

1. Convene the meeting.

Chairman Binette convened the Board at 7:04PM on the above date in the Nowak Room. [Cable TV was not available for showing or taping]. Also present: William Campbell, Lionel Ingram, Robert Eastman, Joseph Pace and Town Manager George Olson.

2. Minutes of meeting of September 22, 2003.

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

3. Bid openings – Police surveillance equipment; Parks & Rec exterior painting & repair.

Rec. Center: Only one bid was received. Chairman Binette asked if the Board wished to open it or hold it and re-bid the project. Kevin Smart, Maintenance Supt. was present and noted the contractor submitting the bid handled the elevator project as well as repair of the eaves and windows at the Town Hall and suggested this may be a 'work in progress'-type bid. He noted 5-7 vendors, as well as Construction Summary, received the bid package. Keith Noyes, DPW Director, asked the Board to also consider the timetable and suggested going with the sole bid. The vendor is winding down at the Town Hall and, if the bid is within the budget, it would be good to get the work done now.

Mr. Eastman, though not usually in favor of sole bids, noted there may be a cost savings with going with this vendor – if the bid price is decent.

Target, New England, Wolfeboro NH	\$18,600
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Mr. Eastman referred to the CIP, noting early in 2003 an additional \$35,000 was expected to be needed for pointing and exterior work – has that request been withdrawn? Yes. **Mr. Campbell moved to award the bid to Target, NE, pending positive recommendation following review of the bid; second by Mr. Pace. VOTE: Unanimous.**

Surveillance Equipment: Five of six vendors submitted bids (results attached). Mr. Eastman asked Chief Kane the budgeted amount. Richard Kane stated it is from a Homeland Security grant of \$34,000. **Mr. Campbell moved to request the Town Manager and Police Chief review the bids and return with a recommendation; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.**

4. Third and final reading of change to parking on High Street.

Mr. Pace moved to not adopt the change to 101.2 – High Street; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.

5. Review of preliminary budget for 2004.

Mr. Olson began by noting the Board received the paperwork on the budget at the meeting of the 22nd. Department Heads and the Town Manager were all present to answer questions, both this evening and throughout the next week. The plan is for the Board to accept the budget and agree to

pass along to the Budget Recommendations Committee for their review. Once they review and vote, it will be sent back to the Board for formal action at Town Meeting in March. Department Heads present: Rich Kane (Police), Brian Comeau (Fire), Hope Godino (Library), Linda Hartson (Tn. Clerk), John DeVittori (Assessing), Jack Sheehy (Finance), Keith Noyes (DPW), Mike Favreau (Parks & Rec), Sue Benoit (Welfare), Doug Eastman (Bldg/Code), Barb Blenk (HR), Sylvia von Aulock (Planning) arrived at 7:50PM.

Mr. Olson offered 8 corrections to the budget presented:

- p. 9 Town employees Pension #3337, from \$103,228 to \$115,300 as some salaries were omitted;
- p. 13 Fire State Retirement #2180 from \$154,050 to \$199,733, some OT was omitted;
- p. 21 COAST #3575, increased from \$13,520 to \$14,205 – request received early in '03;
- p. 27 Communications Salaries #2055, increase from 152,695 to \$165,944;
- p. 40 Arts Committee #2572, increase from \$200 to \$500.

CIP changes:

- Parks Building – remove \$35,000
- Public Works – Change Annual Street Paving from \$260,000 to \$230,000
- Storm-Water Related Projects: both Norris Brook/Swasey Park and Water Street Culvert – remove \$200,000 each to 2005.

Chairman Binette asked the Board to review each department in full, rather than jumping from department to department.

Questions arose on:

Acct #2830 - IT services: The figure is computed based on hiring an employee vs. contracting for on-call work, though research is still on-going. Other communities have reported their experience with IT work is to hire an employee. The amount is based on salary of \$55,000 per year, with 25% paid from water and sewer.

#2827 – 53rd pay week: Mr. Pace noted \$93,000 is 'gained' by eliminating this account next year.

#2023 – Town Moderator: Increase of 192% represents five elections vs. only two in 2003.

Job Class #23 – Town Employees: Mr. Olson explained the benefits are all aggregated and shown here, though individual expenses were calculated per department. A 5% increase was estimated for workers compensation and health rates at an estimated 25%, though the Town's independently rated and those new rates should be received this week. Unemployment is figured at 5%, dental at 5% but FICA and pension figures are based on salaries.

Library (p.16). Health insurance is up 54% due to additional employee not included in '03 budget request but receiving benefits. Her '03 expenses will be about 25% over appropriation.

Books for adults show an increase as donations are down. Ms. Godino speculates it's economy-related as many adult are not buying books now, so are no longer donation books. There is, probably in direct correlation with that, an increase in periodical use and book sign-out. Children's books donations are still high, as those with children continue to donate the books after the children are grown.

