

# Board of Selectmen's Meeting

## Minutes of June 6, 2005

*Selectmen:* Robert C. Flanders, Chairperson  
Peter N. Miller  
Frank S. Michel

*Town Manager:* Carol Granfield

*Recording Secretary:* Linda Griffin

Call to Order: Chairperson Bob Flanders called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

**NONPUBLIC SESSION:** Not wishing to waste time while awaiting the arrival of the videographer, it was suggested that the Selectman adjourn to a nonpublic session to conduct matters of personnel, legal or real estate issues.

*Frank Michel made a motion to go into nonpublic session to discuss real estate and personnel under RSA-91-A:3 II a&d. The Selectmen entered non-public session at 5:35 p.m. seconded by Frank Michel.*

**PUBLIC SESSION RESUMED:** Chairperson Bob Flanders resumed the public meeting at 5:45 PM.

Roll Call:

Robert Flanders, Chairperson, Peter Miller, Frank Michel, Carol Granfield, Linda Griffin

Chairperson Flanders introduced John Edgar, Meredith Town Planner and Bob Hill, Water and Sewer Superintendent.

### **05-40 ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

- *Frank Michel moved to accept the minutes of the May 16, 2005 meeting of the Board of Selectmen as written. Peter Miller seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

### **TOWN MANAGERS REPORT:**

- **Wittenberg University Interns:** Carol Granfield announced that Meredith is the first community to host an International City Management Association (ICMA) program in which Wittenberg University political science students spend June and July working in municipal management. Eleven interns are assisting town managers with a wide range of projects including a citizens' survey, review of

land and sign ordinances, America in Bloom, a potential dog park, documentation of street signs, economic impact of tourism, downtown parking, fee ordinance comparisons, resource inventories, parks and recreation projects, policy and procedure reviews, water and sewer projects, etc. Intern Jeff Able will be writing a column for the *Meredith News* reporting on a Midwesterner's view of small town New England. The students, who introduced themselves and identified their assignments, will carry Town identification.

The Town's only financial obligation is to pay for housing. Several local businesses have agreed to sponsor this cost. Additional sponsors are welcome to participate.

- **Cable Television Program:** The current programming on *Experience the Magic of Meredith* will feature Motorcycle Week in Meredith and the Rotary Club. The Wittenberg interns will also be on the show.
- **All American Display Garden:** The garden was planted last week on the library grounds.
- **July Selectmen's Meeting:** Because the first Monday in July is Independence Day, the Selectmen will not meet that day. Town Manager Granfield was asked to select tentative dates to replace the missed meeting.
- **Pinnacle Park Road Sewer:** On July 11 at 7:00 PM an informational meeting regarding the Pinnacle Park Road Sewer will be held in the multipurpose room at Interlakes Elementary School.
- **America in Bloom:** The America in Bloom judges will be in town on July 18. An awards event will be held that evening.
- **Cable Taping:** Mrs. Granfield proposed that the Town purchase its own videotaping equipment and pay a small stipend to the videographer for taping *Experience the Magic of Meredith*. Lakes Region Public Access technicians would provide advice regarding compatible equipment. Taping will take place in the new Community Center when it is completed.
- **Police Station:** Sixteen proposals have been received in response to the architectural RFP for the new police station. Interviews with architects will begin on June 13.
- **Assessor:** Within the next few weeks, candidates will be interviewed for the position of Assessor.
- **Tax Bills:** Included in the tax bills that were recently mailed was a notice regarding valuation activities. Taxpayers were directed to the town website for updated information.

**VISITORS' AND RESIDENTS' COMMENTS:**

- Appreciation was expressed for finding the Selectmen's Meeting Agenda posted in the Post Office.
- *Experience the Magic of Meredith* airs six times per week on channel 25: Mondays at 6:00 PM; Tuesdays at 8:00 PM; Wednesdays at 3:00 PM; Thursdays at 6:00 AM and 7:00 PM; and Fridays at 12:30 PM.
- Carol Granfield addressed questions regarding the revaluation process. The new assessor will coordinate efforts with Vision Appraisal Technology. The recently hired Real Estate Data Collector, Kevin Wheeler, needed eighty hours of training to be certified. With that completed, his duties will include new building valuation and help with the office work. When the Assessment Department is fully staffed, the services of Corcoran Consulting Associates will no longer be needed, and 20% of Meredith properties will be revalued annually by town staff.

Areas in which the assessment teams are working are listed on the town website and are updated regularly. Thus far 900 pick-ups have been added to the assessment rolls.

**SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS:**

- Frank Michel announced that the next meeting of the CIP Committee will be held on 7:00 pm at the Town Hall Annex where the Parks and Recreation and Interlakes School District will be discussed. The public is invited.
- Peter Miller reported the Elementary Enrollment Advisory Committee is not a Meredith committee, but an SAU 2 District Committee that includes Meredith, Center Harbor and Sandwich. Sandwich K-6 enrollment has slipped below the established threshold. An exhaustive list of options to address this problem has been studiously compiled, and some options require legal involvement. The District Committee will meet from 4:00 to 5:30 PM on June 8 at the Sandwich Central School. A public forum will be held at 7:00 PM on June 9 in Sandwich. The intent of the forum is to provide feedback to the District Enrollment Committee. The impact of Sandwich separating from the District has not been addressed.
- Bob Flanders reported that Planning Board continues to be extremely active reviewing applications.
- The Police Station Design Committee will hold its first meeting at 7:00 June 9 in the Town Hall Annex. Details of the architectural RFP are on the Town website. Results of the boring tests should be received within the next month.

