

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES APRIL 14, 2003

1. Convene the meeting

Chairman Paul Binette convened the meeting at 7:00 PM on the above date. Also present: Bob Eastman, Joe Pace, Bill Campbell, Lionel Ingram, and Town Manger George Olson.

2. Minutes of the Board of Selectmen's meeting of March 31, 2003

It was moved by Mr. Pace, second by Mr. Ingram to waive the reading of the minutes of the Selectmen's meeting of March 31 and to approve them as presented. SO VOTED.

3. Introduction of Ken Quinto, Highway Superintendent and Greg Bisson, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director

Chairman Binette invited Public Works Director Keith Noyes to the mic. Mr. Noyes, in turn, invited the Town's new Highway Superintendent to the mic and introduced him to the Board and to the public. The Board welcomed Mr. Quinto.

Chairman Binette invited Mike Favreau, Parks and Recreation Director to the mic. Mr. Favreau, in turn, invited Greg Bisson to come forward and be introduced to the Selectmen and the Public. The Board welcomed Mr. Bisson.

4. Proclamation – Bike/Walk to Work Day

Clerk Lionel Ingram went to the mic and read the attached proclamation calling for May 15th to be designated Bike/Walk to Work Day in Exeter. Scott Bogel, Transportation Planner with the Rockingham Planning Commission came to the mic and provide details of the events associated with Bike/Walk to Work Day, noting the breakfast will be provided at the Bandstand for those biking and walking to work on May 15th. The goal of the effort is to encourage walking and biking, to improve facilities for same and to help reduce air pollution. The Chair thanked Mr. Bogel for his comments.

Clerk Ingram next read a proclamation not noted on the agenda, namely calling for the current week to be know as Public Safety Telecommunications Week in Exeter. (See attached proclamation)

5. Proclamation – Exeter Area Juniors Month.

Clerk Ingram read out the proclamation (attached) proclaiming the month of May as Exeter Area Junior Month in Exeter.

6. Bid Award – Vacuum truck and solid waste/recycling

Mr. Olson asked that the award of bid on the vacuum truck be tabled until a later meeting in that review of the bid is ongoing. **So moved by Mr. Pace, second by Mr. Campbell. SO VOTED.**

Mr. Olson recommended that the bids for both services be awarded to the low bidder, namely Waste Management for rubbish collection/disposal and Coastline for recycling. **It was moved by Mr.**

Eastman, second by Mr. Pace to accept the Town Manager's recommendation that Waste Management be awarded the bid for rubbish collection/disposal.

Mr. Eastman asked how the 22lb figure for an average bag of waste was determined. Mr. Noyes was asked to come to the mic. Mr. Noyes responded that at one point in the past the number of bags on a truck were counted and then weighed and the average weight came out to be 22 lbs. Mr. Pace asked if one vendor handles rubbish and another handles recycling, as recommended, would residents still be able to put out their rubbish and recycling for pick up on the same day. Mr. Noyes responded in the affirmative. **Motion SO VOTED.**

It was moved by Mr. Campbell, second by Mr. Eastman, to award the bid for Recycling to Coastline. Mr. Noyes was asked to come to the mic once again and he, in turn, introduced Mr. Richard Curry with Coastline. Mr. Curry was asked where the recyclables were taken. He responded that they went to North Andover for processing. All material now recycled by Waste Management will be picked up in the same manner by Coastline beginning July 1, 2003. At Mr. Binette's request the materials that can be recycled were described. **Motion SO VOTED.**

7. Action on adjustment to water and sewer rates

It was moved by Mr. Pace, second by Mr. Eastman to adjust the rates as described at the meeting of March 31. Mr. Eastman reported that his reading of the CIP indicated that there was \$32.4M in projects planned by the utility. This would represent a \$1.6M per year expense to the utility if the money were borrowed over a 20-year period. He indicated that he did not see this in the new rates. It was confirmed that these future expenses were not in the rates being discussed this evening. Mr. Eastman stated that he would not support the rate increase until he knows the full impact of all of the utilities' planned projects on the rates. Mr. Eastman next read of the reserves for the water and sewer utilities over the past several years, noting the 2002 un-audited figures show \$500,000 for water and \$700,000 for sewer. Mr. Olson confirmed these amounts.

