

BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of 10-17-11
5:30 p.m.

<i>Selectmen:</i>		<i>Colette Worsman, Chairman</i>
		<i>Peter F. Brothers, Vice Chairman</i>
	<i>(Absent with Notice)</i>	<i>Miller C. Lovett</i>
		<i>Nathan J. Torr</i>
		<i>Herbert R. Vadney</i>
<i>Town Manager:</i>		<i>Phillip L. Warren</i>
<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, Town Manager, and the Recording Clerk, and made announcements pertaining to fire exits, listening assisted devices, the use of microphones, and cell phones.

ACCEPTANCE AND/OR CORRECTION OF MINUTES:

11 -53 Minutes of the September 19, 2011 Workshop and the October 3, 2011 Regular Meeting.

Selectman Torr moved to accept the minutes of the September 19, 2011 Workshop and the October 3, 2011 Regular Meeting as presented. Seconded by Selectman Vadney. 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

- The Town Manager provided a draft copy of the cable television franchise compliance questionnaire for the Board's review. The questionnaire will be submitted to Metrocast as part of the ascertainment process for licensing a cable company. It touches on subject matter regarding the franchise agreement and other matters of concern such as extension of service. Metrocast will be asked to respond to the questionnaire by year end. Ultimately, a draft letter will be sent by the consortium outlining how it wishes to move forward and Metrocast will produce a master franchise renewal agreement for all towns. Although the consortium will negotiate the master agreement, each town negotiates its own agreement with the cable franchise. Considerable time will be spent on quality of service, service extensions, and island issues. The process is moving along well and an ascertainment hearing is scheduled for December 5 to discuss the cable related needs of the community and town. One volunteer is recommended for appointment to the Cable TV Advisory Committee at this time, and stakeholders will be asked to appoint a representative. The committee can effectively operate with fewer than the number of stakeholders set forth in the Charge.

- The Town Manager made two public announcements: Public Works will remove the floating dock at Hesky Park and the municipal dock at Lake Waukegan the last week of October 2011; and fall cleanup will begin at the Meredith Village Cemetery and Lange Street Cemetery on October 17. Lot owners wishing to save artificial flowers, vases, or other grave decorations should remove them before that time. Both announcements have been published in the paper and posted on the website.

- The agenda for the November 7 Board meeting includes a presentation by the Town Manager on the budget, acceptance of the JAG grant, and Child's Park.

- The town occasionally buys surplus items such as desks and furniture from the state at White Farm. In order to do so, a signatory list must be executed every three years. As the Chief Procurement Officer, the Town Manager supports the execution of the document and requested that the Board do so. The matter does not require action by the Board.

- Negotiations with the health insurance carrier and consultant have been completed, and the town was notified last week that the final renewal amount is 5.75%, which is considerable less than the 12%-15% originally projected. The lower rate is attributed to good experience and the buying power and economy of scale of the consultant, CGI Benefits. On behalf of the Board, Selectman Brothers expressed appreciation for the effort the Town Manager has put into the matter over the years. The news is particularly good in view of the economic climate and budget constraints.

- Workers compensation will be approximately \$90,000 next year, which is an increase of less than \$2,000, and is well below the 3% to 10% increases seen elsewhere.

- Over the past three years, unemployment insurance has been based on an experience factor with a 5% administrative charge added to it. The town paid \$26,000 for unemployment insurance in the current year, and has received a quote of over \$30,000 for the coming year. The Town Manager explained the circumstances wherein the town is liable for unemployment wages, and told the Board that historically the town has paid more in insurance than it would have in unemployment compensation. Dialogue ensued regarding how the number and classifications of employees separating from service would impact the amount to be paid in unemployment compensation. Selectman Vadney supports saving money, but is concerned with how many claims would have to be made before the town would pay more in claims than in insurance. The Town Manager will work on a couple separation scenarios for the Board's review.

- At its recent meeting, the Energy Committee reviewed the building audits and the work that needs to be done. At some point the Committee will come before the Board to lay out future strategy and get recommendations from the Board. There are a number of things that can be done at this time to affect energy savings such as addressing insulation issues and lighting upgrades.

- Chair Worsman reviewed the matters addressed by the Board at the workshop held prior to the regular meeting including a budget review of Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid with Fire Chief Ken Jones and a town budget update with Director of Administrative Services Brenda Vittner. Projections on revenues and expenses are on track, with approximately 75% expended and received. She reiterated that the town budget is only one component of the tax bill, and that it will be affected by the school and county components. The Board is very pleased with the way the Town Manager has been running the town, and thanked him for keeping the budget on track.

VISITOR'S AND RESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

Resident Todd Tilton, owner of the Fermentation Station in downtown Meredith, expressed concerns with the arts and crafts festival that is held in August. Over the past four years, his business has seen a decrease in customer traffic of 400 - 700 per weekend. While he acknowledges that other factors such as weather affect customer traffic, he would like to see the police and fire departments get involved in the planning of the event to make it safer and better promoted. The current layout of vendors does not allow for access to the fire hydrant behind 72 Main Street. He would like to see the Main Street community become involved with planning the festival. He is not against the festival, but pointed out that many of the vendors do not promote local business because they are from out of town, and their tents obstruct the view of local businesses from the street. He suggested that food vendors be consolidated in one area and that a farmer's market offering local produce be incorporated. In addition, he told the Board that his

customers have avoided coming to his place of business over the past few years during high traffic periods. Chair Worsman thanked Mr. Tilton for bringing the matter to the Board's attention. The Board cannot address the matter immediately because it is about to start the budget process, but will take it under advisement and see what can be done to improve the process. The Town Manager added that when a permit is issued, a review is done by the police department, fire department, Town Manager's office, and code enforcement, and permits are reviewed annually. In addition, staff from the Chamber of Commerce is involved in varying degrees. In summary, the Chair expressed that the ultimate goal is to support the businesses in Meredith without putting too much impetus on residents traveling throughout the community.

