

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING**  
**Minutes of 06-06-11**

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|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>Selectmen:</i>       |                             | <i>Colette Worsman, Chairman</i>        |
|                         | <i>(Absent with Notice)</i> | <i>Peter F. Brothers, Vice Chairman</i> |
|                         |                             | <i>Miller C. Lovett</i>                 |
|                         |                             | <i>Nathan J. Torr</i>                   |
|                         |                             | <i>Herbert R. Vadney</i>                |
| <br>                    |                             |   |
| <i>Town Manager:</i>    |                             | <i>Phillip L. Warren</i>                |
| <br>                    |                             |   |
| <i>Recording Clerk:</i> | <i>(Absent with Notice)</i> | <i>Karin Landry</i>                     |

Call to Order: Chair Colette Worsman called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. She introduced the Board and Town Manager, and made announcements pertaining to fire exits, listening assisted devices, and the use of microphones and cell phones.

**ACCEPTANCE AND/OR CORRECTION OF MINUTES:**

**11 -25 Minutes of the May 16 Workshop, Meeting, and Non-Public Meeting**

*Selectman Torr motioned to accept the Minutes of the May 16 Workshop, Meeting, and Non-Public Meeting. Seconded by Selectman Lovett.*

Selectman Vadney requested that language on page 2 of the Workshop minutes regarding legal issues related to plowing the walkway for the Greater Meredith Program project be verified with the recording. Chair Worsman directed that the Workshop minutes be held for the next meeting, and the recording reviewed.

*(Regular and Non-Public Meeting) 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

**11-26 Belknap County Commissioners and Administrator**

Ed Philpot, Chairman of the Belknap County Commissioners, and Commissioners Stephen Nedeau and John Thomas came before the Board for the Commissioner's third year of county conversations. Their presentation began with an update of topics discussed last year:

Juvenile Prosecutor - The appointment of a juvenile prosecutor in the County Attorney's office makes economic and practical sense, and will allow the police force to remain working in their communities. Applications for a part time juvenile prosecutor are currently being reviewed. A number of good applications have been received, and it is hoped that the position will be filled soon.

Community Corrections - An ongoing goal for the last few years has been to consolidate resources and provide them efficiently in every town in the county in an effort to reduce the number of people jailed for mental health reasons and drug and alcohol problems. The Commissioners have consulted with counties with similar programs in place in order to learn how programs can be constructed most efficiently. The goal of the program, which has been very successful in other portions of the state, is to keep individuals in their communities, working as productive members of those communities. Grant money has been received to establish a drug

court. A consultant has been hired, and is expected to make recommendations within six months of beginning his work. He will be monitoring the process for transporting inmates to Strafford County during Bike Week.

Nursing Home - The County continues to streamline the operations of the nursing home. The survey that was performed by the state this year showed no deficiencies in the provision of nursing home services. The cost per bed, per night, continues to be managed and is now in line with other county nursing homes. The County is not considering privatization.

Community Action Program (CAP) - The County continues to support the programs requested by CAP. There have been some adjustments to the amounts requested based on this year's budget.

Health Insurance - In the near future, Primex will no longer provide health insurance. A committee has been formed to investigate options for a replacement plan. Because the County has a large, diverse pool of employees, it is not advantageous for entities to partner with it on a health insurance plan. The County continues to promote wellness.

Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid - The County reviews the bill for Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid and divides it among towns in accordance with the method set forth by the DRA. Governing bodies have a voice in the Mutual Fire Aid budget through their fire chief, who sits on the Board of the organization.

Dispatch Billing - The County considered a request to bill individual towns for the amount of dispatch services they use, and decided that they will continue with the current billing system for county services. While towns such as Gilford and Laconia may use a small percentage of dispatch, they likely use other services at a greater percentage than other towns.

The Commissioners reviewed new topics:

Strategic Plan - The County continues to work on a facility analysis and capital projects. There is a list of projects that are currently being undertaken on the website. Stimulus money will cover the costs of some maintenance and repairs that are not large enough for bonding.

Regionalization - County and Town administrators continue to explore opportunities for regionalization.

Legislation - Legislation continues to be monitored, in the hope of influencing changes going forward that will benefit Belknap County and all constituent towns.

County Corrections - The Commissioners reiterated some of the struggles that are faced by County Corrections, including the fact that 80% of inmates are serving time for drug and alcohol related reasons. The existing facility was built in 1840, and a properly designed renovation will allow for a growth in prison population that can be managed with the same amount of personnel that is in place today.

