

BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of 12-19-11
5:30 p.m.

Selectmen:

Colette Worsman, Chairman
Peter F. Brothers, Vice Chairman
Miller C. Lovett
Nathan J. Torr
Herbert R. Vadney

Town Manager:

Phillip L. Warren

Recording Clerk:

Karin Landry

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:

Minutes of the November 21 and 29, 2011 Non-Public Meetings.

Selectman Torr moved to accept the minutes of the November 21 and 29, 2011 non-public meetings as presented. Seconded by Selectman Vadney. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

- The Cattle Landing docks have been delivered and will be moved to the site for installation during the week.
- A grant for milfoil control processes in the amount of \$10,000 was awarded to the town. The funds will be applied towards next year's milfoil eradication program; including diver assisted harvesting in Meredith Bay and chemical treatments in Fish Round and Tommys Cove.
- The employee Christmas party will be held on Wednesday, December 21 from 12-2 p.m. at the community center. The event will be pot luck, and there will be no expenditures to the town other than the cost of those attending. Town Hall and Public Works will be closed from 12-2 p.m. Notification of the closures was posted in the Weekly Message. Parks & Recreation employees will attend when possible.
- The Conservation Commission voted on Thursday to allow the Town to drill a test well on conservation land off Bonnie Shores Rd. The land is not inside the town forest, but is close to it. Testing will take place once the well is drilled, and if the results are favorable, a full pump test will be performed. Preliminary research indicates that the site has a high probability of meeting DES standards. The process is part of the well exploratory bid spearheaded by the water system committee.
- The Chair briefly reported on the workshop prior to the meeting wherein the Waukegan Watershed Advisory Committee made a substantial presentation outlining what they have done

over the past year, and the direction they wish to take in the upcoming year. A number of issues were discussed, including testing water coming into the Lake, and an outreach proposal for a charette or other type of community gathering in July to discuss Lake Waukewan and the purity of the water coming into the water system.

VISITOR'S AND RESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

Paula Trombley, president of Friends of Meredith Parks and Recreation, commented on the article published in the *Laconia Citizen* on December 6 relating to budget cuts for the Parks & Recreation department. The article reported that the Board endorsed cutting the Parks & Recreation budget by \$26,573 at its December 5 budget workshop. Cuts include a reduction in community center hours and a proposal for discontinuing activities such as 4th of July activities, the street dance, Easter egg hunt, and Fall Family Fun Fest. The article suggests that local civic groups and businesses might be willing to finance some of the concerts and many of the cuts could be restored with private funds raised by the Friends. Cuts were suggested in other areas such as the library, public works, and legal services, but in none of those areas was there a suggestion that programs would be restored with private funds. The Board of the Friends feels strongly that it abides by its mission statement and has fully met its obligations to Parks & Recreation, including assisting many programs through funding, personal time, and talent, and that it is not its responsibility to fill in budget gaps or cuts the Selectboard or Town Manager propose. Restoring the programs with private funds puts an additional burden of a select group of businesses and residents who are already meeting their property tax obligations. On behalf of the Board of Friends, she asked the Board to consider putting the proposed cuts back in the budget.

Selectman Brothers appreciates Ms. Trombley coming before the Board. He explained that in order to fully understand the difficulties faced with the 2012 budget, all deliberations must be considered. The Board worked hard to meet the charge to maintain the same approximate level of taxation for the town portion while facing a significant decline in revenues from sources other than tax dollars for four years in a row. There were lengthy discussions on maintaining staffing and level of service, and essential vs. non-essential priorities. All department heads were charged with identifying ways to economize while maintaining as high a level of programming as possible in view of increases in fixed costs such as medical insurance and heating oil. It is hoped that there are businesses that will support these types of endeavors from a marketing standpoint, where the town has been faced with making difficult choices. He pointed to the success of the public/private partnership for the Childs Park project, and stressed that the Board is not trying to put the burden on Friends or any other organization, but rather is hoping it will spurn some creative thinking.

Selectman Lovett thanked Ms. Trombley for coming. He explained that the December 5 budget workshop was tough for everyone involved. The Board is restrained by the amount of money received in addition to what is raised by taxes. A policy has been in place for several years not to raise the amount of money raised by taxes, and it was felt that the additional cuts are necessary in order to avoid an increase in what is paid by residents. The Board directed the Town Manager to identify approximately \$200,000 in additional cuts to the budget. It is difficult for the Board to be put in the position of making such decisions and it acknowledges the pain of everyone involved. While Mr. Lovett hopes the programs will continue to be offered, it can't be with money from the Town.

