

Lincoln Board of Selectmen – Meeting Minutes  
February 7, 2011

**Board of Selectmen Present:** Chairman Peter Moore, Selectman Deanna Huot and Selectman Patricia McTeague.

**Staff:** Town Manager Peter Joseph, Administrative Assistant Brook Rose, Planning & Zoning Administrator Matt Henry and Police Chief Ted Smith.

**Members of the Public:** Laurel Brown, Don Chase, Susan Chenard, Tamra and Jon Ham, JJ Bujeaud, Bonnie Ham, David Talbot, Lutz and Mrs. Wallem, Jack Pollner, Kevin McNamara, Adam Garon, Jim Spanos, Matt Manning.

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Peter Moore called the meeting to order at 5:40PM.

## **II. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**MOTION:** Deanna Huot made a motion that the meeting minutes of January 31, 2011 be approved as amended. Patricia McTeague seconded the motion. Motion carries.

## **III. PRESENTATION ON THE NORTHERN PASS PROJECT**

Peter Moore addressed the audience and stated that the meeting was being held for informational purposes only. Laurel Brown and Don Chase, representatives from The Northern Pass Project, attended the meeting to present the project to the Board. They reviewed the purpose and overview of the proposed project, project benefits, proposed line routing, construction, permitting and approvals (a 2-2 ½ year process), as well as the project time line. Ms. Brown explained that the project provides a unique opportunity to bring 1200 megawatts (MW) of low-carbon renewable energy without cost premiums to help meet NH clean energy goals. PSNH leads the region in their use of renewable energy sources. Ms. Brown explained that the project is a proposed transmission project, predominately hydro-power, that will run from Quebec to New England (NE). The benefits of the project include a lower regional average market price of electricity as well as the lack of a “transmission charge” to an individual's electric bill. 1200 MW of power would bring electricity to one million homes. This resource diversity adds hydroelectric power to the region's fuel mix which will help to guard against fuel shortages and price volatility. The regional carbon dioxide emissions would be reduced by up to 5 million tons per year. The project will create 1200 jobs per year over a 3 year phase. Preference on those jobs will be given to local labor although the installation of direct current (DC) transmissions lines is a highly skilled profession. Local jobs generated by this project would be more in the line of job site preparation and landscape restoration to name a few. Ms. Brown added that the local hospitality industry would also greatly benefit during construction. The estimated tax revenue is 15 to 20 million dollars annually in new local, state and county taxes.

Don Chase explained the three major components of the project. The first being that the line will extend 140 miles from Quebec to central NH. The second is that a converter terminal proposed for Franklin, NH to convert DC power from Quebec to alternating current (AC) power for distribution on New England's electric grid. The third is a 345 kilovolt AC transmission line

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extending from the terminal to the existing Deerfield, NH Substation which is another 40 miles long. The total distance of the project extends 180 miles. Mr. Chase went on to explain line routing goals which include utilizing existing transmission rights of ways (ROW), minimizing impacts to social and natural resources while still meeting the technical requirements of the project. He added that parts of the proposed preliminary route may change throughout the permitting process due to input from communities and local organizations in coordination with federal and state agencies. Mr. Chase explained that they are applying for a special use permit to put an additional transmission line through the national forest. Currently, they have a permit for one line. There are 4.6 miles in the existing ROW proposed for Lincoln. The project will go through 10 miles of National Forest. He added that in most cases, the wider the ROW, the lower the structure. The new structures are approximately 90-130 feet tall and the current structures are 40-70 feet. The route of the line will cross the Appalachian Trail and as the project crosses international borders, it requires a presidential permit. A full environmental impact statement will also be required to assess environmental impacts.

Mr. Chase stated that every new mile of transmission line adds approximately 2.5 million dollars to a community's local tax base. He added that the United States Department of Energy will hold public meetings in NH in early 2011. Federal and state regulatory review and public evaluation of the proposed project are expected to take approximately 2 years. The Northern Pass will be required to work with each individual state agency through the permitting process. Late 2015 is the proposed in-service date of the project and 2013-2015 is the proposed construction period if the project goes according to plan. It is very likely that this schedule will have to be adjusted.

