



**Selectmen's Meeting  
Town Office  
Wednesday, January 11, 2012**

Present: Jed Brummer, Pat Barry, and Carlotta Lilback Pini (Samuel Seppala was absent)

**APPROVED Minutes**

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

GENERAL BUSINESS

Mike Cloutier, Director of Public Works, reported that someone took a chainsaw to the last standing maple tree on the Common and sawed around it in a corkscrew pattern, damaging it utterly, so it will have to be cut down in the spring. At some time, the Common was also toilet-papered and someone threw a rock through the Rindge Museum's front window (which, although it crashed through the window and landed on the living room floor, luckily missed a glass display case and some antiques.)

Mr. Stan Fry spoke regarding increasing vandalism on his land, damage from unauthorized ATVs, and parties involving drugs, etc. Selectman Jed Brummer said that Mr. Fry has the right to make his land private property and suggested reclassifying the roads running through it. The Selectmen could put that reclassification on a warrant with the Roadway Committee's support.

Fire Chief Rick Donovan: I'm in favor of the reclassification and I'll tell you why. Mr. Fry has 700 acres and there are thousands more. The four-wheel vehicles are absolutely destroying the roads, and there is the danger of the fires people are starting. If these are Class VI roads, I would suggest they become fire roads to protect the interface to the other thousands of acres. If the Class VI roads are not subject to bars and gates, what can we do? Police Chief Mike Sielicki: You can charge them with criminal mischief. Rick: They just rip the signs down and use them for kindling for the fires. Jed: If the roads remain open for nature lovers but because of the four-wheeler destruction of these roads no path can be maintained, who's going to be responsible to keep access so that the Fire Department can respond in case of a fire? Chief Sielicki: If we can gate the roads to stop the four-wheel vehicles, Mr. Fry will maintain the roads as best as he can. Mr. Fry: Last year, we re-graded the roads, and within a week, they were undrivable again because people trucked in these four-wheel drive vehicles and destroyed them. The Town does not maintain Class VI roads but the public has a right-of-way to drive over them. A Class A trail is also a public right-of-way but for non-motorized vehicles. The problem is that the snowmobilers want to continue to use this property. Town Administrator Carlotta Lilback Pini: There's a public misconception about gates and bars and Class VI roads: You can't put up a gate to block public access. The public has to be able to get through unobstructed.

Tom Coneys: I've been using Stan Fry's property all my life and I understand his position, but he's asking us to discontinue a road to protect his property. The dirt bikes and the ATVs have to be registered, and if they aren't, and they aren't on the land with permission, they're breaking more laws than they know. I'm a four-wheeler also, and where are these people going to go otherwise? Jed: Well, people destroy his roads and then what?

Stan Fry: A couple points of clarification: the snowmobilers travel the logging roads, and we've tried to clear a lot of the debris on the land so they can use the trails. But the second problem is the vandalism of the fields—I had just installed \$2,500 worth of gates when people came in and cut the gates off for scrap metal. People have access to any place on my property and build these fires anywhere they want, and it's impossible for the Police to patrol it. John Kauer: Pat told the abutters that this would come up for a public hearing if it happened again. Roberta Oeser: It seems that some people who use private property have no respect for the landowner—some snowmobilers and four-wheel drivers drove right over an owner's stone walls and into his fields and ruined his cash crop. And they were neighbors. Jed: The snowmobile clubs generally have rules and carry insurance. But by the time the Police hear about the damage, it's days or weeks later.

Selectman Pat Barry: I think this is a very necessary conversation and one that should take place, and we should put it on the warrant and let the people decide. The Selectmen's Office will notify the abutters by certified mail and they will have the opportunity to speak at the Deliberative Session.

MOTION: Pat Barry motioned to add to the warrant articles the proposed reclassification of the roads on Mr. Fry's property from Class VI roads to Class A Trails. Jed seconded and all were in favor.

