



Selectmen's Meeting

Town Office

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Present: Jed Brummer, Chair; Roberta Oeser, Selectman; Sam Seppala, Selectman; Carlotta Pini, Town Administrator

APPROVED Minutes

6:00pm Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of:

Manifests: Accounts Payable & Payroll: MOTION: Roberta motioned to accept the payroll and accounts payable manifests, Sam seconded, and all were in favor.

Minutes: May 8, 2012: One change to the minutes: In the second paragraph, the last word should be "striping," not "paving." MOTION: Roberta motioned with that change to approve the minutes, Sam seconded, and all were in favor.

CITIZEN'S FORUM

Jed reviewed the changes made by the Zoning Board of Adjustment to the Selectmen's Administrative Decision about the Hunt property.

John Kauer: What money will come back from Primex to the municipalities? Carlotta: They haven't issued a statement yet, but we'll be glad to receive it.

John Kauer: What about the new tax on poles for Fairpoint? Carlotta: For years, Fairpoint was exempt from taxation from their poles. There were a number of bills to overthrow that exemption saying it wasn't fair. So now the poles are taxable and the municipalities for the first time are sending tax bills to Fairpoint. John noticed that Fairpoint has added a surcharge to its customers. John Weston: Generally, there are jurisdictional lines for which poles are owned by Fairpoint and which by PSNH. The stencil on the pole says who owns it.

John Kauer: How about the status of the DPW exhaust system? Carlotta: Last I knew, Mike Cloutier had proposals from three vendors on exhaust systems but he needed to get the price for the electrical work involved, so he was meeting with Scott Ellis to get a proposal on that. I haven't heard anything since then so I'll circle back to Mike. Jed: Right now we have a policy that if the trucks are running, the door must be open. Carlotta: Our Safety Committee identified a deficiency in the highway garage and we're fairly sure it is a requirement, so we're busy getting proposals and at some point we'll bring it back to this board for discussion. Jed asked whether other towns have exhaust systems. Carlotta: This is diesel exhaust which is harmful to human lungs; it has to be dispersed so it doesn't hurt people; that's the plan.

Jason Czekalski: Jason said that he and Jacqueline submitted to the Selectmen a month and a half ago a petition for redress of grievances. He then read the petition before the Selectmen, attendees, and the press. With strong words, he blamed the Town of Rindge for his bankruptcy and insisted that the Town terminate the Settlement Agreement. Jason: Tonight, Jacqueline and I are here to fulfill our obligations. Our petition for redress was to show the Board was moving away from its divisiveness but this has not happened. We will present our last \$3,000 check so our obligations will be fulfilled. Within 14 days, the Town's attorney has to file the deed. Now we will

ask the question that no Selectmen had the spine to answer: What was it about our sign that was so different that you dragged us through Court?

Jed: Thank you, Jason. We did render a decision on your appeal. Jason: What was so different about Topside Farm's sign when every Real estate panderer was protected? Jed: You went through the Courts and they did not agree with you. Also, please remember that the Selectmen three or four years ago offered to pay for a state-accepted sign and let the matter go – we were going to pay \$1,000 and offered that to you but you turned us down. Jason: But you didn't stop the other violators. Jed: That's another issue. Jason: This Board still panders to the real estate in this town. We are done with this town; you have 14 days to comply. Everyone else will tear this town apart; we're standing out of the way. Sam: If you make an agreement, you fulfill it. Carlotta: Part of the Settlement Agreement was a pay plan. I'm not sure this check fulfills the pay plan; it may still be binding. But we can look at the Agreement and consult our attorney and see what he advises. Sam: I agree that the Town should live up to its side of the bargain, so whatever we agreed to do, we will.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Police: Introduction of the New Officer, Chris Martin

We have the pleasure tonight of welcoming our new Police Officer who is from Rindge and comes highly recommended. Chris is a graduate of Conant High School and achieved an outstanding championship in basketball. His dad was a member of the Board of Selectmen and we're proud to have our Interim Chief, Frank Morrill, present Chris Martin at our meeting today.