Peter Joseph questioned when they would know what share of the power, if any, would be coming to NH. Ms. Brown replied that she did not have an exact answer except to say that the president of Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH) is in negotiations with Hydro-Quebec and that PSNH would not undergo a project of this magnitude unless there was going to be a benefit to their customers. Mr. Joseph stated that one of the concerns to many residents in Lincoln is the visual impacts to the Town. He questioned whether any visual simulations will be performed so townspeople will get to see how high 130 feet really is. Don Chase replied that they are continually working on a way to lower the towers as much as they can and that there are a few different techniques to determine what the transmission lines would look like. These visual simulations are part of the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) process.

Patricia McTeague questioned what guarantees are in place so that once construction is underway, if the economy takes a turn for the worse, the project is not stopped half way through. Ms. Brown replied that there are decommissioning requirements in place. Deanna Huot questioned how many permanent jobs the project would bring to the area. Mr. Chase replied that there would be several jobs at the converter station but significantly less than the 1300 temporary jobs. Deanna Huot questioned how close these towers would be to people's homes and whether putting the lines underground anywhere was being considered. Mr. Chase replied that underground lines are not in the currently proposed project because of the cost. Even if the lines went underground, they would still require a fairly large footprint because every few thousand feet, there would have to be manholes bored into the ground. There would also be a lot of trenching through rock and DC technology does not allow for parts of the line to be underground as well

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as above ground. Ms. Brown mentioned that the consideration of underground lines would be part of the permitting process. She added that underground lines would mean there would have to be sizable substations on either end of underground lengths which would require more real estate than is currently in the ROW.

Peter Moore stated that visual impact is the main concern. He questioned whether the existing line is a DC line. Mr. Chase replied that it is an AC line and that those lines would still remain but would have to be reconstructed in the ROW to accommodate the new DC lines. The two lines would run side by side in the ROW. Ms. Brown explained that extending the existing ROW would add, at the most, an additional 70 feet. Nowhere in the ROW would the width be more than a 200 ft. In Lincoln, the project would be completely within the existing ROW.

Peter Moore stated that he wants to see some of this power come to NH not just pass through it. He added that Executive Councilor Ray Burton said that as the project is currently proposed, he is not in favor of it. He added that the height of the towers is a major concern and lowering the lines and burying them underground wherever possible would really help gain support for the project. Ms. Brown replied that this is where the public and municipalities really need to become involved in the permitting process.

Lutz Wallem questioned what percent of the length of the lines runs through residential areas. Mr. Chase replied that he did not have that information, but that he could find out what percentage of the line is in close proximity to residential areas. Mr. Wallem questioned whether these high powered lines are still thought to cause cancer. Mr. Chase replied that there have been a lot of studies that have shown it is not an issue but people still have concerns that they do. He added that they try to follow the world health guidelines as to the optimal distance of the lines from people's homes.

Matt Henry questioned whether there are any plans to utilize the towers for multiple purposes for example, maybe add wind turbines to the towers. Mr. Chase replied that wind turbines are usually much higher and are built on a ridge however they are looking at partnering with other organizations for example, Coos County does not have broadband so perhaps a partnership to bring broadband to the area with the use of the towers would be something to consider.

Jonathan Adams questioned whether the same size lines come down through Vermont and, if so, could they upgrade that system in the future to accommodate expansion and, if so, why not just expand the lines in VT. Mr. Chase replied that expansion is based on the design criteria of the project at the time and that it could be that the wires in place would not be able to accommodate additional power. Mr. Adams questioned why they couldn't just pull the wires rather than build new transmission lines. Mr. Chase replied that it could be that the transmission supports cannot support the lines.

JJ Bujeaud stated that he is certainly in favor of renewable energy but wanted to know how the project benefits him directly. Ms. Brown replied that lower energy rates, lower regional costs and no transmission fee on his bill would be the direct individual benefits. She added the tax revenue could potentially offer a little bit of tax relief on Mr. Bujeaud's tax bill.

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Jack Pollner stated that Alpine Adventures would take a hit because they use the ROW for their trips. Alpine Adventures owns the land on either side of the current ROW and has an agreement to use the power company's roads. Mr. Chase replied that the existing agreement would be preserved. Laurel Brown mentioned that all landowners have been sent letters about the project. The company is working very hard with individual landowners to minimize the impact to them.