Budget Hearing regarding the proposed 2012 Budget / Bond Hearing regarding the proposed Warrant Articles proposed for 2012

Pat Martin is on the Energy Commission, and this year the Energy Commission received grant funding for three projects: 1) to replace our older street lights with sodium (completed) which is saving us approximately \$400 a month in addition to the 18 lights we shut off; 2) to weatherize the Police Station (which will get under way shortly); and, 3) to undertake energy audits of the Town buildings (completed). A post-energy audit presentation was given at Wellington Recreation Center this fall, and Margaret of SEEDS recommended that the Town invest about \$187,000 on energy upgrades that would yield savings in the form of reduced electric bills and oil bills. Carlotta suggested one of the Energy Commission members join the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Committee so some of these issues get addressed. So Dwight Schenk participated in the process this year and the recommendation from the Energy Commission was to break these projects out over years to make them more digestible. They want to establish a capital reserve fund of \$30,000 and to name the Selectmen as agents. So in March, if voters approve, \$30,000 would go into this fund, the Energy Commission would present its priority projects, and the Board would vote to authorize expenditures of those funds. In 2013, the Energy Commission will ask for more money to be put into the fund. Each year, they'll report on the investments to be made and the savings yielded as a result of those investments. Pat Martin: We will look for opportunities for grant funding as well, which gives us some leverage because many grants want you to match funds, etc. We got a 226.44% return on investment for the Library project – that's almost \$7,000 in savings returned to us in 10 years. We also changed the lighting for the Fire Station which yielded a 114% return. Then we plan a project for the Town Offices anticipating a 117% return. We would do the projects with the highest percentage return first.

Pat Barry: Does the wording of this about municipal buildings restrict anything in the scope of what the Energy Commission wants to do? Pat Martin: We undertook energy audits on the six buildings, and my feeling is that we should go with what the Energy Audit recommended because of Margaret's experience. Pat Barry: What if you had access to a solar or wind grant that came along that you couldn't apply for? Carlotta: How about changing the wording to funding "municipal energy projects?" That makes sense because it's less restrictive.

MOTION: Jed motioned to approve the Article as amended, Pat seconded, and all were in favor.

The Deliberative Session will be held Saturday, Feb 4<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00am, and our Town Meeting will be Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>.

Article 1: Concerns electing the Town Officers. We won't discuss Articles 2-5 because they've been vetted through the Planning Board.

Skip at this point to Budget Article 12, and these Article numbers may change if we don't approve some of these tonight. Tonight's public hearing can change the proposed \$3,599,294 budget – the Selectmen have until January 30<sup>th</sup> to finalize and post the budget, and hopefully it will reflect the BAC's recommendations, the input from this public hearing, and the Selectmen's input.

Carlotta: I did make an adjustment to our legal budget after our discussion. It has been brought down to \$20,000 which is level funding for this year. And I did make an adjustment to the Welfare budget after looking at spending figures: it seems that it could be brought down as well. Pat Barry: It was dropped by almost \$10,000, having been \$84,200 and I brought it down to \$74,800. The need ebbs and flows. If we should exceed the budget there, we do need to find the money elsewhere because this is a mandatory expense. Jed: Five or six years ago, we had almost the same budgets. By law we have to help those who need help. But Mary has been able to find supplemental resources to try to amend people's financial situations. We didn't have that before: we just took on all the expenses. When Mary came on, we figured out that if the Welfare budget stayed on the same trajectory, within one year, we would be spending \$120,000 a year (\$50,000 more for each of the last five years). Three years later, we are virtually level funding where we were.

Carlotta: There are two other very significant changes in the budget since the last meeting, and I think it merits discussion. Cheshire County has opted not to act as a fiscal agent for the Fire Mutual Aid any longer. What that means is that the taxes they collected from the member towns, the taxes we collect from residents that used to go through the County for Mutual Aid, will no longer go that route. They have turned that function of collection over to the towns.

So, we have to increase our budget by \$51,952. This will be due April 15<sup>th</sup>. We didn't plan for this although Commissioner Aaron Patt said it would be contemplated. He said the County budget would be reduced so the net impact would be the same. But the County budget is still in draft form and will not be finalized until after our Town Meeting. We have to have faith that

they will honor their commitment. However, the County budget of \$40 million has gone up by about \$1M every year for the last several years.

Jed: In the short run, we have to find \$51,000 in our budget to cover the Fire Mutual Aid expense that we didn't have last year. Carlotta: Rick and I did some math and figured that if the County budget stays the way it is, it will result in a savings to the townspeople of \$32 on a \$200,000 house, but if we have to add it to our budget, it will go up \$19,000, but there's still a net savings. We have to try to explain this. Is there something we could take out of our budget to make room for this?