Mr. Noyes was invited to the mic and explained that Mr. Eastman was indeed correct in terms of work that needed to be done but that for the coming years the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee was focusing on the construction of the new water treatment plant and that the other projects like pipe replacement and a new water tower were on the back burner.

Mr. Pace stated that the rate increase was necessary to pay for operating budget shortfalls and to pay off the bond for design of the plant and for the replacement vacuum truck.

Mr. Noyes emphasized the need to act on the rate increase as soon as possible since the deficit situation of the utility would continue until the new rates were applied.

Mr. Campbell noted information provided by Mr. Olson today and his need to review the material more closely. He suggested putting off a vote for two weeks. Mr. Ingram shared his agreement with delaying the vote for two weeks. He expressed concern that from information received, Exeter's water rates would go from average to one of the top 12 in the State and the need to make sure that the Board was acting in a financially sensible way.

Mr. Eastman stated that he had no problem voting for the rate increase if he knew what the new revenue would be spent on.

Mr. Pace questioned if the Board should act on all of the projects in the CIP at once or deal only with what the voters have agreed to. In light of the fact that there seems no question of the need to increase the rates as presented, he expressed concern over putting a decision on rates increases off for a month until the information on all of the projects is provided. He went on to state that the longer the Board waits to act on the increase the harder it will be to raise the funds needed to cover the obligated costs. The current rates clearly do not cover the utilities' obligations.

Mr. Ingram stated that the cost clearly has gone up while the revenue has remained the same. He did not question the need for the increase but did wonder why the water rate was going to become one of the highest in the State. He asked that the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee address this question. Mr. Campbell noted that with the increase in rates, while the water rate does end up well above average, the sewer rate would remain about average.

Mr. Pace stated that he would like to see the impact on rates of the long-term plan but that he sees this as a separate issue.

Mr. Eastman asked if the \$1.7M for design is to be bonded. Mr. Noyes responded in the affirmative indicating that a 5-year/3 % interest rate bond had been secured from the State. In response to Mr. Eastman's request for information on how much money the new rates will generate. Mr. Olson responded that the new rates will raise an additional \$920,000 a year and that this additional revenue will cover the bond payments, the cost of the vacuum truck and the \$500,000 shortfall in operating expenses for the utility.

It was moved by Mr. Pace, second by Mr. Campbell, to adopt the new water and sewer rates (attached) and to ask the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee for estimated figures on the rate impact of construction of the new plant. Chairman Binette stated that it was unfortunate that the information read by Mr. Olson had not been made available earlier. **The vote was 3 yeas, 1 nay. PASSED.**

8. Charge to the Fire Station Committee

Chairman Binette asked Mr. Olson to address the topic. Mr. Olson read a draft of the charge (attached) as developed by Chief Comeau and himself. **It was moved by Mr. Ingram, second by Mr. Campbell, to accept the charge as presented.** Mr. Campbell asked if the charge was broad enough to allow the committee the flexibility to look at all of the options. Mr. Olson indicated that Brian and he had tried to do this in the language presented. Mr. Campbell stressed the importance of the charge being broad. It was suggested that the committee provide the Board of Selectmen with updates as they proceed.

Mr. Eastman suggested that the committee come to the Board with a number of options. Mr. Olson opined that this could be done but that given the charge to come up with a design by November 1, options would have to be presented early in the process so that the selected option could be designed. Mr. Eastman indicated that there was no need for hurry and that the matter of building a new fire station did not have to go to the voters in 2004 but could wait until 2005. **The motion was SO VOTED.**

9. Taxation of "work force" housing

Chairman Binette asked Mr. Olson to introduce this topic. Mr. Olson explained that the Planning Board was about to begin the review of a new development off the Watson Rd. The developer wishes to take advantage of the Town new regulation that provided for a density bonus if work force housing is built. Part of the process of determining the number of units is the amount of taxes to be paid. As the Town assessors the Board of Selectmen need to act to determine if the work force housing to be build is to be taxed at fair market value or the below market value established by the Planning Board and the developer. This decision needs to be taken before the Planning Board can act. Mr. Olson referred to a letter from counsel recommending that the property be valued as determined by ordinance.

