



Selectmen's Meeting

Town Office

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

Present: Jed Brummer, Chair; Roberta Oeser, Selectman; Carlotta Lilback Pini, Town Administrator; Linda Stonehill, Administrative Assistant

Absent: Samuel Seppala, Selectman

APPROVED MINUTES

6:00pm Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

This afternoon the Town of Rindge presented the big card to Franklin Pierce University in honor of its 50th anniversary, and several speakers made presentations including the author of a book about the University. Also, today was the first day of the annual LGC conference in Manchester.

CITIZEN'S FORUM

Tom Coffey reintroduced the matter of painting the center lines on Main Street since people can't see them in the wintertime. He wanted to know why lines were painted in the Library and Town Office parking lots where the cars don't move more than 2mph, when Main Street's center line from Winchendon to Route 119 remained unpainted. Mike Cloutier, Public Works Director, explained that the budget for line painting was cut back in 2008. Tom said that cars go 50-60mph on Main Street and there's a drop-off by Danforth Road where the drain goes under the road. John Kauer said he knows there's a large hole on the upside and a huge dip; it's just the slope of the property. Carlotta suggested taking up these issues at our next Roadway meeting on December 6th and meanwhile going out to take a look.

Tom then asked why a fire truck is sitting outside in freezing weather, and Roberta replied that it's the one that's been replaced; it's out of service and they're taking the pump out of it.

John Kauer asked about the progress of the 18-month budget. Carlotta said that our auditor is planning to come out here and discuss how best to implement such a budget at our next meeting. Jed said that we've met with Peterborough officials regarding how they've implemented theirs and Ellen, our Accountant, has been working on that. We'll have to present the public with options for implementing it and the impact of each. A bond is one option that might be a good choice this year, though it will take more accounting work. If we can accomplish this one-time transition, the Town will be able to budget better.

John: What's the annual report going to look like in 2014? With our current report, you can include last year's budget because it ended in December. But if we go June to June, how will we know what the current year will look like? Carlotta: The annual report can only show the information available before publication. Once the conversion takes place, what will appear in the annual report is the prior fiscal year and you'll be getting that information six months later compared to what you're getting now. The way things are, we scramble to close year-end before the annual report is formatted and the auditors often have to make adjustments after the annual report comes out.

Roberta: It will be complicated for two years because we can't vote to change our Town Meeting date until we know that the 18-month budget is passing. Carlotta: We may be able to do it conditionally: "If #11 passes, will you vote on "x?"... etc. Roberta: It will be an interim year. We've been passing budgets in March that have already been spent from since January.

Holly Koski: I'm wondering where we're at with the Chief hiring process. Jed: This Saturday, we'll be interviewing four finalists from the pool of 82 candidates, and one of our finalists is Interim Chief Frank Morrill. We'd like to wrap things up hopefully this month.

GENERAL BUSINESS

MOTION: Roberta motioned to approve the accounts payable and payroll manifests for last Friday and Jed agreed.

MOTION: Roberta motioned to approve the September 19th and October 3rd minutes and Jed agreed.

Two officials from the NH Department of Transportation attended the Selectmen's Meeting to discuss plans to enhance the safety of the Route 202 / Forristall Road intersection.

- William J. Oldenburg, P.E., Administrator, Bureau of Highway Design, New Hampshire Department of Transportation
- Michael J. Dugas, P.E., Chief of Preliminary Design, Bureau of Highway Design, New Hampshire Department of Transportation

As part of the Highway Safety Improvement Program, the Route 202/Forristall Road intersection was reviewed by NHDOT which gathers all accident data and find locations that have higher-than-usual crashes and/or fatal accidents. Between 2002 and 2010, this intersection had 12 crashes and nine injury accidents, and all the crashes involved more than one vehicle. Reducing the accidents at this intersection became an issue several years ago, and NHDOT reviewed the apparent causes to see if they could engineer any improvements to fix the issue. They proposed creating a raised island, wider shoulders, and landscaping along the road edges.

Scenarios: There's a very long lane for vehicles turning right off Route 202 onto Forristall—vehicles don't have to slow down to get into that lane and are traveling almost at the same speed as people on the highway. Meanwhile, the people on Forristall poised to turn left onto Route 202 can see the vehicle turning right onto Forristall but sometimes don't see that right behind that vehicle is someone going through on Route 202. Many people who use Forristall are driving north from Massachusetts to shop and are turning left on Route 202. Crashes happen mostly when people emerge from Forristall and are T-boned. There are fewer accidents involving people turning right onto Forristall to return south.