6:30 Public Hearing re: \$7,000 Grant for DWI Patrols

Is this is a grant we've received before? Frank: Yes, at the last meeting the Police Department brought this to the board's attention so they're somewhat familiar with it. Tonight's discussion is to fulfill the public hearing requirement. This year they did not issue the speed grant because we didn't get the application in on time, but we did get the grant for DWI patrols and one checkpoint. The grant pays for 30 four-hour patrols (120 hours) dispersed to the officers and paid at the time-and-a-half rate allowing for FICA and Medicare deductions, so the Town is not on the hook for anything. Frank: We have to use this money by September 15th. So it's more or less Thursday through Saturday nights between 11:00pm and 3:00am to target the traffic to and from the drinking establishments.

Roberta: When do your shifts end? Frank: We have shifts from 4:00pm to 2:00am, 6:00pm to 4:00am, and 8:00pm to 6:00am so we're covered 24/7. Wednesday through Saturday nights are the supervisor shifts and being short-staffed we're trying to cover the best we can. Carlotta: This is a \$7,000+ grant and since all grants over \$5,000 require a public hearing, we need to open this up for public discussion. Jed: Would anyone like to comment about accepting this grant? John Kauer: It's grant money, so what are the strings? Jed: There don't seem to be any, and we've been able to get 120 hours to keep our roads safe. Roberta: I see no strings attached. Charlie Eicher: The Roadway Committee recommended this too.

MOTION: Sam motioned to accept the grant for \$7,429.30 for the DWI patrols, Roberta seconded, and all were in favor.

\$3,000 Grant for Sobriety Checkpoints

Frank: This is the same grant we applied for last year but it was subject to a public hearing because it was for much more money. In fact, we were able to conduct two checkpoints last year. This year we asked for one and it was granted. It covers six hours of overtime for a total of eight officers. And there is money built in for the officers' benefits. Jed: So this won't cost the Town anything. But the press wanted to know last year where and when the checkpoints would be held. Frank: It is public information, but to hold a checkpoint we have to apply for a court order with the Superior Court – it's a lengthy thing, takes about a month to get done. As far as the press, if you don't give them the information, they can get the Court Order to find out. But out of respect for us, they didn't publish the dates. I'm all for publicizing and they do recommend that you do a press release to the paper so the public can say they've been well-informed. I think it is beneficial – everyone that goes through the checkpoint gets a postcard with about six survey questions. And 80% of them are usually supportive – ours were

90% supportive. About 80 cars went through each checkpoint between 11:00pm and 3:00am, and out of that we had only one DWI arrest. The other goal is deterrence; you hope people will be on their best behavior. If you've reduced accidents, then it's worthwhile. To do the task with one officer would take a long time. Frank then described the staffing. The six hours covered by the grant includes an hour to brief everyone at the Police Department and another hour to set up the cones. Jed: Do the State Police do this? Frank: They do their own checkpoints. Carlotta: It might be beneficial to designate the Town's Roadway Committee as the Town's official Highway Safety Committee.

MOTION: Jed motioned to appoint the Roadway Committee as the Rindge Highway Safety Committee, and to accept the \$3,000 grant for sobriety checkpoints for the month of August. Roberta seconded, and all were in favor.

\$12,546.33 Radio Grant

Frank: The State is asking us to let them pursue grant money to buy radios for us. Before we accept that donation, we'll need to have a public hearing. Sam: Tell us about the strings attached. Frank: We've asked the Town to sign a Memorandum of Understanding that's required because the Department of Homeland Security has awarded federal funds to the State who's purchasing our mobile radios. They determined that Rindge was entitled to \$12,546.33 towards radios and named four Motorola radios that have state-of-the-art technology and are upgrades from what we have. One of the radios has VHF and UHF (UHF allows us to communicate with officers in Massachusetts and that will be helpful for safety reasons). This grant allows us to buy three of these radios at \$3,000+ apiece. We can't spend all of the grant money and we can't purchase additional radios, so the money left over goes back to them. We'll have three radios but eight officers—so we'll put one in the supervisor's car and two in the other cars. Sam: Are these compatible with the repeaters we just put up? Frank: I spoke to the Winchendon Police Chief and he confirmed that this dual-band is the portable that's compatible. We don't program the radios ourselves. So as far as strings, there's nothing – they're asking whether we want them or not and if so, we have to sign. Sam: So we won't have to buy any more equipment to make them work? Frank: No. These radios won't be subject to the routine usage the other ones are that we still have because they'll be in the cars, but they'll allow us to communicate with Massachusetts officers.

