

**SELECTMEN'S WORKSHOP**  
**Minutes of 11/19/07**  
**4:00 p.m.**

*Selectmen:*

*Frank S. Michel, Chairman*  
*Peter F. Brothers, Vice Chairman*  
*Robert C. Flanders*  
*Miller C. Lovett*  
*Colette Worsman*

*Town Manager:*  
*Recording Clerk:*

*Carol M. Granfield*  
*Karin Landry*

The Workshop was opened by Chair Frank Michel at 4:00 p.m. The Chair introduced the Selectmen and Town Manager Carol Granfield. The Chair will take public comment during the course of the meeting.

**W 07-28      Vendor Fees and Permits**

The Town Manager introduced the agenda item. There are several departments involved in various aspects of special use fees and permitting. She told the Board that various staff members and major groups holding specific events were in attendance to answer questions and provide input. The Town Manager would like guidance from the Board regarding the fee structure for permits.

The workshop was requested by Selectman Worsman and dovetails into the budget process. The Board is attempting to maximize offsetting revenue, when possible, which is generally fee-based. The Town's policy is to hold the landowner as sole responsible party to keep in line and augment the Town's policy as it applies to vendors they allow on their property. The current fee for a vendor permit is \$25.00. The fee has not been adjusted in six years. The workshop will address a philosophical approach to fees. An actual change in fee structure requires advance notice and a public hearing. The budget can be used as a timeframe for consideration of the matter.

Dialogue ensued as to whether the current fee reflects the costs to the Town of issuing a permit, and the impact of large events on the community. The Code Officer, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Public Works Department, and Water & Sewer Department can be involved in issuing a permit. The Board believes there should be a distinction between permits for large vendors at major events, and single vendor permits at smaller events. Selectman Worsman would like to see a distinction made between a local business holding a sidewalk sale and a vendor from outside the community selling wares at a craft fair or Motorcycle Week. The Town does not charge vendors for the use of water.

The Chair believes that those who pull permits should be fiscally responsible to the Town. The Board was in general agreement that the owner of the property should be the sole responsible party.

Linda Johnson of Meredith Harley Davidson told the Board that Laconia requires the landowner to pay a “per vendor” fee to cover municipal services. Paul Lessard, Bike Week Project Manager for Meredith Harley Davidson and Hart’s, told the Board that vendors pay them a fee. The fee varies depending on size, location, and number of years displaying at the location. There is no charge to non-profits. It is the responsibility of the business to conduct an event that is cost effective to them at no cost to the Town.

Meredith Harley Davidson and Hart’s pay for the water used on their property during the event. They erect no-parking signs and barricades, pay for traffic control, water & sewer, rubbish removal, and the clean up of Rte. 3 and side streets. Mr. Lessard is not opposed to raising fees to cover costs to the Town, but raising fees to generate revenue defeats the purpose of what businesses in Meredith are trying to do. Visitors to the Town support the local businesses.

Selectman Brothers is interested in consistency in the application process for all events. There should be dialogue among the departments, and a regular review of the fee structure for appropriateness. Various departments are involved in the permitting process at this time. He is pleased with that involvement, and requirements for vendors, such as the use of backflow devices if using water. Costs may need to be absorbed as events get larger. If costs are not being paid by the Town, but absorbed by the event, that information needs to get out to the public. He is surprised that no distinction is made between small vendors and larger vendors at multi-day events.

Chair Michel is in agreement that there should be consistency that differentiates for different kinds of events. An increase in an application for user fees should be based on what it actually costs the Town. Bike Week is a major event that draws on Town resources and should be segregated from other events. The event generates additional costs to the Town, including membership fees for the Association overseeing the event, and holding pre-event and post-event meetings. The Chair is in favor of extra fees for Bike Week permits. The Board also needs to consider fees for beaches, parks, and special events, such as the antique boat show.

Paul Lessard explained that the \$2,000 fee paid by the Town for representation on the Motorcycle Week Association ensures that there are no negative impacts to the Town associated with the event. He believes that the membership fee should be separated from the permit fee. He expressed concerns with events not being treated equally across the Board. He further stated that the vendors have actually decreased in the last four years, even taking into consideration those vendors who have moved to Meredith from the Weirs.

