fitzwilliam serves 2,500 people -- Rindge serves 6,000. We have a Recreation Department; they don't. Their police coverage is a third or half of ours, and they have approximately the same tax rate as Rindge has. We're providing more services to more people yet Rindge has the same tax rate as Fitzwilliam. Plus, Rindge is working with \$1.5-\$2M less in its budget than Jaffrey which has 5,000 residents. The bottom line is Rindge is doing more with less.

3. Accept Donations for Ice Rink - The state requires the Select Board to approve the \$6,427 donated for the ice rink.

MOTION: Sam motioned for the Town of Rindge to accept the donations for the skating rink, Jed seconded, and all were in favor.

4. 2012 Budget

Jed: Rindge's total assessed valuation is about \$110 million higher than Jaffrey's which affects how much we pay the Cooperative School District.

a) Town Clerk - Nancy Martin, Town Clerk, noted one correction on the contracted services line: since she put this budget in a couple months ago, she received a bill for the copier downstairs that is \$14 higher than the original figure, so the total is \$134. There is \$1,000 in the budget, as there is every year, for conservation of Rindge's vital records from the 1800s. Nancy as Town Clerk is charged with maintaining all the old records of the Town, to use acid-free paper, slip them into sleeves in books, bind them, and store them in a fireproofed cabinet she got through a grant. Unfortunately, every year for the past four years that \$1,000 has gone back into the General Fund to deal with emergencies, and meanwhile the records are disintegrating. The Town and the State both get a portion of the dog licenses, but it costs the Town \$2,600 to print the dog license tags. Office supplies have gone up--toner for the Lexmark machine is \$289, and it has to be used to print registrations. However, we're definitely ahead of last year in motor vehicle revenue.

Carlotta: We still have no deputy in Nancy's office, but at some point we'll need to find a solution to that because when her office is closed, people are not happy after they've come here to take care of their business. I don't know if Nancy has a proposal this year; her proposal last year was to bring in a part-time person. John Kauer: I heard that when the Town Clerk and Tax Collector positions split, they were supposed to be deputies for each other.

Carol Donovan, Tax Collector: When we went before the Selectmen, I thought it was with the understanding that we would cover for each other for a while, but if it didn't work out, we would be requesting one deputy (part-time, no benefits) to cover either office when either was away. So we volunteered our time to do the other person's job--when I was physically in Nancy's office, everything in my office was at a standstill and nothing was getting done; banks weren't getting their answers. And a lot of money needs to be processed: the Tax Collector takes in \$11.5M and the Town Clerk takes in more than \$800,000.

Carlotta: Maybe a warrant article to fund a deputy for one or both of you should be considered. Nancy and Carol are entitled to four weeks' vacation and sick time, and they are required to take training to keep up with their certifications, so we would need someone who could at least cover that time; as it stands now, they can't get out of the office without inconveniencing residents.

b) Tax Collector - Nancy and I split to the cost of the copier contract which has gone up to \$134. I saved \$41 for tax documents since you can get them online now. For office supplies, there's just \$30.50 left for the rest of the year. However, I could try to drop supplies by \$30 to \$120 for next year. Postage is rumored to be going up next year.

c) Patriotic - Pat Martin: We're asking for \$1,000 for Memorial Day this year. I've been giving the ministers a \$50.00 honorarium out of my pocket each year because they give a speech and march in the hot sun. I'd like to put that in the budget this year since I have less to work with since I'm retired. We spent \$341 in 2010 so that should cover it. We had the artificial wreaths made last year, so we'll have some wiggle room in case we need more money for the flags. This year, we spent \$1,570 on fireworks and the rest of the \$5,000 was donated by various folks. Jed: It's one event that brings people together and we can't have a \$2 show. Carlotta: Someone has to coordinate the fundraising because it fell on Jed's shoulders this past year. Jed suggested putting it in the warrant, and Sam agreed because then the Town would know what the people think. Carlotta: Smaller items such as this have been put into the operating budget because we're trying to cut down on the number of the warrant articles. From this meeting, the consensus was to present the July 4<sup>th</sup> budget in a warrant article.

d) Welfare - Mary Drew has been our Welfare Director since 2008, and she also is the part-time Welfare Director for the towns of Jaffrey and Fitzwilliam. When prospective recipients call the town office, Linda Stonehill determines whether they have an emergency situation or not and, if not, she sets up an appointment for them with Mary and gets them the paperwork they'll need to bring.