Selectman Vadney wonders if it is incumbent on the Board to identify possible impediments to local clubs, citizens, industry, or business picking up programs. If the Town is going to step down from running the events, there should be some type of guidance for anyone wishing to take

over. He invited anyone who wishes to participate to contact the Selectmen or Town Manager, and to let them know if they encounter impediments in doing so.

Chair Worsman believes that asking private businesses or organizations to take over the events ties in well with goals. Issues such as promoting or hindering businesses, and appropriate sponsorship of an event need to be addressed in a workshop.

The Town Manager informed that while financial support would come from outside groups, the majority of the events will continue to be run by Parks & Recreation.

Selectman Torr had nothing to add to the conversation that had not already been said.

Ms. Trombley told the Board that she understands the difficulties of the situation it is faced with, and clarified that the objections are not so much to cuts in the budget as asking the Friends to fill in budget gaps with private fundraising, as they do not feel it is their responsibility to do so. The Chair explained that it was not the intention of the discussion that took place that fundraising would be an addition to the Friends' charge.

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

Selectman Torr reported that the next Board meeting is the budget hearing scheduled for January 9 at 5:30 p.m. at the community center. If a workshop is scheduled prior to that meeting, it will be posted on the website. Town elections are scheduled for January 10.

NEW BUSINESS:

11-62 Consider Appointment to Cable TV Advisory Committee

The Town Manager informed that resident Warren Clark wishes to serve as a member of the Cable TV Advisory Committee. He will be out of town from January 6 through February 16, however, the committee will not be very active at that time. The Town Manager did not request that Mr. Clark fill out a volunteer application, as the Board is familiar with him. The Town Manager highly recommended appointing Warren Clark to the committee for a term until a successor is appointed, and expressed appreciation for his willingness to do so.

Selectman Lovett moved to appoint Warren Clark to the Cable Television Advisory Committee for a term to serve until a successor is appointed. Seconded by Selectman Vadney. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

11-53 Execute Tentative Agreement

The Chair reported that a Tentative Agreement has been agreed upon in the collective bargaining negotiations with the members of the Department of Public Works, Water & Sewer, Buildings & Grounds, and Solid Waste. The Agreement basically mirrors town policy, and there are instances where it refers to the Personnel Policy. The goal was to treat employees as equally as possible. The Agreement provides for a 2 1/2% salary increase retroactive to April 1, 2011. Members have not received any salary increases since the process began. The salary increase will amount to \$32,000, and will be a separate Warrant Article that must be approved at Town Meeting. Any future salary increases under the Agreement will be consistent with what is offered to non-union employees, and will be part of the budget process (step, COLA, and salary adjustment). The entire Agreement must be approved at Town Meeting per RSA 273-A:3(b). If the Warrant

Article is not approved at Town Meeting, negotiations will continue and the parties will need to submit a new Article for approval at a future Town Meeting. The Selectboard supports this Agreement as it is fair, equitable, and is a result of the collective bargaining process. Accordingly, the Board offers to execute a Tentative Agreement with the collective bargaining unit dependant on approval of Town Meeting.

Selectman Vadney clarified that the signing of the Agreement has no meaning unless it is approved at Town Meeting. The Town Manager proposed that the Board vote to have the Tentative Agreement executed by the Town Manager out of session. A final copy of the Agreement was received from the attorneys today and will be posted on the website.

Selectman Brothers thanked the attorneys, Town Manager, and his fellow Board members for the effort that went into the Agreement. The Town Manager thanked the Board for its assistance in negotiating the first Collective Bargaining Agreement, and the employees of the bargaining unit for their patience and understanding. The resulting Agreement is fair and equitable to both parties, and at no point did the negotiations become a complete adversarial process. Although the negotiations were difficult at times, fact finding steps did not have to be taken as was the case in other communities.

The Chair clarified that the Board will move to authorize the Town Manager to sign the Agreement out of session and that the entire Agreement is dependent upon the approval of the contract at Town Meeting. The dollar amount for the salary increase will be a separate Warrant Article.

Selectman Vadney moved that the Board enter into a Tentative Agreement with the State Employees Association of New Hampshire, Inc. SEIU Local 1984, based on the terms and conditions negotiated in the Agreement between said bargaining unit and the Town of Meredith, that the Board approves the Town Manager to execute the actual Tentative Agreement out of session, and that the parties agree, consistent with RSA 273-A:3(b) that the actual Agreement must be approved by Town Meeting. Seconded by Selectman Brothers. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

ADJOURNAMENT:

The Chair announced that the Board will go into a nonpublic meeting per RSA 91-A:3II(a), personnel, following a short recess.

Selectman Torr moved to adjourn the public meeting at 6:35 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Vadney. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Phillip L. Warren, Town Manager

Colette Worsman, Chairman

Peter F. Brothers, Vice Chairman

Miller C. Lovett

Nathan J. Torr

Herbert R. Vadney