Selectman Brothers encourages looking at how much expansion of Bike Week the Town wants to support, and can support, without impacting the citizens. He is in favor of minimizing impact while still allowing the event to take place. Dialogue ensued regarding attendance over the last 3-4 years at major motorcycle events in the U.S.,

which has steadily declined. The number of vendors at Meredith Harley Davidson and Hart's has declined over the past 4 years.

Dialogue ensued regarding whether the Town has a written policy that protects it during large events. The Town Manager told the Board that the policy is part of the review process for special use permits, and is implemented by those who issue the permit. Certain things must be agreed upon before a permit is issued. If something does not make sense, the request for a permit will be denied by the Code Officer, Bill Edney.

The Board briefly discussed various events other than Motorcycle Week. The Fishing Derby takes place on the Lake, which is State property, and no permit is issued by the Town. The Rotary Club cleans up after their event. Two permits are issued for the craft fair, one for a special use on private property and one for use of a Town right-of-way. There is a \$25 fee for the private property permit. Mr. Edney told the Board that staff involvement in coordinating and following up on an event varies significantly.

Established events, such as the craft fair, are well managed by the sponsoring group, and the Town's involvement might be as little as an hour. A large new event would require more staff time during the permitting process. The review process for various groups is fairly consistent, with slight variations in items such as police detail. Department heads review the same issues from event to event to make sure the community's welfare is looked after. Linda Johnson told the Board that the Chamber of Commerce pays for the police department details, so there is no cost to the Town. Traffic control and crossing guards, other than on the premises of businesses hosting vendors, is not covered by the vendors. There is a \$10,000 line item in the police department budget for details, which includes special events and street work. Vendor's fees are accounted for as revenue, offsetting that line item. Selectman Flanders pointed out that traffic control is part of the Town's municipal responsibility in providing for the safety and welfare of the community.

Dialogue ensued regarding fees for hawkers and peddlers. The Board was in general agreement that hawkers and peddlers create competition for local business and don't support the community in the long term. Dialogue ensued regarding consideration of an ordinance discouraging hawkers and peddlers.

Parks & Recreation Director, Vint Choiniere, told the Board that the fees structure for outdoor Parks & Recreation facilities was reviewed and set at the time the Community Center opened. They are currently up to date.

The Chair is in favor of a recommendation increasing fees from \$25 to something more reflective of the current time. If a property owner has sub-vendors, an additional fee should be assessed for those vendors. Selectman Flanders is in agreement that the base fee needs to be increased. Bill Edney asked the Board to be mindful of the single vendor selling popcorn or cotton candy at a one-day event when adjusting the fees. He suggested the Board consider a fee based on how much land is going to be used, and a separate fee for the use of Town property as opposed to private property. Director of Public Works,

Mike Faller, told the Board that a facility use permit is issued for the use of Town property, and a special use permit is issued for private property. The Town is occasionally approached for a permit to use Town land for purposes such as taking wedding photos at the gazebo. There is currently no charge for this type of facility use permit.

Selectman Lovett would like to consider the variables when adjusting the fee structure. Selectman Worsman would like to find a balance between being a magnet for businesses coming from other communities, and attracting those that the Town wants here. Charging individual vendors at large events enables the Town to control the size of the event. Selectman Brothers suggested keeping things easy to understand and apply. He recommends using a \$25 fee, where appropriate, and attaching a second fee if applicable. He is satisfied if the cost of the event is covered by the fee. The Chair would like additional guidance from the Town Manager, Mike Faller, Vint Choiniere, Bill Edney, and John Edgar in a recommendation seated in the way the Town of Meredith wishes to address the fee structure, as opposed to other communities, including fees for non-profits. Continued dialogue will take place within the next couple months.

Sue Cerutti of the Chamber commented on the efficiency of the current permitting process. Paul Lessard complimented the Town staff on their thoroughness during the permitting process.

*Selectman Flanders moved that the Board adjourn at 5:20 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Worsman. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Carol M. Granfield, Town Manager

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Frank S. Michel, Chairman

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Karin Landry, Recording Clerk

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Peter F. Brothers, Vice Chairman

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Robert C. Flanders

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Colette Worsman