

Chairman William Campbell opened the meeting at 7:00PM in the Nowak Room and proceeded to introduce the Board members present: Vice Chairman Lionel Ingram, Clerk Paul Binette, Robert Eastman, Joseph Pace and Town Manager George Olson.

1. Public hearing on Discretionary Preservation Easements for preserving Historic Agricultural Structures per RSA 79-D.

Mr. Olson explained this is a required public hearing to discuss the preservation of the historic barn at 32 Hampton Road owned by Nicholas and Joy Smith Starr, and is the first step in granting of the easement. The post & beam construction suggests the barn was built around 1742 with an addition to the north end added sometime around 1841. The barn meets the criterion of a 'familiar local landmark' and is visible from two public roads. The Starrs have spent nearly \$40,000 over the past five years to maintain the structure without damaging the historic character, with the replacement of the roof planned in the next year or two.

RSA 79-D authorizes towns to grant property tax relief to barn owners who (a) can demonstrate the public benefit of preserving their barns or other old farm buildings, and (b) agree to maintain their structures throughout a minimum 10-year preservation easement. Action would be at the regularly scheduled meeting following this public hearing.

There were no comments from the public. ***Mr. Ingram moved to close the public hearing portion of the meeting; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.*** Public hearing closed at 7:05PM.

Chairman Campbell opened the regular meeting at 7:05PM. At this time, he jumped to item #6, inviting the EHS Girls Basketball team forward. He read a proclamation (attached) congratulating the team on their runners-up finish in the Class L Girls' Basketball State Championship. Head Coach Sue Rowe invited the girls to introduce themselves. They left the room to applause by those present.

Chairman Campbell then followed with item #7, inviting visiting exchange students from Hiroshima, Japan to the front. Carlo Natoli, EHS Teacher, introduced the group and thanked the Board for their invitation to the meeting. The students were from a private school of 1600 boys and this is the third school EHS has hosted, sponsored by the World Language Department at EHS. The boys are enjoying themselves with their host families and all are having much patience with their communications. Chairman Campbell presented each student and the two teachers with Exeter pins.

4. Minutes of Selectmen's meeting of March 15, 2004.

***Mr. Pace moved to waive the reading of the minutes and to accept them as submitted; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.***

5. Action on request for historic barn easement.

***Mr. Ingram moved to find the proposed preservation of the historical agricultural structure located at 32 Hampton Road consistent with the purposes of Revised Statutes Annotated 79-D and to grant the easement; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.***

8. Bid Openings:

**Swimming Pool Renovations:** Three bids were received for the projects (Filter repairs, chairs & diving standard; and Sand blasting & painting):

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Bolton Co., Rochester, NH                    | \$26,000; \$41,000 |
| M&L Maintenance, Litchfield NH               | \$35,523           |
| Associated Concrete Coatings, Manchester, NH | \$19,750           |

***Mr. Binette moved to refer the bids to the Town Manager and Recreation Department to review and return with a recommendation; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.***

**Police Cluster Radio System:** Two bids were received from the following

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 2-Way Communications, Newington              | \$26,715. |
| Ossipee Mountain Electronics, Moultonborough | \$50,535. |

***Mr. Binette moved to refer the bids to the Town Manager and Police Chief to review and return with a recommendation; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.*** It was noted the packet is part of the budget but no award will be made till the budget is settled.

9. Second and final reading of change to SOP's to increase mileage paid.

Mr. Olson reported the first reading took place at an earlier meeting but missed scheduling it for the 15<sup>th</sup>. This change, from 36 cents to 37.5 cents per mile, is in line with the IRS figure paid for those using their own vehicles. He reported there is approximately \$5400 spent per year to cover the many times private vehicle use is necessary – when no town vehicle is available, etc. Some use their vehicle daily – others only 1-2 times per year.

***Mr. Pace moved to amend the title change to from SAP F-02-03 to read F-04-03 and to change all references to "price per mile" from 36 cents to read 37.5 cents; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.***

10. Community Development Block Grant Program – Sherwood Forest – Robert E. Morency, RCAP Solutions.

Mr. Morency approached the microphone and explained his desire to obtain support of the Board for the application for a Feasibility Study Grant, under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, by Sherwood Forest. They have begun the process of determining if the community is eligible to apply for an implementation grant. If found eligible, CDBG funds would be sought, along with other low-interest loan sources, in order to keep the improvements to the infrastructure affordable to the low-income residents there. RCAP Solutions, Inc. is a private non-profit, funded by state and federal grants, providing no-cost technical assistant to low-income rural communities. They would also assist the Management of Sherwood Forest in submitting an application for State Revolving Loan Fund monies.