NHDOT proposed ways of opening that sight distance around the person turning right. The road property has a huge right of way, so there would be no issues with widening the road. The orange section in the provided diagram (a copy of the new plans may be seen at <http://www.nh.gov/dot/projects/rindge16210/index.htm> and have been printed for inclusion with the minutes) represents a painted island to open up the sight distance. Because Forristall is on a curve, NHDOT proposed introducing a raised island flanked by stop signs. While people were actually stopping at the intersection, they sometimes made bad choices about when to emerge. NHDOT felt that an island would give the people turning a sense of protection from the people coming down the right-turning ramp from 202 to Forristall.

Carlotta: I think there might have been some accidents from cars coming out on Route 202 before we installed the lights. Mike Cloutier, Rindge Public Works Director: I plowed that road for 15 years—I'm not a huge fan of a raised island because you have to maintain and plow it. Also, having stop signs on the island would create more view obstructions for the drivers. I'd be in favor of a painted island instead of a raised island.

Bill Oldenburg: If you don't want the raised island, we don't have to put it in. Roberta Oeser, Selectman: Why don't we make the orange area a rumble strip instead of an island? Bill: We talked about that and that's part of the plan. We also would not recommend putting signals up there; it's not warranted. There are a few minor wetlands but nothing major from a wetlands standpoint; we've contacted the town's Conservation Commission. This project, involving widening this part of the road, would cost around

\$300,000; it would use state and federal funds and there would be no Town funds used that we're aware of. The idea is to finish the design this winter and have it done next year. Phil Stenersen: The Roadway Committee's only concern was a raised island. We were in favor of the work proposed by NHDOT except for the island.

MOTION: Roberta motioned that, as long as no raised islands are created, the Selectmen endorse and approve NHDOT's plans to improve the Forristall Road and Route 202 intersection. Jed seconded the motion.

Planning Budget and the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District:

Matt Henry, Planning Director, discussed the Planning budget and said it's hard to anticipate revenue due to the fluctuation in the number of applications received. The Master Plan hasn't been updated since 2006. Wages have gone down 10-12% because Matt is not on the health insurance plan and Susan is part-time. Planning also agreed to cut 2% from the consulting services budget, which means they'll do more in-house. Jed asked whether they would recommend signing up Southwest Regional Planning Commission, and Matt said that the Planning Board did send the Selectmen a letter. Matt: We've run into a lot of roadblocks by not being a member of the SWPC and I do advocate strongly if the funding's available to rejoin. Carlotta: The dues are not proposed in this budget, and we've checked with other communities which have a separate department code for it. We might ask whether those dues might be included in a warrant article or in a budget separate from the Planning or Town Office budget. Matt: It really needs to be sustained each year or we're in the same situation as before. We need to make a commitment to the planning community. Roberta: I advocated getting out of it when I was on the Planning Board because I felt it was a waste of money and Planning was paying for it all. Kim McCummings: For the most part it was coming out of the Planning Board budget. The service was going to the Conservation Commission and some other parts of town, but the services we needed we had the staff to do ourselves, but then we were pressured to lower our budget. The recommendation from the Planning Board is that we support the Town by moving forward with it but that it not come out of the Planning Board's budget. The tax impact is the same. We shouldn't cut things that impact our ability to provide services. Carlotta: If there's agreement that it shouldn't be on a warrant article, we can plug it into the new budget line that the other towns have and discuss this further.

Matt: The Planning Board hired Hawk Associates consultants to discuss implementation of the Tax Increment Financing Plan. If we're pursuing the TIF, this might be a good time before Wal-Mart's proposed expansion, which could generate \$74,000 in tax revenue to be segregated for reinvestment in the district, possibly at the four corners. The TIF District would encompass from Forristall Road, skirting Route 202, and heading towards the college campus. It's advisable to have a development agreement for a TIF district ahead of time so you have revenue before it starts. If a TIF committee forms in December, then by February we'll have an idea of what the TIF money should be spent on, and in March the vote will take place. Managing the TIF will take some accounting training.