MOTION: Roberta motioned to authorize the State to apply for the radio grant on behalf of the Town, Sam seconded, and all were in favor.

Roberta: This is just stating that we'll accept the radios if they're purchased. Carlotta: There was some money in the operating budget to replace a few police radios that are old and have mechanical issues and Frank may proceed on those later this year. Frank: Motorola no longer supports some of our models. Rindge is unique; in some places, analog works better than digital because of the peaks and valleys. The system will automatically pick which frequency is coming through best.

John Kauer: Rick said the radios were great and then they switched frequencies. If that happens, how will they get fixed? Carlotta read some information on the bottom of the paperwork. Carlotta: I think we're headed in the right direction as far as everyone having similar equipment that can communicate. John: Can this equipment communicate with the Fire Dept.? Frank: Yes. The ice storm was tough because the base radio is powerful but the portables are much less powerful so reception came and went.

Carlotta: The shed for Verizon was delivered so we should have the 4G soon. John Weston: But we don't know when it will be turned on. People then discussed how poor the current cell coverage is.

Closure of TD Account "OSP Rindge Monadnock T": We're just cleaning up some accounts and don't need a vote on this; we just wanted you to be aware. There was a grant for an upgrade to the septic system that was already audited so we can assume this was a reimbursable account. It has just \$32.82 in it and costs us more to reconcile the account each year.

Dane Sauvola's Request for Reimbursement of Town Registration Fees:

We have an email from Dane Sauvola saying that he purchased from a Massachusetts resident a vehicle that turned out to have been stolen. It has since been returned to its owner, so Dane lost \$9,000 on the car which he had also repaired. He is asking for a refund of \$115 which was the Town's portion of the registration fees.

MOTION: Sam motioned to refund Dan Sauvola the \$115, Roberta seconded, and all were in favor.

Beautification Committee Resignations/Appointments:

Jed: We unfortunately are losing two members that have served the Town of Rindge very well—the MARRS, who have been contributors to the Cathedral of the Pines and the Beautification and Planning Committees. They'll be moving to Virginia. I was taken away with the extensiveness of the MARRS' gardens—it's amazing what their efforts have produced. So, I think we should accept their resignation but would like a letter of appreciation sent from the Town to thank them for their efforts—they're nice people. Carlotta: I did call Barbara Wells to ask whether the Beautification Committee wanted to be included in our ad recruiting members and volunteers for various committees. Sam LaFortune and Betty Cummerford said they'd be glad to help out. So I would ask that the Board officially appoint them to the Beautification Committee.

MOTION: Roberta motioned to accept the resignation of the MARRS from the Beautification Committee and to appoint Sam LaFortune and Betty Cummerford. Sam seconded, and all were in favor.

Health Insurance Renewal: Carlotta: We talked about how Primex was no longer going to be offering health insurance. Before that, we had a not-to-exceed rate from the NH Interlocal Trust that was established to take over Harvard Pilgrim insurance. A group met yesterday including Roberta, Tom Coneys, and Ted Covert and they shared information about the Trust. The good news is our actual renewal only increased 4.25%, not the 8.0% they said they thought it could be. Sam: Can you translate that into dollars? Carlotta: An 8.76% increase would have meant \$26,000 more a year but instead it's just \$12,750. So we've saved about \$13,000. And the other thing presented was an option for further reducing the premium by making a minor change in the prescription drug plan – right now it costs \$0 for generics, \$30 for certain brands, and \$50 for super formulary prescriptions – and this new change would break the generics into two groups: some would remain at \$0 but others would increase to \$10. And we received a list of the medications that would remain at \$0. So, the consensus was that this was worth saving another \$6,000 on top of what we had already saved. It may impact some individuals on certain medications and they might check with their doctor to substitute medications or try Wal-Mart.

