

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2005, 5:00 p.m.

Corner Meeting House

Chairman Brian Watterson called the meeting to order at 4:58 p.m., also present were Selectman Reginald Caldwell, Selectman Ronald Cormier, Jr., Town Administrator K. Jeanne Beaudin, Administrative Assistant Cary Lagace, Fire Chief Rick Siegel, Police Chief Vincent Baiocchetti, Town Planner Candace Daigle, Deputy Fire Chief Jim Davis, Kim Ortakales, Jeff Marden, David Morse, Wallace Rhodes, Linda Frawley, Brian Loanes, Mike Cozort, Tom Goulet, Jim Pilliod, George Condodemetreky, Donna Cilley, Ron Mitchell, Mrs. Hoey, Elson Moody, Melanie Nelson of the Citizen, and Ray Carbone of the Daily Sun.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hearing – State of NH, Department of Safety Grant

Chairman Watterson opened the Public Hearing at 5:00 p.m. in accordance with RSA 31:95-b to accept a grant from the State of New Hampshire Department of Safety, Division of Emergency Services in the amount of \$5,240 for the Belmont Fire Department to conduct a tabletop Weapons of Mass Destruction exercise.

Fire Chief Siegel explained that the grant is from Homeland Security to test the response for a major event. Chairman Watterson asked if the exercise would include other communities, Chief Siegel indicated that the exercise is for just Belmont. Linda Frawley asked how this would integrate with the current plans developed for the department, Chief Siegel noted that this is to test that plan.

Chairman Watterson asked what type of exercise would take place, Chief Siegel indicated that it hadn't been set yet however, they are looking into flooding at the Lochmere Dam. Jeff Marden asked if the exercise would be open to the public to watch, Chief Siegel noted that it will be however, depending on the turn out of observers they may need to relocate, it is currently set to take place at the Fire Department.

Chairman Watterson closed the Public Hearing at 5:03 p.m. Selectman Cormier moved to accept the grant from the State of New Hampshire, Department of Emergency Services in the amount of \$5,240 for the Belmont Fire Department to conduct a tabletop Weapons of Mass Destruction exercise. Selectman Caldwell seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

Selectman Caldwell moved to accept the minutes of the meeting held on November 7, 2005 as written. Selectman Cormier seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Town Administrator Beaudin advised the Board of several items that remain pending awaiting further information, including the bids for the new Public Works truck; Bob is acquiring additional bids on International and Mack trucks. She also noted that she is waiting to hear from the State regarding the water line project and waiting for a response from the Union regarding the possible change in health coverage, they have been asked to respond by November 21, 2005.

Public Hearing – Safe Neighborhood Heroes Grant

Chairman Watterson opened the Public Hearing at 5:06 p.m. in accordance with RSA 31:95-b to accept a grant from Safe Neighborhoods Heroes program sponsored by Wal-Mart in the amount of \$1,000.

Chief Siegel explained that he had been approached by Wal-Mart with the offer for the grant, so the department submitted the application and was granted the funds which were used to purchase 4 adult and 4 child CPR mannequins as well as a defibrillator training unit. Linda Frawley commented that it is an above average grant amount and commended the Chief for his efforts.

Chairman Watterson closed the Public Hearing at 5:09 p.m. Selectman Caldwell moved to accept the Safe Neighborhood Heroes program grant sponsored by Wal-Mart in the amount of \$1,000. Selectman Cormier seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Town Hall/Police Department Building

Selectman Cormier presented a PowerPoint program highlighting the need for both a new Town Hall and Police Department. The presentation showed an approximate 7 acre tract of land by the Mill Building as the possible site for the newly proposed combined Town Hall and Police Department. Does the Town need this proposed building, it is the Board of Selectmen's opinion that it does.

He noted that it would be the hope that if the new building were to move forward that once vacated the current Police Department and Corner Meeting House buildings would be used for a Recreation office and possible Community Center.

The PowerPoint presentation showed many areas of both Town Hall and the Police Department with very cramped areas, files and file cabinets lining hallways and stacked one on top of the other. Many offices accommodate more than one employee. Neither building offers any meeting space.

With the community growing and the demand for service on the rise these buildings have reached their maximum capacity. Each building has its own unique problems, the Town Hall has structural problems on the second floor which needed support beams to be installed for roof trusses that are falling, and it has air quality problems with several areas running air purification units. Also Town Hall is working to implement changes structurally and other for ADA compliance. These are just a few of the many problems the plague the building.

The Police Department has safety issues with the interview room being too small to accommodate more than one officer at a time with a suspect. The Dispatch Center is cramped and not as secure as it should be. The Chiefs office is very small and not conducive to the type of work being performed by him. Some safety upgrades have been done but it's not enough. The Department has outgrown the space.

Selectman Cormier noted that interest rates are on the rise and with the Town having very little debt, 2006-2007 would be a good time to move ahead with such a project. The housing studies that have been done show the community growing and it will continue to do so.

The Board of Selectmen have looked into bond cost but have also looked into alternative funding methods, there will be revenues associated with the new growth, funds from the municipal facility capital reserve and revenues added back into the community from the reopening of the Dog Track that could be utilized as off setting funds as well.