Mr. Campbell stated that while the concept of providing affordable housing was admirable, the 5-year period called for in the ordinance was too short and that it should be in perpetuity. Mr. Eastman indicated that he agreed with Mr. Campbell, suggesting that the housing should be owned by a not for profit.

Mr. Pace suggested that the developer be approached and asked to go longer than 5 years. Mr. Campbell indicated that the developer had indicated a willingness to do so but that nothing definitive has been forthcoming. Mr. Ingram suggested that the Board work to change the 5-year provision at next year's Town Meeting.

Mr. Pace indicated that he supported counsel's recommendation that the property be valued at its controlled price, but that he could not agree with anything short of in perpetuity. Mr. Ingram reminded that Board that regardless of the period, the taxpayers would be subsidizing the properties with artificially low taxes. Mr. Campbell stated that he would be willing to take on the burden so long as the controlled value was in perpetuity.

Mr. Ingram suggested that issues such as this, issue in which the Selectmen play a role, should come to the Board at their inception prior to going to the voters.

It was moved by Mr. Eastman, second by Mr. Ingram to table the matter and to put it on the agenda for the meeting of April 28th. SO VOTED.

10. Permits

It was moved by Mr. Campbell, second by Mr. Ingram to allow, on petition of Katie Childs, to close the Swasey Parkway for a "Support out Troops" rally from 5 until 8 PM on April 17, 2003. SO VOTED.

It was moved by Mr. Ingram, second by Mr. Campbell, to allow, on petition of Cinda Patrie, to place a banner over Water St. in support of the annual Lion Club Auction, from April 18 until April 28. SO VOTED.

It was moved by Mr. Ingram, second by Mr. Eastman, to allow the closing of Front St and Tan Lane for PEA graduation exercises on June 8 from 9:30 AM to 1:00 PM. SO VOTED.

11. Town Manager's items

Mr. Olson reminded residents the Park St. Bridge will be closed on April 22 for a 3-month period to allow NHDOT to make necessary repairs. He also noted ongoing problems with the new telephone system installation, the flushing of water mains and the reval work that will begin May 1.

12. Selectmen's Committee reports

Chairman Binette turned to Mr. Pace who noted Thursday's meeting with the HDC; Mr. Ingram reminded residents of the ceremony unveiling the historic marker at Gale Park; Mr. Eastman spoke of last week's Planning Board meeting at which two projects were approved; Mr. Campbell noted his meeting with the Exeter Development Committee and the Conservation Commission; and Chairman Binette noted Tuesday's meeting of the Benefit's Review Committee.

13. Public Comment

Lisa Shultz of Tremont St. asked to speak. She explained a real problem she is having with residents not picking up after their dogs. She described Lincoln St. school property adjacent to the school parking lot, which is used by some 15-dog owners to walk their dogs. Unfortunately 5 of the 15 do not pickup after their dogs. The site has become so littered with dog feces that she will not allow her children to play in the area. She explained that she has been to the school and the police and that the problem persists. She asked that the area be posted. Mr. Pace asked Mr. Olson if this would be a problem. Mr. Olson responded that it could be posted but that it was unlikely that the people not picking up after their dogs did not know that it was against the law. Mr. Shultz noted that the Animal Control Officer had been up and had issued tickets but that the people just paid the tickets and still did not pick up after their dogs. Increasing the fine for not picking up after your dog was discussed.

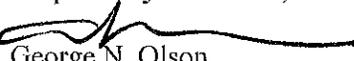
It was agreed that Mr. Olson would have the area posted and that he would bring to the next meeting the current dog ordinance.

Jeff Bovier next came to the mic requesting that the Board address the provision of second water meters to residents who wish to use water that does not enter the sanitary sewer system. He explained that he had been before the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee on this matter and had been told that the matter was under study. He is opposed to paying a sewer bill based on water used if the water does not enter the sewer system. Mr. Olson reported that the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee had discussed the matter last week and the Public Work Director was gathering figures on the impact such meters had on other Towns.

Arthur Baillargeon came to the mic and asked if in setting the new water and sewer rate the Select-men had consider the impact of less water use based on the increased cost. It was noted that most of the increase is on the service side, and relatively little on the water use side of the bill.

It was moved by Mr. Ingram, second by Mr. Campbell, to adjourn. VOTE: Unanimous. Time: 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,


George N. Olson
Town Manager