So we'll renew with Harvard Pilgrim for a year with one minor change, increasing the prescription plan to the four-tier system. There was some discussion yesterday as to whether the employee contribution to the premium needs to be looked at, but we need to spend more time on it. Jaffrey and Peterborough employees pay lower copays and deductibles but their health plan costs more. Rindge requires its employees to pay higher deductibles and \$20 copays so Rindge's plans cost less. If this is something the Board wants to pursue, why don't we start to get our facts together and reconvene in September. If we're pursuing an 18-month budget, there could be some challenges there. Sam: Well, this is an opportunity to get a good deal on costs. Jed: We don't know how many employees this will affect. Roberta: Everyone knew we would have to change insurance companies. Jed: I don't think it will have a huge impact, but let's get the word out to the employees as soon as possible. Carlotta: I talked to Mike Cloutier, Rick Donovan, and Frank Morrill about it. If an employee has to pay \$10 more now for a certain medication each month, this change will cost them \$120 more a year. But it will save the Town \$6,000.

MOTION: Jed motioned to accept the new health plan, Sam seconded, and all were in favor.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Ongoing Business:

Bob Cleland has been working on the procurement policy update.

There has been talk about forming a community newsletter and it looks like the Chamber is following up on that.

The Planning Board is attending our next meeting to talk about the Economic Initiative.

The Meeting House Oversight Committee is looking at specifications for painting the Meeting House and we'll get together on the 29th.

Jed: How much money do make on the senior housing? Carlotta: That is still being hammered out. Dave DuVernay and I had a conversation with the Dept. of Revenue Administration and we're trying to get clarity on what statute applies to it. And we have another meeting next Wednesday in which we'll talk about the taxation of that property because it may be subject to a payment in lieu of taxes.

Carlotta: You have a copy of the Zoning Board of Adjustment's Notice of Decision in the Sunridge case. There may or may not be an appeal of that Decision; if so, it may end up in Superior Court.

Carlotta, speaking as a member of the FastRoads board: We need to recruit some members for the Telecommunications Committee. John Weston and I had a nice chat about the FastRoads project which is moving along and they're still on track for the fall/winter of this year. The area that will be served has been scaled back a little to fit in the budget. Enfield is the other town getting fiber and 190 residents there have already signed up for the service in addition to 86 community buildings. The fiber there has been ordered and the pole license has been applied for. Rindge will be next.

At the Town-Gown meeting today, we were reminded that Ed Lamoreux (a citizen representative) has resigned, and the Board might think about who would be a suitable candidate. Ideally, it would be someone who has the best interest of both organizations at heart, is available to meet during the day, and will make a positive contribution to the conversations between the Town and University. We should agree on this before the next Town-Gown meeting.

The Safety Committee has scheduled its second all-employee meeting next Wednesday morning, the 23rd. Sam and Roberta might want to join us to see what it's about.

We had a conversation about the Town Clerk/Deputy and I know John brought this up: Nancy put a call out on a listserv for the Deputy Town Clerk and she got no response. At this point, we are faced with the decision on whether we advertise. If we do advertise, we'll have to decide how we'll pay for this person. The State requires that this person has a month of training with Nancy before they train with the State. If the new Deputy had hours MWF 9-1 and Tu/Th 2-4 that would be 16 hours over five days a week so that person could learn quickly. If we did 16 hours a week for half the year, the cost would be about \$6,000. We just found savings in the health insurance area but we have a couple of other shortages that we'll need to address as well. Do we want to go ahead and advertise and start screening candidates and then come back with a proposal? I think the Board acknowledged the need. Jed: Just in registrations alone we collect \$70,000 a month. Carol collects about \$14 million and Nancy about \$800,000. This isn't a lemonade stand. Roberta: We need to make it convenient for people to give us money. Jed: If Carol or Nancy get sick, we need coverage. Sam: Yes, we do need coverage and it makes sense to keep the office open. I think we should explore advertising for the position.

NONPUBLIC SESSION PER RSA 91-A:3, II (D)

Roberta motioned to enter nonpublic at 7:51, Sam seconded, and all were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Stonehill, Administrative Assistant