There had been some consideration earlier in the budget season about starting a revolving fund for the Transfer Station, similar to the one we have for the Recreation Department and the Police Detail revolving fund. We would take the revenues from Transfer Station stickers, punch cards, and the recyclables (which isn't much) and segregate them in a special fund and use that money to cover some of the expenses to run the Transfer Station. Public Works Director Mike Cloutier was concerned about the prospect of relying on that revenue stream to fund the staff or the contracts, because those are commitments that must be paid. So we talked about starting the revolving fund with some seed money and perhaps funding the staff and contracts through the operating budget but taking some other things out of the operating budget and put it in the revolving fund. So now some of that operation would happen outside the general fund. The benefit would be a new focus on how we can make the Transfer Station more efficient and self-sufficient by looking at our revenues and focusing on ways to get the most from selling recyclables.

Fire Chief Rick Donovan: In the default budget, Fire Mutual Aid (the 911 dispatch service) is a contractual agreement, and we have to meet it. Police Chief Mike Sielicki: We can't put it on a warrant article—a "no" vote would cripple the Town. It should go into the default budget. And I would disagree about impacting Mike's Transfer Station operation. Jed: We might have to increase the dump fees.

Carlotta: By putting seed money in there, you're allowing Mike to pay the bills until the revenue comes in from the punch cards and transfer station stickers. Jed: If we have this fund and in six months have less or more money from recyclables, will this fund adjust? Mike Cloutier: Yes. The recyclables are a work in progress. This would allow us to get equipment replaced to do single stream, etc. I think this is a good idea for the purpose of adjusting the Transfer Station itself. I have reservations about taking funds out of the operating budget because we may be short the next year. Roberta Oeser: I have been in favor of the revolving fund for three years, but according to the statute, it's for recyclables only. Now that we're hauling recyclables only, it's good for that. I do think we need to increase the fees. You could close the dump and have it open one day only and use it only for recycling. If we're using the truck only for recyclables, the money could be set aside to purchase a new truck for recycling. I'd recommend establishing the revolving fund for the recyclables and increasing the dump sticker fees. RSA 3195 applies to recycling. Pat B. and Carlotta: The NRRA oversees recycling over all of New England. We'll run this by our attorney before presenting it.

Tom Coneys: The 3195c is a special revenue fund; the difference between special revenue fund and revolving fund is that a special revenue fund requires a vote of the Town to use the funds, but the revolving fund does not require a vote. A revolving fund hasn't been tested but if you use it to facilitate recycling it would be a gray area—there's a possibility that it would fly. Jed: We'll do a little more research on that. Tom: It's like a capital reserve account. The special revenue fund has a much more specific use. Pat Barry: For example, the Selectmen don't micromanage how Greg Fraley manages his revolving fund. He funds the programs that succeed. A revolving fund gives the Department Head flexibility to choose what to do without going to the Selectmen for everything, although the Selectmen still must approve the weekly manifests showing all expenditures. And the Department Heads often become more revenue-focused in the process. It has worked phenomenally for the Recreation Department which is growing because of the reinvestment. Mike Cloutier: The idea was to create an avenue to maintain Highway equipment without having to wait for the annual Town Meeting to ask. Mike Sielicki: Revolving funds also help prevent expenditure spikes.

**MOTION:** Pat Barry motioned to eliminate the Article proposing to add \$51,000 to the budget. Jed seconded, and all were in favor.

Carlotta: The Department Heads and Budget Advisory Committee have worked very hard to arrive at a budget that is very close to last year's budget. If we go forward with this proposal, we are still only up 1%. There was a good deal of discussion at the last meeting about the employee pay adjustments. Sam isn't here tonight and it's unlikely we'll resolve that now. I am suggesting that the Board make any additional pay adjustment within the constraints of the wage proposal being proposed tonight. The employee health insurance is up for renewal on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The budget reflects the 8% not-to-exceed figure we were quoted by the provider. Primex has provided our insurance over the last several years but they're going out of the healthcare business. I've talked to a healthcare broker--a representative of School Care that Jaffrey and the school district is using—and I've talked to the LGC. Our renewal isn't planned until July 1<sup>st</sup>; this is something we haven't contemplated. Primex said if we wanted to get out of our contract before July 1<sup>st</sup>, they would help us do that. So I'm trying to find a

provider whose increases are less than 8% and try to realize some additional savings. There are also some open positions within the Town right now that haven't been filled yet. And there are Police positions that haven't been filled yet. Both of those positions were in this budget for a full year, so there are savings there. I think the Board could find a way to make those employee increases happen. I think it's important to discuss that here because this is a public hearing. Following the original adjustments recommended by the Personnel Committee, the adjustments would amount to \$40,000 to \$65,000. Chief Sielicki: Until we can hire, we're spending on overtime. The next Academy training starts in April and the new Officer won't be out until August. I would like a Selectman to sit on the oral boards. It would probably be one day. We're looking at nine uncertified officers. Pat Barry: I would love to do that.