Mr. Eastman asked if this is the same process the Town went through for Apple Seeds, the day care center on Hampton Road? Yes. The Town serves as agent to receive and distribute the money, with

any costs to the Town included in the grant. Mr. Olson noted this is time-consuming, however. Also, Apple Seeds is a non-profit agency, Sherwood Forest is not.

Mr. Ingram noted this is a competitive program, with the agency scoring against other applicants. It was noted that part of the process would require Sherwood Forest to maintain low rent for a set period of time – between 5 and 20 years. Mr. Ingram also noted that discussion over the water condition at Sherwood Forest comes up regularly at Council on Aging meetings.

Mr. Olson reminded the Board and Mr. Morency that though the Board may find this process acceptable, Sherwood Forest must still come back to the Board at a later date and the Board may not find it acceptable then.

Mr. Binette asked of the issue between the Town and Sherwood Forest now. Mr. Olson noted the Town is in litigation with Sherwood Forest over a jeopardy tax issue. Mr. Morency stated this has been reviewed with the State agency and they thought this would not affect the application. Other portions of the process may desire a clean slate between the two, however. Mr. Olson reported the tax issue is back before the judge.

Mr. Campbell reported the consensus of the Board was to proceed and to report back at a later date.

11. Budget cuts to meet 2004 default budget.

Mr. Olson read from the prepared memo (attached), proposing to cut \$648,850 from the operating budget presented to the voters. He stressed the importance of understanding how the default budget figure is determined. It is **not** “.the same as lat year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Exeter or by law...”. The default budget is last year’s budget adjusted up by commitments made to our employees through our collective bargaining agreements and added debt, and adjusted down by the deletion of one-time expenses from last year’s operating budget. This adjustment is almost always missed when the default budget is discussed. It is last year’s budget less one-time expenses, **plus** new obligations taken on by vote of the Town.

Mr. Campbell asked the Board if there is sentiment to go back to the voters, at a special meeting, with the originally proposed budget?

Mr. Pace stated he originally supported this directly after the vote, particularly with all the work done by department heads, sub-committees, full budget committee and the Board but now feels he can support the cuts. He stressed, however, that voters should not think these cuts should have been made six months ago – these cuts will be felt. If something a resident expected to be done isn’t, think about it next March and support the budget.

Mr. Ingram noted many did not know what a default budget is. He stated the proposed budget made sense to many, but was not what the voters decided.

Mr. Ingram asked if the Board members could give their thoughts on cuts – increasing some of Mr. Olson’s suggested cuts and cutting elsewhere.

Mr. Campbell noted the consensus seemed to be to go with a default budget rather than returning to the voters in a special Town Meeting. Yes. It was decided to review Mr. Olson’s prepared list and

provide a one-time vote. If someone objects to an item, leave it in but find the money to be cut elsewhere.

Mr. Olson reviewed his list.

Mr. Eastman provided a list of his own, hoping to keep the funds proposed to be cut for the paving and cold plaining, substituting other funds. One included:

- Research of firefighters' pay shows three grades of payroll rates, encompassing their various certifications, while they also receive the premiums as noted in their current contract. The Board accepted the new pay plan in 2002 and those premiums listed in the contract should have been negated, and he suggests re-negotiating their contract to address this. A heated discussion followed. Mr. Olson noted the new grades consider the different skills and they are a result of the interview process with the firm conducting the study. He does not recall the issue of the premiums (as noted in the CBA) coming up during the process. He noted this is a legitimate issue to bring forward to the negotiation process next year, as the contract ends 12/2005.

***Mr. Pace moved to adopt those cuts, proposed by Mr. Olson, as a consensus except for the paving and cold plaining to be discussed next; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.***

Mr. Eastman continued with his list of suggestions, including:

- \$30,000 for conferences;
- \$4,000 for an additional 24 users with the telephone system;
- Job notices: with no new hires, this shouldn't be as high. (It was noted that job notices must still be posted for replacement positions).
- \$40,000 for reval;
- Plumbing upgrade at the Recreation center;
- \$15,000 at District Court, deleting all projects except minor repairs to the front entryway;
- \$17,000 for two paramedics. Per the Town Report, there are 9 listed already – why do we need two more, along with the 10 EMT's.
- \$6,500 in office equipment at DPW for two new computers and a desk;
- Trench box at \$16,000;
- \$4,000 for a table saw and a buffer;
- \$69,000 for new Highway equipment: with two loaders in our fleet, why do we need another; with two compressors – why do we need another.

Mr. Eastman stated he feels the infrastructure of the Town is more important than computers, etc., and the equipment could be put off another year. Mr. Campbell asked Mr. Noyes to address Mr. Eastman's statements, particularly where 80% of the cuts were from DPW..

Keith Noyes, DPW Director, did not wish to argue for each item, as the discussion on why each item is needed began last August and went through the entire budget process. He noted the equipment is used in performing the job of maintaining the infrastructure. He did note, however, the trench box is a safety issue. He also stated the compressor and backhoe are not always available from water & sewer.

