

Lincoln Board of Selectmen - Meeting Minutes
October 6, 2008 - 5:00 pm

Present: Chairman Peter Moore, Selectman Patricia McTeague, Selectman Deanna Huot, Town Manager Peter Joseph, Administrative Assistant Susan Chenard
Woodstock Board of Selectmen: Chairman Joel Bourassa, Selectman Jim Fadden and Selectman Gil Rand
Audience members: James Steele, Dan Woods, Charlie Cook, WT Bishop, Bill Conn, Joe Conn, Paul Beaudin, Jennifer Degan

Chairman Moore called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

Routine Business

- **Approval of public meeting minutes of September 29, 2008** - A motion was made by Selectman Huot, seconded by Chairman Moore, to approve the public meeting minutes of September 29, 2008, as amended. The vote was unanimous.
- **Solid Waste Facility Survey Review** – Chairman Moore introduced James Steele of the North Country Council, who introduced Dan Woods, also of the NCC. Mr. Steele distributed copies of the attached PowerPoint, and reviewed this with the Solid Waste Board, which is comprised of the Lincoln and Woodstock Boards of Selectmen. Last November, he was asked to see what could be done under a technical assistance grant for solid waste studies. He and Mr. Woods put together a survey, which was approved by the Solid Waste Board, and had a 24% return rate, which far exceeded the goal of 10%. Unfortunately, the brush burning question was worded vaguely and needed to be scratched. 68% of respondents said they recycle and 71% of them do so at the transfer station. Many seasonal homeowners, however, did not know there was a transfer station in Lincoln/Woodstock nor what could be recycled there. 94% of respondents were satisfied at least to some extent, and 53% were very satisfied. 58% of respondents were not in favor of a pay per throw system, and the results were split on mandatory recycling. The comment section pointed out an interest in adding open hours on Wednesdays or evenings.

Mr. Steele next compared our facility to 6 other local facilities, including Plymouth, which has mandatory recycling, and Campton/Thornton, which has no ordinance, like Lincoln. He described our operational structure, which is good with plenty of oversight, but feels we lack a solid waste/recycling ordinance or written rules. This leaves the facility manager to defend decisions with no written backup. Payroll and benefits fall at about 60% within the range, and holidays are handled like most of the comparable facilities, with employees who work a holiday, taking another day off. Our facility actually has the most open hours and the most hours available to the public. Other facilities have more time where they're working, but closed to the public. Mr. Steele described what type of work gets done on Wednesdays, including administration, training, building and equipment inspection and repair, etc. He feels these hours are very much needed so as not to disrupt business during open hours, and recommends that we keep this system.

Traffic data showed that Thursday is the most used day, probably due to the facility being closed Wednesdays. We have people through at a rate of about 44

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cars per hour, or 345 per day. Memorial Day had 338 users too, so holidays are important. But the 4th of July only showed 87 vehicles, as the facility is closed half the day. Littleton has about the same volume as us.

We seemed to have the highest solid waste transportation contract fees. Mr. Steele noted that all of the comparable facilities except Lancaster are part of the Pemi Baker Solid Waste District (PBSWD), which gets a volume discount. Most facilities had a 3.94% increase through NECPI, while we have a straight 3% increase built into our contract. In comparing fee schedules, disposal costs for some large items are higher, and some are lower than other towns. Overall Lincoln recaptures 95% of the costs to dispose of these items. Disposal fees haven't increased in 10 years, but the 95% figure shows that they are still accurate. We have a higher volume of mixed solid waste (MSW) processed than the other facilities. Our gross operating budget is pretty much in line with the comparable facilities, but our MSW expense is at 27% of the budget as compared to the others at 12-17%. Revenues from recycling and user fees create a net operating expense putting Lincoln/Woodstock on the high end. However, taxpayer cost versus user cost shows a tax cost of about \$42 per year as part of a \$200,000 valuation, right in the middle of the group. The cost per taxpayer in Lincoln is approximately \$26, while Woodstock's is approximately \$86, which is attributed to the tax base per town.