Contracted services will remain the same: Contoocook Valley Transportation is asking for \$500 this year; getting transportation is probably the number one barrier for welfare clients. The contract items include the community kitchen, home healthcare, Southwest Community Services, and the Rindge Food Pantry. Sometimes money has to be taken from one agency and given to another agency to level the fund. Pat Martin is a representative for Contoocook Valley Transportation. They have a ride board and plan to talk to the residents at Payson Village who often have trouble getting out for appointments and shopping. Jed: Mary does a great job of preventing recipients from double-dipping from other towns' programs at the same time. The budget needs a small increase of \$400 for food, fuel, and prescriptions. When recipients hit age 19 and no longer have state health insurance, they come to the Town for help. And now there are so many more people who, due to the state cuts, are coming to the Town for aid. Mary said that one client needs \$1,800 for prescription medication, and by law the Town is required to meet all welfare recipients' needs until they no longer require help. Other welfare clients want assistance with their \$500-\$600 monthly electric bills. And it's harder for the Town now that electric company PSNH's fuel assistance program has been cut--people that got \$700 fuel assistance last year got half as much this year, so they're asking the Town for aid. Burial expenses, another area we help with, stayed the same. We also give welfare recipients money for their rent: one of Mary's clients has \$6,000 in back rent to pay. Mary can give them one month's rent paid for by the Town, and then they can re-apply for subsequent rent payments. Mary said she expects a significant increase in rent assistance requests -- the Town of Jaffrey's annual rent assistance budget alone is \$100,000. Rent assistance also includes sponsorship for shelters. Rindge pays \$800-\$1,000 a month to sponsor a family and currently there's no shelter space available in the state. There's a 6-year wait list, an 11,000-person wait list. There will be a 32% increase this year because the state has cut funding to so many programs we used to have. These are projections, but back when the Welfare budget was underfunded, we pulled from Highway funds because we have to pay Welfare by law. Mary is required by law to meet the need, and if the money's not there, it has to be taken from other departments.

e) History - No one showed up to discuss the budget.

f) Conservation - Dave Drouin and Phil represented the Conservation Commission. The Commission's operating budget is minimal (\$1,550) for printing trail brochures, advertising, mileage, and office supplies, and Bob Cleland, the Clerk, takes the minutes and prepares correspondence. There's a presentation Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at Wellington for a presentation of Annett State Park's biodiversity, and 4-5 people will be presenting study: the engineer who did the study, three state agencies, and Jed Brummer, Chair of the Select Board, who will talk about some of the Park's history. Two years ago, the State proposed selling the Park off because it was not revenue-generating. So, the Conservation Commission did a study and found that, fortunately, because of the way the Park was purchased in the 1920s or 30s, the State was required to keep it. The 1,500-acre Park contains beautiful Hubbard Pond, and there's only one dwelling on the whole lake which has quite a history. The Park is an important piece of property for migrating wildlife and is adjacent to the Meeting School.

g) Public Health - no one showed

h) Insurance - no one showed

5. Financial Development Plan: Community Development Block Grant – The Financial Development Plan, which proves fiscal responsibility and internal controls, is a technical requirement for the FastRoads grant. The Board was asked to approve the Financial Management Plan.

MOTION: Jed Brummer motioned to approve the Financial Management Plan for the Community Development Block Grant, Sam Seppala seconded, and all were in favor.

6. Appoint a Representative to the Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative School District's Budget Advisory Committee – In the past, Charlie Eicher was our representative but he has been promoted to the School Board. Rick Sirvint, who has a background in education, expressed interest in serving as Representative, and the Board so motioned:

MOTION: Jed Brummer motioned to appoint Rick Sirvint to the Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative School District Budget Advisory Committee, Sam Seppala seconded, and all were in favor.

7. Payroll Manifest & Accounts Payable Manifest - Jed motioned to approve both manifests, Sam seconded, and all approved.

III. Town Administrator's Report  
1. Ongoing Business

The Fire Chief's truck: At the last Selectmen's meeting, Fire Chief Rick Donovan was advised to speak with Mr. Raney, a highly regarded mechanic, about the truck repairs. Mr. Raney was extremely knowledgeable but didn't want to take on this truck because there was too much on his plate as it was, and he confirmed that Rick was getting a good price with the other estimate. But he asked Rick to insist on certain replacement parts to avoid this problem happening again. Rick priced out the parts on the website Raney referred him to and they're \$2,600. A well-respected mechanic at Townsend Ford thought he could install these parts but didn't know what the labor costs would be. The truck is a vintage 2004, 60,000 miles diesel truck, and diesels are supposed to last for about 200,000 miles. Jed: In consideration that the Fire Chief will need to drive this truck for a long time, let's get this done.

As a side note, Mike Cloutier, Public Works Director, didn't trade in the old highway truck. He took some equipment off it that he wanted to keep and got an offer from the international dealer for what's remaining. We thought we'd advertise for sealed bids on that truck with the minimum starting price of what the dealer said and, if we get no bids, we'll give it to the international dealer.

IV. Informational Items / Communication

1. Thanksgiving/Holiday Hours - Thursday and Friday the Town Offices and Transfer Station will be closed. The Library will be open Friday and Saturday, and the Transfer Station will be open Saturday.

MOTION: Jed motioned that we go out of Public into Non-Public for Personnel, Sam seconded, and all were in favor. The time was 8:24 pm.

V. Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II.(a) for Personnel

MOTION: After the Non-Public Session was finished, Jed motioned to leave Non-Public and seal the minutes, then move back to Public.

VI. Adjournment

MOTION: Jed motioned to adjourn, Sam seconded, and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8.40pm.

*Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Stonehill, Administrative Assistant*