Mr. Ingram noted the paramedics are paid through the Ambulance Fund, with the Town being a 'pass through account'. Mr. Eastman noted then water & sewer items should be placed back in the budget as those funds are raised through user fees -- as a 'pass through accounting'.

***Mr. Pace moved to accept the cuts proposed by the Town Manager as noted items for paving and cold plaining; second by Mr. Binette. VOTE: Unanimous.***

12. Permits:

- Exeter United Methodist Church requests permission for a Lenten Walk on April 9<sup>th</sup> at 12 Noon and again at 6PM from Town House Common to the Gas Light Park Cemetery;
- New Outlook requested permission to sell Krispy Kreme donuts at the Bandstand on April 3, May 1 and June 5 to raise funds.
- Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce requested use of the Nowak Room on April 13<sup>th</sup> from 4:30-6:30PM for a press conference.
- College for Lifelong Learning requested the Wheelwright Room on Mondays, May 3, 10, 17 and 24<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-9:30PM for training of Foster /Adoptive Parents.
- Seacoast Wind Ensemble requested the Town Hall on May 8<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-10PM for a spring concert;
- NH Dept. of Transportation requested use of the Town Hall on June 10<sup>th</sup> at 10AM for a Regional Safety Conference.
- Exeter Lions' Club requested permission for a bike tour through Exeter on June 6<sup>th</sup> from 8AM to 4PM. The routes have been approved by the Police Chief.
- Mary Strathern of Blackford Place requested permission for a block party on June 19<sup>th</sup> from 2-8PM between #4 and #15 Blackford. Emergency vehicles will have access if necessary.
- Exeter Kiwanis requested permission to conduct a road race on July 17<sup>th</sup> from 7:30AM to 12 noon. The route has been approved by the Police Chief.

***Mr. Ingram moved to approve all permits as noted; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.***

13. Town Manager's Items:

- Spring clean-up is the week of April 5 through 9. Stickers are \$2.50 each for items too large for blue bags, and are available at the Town Office reception desk.
- The NH Dept. of Transportation will hold two public information hearings on the proposed 1-way tolls on 95. April 7<sup>th</sup> at 7PM at the Hampton Falls Town Offices and April 8<sup>th</sup> at the Portsmouth City Council Chambers. Residents are invited to share their thoughts.
- Bob Hall, Chairman of the Town Station Committee, reports the 100,000 traveler will jump on at Exeter during this next week. The three ticket machines have accepted \$500,000 to date.

14. Selectmen's Committee Reports:

- Mr. Pace stated it was a pleasure to see Mr. Natoli again this evening. He was one of Joe's teachers at EHS and helped inspire him to seek public service.
- Mr. Ingram stated a meeting of Rockingham Planning Commission spoke of land conservation associated with Phillips Exeter Academy; Council on Aging discussed the default budget; The Safety Committee met to discuss injuries and safety walk-thrus; NPO met in Seabrook and discussed the 1-way tolls on 95. He urges residents to talk to them and

express opinions, including the use of 'Easy Pass'. Without comments, they will do their own thing.

- Mr. Eastman – none.
- Mr. Binette – none, but requested Mr. Sheehy (Finance Director) provide the Board with a revised printout to reflect the figures voted this evening. Mr. Sheehy noted he will provide them ASAP.
- Mr. Campbell – none.

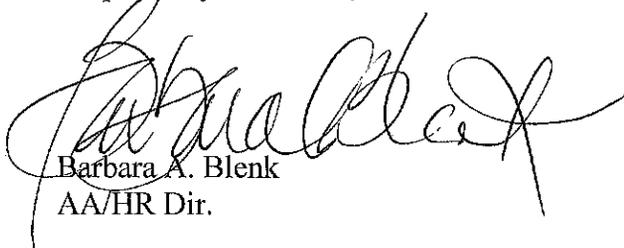
15. Public Comments:

Michael Lambert, Locust Avenue, expressed surprise at the discussion of the roads in town. He commented on his continued request for speed bumps on Park Street, to no avail, but that from Main Street to Brentwood Road it appears to be a 'defacto' speed bump and the best way to handle this would be cold plaining, but to Mr. Quinto's dismay. He feels what Mr. Quinto wishes to do is throwing money away. He suggests not waiting till the big jobs get accepted in town before doing any maintenance. The Town should focus on the roads that need improvement rather than what roads are scheduled.

Mr. Lambert also noted Senator Prescott has co-sponsored a bill to deposit waste off shore and he urged the Board not to be party to regional waste plants and to protect our 14 (12?) miles of coastline.

***Mr. Pace moved to adjourn; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous. Time: 8:44PM.***

Respectfully submitted,



Barbara A. Blenk  
AA/HR Dir.

attach.