Town of Barnstead - The County is assisting the Town of Barnstead in a study regarding no longer having a police department and having the Town patrolled by the Sheriff's department. Costs for doing so will be billed directly to the Town, and will be above and beyond what is billed for standard services provided by the County. The County is optimistic that it will be able to provide comparable or better service to the Town at a reduced price. While the details of the arrangement have not been worked out at this time, including billing for indirect costs for the use

of capital infrastructure such as vehicles, equipment, and debt service, the County wants to be sure it has no negative impact on the other services that are provided in the community. The arrangement will be used as a template for other Towns if they wish to do the same in the future. It is hoped that an investigation of the matter will be completed by the end of the summer. An ancillary benefit to the County is that it would have a small substation in Barnstead.

Selectman Lovett spent five years as a university professor at the Walpole State Prison, and agrees that many inmates can be rehabilitated at a savings to the prison system, communities, and families. He had wide exposure to the prison system while acting as Chairman of the Criminal Justice Department at U Mass Boston, and was amazed to see how inmates can be monitored using modern technology while being productive members of the community. If programs are cut it may save money in the short run, but will incur additional expenses in the long run.

Chair Worsman is encouraged by the approach being taken by County Corrections; however, when collaborative efforts are being discussed, the goal from her perspective is to save money. She is concerned with the fact that the budget has grown and Meredith has not been saved any funds. In her opinion, the jail should have trumped other projects such as the renovation of administrative buildings. Commissioner Philpot explained that efficiencies have been realized in providing services through the renovation of buildings and that those efficiencies benefit towns across the board and preserves the county's assets in terms of capital. Miscellaneous capital projects have been a good use of Stimulus money. The County is implementing a maintenance schedule for its capital assets. The improvements to the jail will require a bond. Chair Worsman pointed out that the Town of Meredith prioritized capital projects so it was able to maintain a level funded tax rate, and asked that the County do the same.

Resident Jim Hughes recalled that the jail was modernized in 1970. Commissioner Philpot explained that the center portion of the jail is the original facility that was built in 1840, and that that portion has never been modernized.

Commissioner Philpot introduced the County's Human Resource Director, Norm O'Neil, and County Administrator, Deb Shackett, who were both in attendance. Chair Worsman thanked the Commissioners and administrators for coming.

## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

- The Town Manager received a letter from Conservation Commission Chair Peter Miller regarding its intent to look into Town Forest conservation easements, and inquiring if the Board would like to meet with the Conservation Commission at a workshop to get more information on the matter. There was a consensus among the Board that they wish to be briefed further in a workshop format. The Town Manager will schedule the matter for the July 18 workshop.

- Public Works Director Mike Faller prepared a Staff Report that addresses the operation issues involved with maintaining the walkway at 38 Main Street as set forth in the proposal submitted by the Greater Meredith Program (GMP). The Town Manager inquired if he should proceed with legal research on the matter based on the Report submitted by Mr. Faller. Selectman Vadney is concerned about the legal issues, and if the Town should do it at all. Selectman Lovett serves on the Board of the GMP and is on the Design Committee as Selectmen's representative. He very much favors what is trying to be done, and pointed out that it is part of a larger effort to find ways to make Main Street viable. Removing the snow from the walkway is not a big job and is not worth spending a lot of money on a lawyer. If the Town can't clear the walkway, it doesn't appear to be a major annual cost, and another way will have to be

found to do so. He favors the Town clearing the walkway, but does not wish to spend a lot of money on legal fees. Selectman Torr agrees. The issue must be resolved legally before moving forward. The project is great for the Town, but he acknowledged that it is a narrow area and a parking spot will be lost on one end. Chair Worsman acknowledged that GMP has done a great job in revamping Main St., but is concerned that agreeing to clear the walkway will open the town up for other projects, and is concerned with placing a liability on the taxpayers. Resident Jim Hughes inquired who is actually going to own the pathway and if an easement is going to be granted that includes a provision for the public to pass and repass, making it clear that it is a business pathway and open to the public, but it is not owned by the Town of Meredith. Selectman Lovett acknowledged that that is a possible solution that hasn't been suggested by GMP at this time. The Town Manager will submit the matter to LGC for initial guidance and schedule a follow up workshop. The Chair wonders about the timing of the project, which was scheduled to go forward this summer.