Jed: Some TIF projects have been successful and some haven't. We'd have to have some incentive for a developer to concentrate on the four corners. We've had studies and surveys for four years or so and people have said everyone wants their taxes reduced and we need more of a commercial tax base to make that happen. Rindge does not have the level of commercial development that we're capable of while still maintaining our rural character. We all know we don't have a downtown center and the only location likely to become that is the four corners in West Rindge, so I think we can show leadership in moving this forward. We might be able to capture up to \$100,000 from WalMart depending on their expansion plans. So we'd have something in place—money already there—to entice a developer and other businesses to come in. Time is running out; a lot of those properties are already up for sale.

Matt: We don't know what WalMart will do, but if they do expand it will be silly to miss this opportunity. Carlotta: A TIF is a tool to accomplish something; what do you want to accomplish? It's a piece of the Charrette and the Master Plan, and I think it's important to share that with the folks in the community who may have come to those meetings, taken the survey, and contributed to that Plan. They need to understand that this is how you get there. Franklin Pierce University wants the same thing as the

townspeople do. Some students say the center of town is Wal-Mart and that's sad. Kim: I think this is the right time and a point of traction for potential businesses that want to come here. If it's not WalMart it might be other businesses. The businesses that have come here have done very, very well and I think we've got a good track record for anyone who wants to come here. But people will want to know what the money can and cannot be spent on. Roberta: People should know that if no businesses come here, the money goes back.

Request by Hope Ketola for reimbursement of fees:

Hope: My truck got towed because the Town Office registered my vehicle incorrectly – the Police Officer had to impound it because he didn't know if I was telling the truth. It should never have been towed. An F250 was registered instead of the 1250. My husband had to miss pay for work. Carlotta: Nancy admits she made a mistake and because of that these folks incurred some expenses and they're looking for reimbursement of their expenses. They did get pulled over and towed which cost \$150, and they say we should also pay for the hours of missed work and the gas which, including the towing, they say comes to \$375. The question is to what extent we reimburse them. In the past, the board has voted to refund some fees but this is a little different. Roberta: And what does this come out of? Carlotta: That's the question; there is no line item for this sort of thing. Roberta: Is Nancy over budget? Carlotta: Probably. Jed: I can certainly see reimbursing the towing expenses; I think the question is how much we reimburse for hours and gas. It wasn't a malicious mistake. It was a mistake that could happen to anybody and we have to be careful of what kind of precedent a reimbursement would set. Carlotta: Perhaps if the Board reimbursed the towing expense and the gas as a compromise? Roberta: Or we could just grant \$225 which is in the middle. Jed: I'll go along with that.

MOTION: Roberta motioned to reimburse the Ketolas \$225.00 and Jed seconded.

Tom Duffy's concern:

Tom Duffy had a legitimate concern since his assessment had been \$25,000 but this year increased to \$219,000. Dave DuVernay said our appraiser stated it had been incorrectly booked before and this was the result of fixing it. Tom said if he knew his assessment was going to go up almost \$200,000 he would have set more money aside or put the land in current use. He wanted to ask the Board if they would consider a late filing of a current use application (the deadline to file was April 15th) since if he'd known this revised assessment was coming he would have filed one. Carlotta: Tom was never notified of the change in assessment. Obviously, he'd prefer that it stay at \$25,000 but if it's going to change to \$219,000, he'd like to put the property in current use and deal with it later. The consensus was to have Tom sign a current use application.

Other matters:

Kim McCummings: The Agricultural Committee will meet twice a month Thursday evenings from 5:00-7:00pm and we'll need to post some signs for the Farmer's and Crafter's Winter Market. The Farmer's and Crafter's Market is building each year. Holly: Will the vendors that were there in the summer going to be there? Kim: Yes.

Robblee Tree Service will look at the tree on the Common that we're lighting on Dec. 7th. Sadly, it may need to come down next year.

The Recreation Department had 300 participants in Trunk or Treat and will host a senior dinner on December 13th.

The Town offices and Transfer Station will be closed next Thursday and Friday for Thanksgiving.

We're collecting numerous FastRoads residential connection agreements; blank forms are available on the Town's website. People are showing a lot of interest.

MOTION: Jed motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:31pm and Roberta seconded.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Stonehill, Administrative Assistant