The discussion was then opened up to the audience. There was discussion regarding the funding from the Pari-mutuel Commission (Dog Track) with Selectman Cormier noting that the Town has been operating without the revenues from that source and they would like to earmark those funds for this project once the revenues are received again. There was also discussion regarding the implementation of impact fees, it was noted that Mr. Mayberry is currently working on it and the ordinance currently in place would require an amendment to support a fee schedule.

Ray Carbone asked for clarification on the use of the Police Department and Corner Meeting House buildings. Selectman Cormier explained that the idea is the utilize the Corner Meeting House for meeting space for community organizations, such as the Boy Scouts, the Belmont Baseball Organization and Bogie Busters to name few, that are currently being turned away when requesting meeting space because the facility is already in use for Town boards and commissions. Chairman Watterson noted

that the idea for the Police Department building will be used for Recreation Committee functions such as the day program. It would also house the Recreation Director who will temporarily be housed in an office trailer at the Old Highway Garage lot.

Jeff Marden commented that the downstairs of the Town Hall does not have to be accessible by the handicapped in order to be ADA compliant, only that reasonable accommodations need to be made such as meeting up stairs with the individual.

Budget Committee Chairman Ron Mitchell commented that for many years band-aid repairs have been being done and that type of approach can only be done for so long. He expressed that staff can't be stuffed in closets and he would like to see a facility that can be accessed by all, with functionality. He understands the cost to the taxpayers will be a big issue, but that through hard work and alternative funding the project can move forward and not have to be looked at again for 30 years.

Mrs. Hoey asked that the Historical Society's need for a building for a museum be taken into consideration when deciding what to do with the buildings that may become vacant if the project moves forward.

George Condodemetreky commented that the maintenance costs need to be included in the cost projections when they are presented. He also commented that he feels the second floor of the Town Hall should be built out instead of a new building, Ron Mitchell commented that the roof is falling, the trusses are failing, there is no parking, no circulation and the Town continues to put more and more money into it, he does not support putting more money into the Town Hall building. Mr. Mitchell feels the problem needs to be fixed right, by building a new building for the Town Hall and Police Department, so the Town does not have to worry about it again for 30 years.

Linda Frawley expressed that she supported the project and suggested that as noted in the report by the Town Hall Study Committee report that funding through grant programs such as US Rural Development and the other noted in the report be pursued. She also suggested the utilization of the Local Government Center for classes related to such projects.

There was discussion regarding the other Community entities that are also looking into projects that may all come before the voters at the same time. It was noted that the School is looking at a building project and the Library is moving forward with their addition project which may also come before the voters in the same time frame. Chairman Watterson indicated that it was likely this could happen, but he feels strongly that the Town Hall/Police Department project can't wait and ultimately the voters will decide.

Tom Goulet suggested that if the Town were to put some of the real estate that the project would free up back on the tax roll it would make the project look more favorable. Selectman Cormier noted that the Town Hall building is salable and that it would definitely be pursued.

Chairman Watterson called for a recess from 6:20 to 6:25.

Winnisquam Fire Department Budget

Town Administrator Beaudin advised the Board that in addition to the two previous options proposed the Fire Chief and Deputy have come forward with a third option. The first option was for full-time staff, the second option was for part-time staff, the third option is for call staff. She noted the new option could move forward as of April 1, 2006 and would utilize call staff at call wages, this proposal would see a budget request of \$70,537. If this option were implemented as of January the request would be approximately \$82,000.

Chairman Watterson commented that the Board has not heard from the other communities regarding their support of the budget for Winnisquam Fire Department, but they can't wait any longer a decision needs to be made now. He noted that as the level of funding from the other communities is not known the Board may want to take the lesser of the budget options.

Chairman Watterson moved to fund the \$70,537 for the Winnisquam Fire Department budget. Selectman Caldwell seconded the motion.

There was discussion regarding response to the other communities if they choose not to support the requested budget for the Winnisquam Fire Department. Chief Siegel noted that Sanbornton would still have to respond as would WFD in a Mutual Aid situation. Ron Mitchell commented that they would get out pretty cheap due to Mutual Aid if they choose not to support it and he feels the other communities should step up and support the budget.

Chief Siegel commented that the other communities may cut back their request for assistance from the Winnisquam Fire Department. He also commented that the citizens just want assistance to show up when needed.

Selectman Cormier noted that the Board had considered a fee for service program but that has problems, also if we fund and they don't, they get a huge benefit, forcing Belmont to look to the more affordable option in case the other communities don't support the budget.

It was suggested that the Department be left as it is, Chairman Watterson explained that they are a private corporation that is going out of business, and they can no longer provide the service at the level that they feel is necessary. It has been a very difficult decision for them to make. Town Administrator Beaudin commented that it is a very difficult situation for all of them involved in the decision at the Winnisquam Fire Department.

With no further discussion Chairman Watterson called for a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was set for November 28, 2005 at 5:00 p.m. at the Corner Meeting House.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Brian Watterson, Chairman

Reginald Caldwell

Ronald Cormier, Jr.