The facility assessment shows our transfer station is clean, friendly, favorably viewed and sufficiently able to handle the levels of materials. Mr. Steele's only area of concern is the high cost of MSW. His recommendations include:

1. Update the facility brochures for distribution to condo associations, residents and businesses.
2. Update the solid waste agreement between the Towns so that it is based on population or housing, and renew it every three years or less.
3. Establish a solid waste ordinance that clearly defines the rules of the facility, fees and handling of materials.
4. Move towards a mandatory recycling system. This will decrease MSW, and increase revenues.
5. Continue bi-annual Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collections. Low turn-out (27 cars this year) and high cost don't warrant more, despite all sorts of advertising.
6. Continue burning brush. This is the most cost-effective way of dealing with it. No fees are assessed and chipping requires more staff, as you should have 2 people, per OSHA.

Mr. Steele also listed some things to consider:

1. Negotiate new pricing with Waste Management for co-mingled materials. We do have the ability to match better prices from others.
2. Separate co-mingled materials for recycling. Baling tin is option, use NRRA glass PGA program (equal amount available back for what you send out), ship plastic to Littleton or Plymouth, as they offer revenue sharing.
3. Install a set of scales. This would improve the fairness in assessing fees for C&D, and insure weights of all materials being shipped to and from the facility.
4. Join the Pemi-Baker Solid Waste District. There is an estimated cost to join, of

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about \$4500, but it would cover the dues to NRRA and all HHW program costs (in various other locations). Our current HHW budget of \$11,500 would be covered too.

5. Participate in PBSWD hazardous waste collections with costs based on our level of participation and be able to go twice per year.

6. Close on July 4th, as there is low turnout when the facility is closed a ½ day already.

Chairman Moore asked facility manger Paul Beaudin to comment. Mr. Beaudin felt that the survey supports what he thought, that they do a good job at the solid waste facility. Changes are made slowly but continuously. He had heard recent comments that people were happy that there were not any big changes made after the survey. He is still trying to resolve the burning brush issue. He would certainly appreciate something in writing in terms of a solid waste ordinance, so he has something specific to enforce. For now, he enforces State rules and regulations about what can be disposed and what can't, as well as our current disposal fees for large items.

Woodstock Chairman Bourassa asked how many facilities do have scales, and Mr. Steele stated that Plymouth has a full-sized one, and Littleton has smaller scales which can't do trucks. Sheetrock costs seem higher for us, which could be because they're based on eyeballing versus exact weight. But as our costs are covered at 95% anyhow, so we're most likely not overcharging. All the facilities were in the same range, with Lisbon lowest at 90%, and Littleton and Plymouth at 100%. Town Manager Joseph asked if the recommendation was for certified scales, which would require regular calibration and training and certification of operators. Mr. Steele confirmed that this was his recommendation. Chairman Moore was happy to see that the study supported that the Wednesday work hours are valuable. We provide good public access in the way of hours and days, and he did not see much call for adding either, as people seem pretty satisfied. Selectman Huot asked if Mr. Beaudin had looked at joining the PBSWD. Mr. Beaudin replied that he had, but they weren't sure at the time what their prices would be and they were already higher than Waste Management. The PBSWD uses Casella Waste, who wouldn't commit to the same level of service that we receive from Waste Management. For example, PBSWD would charge extra for bulky goods, while with Waste Management we have no fuel surcharge, no environmental surcharges for the next 5 years, co-mingled costs stay the same, the haul rate had dropped down, and we can get same day pick-up if needed. Waste Management currently provides the best level of service for the cost, but Mr. Beaudin said he would be glad to check with PBSWD again in the next round of contract negotiations. Chairman Moore asked what the Franconia area facility does for 34 hours per week when they are closed to the public but still working. Mr. Steele explained they only have one vertical baler, and spend most of that time processing material. Lancaster also does most of its processing while closed to the public. Chairman Moore next asked how it would work if the board wanted to set requirements and fees. Mr. Steele said an ordinance could be approved by the joint solid waste board, but that it is a good idea to let the public weigh in first, possibly through a Town Meeting vote. In speaking about mandatory recycling,