Tom Coneys: The Town voted to be part of Fire Mutual Aid 58 years ago. What are our options for another service provider? Before we jump on a contract with these guys, it would be prudent for the Town to look at other options. There are a lot of open questions with this. It looks like they're basing our cost on population, etc. Fire Chief Rick Donovan: The options for Mutual Aid are: the Lake Region Mutual Aid, Seacoast Mutual Aid, and Southwest Mutual Aid (which covers 73 towns and 93 agencies) in SW NH, VT, and MA. The other option would be for us to do it ourselves. For that, you'd need 5-7 full-time employees and \$1M in equipment. Pat Barry: Rick shared this with us before and it just isn't an option. This is for Fire dispatch only.

John Kauer: Regarding the Welfare Department, I would propose that if we go over a certain amount, we use the revenue in the trust fund. Carlotta: All of those trust fund monies come into the Town as revenue into the general fund. We can't fund anything without an appropriation. Carlotta: In 2011, Welfare cost \$68,000+ and Mary requested \$84,000 this year. If we don't spend all of it, it will go into the surplus. If we do spend more, we'll have to get that money from another department. We could get money from the Trust but we couldn't spend it without it being allocated. The only thing you can get from a trust fund is the interest income, which could be used to increase the surplus. It's all good but it can't be used to spend.

Fire Chief Rick Donovan: Fire Mutual Aid is not only for dispatch; it's for getting mutual aid from other towns. If we were with Seacoast, we'd be waiting for the Rochester Fire Department to get here. Fire Mutual Aid is strategically placed to share resources and personnel. The other towns would bill us if we didn't have Fire Mutual Aid. Police Chief Sielicki: I was responsible for dispatch at one point—believe me, considering the expense and the equipment we'd need on hand, etc., we don't want it.

John Kauer: Was there a savings from moving Engine 2 to Franklin Pierce University? Carlotta: The story in the *Ledger-Transcript* was premature. We do not have any formal agreement with FPU. We were exploring that concept, but it still has not been finalized. Our attorney's reviewing the agreement. The idea was for our engine to be on campus to make the response more efficient, and I think it's worth exploring further but it's not a done deal. Chief Donovan: And if we do move Engine 2 there, we would not be "giving" FPU a fire truck: we would still supervise, own, maintain, and operate the engine. It would be about trying to cut down the response time and avoid the public safety issues of that truck roaring up from Main Street to FPU six, seven, eight times a night. As mentioned, this idea is still being reviewed by the attorneys and insurance companies. The Town would have to vote to make FPU its own fire district, but we would still have the liability. So, that's why they would operate under our supervision, because the liability is ours. Also, the State won't approve private fire companies that have no agreement with the towns.

Kim McCummings: What is the next step in the budget process? Carlotta: The Selectmen are taking public comments tonight and next Wednesday will be discussing the budget further. The recommendations of the Selectmen and BAC have to be voted on January 11<sup>th</sup> and the Selectmen must finalize the budget by January 30<sup>th</sup>.

John Kauer asked about a surplus at the end of the year. Carlotta: There's not a simple answer. Some departments were over and some were under; Highway was under because of the mild weather. Of the \$41,000 set aside by the Selectmen, much of that is going towards the Police Chief's second cruiser.