General Government Buildings:

Recreation Center #2276 (p. 18). Mr. Eastman asked of the plumbing upgrade at the Center, when in 1999 \$100,000 was appropriated to renovate the building interior and there is now an additional \$8,000 in 2004. Mr. Smart noted the raised walkway caused a drainage problem and a new line was installed to Court Street. The appropriation is to tie all plumbing in the building to the new service.

Town Hall (#2296): Mr. Eastman noted warrant article #20 in 2002 for \$150,000 was to include \$25,000 for District Court carpeting, and was it done and if not, the money should still remain in the article fund. Mr. Smart noted the project for the elevator, stage and vestibule was budgeted at \$100,000 but the bid was for \$138,000. Funds for that project were made up from the other account and some items not completed. Mr. Eastman will review the minutes of that selectmen's meeting where the bid was awarded.

Mr. Eastman expressed concern that \$120,000 is scheduled for Town Hall repairs, including windows, pointing the bricks, stairwell design and construction, amounting to \$800,000+ spent over the past five years on a building not used. The Town Office, however, needs work, primarily for the health and safety of the employees. The Maintenance Superintendent's number 1 concern should have a priority of the Town Office over the Town Hall. The Hall should be renovated but not before problems at the Town Office are addressed. He stated DPW has a new building, the Fire Department may also, with an upgrade to the Police Department. Since 1997, employees have reported the building needs work but nothing has been done and the Town Manager should address the issue with the Board. Mr. Ingram stated whether it is the Manager's problem or not "sold" to the voters well enough, Town Meeting is defeating the articles. Mr. Eastman stated the Selectmen are not forcing the issue: the Town Manager is not forcing them to deal with it and the Maintenance Supt. is not forcing him to deal with it.

Discussion followed concerning design, thoughts and reasons for renovation to the Town Office building. It was suggested the CIP be reviewed with the Board concentrating on straightening up this building, perhaps delaying some projects. The residents do not see what is wrong with this building. Mr. Ingram suggested a plea to the reporters (present) to make this an important issue could help. It was noted, however, that if the article does not pass again in 2004, money will still be needed to fix items.

Senior Center (#2892): Mr. Eastman noted the CIP shows \$125,000 proposed for renovations though much work was done this year. Prior to all this work done, is there a complete plan showing what is to be done, rather than piecemeal each year? Mr. Smart noted the Meals on Wheels program received new appliances and the Town accommodated these, causing slight renovations to the kitchen area, with funds taken from the Maintenance account and work done in-house. They are working on upgrading the area to meet health code standards – we are close.

Safety Complex #2080 (p. 19): Mr. Campbell asked if the \$25,000 from the CIP list is to be included in the budget. Yes, but not shown here, so adjustment made to #2080 – increase to \$40,000.

Train Station #2489: Mr. Olson explained that in 2004, all expenses are covered by the Town, following State and Federal funds covering 80% in the past. This includes rental of land, monthly expenses at the Quik-Track tickets and insurance (including 20% for part of 2003).

Sylvia von Aulock, Planner, arrived to discuss planning issues (p. 16). Conference/Room/Meals increases 167%. Ms. von Aulock noted she plans to attend the American Planners 4-day convention in Washington DC, usually only attending local conferences.

Personnel changes include one full employee and part-time hours up to 40 hours (up to 2 part-time employees). The attached job description was provided concerning the 'Natural Resource Planner/Inspector' position, as proposed under #2420 (p. 17). The proposed increased fees would off-set the cost of the position, with no tax burden. The position would be 9 months/year at grade 6, equal to Electrical Inspector, and would also handle inspections.

Cemeteries (p. 20): Once the 3-year history of an account is passed, the account may be dropped. This section, now part of parks, will be deleted.

Police: (p. 21). The CIP item of \$14,774 is under the budget, but included with Communications.

Fire: Ambulance fees are being revaluated comparing last year's costs. The revenues are ahead of schedule, with 60 more calls to date over 2002. The collection rate remains at 80+%. Fees may be adjusted up \$10, but no recommendation is being made now. Mr. Ingram asked for revenue information. Mr. Olson noted that is being generated and will be available with the budget. Mr. Eastman asked for it with the Selectmen's first budget in the future.

Discussion on the sub-station: Chief Comeau stated the Committee has not yet researched bonding, as the total cost is not yet known. He projects \$700,000 per year increase with the hiring of 16 additional personnel – gradually hired over the course of two years. Mr. Eastman asked if the 2nd station could be manned 24/7 or just at peak traffic times (7AM-7PM). Chief Comeau stated it would be tough not to be 24/7, with work schedules rotating.

Building Inspection: Chairman Binette asked Doug Eastman if he uses the Town car for travel. Usually only to conferences, not in day-to-day inspections.