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Mr. Steele said that Plymouth casually observes this edict, using an escalating method of enforcement. Usually the first few times are gentle reminders. If the individual still continues to ignore the rules, further enforcement may need to be taken, but this was very rare. He showed the joint board a picture of lots of cardboard going into our compactor. If we could get people to put their cans and bottles into the co-mingled recycling container versus the compactor, it would cost \$55 per ton less. Mr. Beaudin is actually working towards getting someone to buy our co-mingled, rather than paying to have it removed. He is also working with Waste Management to update prices. But things change all the time – metal went from \$144 to \$44 of income per ton recently. With the incinerator removed, we now have more storage and can stockpile on things until the value goes up. Chairman Moore noted that he likes the co-mingled process, as he knows it gets recycled down the line. Separating the items completely would mean another employee, costing about \$40,000, with benefits, etc. He is also investigating becoming a centralized facility.

Woodstock Selectman Jim Fadden noted that we have a high amount of construction debris and compost, and wondered how other communities handle this. Mr. Beaudin felt that scales deter some people who have just an armload or two. Also, construction debris is down by a substantial amount over the last year due to lack of construction. Due to the many property maintenance companies here, we have about 250 tons of brush or compost as opposed to other towns' much smaller amounts, Mr. Beaudin said. None is commercial, and all of it comes by homeowners' pickup or trunk loads. One property maintenance company alone generates about 100 yards of leaves per year, for example, and we don't have the room to handle it for all the companies, so typically we don't accept commercial brush, etc. However, our facility does help out with businesses when they're in a bind. We do compost and that is well-received. Selectman Fadden asked again how other communities handle brush and Mr. Steel said that everyone burns, other than Campton/Thornton, which uses someone from Manchester, who brings a chipper on site and chips in exchange for the chipped material.

Regarding hazardous waste collection, we pay \$1500-\$2500 per year per Town now, and could instead pay a combined \$4500 to PBSWD. Our number is based on two collections. If we were to join the PBSWD, we would have to go to Plymouth or Littleton, but could go twice per year with the chemicals, etc. Mr. Beaudin said he and James Steel are looking at collecting all year long and having a centralized event here annually. Facility users would have all summer to drop off the materials, as they sometimes forget about the one day event. It is very costly to have single items of hazardous waste picked up, but we are looking to have a collection facility.

Selectman Huot asked Mr. Beaudin if a recycling ordinance would give him help. How would he envision enforcement of fees/fines? Mr. Steele suggested denying use of the facility for certain periods of time to repeat offenders. If we were to use fines, the ordinance would need to go before Town Meeting. Mr. Beaudin suggested instituting a clear bag policy. Selectman Fadden wondered how much we want to change for such a small cost of \$26-\$86 per year. Selectmen Huot and McTeague felt we should encourage recycling, but be careful how to do it. Clear

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bags and policies stating that we want to recycle will send that message and encourage it, without necessitating fines. Mr. Beaudin said we could also supply clear bags with the savings that change would generate.

Selectman Fadden explained that the most economical way to get rid of brush is to burn it, but using a chipper or tub grinder may be necessary. He feels we should digest the results and have another meeting to accept the results and decide which, if any, recommendations we might take. Mr. Beaudin noted that he would be against the scales as he doesn't want to charge for armloads, but would have to, to make the calculations correct.