- Bike Week preparations have been completed. Permits have been issued for activities at Laconia Harley Davidson with abutters in mind, including the mitigation of sound impact. A lot of time has been spent by land use, code enforcement, and public safety to ensure that. The activities are the same as last year with the exception of a demo program that was relocated from Laconia. The police and fire departments have been consulted to make sure the program runs smoothly. All tents will be in compliance with restrictions for grease laden vapors. The POW/MIA ride is scheduled for Thursday evening.

- The traffic cones that were placed on Rte. 25 at Pleasant Street during recent construction received favorable comment and will be utilized to help with traffic flow.

- Flyers have been posted for the treatment of milfoil in the Bay and Hawkins Brook. Once a final date has been determined, flyers will be posted to inform people of the date, time, and location of the treatment. The notices are also posted on the Town website.

- A position has been posted for Maintenance III in the Highway/Public Works Department as a result of the retirement of Richard Davis. The Maintenance III position will be filled, but the position that will be made vacant by the promotion will not be filled, in order to reduce the secondary costs associated with hiring an employee. The intention is to hire part time summer staff to help with the vacant position, and contract out a plowing route in the winter.

- Pete Currier of Buildings & Grounds announced his intention to retire effective July 1, and there was a recent resignation in the Department as well. One of the positions will have to be filled, but a decision will not be made at this time. The plan is to hire a part time summer person, and analyze the situation through the summer. The Town Manager will bring a proposal before the Board after the summer season.

- The employee appreciation bar-b-que will be held tomorrow from 12-3 at Leavitt Beach. The Town Hall, Solid Waste, and other facilities will be closed during that time. Notice will be posted on the buildings regarding the closure. Last year's event was a great success and the same is hoped for this year.

- Concerns have been expressed by employees that local dentists to not accept the Americas Dental Insurance plan and employees would have to travel to Concord to use a vendor in the network. The Town Manager has reviewed the matter and does not believe that switching to Americas is a viable cost containment strategy at this point. He expressed appreciation to the employees who provided the additional information. The renewal of the Delta Dental plan will

include a 5% increase. The Chair expressed appreciation for the Town Manager's efforts to work on cost containment.

#### **VISITOR'S & RESIDENT'S COMMENTS:**

Resident Karen Sticht noticed a giant welcome sign in front of what use to be the Christmas Loft and wonders if it complies with the site ordinance because of its large size. She commented that the sign does not include proper punctuation. The Town Manager will follow up on the matter tomorrow. In addition, Ms. Sticht inquired about the cost of the employee appreciation bar-b-que. The Town Manager informed her that last year's costs were around \$300, and that the costs are kept to a minimum because many employees bring dishes.

#### **SELECTMAN'S COMMENTS:**

Selectman Lovett reported that the Village Pathways Committee will host a guided walk at 10 a.m. on Saturday morning. A lot of work has been put into the effort, and a leaflet has been produced at no cost to the Town. The walk, which is along the Pathway, will include 14 numbered residences. Additional details will be printed in the local papers.

Selectman Vadney reported that Memorial Day was a good success. He commended the high school band, and in particular the bugler, for an excellent job. In addition, the middle school band was very good. Both bands have made a lot of progress and deserve recognition for it.

Selectman Torr informed that the Waukewan Watershed Association will bring proposals on truck routes and septic systems before the Board at the June 20 Workshop.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

##### **11-27 Appointment of Town Treasurer**

The Board reviewed candidates for the position of Interim Town Treasurer at the workshop previous to this meeting, and agreed to make a departure from its usual process and appoint a candidate at this meeting. There was one candidate for the position. The Board interviewed Mark Billings and reviewed his resume at the workshop prior to the meeting. There was a consensus among the Board that Mr. Billings would be a huge asset to the Town acting as the Interim Town Treasurer.

*Selectman Lovett moved that the Board appoint Mark Billings as the Interim Town Treasurer to fill the vacancy left by the passing of Chuck Palm. The term will conclude at the time of the elections in March. Seconded by Selectman Torr. 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