**05-41 DOG PARK**

Town Manager Granfield has been working with Lakes Region Kennel Club representative, Lori Sirles, to develop specifications for a dog park. It is proposed that such a park be located on town property that is currently not in use. Three potential sites have been identified: Waukewan Highlands, the new police station site on Route 3, and Circle Drive Park adjacent to the Community Center. All three areas provide sufficient parking. Ideally, the site would be no less than one-half acre, preferably one full acre. The area would be fenced so that dogs could legally run unleashed. It would be doubled gated for secure entrance and exit. Users would assure the area is free of dog waste, and waste disposal facilities would be on site.

Maintenance and all other costs would be entirely funded by users and through donations from other interested parties. It is expected that the primary cost would be for fencing and that the cost for materials and services would be donated.

One of the purposes for a dog park is to provide a venue where dogs can become socialized with one another, thus teaching the animals to be less aggressive in other settings. It provides a setting where users can get acquainted with people from all over the community. Such a project also makes opportunities available for community involvement. Community Services representatives have already expressed an interest in having their consumers help to maintain the area. Scout troops have volunteered, as well. A bulletin board for notices about lost dogs, pets for sale, Kennel Club activities and Humane Society adoption prospects could be included in the plan.

A petition in favor of a town dog park has been circulated and over 160 signatures were obtained. Yvonne Morris and Ginny Lovett were present to speak in support of the project. Mitchell Richardson, resident of the Circle Drive Park area, mentioned his concern about noisy dogs and the fear his children have of dogs. He questioned how these factors would influence residents' decision to participate in Community Center activities.

In connection with Waukewan Highlands, John Edgar suggested that the 1990 multi-use plan to leave the area as natural as possible be reviewed, as there were many contentious issues involved and compromises made in developing that plan.

- *Peter Miller made a motion to direct the Town Manager to work with Lori Sirles and other interested parties to continue to explore options in regard to the development of a dog park on suitable public or private land. All options should be explored with the direction of not having such a park as a budgeted park item. Frank Michel seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

#### **05-42 HEALTH INSURANCE OPT-OUT POLICY**

As noted in previous Selectmen's meetings, the cost to provide health insurance for town employees has been significantly reduced by combining the Town and the SAU 2 school district as a single purchasing entity. Some employees have dual coverage because a spouse's employer insures the family. If such employees were given the opportunity to

decline coverage, the savings to the Town would be \$5,000 per employee. It is proposed that half of that amount (\$2,500) be returned to the employee in monthly installments of \$208.33. In the event of loss of coverage from the spouse's carrier, the employee would be given the chance to rejoin the Town's plan.

- This is proposed as an incentive program to persuade employees with dual coverage to opt out of the Town's insurance plan.
  - There are only 6-10 employees that would be eligible for this strictly optional benefit.
  - Employees who opted out could reenroll in the Town plan during open enrollment month (June) of each year or when a qualifying event occurred.
  - A definitive list of qualifying events to opt back in must be specified:
    - Spouse's job loss
    - Spouse's death
    - Divorce
  - A catastrophic illness is not a qualifying event.
- *Frank Michel made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to develop a personnel policy to offer the opt-out benefit of \$2,500 per year, payable on a monthly basis, to specific employees who have primary coverage elsewhere, as long as the employee is employed and does not participate in health insurance coverage through the Town. Peter Miller seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

- **05-29 SEA REPORT DISCUSSION**

A lengthy discussion of water and sewer issues began with Bob Hill, Water and Sewer Superintendent, giving a brief history of the Town's water and sewer system that has been in place since the 1890s. In 1986 the open reservoir located on Parade Road was closed. At that time, the system handled one-half million gallons of water per day. Today, it is required to handle one million gallons per day, and the treatment plant runs at full capacity 20-21 hours per day. Very few improvements have been made to the system.

Cost-savings recommendations made in the SEA report accepted by the Town in May include, among others, closing the blow-offs, repairing leaks, and educating consumers to conserve water. To date, the Circle Drive blow-off has been closed. A leak detector has been purchased and repairs are planned as leaks are identified. A Wittenberg intern has been assigned to assist Mr. Hill in amassing information to aide in prioritizing short-term and long-term system improvements.

Mr. Hill stated that there are multiple issues that need to be addressed before the Town's system will be efficient and adequate. On a scale of one to ten, with ten being a crisis, he believes the situation merits a 7.5 rating.

John Edgar, Town Planner, stated that the system is inadequate to meet current and future peak needs. He noted that management of resources must be the major overall priority, keeping in mind that every problem/solution is associated with cost, time frame, and benefit considerations. He requested specific direction regarding new development applications so that his decisions will be consistent and supported by Town Policy.

- Carol Granfield was asked to contact NHM to learn how other towns have handled similar issues and develop a time line for discussion at the June 20 Selectmen’s meeting. She was also asked to work with Bob Hill and John Edgar to prioritize the recommendations and to initiate implementation, as resources are available. Specific emphasis to be placed on the following:
  - Public education
    - Need to conserve, especially during summer season
    - Inadequacy of water capacity for fire fighting
  - Policy/ordinance development to address Planning Office needs

**ADJOURNMENT:**

- *There being no further business to come before the Board of Selectmen, Frank Michel moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 PM. Peter Miller seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Carol M. Granfield, Town Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert C. Flanders, Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Linda Griffin, Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Peter N. Miller

\_\_\_\_\_  
Frank S. Michel