Tom Coneys: Regarding the Highway Dept. shortfall because of the State cutting our Highway Block Grant - \$27,000 - I don't see it being added to Mike's budget under highway projects. The BAC feels it should be, and so does Mike for paving projects. We've gotten back on track with paving and to not put it back into the budget is a shame. Carlotta: It's extremely unfortunate that the State cut our block grant by \$27,000. Two years ago they cut our revenues by \$60,000. They keep taking money then expecting the towns to pick up the shortfall. I wish we could pick up the \$27,000 for the block grant, but we just can't do it. It appears we've underspent the default budget but still have to cover what the State and County are no longer providing: \$51,000 for Fire Mutual Aid and \$27,000 for the Block Grant. Also the Planning Director's position has been vacant since March, 2011. This Board has voted to fill that position. There's \$25,000 savings from leaving that vacant and \$35,000 for the mild winter. The fact is, we're plugging \$51,000 into the budget and trying to still present a budget that the folks in this town might accept. If we add another \$27,000 to the budget, they may vote no. We could propose a warrant article requesting that the voters approve adding \$27,000 for the paving that the block grant cut. Selectman Pat Barry:

historically, the more warrant articles you have, the fewer get passed. Carlotta: I will pencil in an article to add \$27,000 to paving to make up for state cut. Kim: It will help people to know that these funds were cut, and how we can move forward. Public Works Director Mike Cloutier said that there are also some new roads pending, and that means about \$3,500 per mile more for maintenance.

#### BOND DISCUSSION:

On our warrant, Article 9 is up for discussion to bond \$1M for paving the Town roads. The way we're funding road maintenance now, we're not on a 10-year replacement schedule – we're on a 15-year schedule. In other words, if your road is maintained now, it won't be done again for 15 years. Mike Cloutier: We're trying to address the worst roads first. Roughly three years' worth of projects would take care of 12 miles, or 7-9 miles done properly. Carlotta: The concept behind these bond articles is that bond rates are historically low right now and the Town could take advantage of this timing to tackle some projects that must be done and equipment that needs to be replaced, such as Engine 2. What's up for discussion is whether folks think it would be important to fix some of these roads that are in bad condition and try to decrease the time frame on the maintenance.

John Kauer: The roads don't last 15 years; they don't even always last five years. But we don't want to become strangled with debt like other towns. Jed: The alternative is to raise the tax rate. John: Our grandkids will be paying off the bond for the truck. Tom Coneyes: One million dollars will resurface 10 miles of road or replace a roadbed three miles long, so that money doesn't go very far. We need \$180,000 more in paving money a year. Our roads might last longer if we could fix some roadbeds.

Last year, a bond for renovating the Fire Station was proposed. It did receive a 50% vote but didn't get the 60% it needed. Since then, we've had to make some safety and life safety improvements to the Fire Station, but the need hasn't changed much since last year. Police Chief Mike Sielicki: Going forward with a Public Safety Building is the right thing to do – it's about people and service and we can't overlook the Police Department. I think we should have a complex. Mike Cloutier's got issues – he can't breathe in his building. I hate to miss the opportunity with the bond rates being so low. Mike Cloutier: It would be great if we could buy the Parsonage and make it a complex for Police, Fire, and Highway. It would keep everything in the center of Town, where the water is. Carlotta: The reason Rick went forward with plans for the renovation/addition of the Fire Station is because it became apparent that having a combined Safety Building was too expensive and wouldn't pass. We have spent a lot of money for plans for a Public Safety Building that haven't gone anywhere. Selectman Sam Seppala had praised the proposal, which incorporated flexibility for the Police to hook onto it at some future date. We don't have plans to add to the Police Station itself. Chief Sielicki: The Public Safety plans are in place and then you'd have a shared power source, septic, water, everything. So it seems if we do it, we should do it right. Jed: We've always had a problem with our infrastructure needs. I think it's important to keep it out front for the people to know that there's still a need for it. Is there a way to get an idea of whether it's the will of the taxpayers to proceed with plans through a bond? Carlotta: We did that for the Highway Garage. Pat: We had lots of information about how the townspeople stood four years ago about a Public Safety Building, but it came down to money.

Carlotta: We had a referendum on the Highway Garage and the people said they wanted it, but when it came to paying for it, the people said no. Jed: It's been frustrating these past five years to do all this work and planning and get nowhere. Kim: The increased ISO rating was related to the lack of Fire and Police and directly related to the fact that we did not vote a certain way last year—and the people should know that. Money is cheap now, and it would be helpful to project five years ahead what the impact on taxes and homeowners' insurance would be if we built a new Public Safety Building, factoring in that we're losing Police Officers because they feel people aren't supporting them.