The Board opened the subject to public participation at 6:22pm. Charlie Cook said that as a taxpayer, he is happy with the way it is, and the study results bear that out. If 60% of the users are seasonal and 45% transport to facility themselves, the rest must use dumpsters. We need to promote recycling around town too, including Town Hall. 57% of respondents use the facility, so he wondered how one could recycle at resorts. Selectman Bourassa said they sort at Pollard Brook. Mr. Cook asked why we don't take tires, and Mr. Beaudin replied that Stan's Tire Barn takes them. Selectman Huot asked Mr. Beaudin if he would like an ordinance, and he replied he would, if the Board stands behind it. Bill Conn pointed out that any ordinance would cover only the facility, not private dumpsters. Chairman Moore would like something in writing for Mr. Beaudin. Woodstock Selectman Fadden, Lincoln Chairman Moore, Mr. Steele and Mr. Beaudin might sit down and make recommendations to be brought before the joint board. Town Manager Joseph felt the cost factor (how much money the Town would save by increased recycling versus disposing of mixed solid waste) should be the major concern of the Town. We can save money for the Towns by recycling more, as opposed to continuing with our high MSW amounts and low recycling amounts. Selectman Fadden and Chairman Moore feel our rate schedule may need some fine-tuning.

Chairman Moore summarized by saying we're back where we started. We still have a good facility, but we do have some recommendations to fine-tune and perhaps save money in the long run. He felt we have a good manager who stays on top of changes in the field. Educating the public is definitely important; we need to let them know we're here. Better signage at facilities may help, but a bulk mailing may not be as good. Signs and posters throughout town may be another thought.

Mr. Beaudin pointed out that many second home owners have laminated their dump stickers and keep them at their condos, to use for different vehicles or visitors. However, we have had as many as 30 people from out of town try to use our facility, usually from area towns when their facility is closed or if they are working in our towns and it is just more convenient for them. However, as they do not pay taxes here, we need to police this, which we do by providing property owners here with the facility stickers after proof of residency.

Bill Conn asked who was happy with the current management at the solid waste facility. Each of the six board members agreed that they were happy and that the work that Mr. Beaudin does on Wednesdays is important. The joint board agreed that a subcommittee should meet and bring back suggestions based on the results

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of the study. Selectmen McTeague and Huot mentioned they were happy to have the facility open on holidays.

Mr. Conn hoped that the NCC would do a future study on the recreation and police departments.

The Solid Waste Board adjourned at 6:44pm, and the Lincoln Board of Selectmen continued after the Woodstock Selectmen and others left.

- **Trick or Treating Plans** – Town Manager Joseph read a memo from Police Chief Smith saying that we will be closing off School and Church Streets to through traffic from 5pm to 8pm again this year for Halloween. Selectman Huot said it went very well last year.
- **FEMA Update** – Town Manager Joseph distributed a memo describing his conversation with Kevin Merli, Mitigation Director of FEMA in Boston, MA. The re-mapping has been on hold for over a year, but now has funding, and FEMA has contracted our mapping to CDM. A rough draft of maps should be back to FEMA in about 4 months. The public input process should be done by this time next year. Then FEMA will officially adopt those new maps. Any construction started before then can use the old insurance rates. Our “levee” does not qualify as a flood control device for various reasons. It does provide other benefits, like stabilizing the river route. FEMA would not require rehabbing it, but will just ignore it as a flood control device. Any work we want to do to the levee would be a political and economic decision by the Town. Until new maps are adopted, the planning and zoning boards should use the old maps for now, but it would be a personal decision of the builders or owners if they decide to build in a future flood plain. Mr. Merli warned that there would be much engineering work and costs before we could even start any work. Charlie Cook felt were still where we were two years ago. The Corps of Engineers decertified the levee a year or two ago. There was some discussion of maintenance by the Town or the Corps. We would need to completely rebuild it, which is prohibitively expensive. Mr. Cook also mentioned that there is a limit to the FEMA flood insurance of \$250,000, while the affected homes are worth more. He estimated engineering alone would be a million at least, so it would end up as a Town Meeting warrant article for that amount before we could even have firm engineering cost estimates. Town Manager Joseph said there would be a public presentation on the draft maps in about 4 months. Mr. Cook felt we should work on local Senators to try to get money for the review.
- **Town Manager’s Report** –
 - Motor vehicle revenues are up \$2,000 over last year at this time, which is a good sign.
 - The Town Manager will be reviewing current year to date budgets with department heads on October 7th.

