

Lincoln Board of Selectmen – Meeting Minutes

April 20, 2009 – 5:00 pm

Present: Chairman Peter Moore, Selectman Patricia McTeague, Town Manager Peter Joseph and Administrative Assistant Susan Chenard

Audience: Commissioner Ray Burton and Charlie Cook

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:10 pm.

Routine Business

- **Approval of the Public Meeting Minutes of April 13, 2009** - A **motion** was made by Selectman McTeague, seconded by Chairman Moore, to approve the public meeting minutes of April 13, 2009, as amended. The vote was unanimous.
- **Meet with Grafton County Commissioner Ray Burton** – Commissioner Burton introduced himself, stating he was before the board for his bi-annual visit. He distributed literature regarding the budget and the county, as well as prescription savings cards.

The Commissioner noted that there would be a meeting at 10am on April 30, 2009 to discuss a revised proposal on the jail, which would reduce the number of beds from 200 to 150 and reduce the cost from \$38 million to roughly \$32.8 million. The County now heads to the Supreme Court in further litigation on this subject. County costs in this on-going lawsuit are at over \$355 thousand so far, with an additional \$15 thousand expected at the Supreme Court level. Decisions should be handed down in the late fall, meaning no construction will occur this year.

A public meeting on the Commissioners' proposed budget is scheduled for 7pm on May 26, 2009. At this point the delegation will assign themselves various departments to review, and by the end of June, approve, deny or amend the budget.

The Grafton County Nursing Home continues to be one of the best in the State, passing its annual inspection with zero deficiencies. It received the coveted Quality of Life award last year.

The Chairman opened the meeting to discussion, and the topic reverted to the proposed jail. He requested that all associated costs be related as one figure, including water, sewer, furnishings, etc. He would also like to see a good estimate of operating costs. Charlie Cook thought that the population in Grafton County was shrinking, but the Commissioner said it was not. Mr. Cook also asked how Sullivan County was able to build their jail for \$6 million, and Commissioner Burton said he would respond in writing to that question. Chairman Moore reiterated that the Selectmen agreed a new facility was needed, but smaller and less expensive than the original, and one with a sound financial plan. Regarding litigation, Mr. Cook asked why the County Attorney did not handle this, but the Commissioner said that he already had a full schedule. Selectman McTeague asked if a new bond vote on the smaller jail proposal would not

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invalidate the \$38 million vote, thereby making the court case a moot point. The Commissioner replied that there were 4 parts to the appeal, and so far, the county's attorney and the litigants' attorney had not come to terms. The discussion turned towards budgets. Currently \$100,000 is budgeted for legal costs each year. The difference would come from unexpended funds, of which there was \$1.9 million as of this date. Chairman Moore asked if there had been a directive to stay within a certain percentage of growth across the entire budget, and the Commissioner replied that there had been a goal of zero growth, so he expected only a very small increase to the Towns. Selectman McTeague asked about finances at the nursing home, as the State was continuing to shift responsibilities towards the County level, and the Commissioner agreed that this budget had to be increased. Grant applications are in process and there is hope for some stimulus money to buffer this. The farm continues trying to earn money, selling 10 heifers, planning to sell up to 100 pigs, and opening up the farm stand again soon. It does make a loss of over \$60,000 per year while keeping 5-6 inmates busy. Commissioner Burton noted that supervised inmate labor is available to the Towns, but there is a waiting list. He also stated that the jail loses about \$1 million per year, and the Sheriff's department loses money as well. The Commissioners would like to use our conference room for a public meeting after the budget is proposed, and Commissioner Burton will coordinate with the Town Manager on this.

There was some discussion on the proposed biomass (wood chip) heating plant. This would save the County thousands of dollars throughout the complex, help the local forest industry, be good for the environment, and pay for itself in the long run. Commissioner Martha Richards is on the energy conservation committee and a \$5.5 million grant request has been made to the rural development agency in the federal government for this project.

Charlie Cook asked if a capital reserve fund had been established in preparation for future replacements of facilities like the jail, but the Commissioner stated that the County Delegation would re-appropriate the funds elsewhere, so it did not make sense. However, a \$50,000 capital reserve fund for the nursing home had just been created.

As Commissioner Burton was preparing to leave, he mentioned a moose safety video he had helped to create as a public education tool. He mentioned that Dr. McLaren of Littleton Hospital had been involved, and revealed that his studies had found that most moose collisions occurred between 11pm and 1am during breeding and calving seasons. This 8-minute CD should be out very soon, and the Town Manager asked that it also be made available in digital format so it could be placed on the Town website.

After promising written responses to any questions that may have been unanswered at this meeting, and to push for new no parking signage on Main Street, Commissioner Burton left at 6:25pm.