How do the Selectmen get people on their side? Citizen: Twenty-five years ago, it wasn't a problem that the people and Selectmen were divided. Jed: You could get consensus in Town meeting; it's very difficult now. Chief Sielicki: It's much easier for a Department Head to stand up and explain the budgetary needs face-to-face with people, putting a face to a name via the Town Meeting. I've heard year after year that the townspeople don't want to pay for anything. Fire Chief Rick Donovan: I'm with Mike Sielicki about creating one big complex. I've processed 95 building permits, and keep hearing there's a lack of trust. When are we going to grow up and stop dragging out what's happened in the past that might not have anything to do with the people in the positions now? You can do a cost analysis, but all the neglect going on in these town buildings for years is becoming a major life safety issue, so you're putting good money into bad buildings to keep them safe. We have admitted our liability as a Town, and it only takes one person to get hurt. We're out there speaking to all the businesses, training them in life safety, while our own Town can't even provide a safe environment for its employees because the money's not there. I'm getting in the position that I'll have to cite the Selectmen for not addressing the safety issues in Rindge, and I'm getting tired of hearing about the distrust.

Hank: You mentioned getting a referendum from the people. Short of putting up a Public Safety Complex, we have a Fire Station warrant article now. We need your leadership to present it at the Town meeting. You're preaching to the choir here: my homeowner's insurance went up over \$300 this year. For another \$100 we could have gotten a new Fire Station. We've got to pay now or later. The other thing is home values: people are going to be considering the cost of owning a house in Rindge knowing that when services go down, costs go up. I think this is an opportunity to educate ourselves on the cost of doing nothing, and the cost of doing something halfway.

Carlotta: But the problem is that up to this point we haven't been able to get everyone on the same page. The optimal solution was to have the combined Public Safety Building, but the three times it came before the voters it failed. So this renovation of the Fire Station was an evolution of that concept. But if we keep squabbling over what we should do, it will never pass. Chief Sielicki: I don't think our feelings ever changed that ultimately the most responsible thing to do for the Town was to have a Public Safety Building. I think we should propose a warrant article not to exceed \$2.5M. Fire Chief Rick Donovan: I would only disagree with you on the \$2.5M. In the *Keene Sentinel*, you'll see that Building Codes have changed, and that translates to increased cost. Mike Cloutier: Don't forget the Highway Department. We spent a lot of money to research this.

Robert: I'm going back to the adopted Master Plan. We listened to where people wanted these buildings – they wanted to get them out of the center of town. Now, people have to drive by an eyesore Dump in the center of town. Pat Barry: In 2004, the Facilities Management Report was voted in by everyone at the Town Meeting. Fire Chief Rick: Where would this land be? In 2004, they voted on the location. Pat Barry: In 1998, it was going to cost us \$16.7M for a new high school on 100 acres with a swimming pool, auditorium, and theater. We explained to people how it would bring in businesses, and \$100,000 we were going to get from the State. But 900 people showed up to vote no. Five years ago, we spent \$10M for four classrooms, a band-aid on that campus. Ten years of Conant graduates could have benefitted, and every class of Conant students have been underserved since. Nashua ended up getting our Applied Technology Center funds. Hillsborough's and Ashburnham's safety buildings are beautiful. It would have cost us \$200 on our taxes a few years ago to have a new Public Safety Building and now we have to pay over \$300 on our taxes because we didn't.

Citizen: We should talk to people and knock on doors, and all that. If we approached our own problems as negatively as the Town's, where would we be personally?

John Kauer: I'm on a lake and my homeowners' insurance went up \$20. I voted to fix what we have to make it work. You use what you have and don't need something brand new. Holly: Some companies don't use the ISO rating. My insurance went up sky high. Roberta: It depends on when they do their assessments. Hank: Different insurance companies use different assessing companies. The perception is that we all are sick about what's going on in Concord and Washington, and we all say we hate our Town, too, so we're going to go in and slash \$300,000 and make everyone part-time. Maybe we're going to have to sell the idea of "pay something now or it will cost later" at Deliberative Session – someone has to stand up and present this.

Jim: When your house burns down or someone breaks into the house, don't you want motivated people to respond who care about this Town and want to protect it? Cost has been a big issue for us all, but we have to try to make this Town work.

Pat Barry: Why aren't certain light industries coming to this town? Why isn't Rindge booming when it's at the crossroads of two highways and borders another state? People look at our facilities and schools and turn around... and things won't be better until people say, "I want my family here; Rindge values its Fire, Police, and School, and has good infrastructure, internet access, etc." Roberta: Many people move here after they've retired. And, for several years, people were moving here because of Market Basket and Wal-Mart. Pat: But now we've plateaued, and how do we move on? Jim: Would local business give the Town seed money to fund projects that would attract more people to Rindge?