Other Business

- Town Manager Joseph noted that next Monday was Columbus Day and wondered if the Selectmen intended to hold a meeting next week. The Board felt that it was not necessary, and the next meeting was set for October 20th, at 5PM.

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- The Town Manager handed out a consumer price index schedule for the northeast region. Based on a rolling 12 month average, we're looking at 3.98% increase. Of course this could change based on how the rest of the year goes. Selectman Huot felt the 2.5% and 2.5% pay increases fall in this range, and asked the Town Manager to limit the department heads to a 4% percentage maximum budget increase. Peter Joseph noted that capital projects are on the horizon, such as water projects, roads and streets, moving a water pump station, etc. Many of these items cannot be pushed off anymore and need to happen in the next few years. Chairman Moore agreed it would be nice to have a percentage increase goal, but Selectman McTeague felt it would be very difficult to keep to it. The Chairman wondered how a 5% pay increase fits into a 4% department budget. Mr. Cook, as budget committee chairman, noted that we have been slicing the operations budgets to pay the personnel budgets for the past several years, and this only works for a while. The Town portion of taxes is the only one that faces voters, and we have done an admirable job so far. Chairman Moore said we need to look at wages for other similar towns. Mr. Cook felt that what we pay our employees is fair to minimal. Town Manager Joseph said we have had an increase in town tax base, which will help keep the overall Town rate low. Chairman Moore felt that now is the time to increase rates or use a low interest rate bond. There was a discussion of the bedroom tax and 6-year limit. Mr. Cook asked that the Board not forget water and sewer tap fees. Selectman Huot explained that we pay several bonds from the water tap fees, and are holding sewer tap fees to offset the costs of cleaning the lagoons. WT Bishop asked about the credit market and the Town Manager said that the bond market may be significantly affected by the credit crunch. Chairman Moore asked that we keep the Bog Brook/Parker Road project on the table. Town Manager Joseph said he and Public Works Director Willey are looking at engineering RFP's now. WT Bishop talked about street lights that are on, and the solar speed limit sign.
- The Boyle family would like to donate a memorial bench to the Town. We will have a hearing to accept it at the October 20th meeting. The Boyle's have talked with Brian Baker at InnSeasons to coordinate placing it in the Memorial Park. The bench will be all granite, made of 3 slabs with engraving on the seat side. We would do the mounting and provide a base, and they will pay for it to be mounted.
- Administrative Assistant Chenard asked which Selectmen would be attending the Local Government Center's annual meeting.
- Selectman McTeague asked if anything was happening with the business park. The Town Manager replied that there had been nothing in the past few weeks, but that he has been in contact with individuals who have expressed future interest.
- Selectman Huot wanted to express that she was very supportive of the solid waste facility and that the figures in the survey bear that out.

Public Participation

Mr. Cook asked about the progress of a community heating assistance program. He wondered what the developers were doing with wood they're cutting. Maybe the Chamber of Commerce could put people together. Maybe even having those logging near Main Street stack it with a sign showing "free wood" near the street may be an option. The board felt speaking with the Chamber was a good idea.

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WT Bishop asked about the new heating system at the community center. The insulation company is lined up, and Recreation Department Director Tower spoke with them today. Mr. Bishop is happy to see us get on the curve with recycling.

At 8:03 pm, the meeting was adjourned and the Board of Selectmen reviewed payroll and accounts payable check registers for the week ending October 5, 2008.

Date: _____

Approved by:

Chairman Peter Moore
McTeague

Selectman Deanna Huot

Selectman Patricia