Welfare: (p. 35) Mr. Eastman noted the increase in salary due to 5 more hours per week. He encouraged the support of this, noting many calls after her normal work schedule.

DPW: Mr. Eastman remarked on the \$3.1million over the next 6 years to reconstruction the roads. Ken Quinto, Highway Superintendent, stated the main arteries have deteriorated and few have been reconstructed over the years, noting Portsmouth Avenue still has concrete and old water, sewer and gas lines. There have been partial overlays and band-aids throughout the town. A preliminary estimate is being prepared for a warrant article to complete Portsmouth Avenue, in conjunction with water and sewer work planned. The cold plane approach was discussed, saving as much as 10-15% on asphalt. Mr. Quinto presented a road and sidewalk schedule.

Guinea Road and Main/Water Streets intersections were discussed, with the suggestion of priority. Mr. Noyes stated for public safety, he would like Water and Main to be completed but his priority would be for Guinea Road.

Mr. Campbell asked about Lantern Lane and wouldn't the project send more water to public water supplies. Mr. Noyes reported that was still be researched but there appeared to be significant distance between the two to handle it.

Mr. Noyes reported with the regarding of Simpson's pit, the salvaged sand should give the Town 8-10 years of not having to purchase sand for the winter.

Social Service agencies: The first six listed in the budget will be warrant articles in 2004, hence no figures in the 'department requested' column.

Parks/Recreation: Mike Favreau reported that #2251 is up \$20,000 but #2241 is down \$38,000, as some expenses, such as instructors' salaries, are being shifted to the other account. He noted they should turn back some funds from sports.

Discussion followed on the bus, with some \$7,000 expended this year on repairs. Mr. Favreau the estimated \$15,000 may not be needed in '05, as there is some \$30,000 in the bus account to apply to a new purchase, hopefully in '04. Mr. Binette noted that over the past 10 years, the Town has probably spent more than what a new bus would have cost, in several purchases of used buses and related repairs.

Mr. Eastman asked of the \$100,000 for the renovations to the pool house. Mr. Favreau reported it was originally to include handicapped access but the footprint of the building is too small. In '05 or '06, a small building may be added for the concession, thereby allowing use of that space for the stalls. The \$100,00 includes patching the house, the filter system noting the present system becomes clogged with paint chips, etc. To sandblast the pool, it's estimated at \$60-65,000.

Council on Aging #2739 (p. 40) is increased to cover new chairs. With the renovation of the room, the need for lighter, smaller chairs and better storage is great.

Water/Sewer CIP: Mr. Noyes reported they are refining figures still.

Mr. Pace moved to submit the budget, with changes and other information received this week, to the Budget Recommendations Committee for their consideration and recommendations; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous.

6. Permits:

- Silver Brothers requested permission to place ladders on the sidewalk at the Masonic Hall, 59-65 Water Street beginning September 30th for one week. ***Mr. Pace moved to approve; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.***
- The Chamber of Commerce requested permission for parking by the Bandstand, Town Hall and behind the Town Hall from 6AM to 6PM on October 11th as part of Fall Festival. ***Mr. Pace moved to approve; second by Mr. Campbell. VOTE: Unanimous.***

7. Town Manager's Items:

- Household hazardous waste is this Saturday and volunteers are always welcomed.

With no television coverage, Mr. Olson did not read information on other issues – as they were public announcements.

Mr. Eastman asked about the use of the Town Hall for the photo presentation which began last Saturday. He does not remember discussion and was questioned on the use of the Hall. Mr. Olson noted it was a telephone poll of the Selectmen.

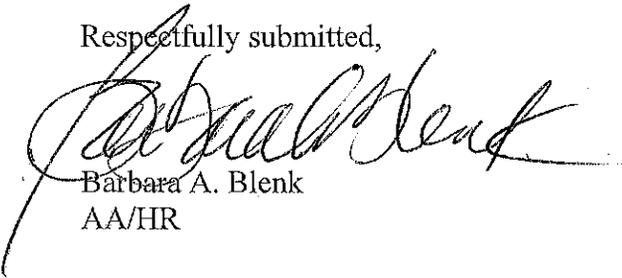
8. Selectmen's Committee Reports: None to report.

9. Public Comments:

Arthur Baillargeon, Tremont Street, asked if the Board plans to renovate the Town Office, will voters see a design prior to the vote? Mr. Olson reported \$100,000 is for the design of the building. Mr. Eastman stated that the Maintenance Supt., with drafting skills, should be able to estimate what is needed and provide a simple design, with the design company then refining and clarifying the design, noting bearing walls, etc. It was noted the recent sketches were prepared with no funds appropriated, hence no real details provided.

Mr. Pace moved to adjourn; second by Mr. Eastman. VOTE: Unanimous. Time: 9:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Barbara A. Blenk
AA/HR

attach.