Resident George Hawkins has been a business owner at 73 Main Street since 1988 and suggested that summer activities such as the street dance and craft fair need some brainstorming. There are professionals who are good facilitators in brainstorming because they do not have a stake in the matter. He supports Mr. Tilton's statements and thinks it is time to restudy the matter. Selectman Brothers appreciates having the opportunity to look at important community events. The larger picture is the impact that these types of events have on merchants and community organizations. The community is tourist oriented and comprised of many local businesses and must pull together to benefit individual business owners and the community. It is critical that the town gets together with the individuals impacted to review changes of venue, traffic patterns, hours of operation, and other details. He acknowledged that traffic problems are getting bigger every year, and suggested the possibility of holding the event in an alternate location such as a park or ball field. The stakeholders must work together to evaluate and improve the event so the community continues to enjoy the cultural and economic benefits, and jobs that these events create.

Bill Blanchette, a representative from the Chamber stated that the arts and crafts event has been held for over 30 years with the goal of bringing a quality event to Meredith that would attract additional traffic to the downtown merchants and high quality craft vendors. The income generated from the vendors is used to promote the event and pay for operating costs and local entertainment. All profits derived from the event are used to fund chamber marketing programs. A permit must be signed by the Selectmen, police, fire, and public works departments on a yearly basis. He acknowledged that merchant participation is not ideal, and welcomes a Main Street merchant representative to participate in the process. He looks forward to the opportunity to work with the Town and Main Street merchants to make an already great event even better.

The Chair thanked all that attended and brought the matter to the Board's attention.

SELECTMEN COMMENTS: (Reports on Committees 2nd meeting each month)

Selectman Torr reported on the Energy Committee. The Meredith Energy Handbook is almost complete. The web based handbook will be available late this fall or early this winter. The Energy Committee is working with consultant Clay Mitchell, who was hired with grant funds, to review the community plan and land use regulations. Last year's energy fair was very successful and plans are underway for another fair this coming year. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for November 10.

Selectman Torr reported on the Waukegan Watershed Advisory Committee. The next meeting is scheduled for November 2 at the Town Hall Annex. The Committee is working on runoff situations in lakes and would like to meet with the selectmen in a future workshop to share ideas and plans for the future.

Selectman Brothers reported on the Capital Improvements Committee in Selectman Lovett's absence. The Committee has been meeting through most of the spring and into the summer and is now establishing

its fall schedule. It is charged with making recommendations to the Planning Board and will be scheduled to make its final recommendations at the October 25 Planning Board meeting. The public is encouraged to attend the meeting.

Selectman Torr pointed out to the committee updates posted on the Town website as an excellent source of information.

The Chair reported that the budget process began with a review of outside agency requests at last week's workshop. The final review of the 13 organizations who have submitted requests for funding will be included in the formal budget process.

The Chair informed that U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte will be in Meredith for a town hall style meeting for Belknap County on Friday October 21 from 12-1 p.m. State Representative Bob Greenmore and state Representatives Worsman and state Senator Forrester will be available for a town hall meeting at the Wickwas Grange on the evening of November 16. The public is invited to attend both meetings and share comments.

NEW BUSINESS:

11-54 Appointment to Cable TV Advisory Committee

The Town Manager recommends the appointment of Bruce Reichlen to the Cable TV Advisory Committee. Mr. Reichlen has come before the Board on cable issues, and is a member of the ZBA. He has considerable personal and professional experience in the field, and will be an asset to the process. The Town Manager asked the Board to appoint Mr. Reichlin to the Committee for a term to be served until a successor is identified and appointed.

Selectman Torr moved to appoint Bruce Reichlen to the Cable TV Advisory Committee for a term to be served until a successor is identified and appointed. Seconded by Selectman Vadney. 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

The Chair welcomed Mr. Reichlen to the committee. His extensive knowledge and deep interest in the matter will aid in identifying stakeholder positions and reporting them to the Board.

11-55 Resignations from Village Pathways Committee

The Town Manager announced the resignation of Pam Colburn from the Meredith Pathways Committee because of a conflict in schedules. In addition, he was notified by Chairman Liz Lapham that Ginny Lovett, who is a long time member of the committee, has submitted her resignation. Selectman Brothers recently spoke with Ms. Lovett, and shared that she hopes this will be an opportunity for a new member to bring fresh ideas to the committee. The Town Manager will draft a letter of thanks to each for their service to the Town of Meredith.

ADJOURNMENT:

Selectman Vadney motioned to adjourn the Meeting at 6.45 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Torr. 4-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Phillip L. Warren, Town Manager

Colette Worsman, Chairman

Peter F. Brothers, Vice Chairman

Nathan J. Torr

Herbert R. Vadney