##### **11-28 Water & Sewer Update**

Water & Sewer Superintendent Dan Leonard updated the Board on the sewer project. Beginning last July, sinkholes began developing in the area of Route 25. Spot repairs were made last year in order to keep the area open. This year, the sink holes were getting progressively worse and the decision was made to hire a contractor to make repairs. The contractor that was hired has performed similar work for the town in the past that went very well, and has a reputation as one of the best on the east coast for this type of work. Unfortunately, for reasons that have not been identified, the first section of the lining project which began at the Rte. 3 and 25 intersections and ran 125' up Rte. 25, failed. Sewer flow cannot pass through the pipe because there is a 10' section

of completely solid slug, and the sewer main has been ruined. Mr. Leonard exhibited samples of the failed pipe for the Board's viewing. An entire week was spent trying to assess and recover from the situation, and it was decided that a sewer bypass must be implemented. Beginning tomorrow, the damaged pipe will be drilled out of the ground by a directional drilling company and a new pipe will be installed. The driller has committed that once the project begins, it will continue 24 hours a day. It is hoped that the project will be completed by Thursday. The insurance company for the initial contractor will be pursued for the majority of the work performed prior to Memorial Day and all the work performed this week. The Town Manager shares Mr. Leonard's disappointment in the original contractor. The goal is to get the pipe back where it should be, get the bypass out of the road, and fill it in. He pointed out that this is not a permanent solution, and that the entire section of the pipe from Pleasant St. towards Hannaford needs to be addressed for removal.

On behalf of the Board, Chair Worsman thanked Mr. Leonard and his staff for the work they have done on the project.

The Board posed questions regarding the mechanics of the project, and safe digging with the conglomerate of utilities in the ground in that area. The Town Manager explained that Dig Safe, DOT, and Fairpoint have been made aware of the situation, and all have a good handle on what is in the ground. As time progresses, the Town Manager will recommend a comprehensive inflow and infiltration study to the Board that looks at the entire network (the study that was done three years ago did not include this section of the sewer main). In addition, it will be determined how to phase in the necessary replacements of the system. Selectman Lovett wishes to be certain that water, sewer, drainage, and road work in the area are coordinated once the replacement of the system begins. Chair Worsman asked that the Town Manager make Nancy Mayville of the DOT aware of the matter in the event it needs to be coordinated with the roundabout that is proposed at the Rte. 3 and 25 intersections. The Town Manager will follow up on the matter tomorrow.

The Town Manager received a letter from Harry Stewart from the Water Division at DES regarding the Winnepesaukee River Basin Program (WRBP) UV program and other items attached to it. The Board was provided with a copy of Mr. Leonard's response, which addresses items set forth in the Mr. Stewart's letter. Last year, the WRBP Advisory Board presented a project that was at 95% design completion with equipment contracts already in place. The biggest source of contention is that the Towns fund 100% of the program, and are not part of the review plan or vetting on the engineering process. Both the Town Manager and Mr. Leonard believe that the project is overbuilt, and that available technologies for implementing the disinfection project were not thoroughly reviewed.

Selectman Lovett does not believe that the amount of money spent on a project is justification for proceeding with it, and agrees that further study must be done. Selectman Vadney concurs completely and salutes Mr. Leonard for his letter and his engineering analysis of the entire system. He wishes to continue to support pushing an alternative to the UV disinfection system.

At the most recent Advisory Board meeting, the Town Manager made it clear that while Meredith supports the Advisory Board, it must take action regardless of the vote taken by the Advisory Board. If the vote is lost, a copy of Mr. Leonard's correspondence will be forwarded to the Executive Council and Governor. Chair Worsman requested that a copy of the letter be forwarded to Senator Forrester. Both the Chair in her capacity as State Representative and Senator Forrester are very concerned with this matter, and have experienced the difficulties in dealing with it because the state deems it a community issue. In addition, she suggested that a

copy be forwarded to Representative Gene Chandler, who chairs the committee on capital improvements.

Mr. Leonard expressed appreciation for the Board's support for the matter.

Selectman Torr pointed out that the sewer system will be there for a long time, and the bigger issue at the moment is to make sure that the communities that are paying the bill have the opportunity to weigh heavily on matters going forward. Selectman Lovett agrees that there is something basically wrong with a management system that allows a handful of decision makers to spend \$10 million, and would like to see an Advisory Committee that has more power in the decision making process. Mr. Leonard would like to see the metering project completed before moving forward with other projects. The goal behind the metering program is to start billing communities based on what they actually send to the plant. Dialogue ensued regarding the costs associated with the Town implementing its own metering system, which are not believed to be extraordinary.

The Chair announced that Mr. Leonard has the complete support of the Board to send the letter in response to Mr. Stewart's letter. The Board appreciates the effort and thought that was put into composing the letter.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

*Selectman Vadney motioned to adjourn the Workshop at 8:00 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Torr. 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Phillip L. Warren, Town Manager

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Colette Worsman, Chairman

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Miller C. Lovett

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Nathan J. Torr

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Herbert R. Vadney