Articles 7 (Lease for Engine 2) and 8 (Bond for Engine 2): Fire Chief Rick Donovan proposed a bond for Engine 2 two years ago and it failed. Last year, we put \$15,000 into Engine 2 (which is a 1989 vehicle that's now 23 years old) to keep it limping along, but it still needs to be replaced. Do we bring forward an article to bond or lease it? There are two types of leases – a capital lease requiring 60% voter support because it's long-term debt, or another lease that requires 50% support with the option to return the truck. MLC from Vermont offered us a five-year lease with five annual payments of \$76,000. And the first payment would be due in 2013. The rate is 2.79%. We also ran a bond schedule on Engine 2: on a five-year bond at 3.248%, we would make an \$82,000 payment the first year then \$79,000 etc. Rick: Jaffrey ran into a problem when they leased but rolled that payment into the rescue. Once they established that ongoing payment, it enabled them to accomplish what they needed to. It would be nice to get on solid ground to save for this equipment. When we bought Engine 1 in 1996, we should have been looking at the 20-year replacement window and putting money aside but we didn't do that.

Article 19 proposes putting \$70,000 into the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund to save towards replacing the self-contained breathing units (which will cost \$140,000 to replace them all next year). We would also recondition Pump Hose 1 at \$15,000.

Article 15 proposes purchasing a command vehicle (a large SUV such as an Expedition or Tahoe) to replace the fire car we used to have up to two years ago (\$35,000) to be used by the Chief. The Fire Chief's old vehicle would be passed down to the Fire Prevention Officer, who is currently using Engine 2 to travel to inspections. The two vehicles would be stocked with all the necessary emergency equipment and supplies. The \$35,000 is already in the capital reserve fund to replace that vehicle, so we're just looking for authorization to use the funds.

Public Works Director Mike Cloutier: What about a warrant article to establish a capital reserve fund with an initial \$18,000 for the Wellington Road bridge replacement project?

Carlotta: Articles 10 and 11 were included because bonds are really inexpensive right now and should we consider replacing some equipment. If the Board were inclined to pursue bonding, these would be two other pieces of equipment we might consider replacing though they're not on the bond next year.

Roberta: The interest rate on the lease was lower than on the bond. Carlotta: The bond bank will only give the most conservative rates, and the bond would be negotiated by the Selectmen if authorized. Pat: Would there be any merit to combining these articles? The more articles there are, the fewer get passed.

Article 13 proposes adding \$25,000 to the Meeting House maintenance trust fund. We repaired the bell tower this past year for \$90,000: \$45,000 came out of the Meeting House fund and \$45,000 was paid by the Ward Fund thanks to the generosity of Ralph Ward and his wife. Now that the bell tower project is complete, the Meeting House Oversight Committee intends to move forward with painting the exterior. We had applied for an LCHIP grant to help with that but didn't get it. LCHIP received over \$3M in requests and had only about \$1M to give out.

Article 14 proposes adding \$35,000 to the revaluation capital reserve fund. If the Town doesn't do a revaluation every five years, we're fined \$90,000. We would like to spread the cost out over five years but now have just four years to raise the money because it didn't get on the warrant last year.

Article 18 proposes replacement of the Highway Department's one-ton truck that has a sander. Public Works Director Mike Cloutier got an estimate of \$55,000 and perhaps the old truck will net a \$10,000 trade-in value. It's vintage 2001 and needs a lot of work; the oil pan is rotted out plus the exhaust system is rotted out and the engine will need to be removed to get at it. Repairing it will cost \$6,000-\$7,000.

Article 21 proposes changing Ingalls Road to a "highway to summer cottages." It's a Class V town road now. This article would protect us from maintaining the road if people from Jaffrey decided to use it.

Other articles included raising the Elderly and Disabled Exemption limits. Also, the need for an exhaust system in the Highway Garage was brought up pursuant to the Safety Committee's report. It might cost about \$40,000 but we need to get estimates to know for sure. Everyone acknowledged that the Highway Garage still needs attention.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT AND INFORMATIONAL ITEMS / COMMUNICATION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Jed motioned to adjourn at 9:13pm, Pat seconded, and all were in favor.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Stonehill, Administrative Assistant*