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- **Discussion on tax deeding of properties** – Town Manager Joseph invited the Selectmen to stop into his office and review each folder at their leisure over the next few weeks, making notes of their suggestions. Some parcels are saleable sites, while others could be refused if there would be a liability or detriment to the Town to take them. The next full board meeting would be on May 18th, and the discussion and decision could be held at that time, prior to the May 20th deadline.
- **Public Works Information Management Data Collection** – The Town Manager distributed figures for this project. The current Engineering & Planning Capital Reserve Fund Balance was \$31,051. Subtracting ongoing mapping work held over from 2008 (\$7,600) and associated costs to convert the assessing system to new map numbers (\$3,000) would leave \$20,451 in the fund. However, the quoted data collection cost is slightly more, at \$21,730, besides software and computer costs of \$6,200 and linking tie cards costs of \$1,200. Tim Fountain of Cartographic Associates (CAI) is willing to work with us to split up the collection costs over this and next year. After some discussion regarding how busy Public Works Director Bill Willey would be next year with the 4-road project, the Selectmen directed the Town Manager to see if CAI would do the data collection for the money we have available. Town Manager Joseph also noted that the \$3,000 assessing cost quote may be high, so we might have more available for CAI.
- **Review of draft purchasing policy** – The Selectmen reviewed the draft purchasing policy and found it very good, covering many situations while staying simple enough to be easily understood. There was one slight amendment suggested, and the town manager will bring it back before the full board in late May for approval.
- **Town Manager’s Report** – The Town Manager’s Report’s first three items were covered and confirmed in the conversation with Commissioner Burton, including budget hearing date, jail costs and litigation costs. The final item was regarding the start of the process for an updated “all-hazards” mitigation plan. This would be a combination of the wildfire and hazard mitigation plans. The Town Manager attended the first meeting today with North Country Council, the police and fire chiefs, public works director and planning board representative. There will be two more public meetings which the Selectmen may wish to attend, scheduled for May 5th at 2pm in the Town Manager’s office and on May 19th at 6pm in the conference room.

Other Business

- The Selectmen signed a timber tax levy for MDR South Peak.
- Chairman Moore was asked to sign a letter for the auditors.

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- Chairman Moore and Selectman McTeague will attend the school breakfast function on Tuesday, May 26th from 7:30-10:00 am.
- The Town Manager has been working with Certified Computer Solutions on getting our system to back up all emails on a separate hard drive. Legally, we need to keep records of all emails. This should cost a few hundred dollars.
- As required for our NPDES permit, we will be doing testing during this high water flow time, to see if any inflow is coming from private developments. If so, they will need to fix any problems on their private property themselves. Flow Assessment has quoted \$9800 to do the testing at the junctions with the Village of Loon, Clearbrook and Coolidge Falls this spring. Other resorts will be scheduled for a later date. The Town Manager suggested using sewer tap fee funds for this project. Steve LaFrance of Horizons Engineering referred this company to us and said this was a good rate. Chairman Moore approved the expenditure.
- Chairman Moore asked if we had had to borrow funds from ourselves yet, and Town Manager Joseph said we had not, but would most likely need to when the next school payment was due. He will check again if the SAU is willing to work with us on the timing of this.
- The Town Manager will also check again on where the heat is going at the community center. The controls are working well, and the building is staying at 70 degrees now, but fuel is still being used very quickly, most likely due to lack of insulation.
- Town Manager Joseph reported further on the meeting regarding the Beechwood roads. They will be going ahead with Steve LaFrance of Horizons Engineering's quote for a cursory review of that infrastructure, and should have a response within a month. We reiterated that utilities like phone, cable and electric are not the Town's responsibility. It was also proposed to have overhead lines for utilities if it was a significant cost savings. The Town Manager will check with Local Government Center about the village districting. Larry Sinsimer will be working on managing realistic expectations among the homeowners. There was also a discussion of the road in front of the Mountain Club. Loon has been keeping an eye on the pavement, which has not settled further in several years. The Town will eventually have to fix the road and roadbed, while Loon's responsibility is for everything else, including retaining walls, guard rails, etc. Chairman Moore asked that plans for future repairs be put into the deeds in writing, but noted that it was good to have all the parties at the table now.

Public Participation

Charlie Cook reiterated that the County needs to create and use a capital reserve fund. With a capital improvement plan, the delegates could be convinced not to re-appropriate the funds. He suggested that the Grafton County Municipal Association should focus on getting the County to plan better. The Town Manager has been speaking to Representatives Susan Ford and Edmond Gionet, and town managers at other, larger Grafton County towns already.

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Mr. Cook noted that the Town painted no parking signs on the road in the fall, but this winter, under the snow, they could not be seen. Pole signs are important, and the Town Manager agreed, saying he has been waiting for a year for these.

Mr. Cook also suggested not bonding the paving on the 4-road project, as the pavement would not last as long as the bond.

Finally, Mr. Cook asked what would happen if it did not rain during the testing phase for flow assessment. Chairman Moore asked the Town Manager to double-check, but it was highly likely it would rain over the 4-week testing period.

At 7:30 pm, the audience left, and a **motion** was made by Chairman Moore, seconded by Selectman McTeague, to enter into **non-public session** per RSA 91-A:3 II(a). The vote was unanimous. The Board discussed two personnel issues regarding compensation. The Selectmen agreed to an adjustment of salary for one employee to be retroactive to January 1, 2009. The second issue concerned a performance review, and it was decided to suspend an anniversary raise for 6 months on a probationary basis, to be granted at the supervisor's discretion. At 7:45 pm, a **motion** was made by Selectman McTeague, seconded by Chairman Moore, to reconvene the public session. The decision was unanimous.

At 7:50 pm, the meeting was adjourned and the Board of Selectmen reviewed payroll and accounts payable check registers for the week ending April 12, 2009.

Date: _____

Approved by:

Chairman Peter Moore

(not present) _____
Selectman Deanna Huot

Selectman Patricia McTeague