Bonnie Ham, Chair of the Town of Woodstock Planning Board, would like to know more about where the project is going in Woodstock. She would also like to see some of the power go to NH and not just southern NE sites. She questioned how wide the structures would be. Mr. Chase replied that the exact dimensions of the various structures are on their website. However, they are anywhere from approximately 12-17 feet. Ms. Brown mentioned that she would be doing a presentation for the Town of Woodstock as well.

Matt Manning asked that Ms. Brown clarify what she means by regional benefits. What region is she specifically referring to. Ms. Brown replied that she is referring to NE. Mr. Manning asked whether PSNH has any contracts in place with Hydro-Quebec. Ms. Brown replied that they do not yet. Mr. Manning mentioned that PSNH's parent company is in Connecticut.

Adam Garon questioned whether Mr. Chase had any idea how much it would cost to bury the line. Mr. Chase replied that he did not have an estimate on burying the entire project but estimates it could cost anywhere from 10-20 times more than having the lines overhead. Mr. Garon questioned whether New Hampshire Electric Co-Op (NHEC) would benefit from the project. Ms. Brown replied that PSNH does not sell to NHEC but that they could benefit from purchasing power at the lower regional rate. Mr. Garon questioned why the project would not be built to accommodate growth as there will only be growth in the future. Mr. Chase replied that the project is extremely expensive and the company must be able to get a return on the investment.

Tammy Ham stated that it does not appear that any ROW's have been obtained for the project between Groveton and the Canadian border. She asked if they were going to be able to obtain those ROW's. Mr. Chase replied that generally they apply for and purchase the easement, not the land.

He added that they do not have any of the easements yet. Mrs. Ham questioned whether the easements would be taken by eminent domain if the landowners were not willing to sell them. Ms. Brown replied that they are really trying to negotiate with individual landowners and using eminent domain is not a good situation and is really the last resort.

Deanna Huot questioned whether noise pollution would be a factor. Mr. Chase replied that the lines are designed to limit the amount of noise that could be generated by the discharge activity from the transmission lines.

The Board thanked Laurel Brown and Don Chase for their informative presentation.

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#### **IV. OLD / NEW BUSINESS**

##### **Review of Section 155-B Repair or Removal of Hazardous Building**

Peter Joseph gave the Board a copy of the state statute regarding the removal of a hazardous building. The Buonapane's building was deemed uninhabitable by the Fire Chief and is most likely not salvageable. Mr. Joseph would like the Board's input as to a reasonable time frame for demolition. Patricia McTeague thought 60 days was reasonable. Deanna Huot mentioned that the Town does not want to be responsible for all of the demolition costs. Peter Joseph replied that he would get a full estimate for demotion before anything is done and a lien would be placed on the land for the expense. Peter Moore stated that the Board has not budgeted for this and would have to take the money out of contingency. Mr. Joseph replied that the Town should go through the procedure of filing an order with the court. If there are no funds to demolish the building, the Town is not required to fund the demolition. However, this would be one possible outcome. The Board agreed to file for the order on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

##### **Review of Budget Committee's 2011 Recommended Budget**

The Board reviewed the Budget Committee's 2011 recommended budget. Peter Joseph informed them that the Budget Committee recommended \$100 less in the Health Appropriates line item as they reduced the appropriation to D.A.R.E. and gave some to CASA. In the Capital Reserve/Trust Funds, the Budget Committee recommended \$40,000 for public works vehicles instead of \$20,000 and \$3150 in the cemetery maintenance expense trust instead of \$4,000. The Board of Selectmen concurred that the sewer capital reserve fund had been previously revised from \$38,000 to \$28,000 but that the \$38,000 figure was entered incorrectly on the Budget Committee's earlier copies of the budget.

**MOTION: Patricia McTeague made a motion to amend the Board of Selectmen's Recommended Budget to match the Budget Committee's Recommended Budget. The Health Appropriations line item will be revised from \$48,565 to \$48,465. In the Capital Reserve/Trust Funds, the public works vehicles will be changed from \$20,000 to \$40,000 and the cemetery maintenance expenses trust will be cut from \$4,000 to \$3,150. The appropriation for the sewer rehab capital reserve fund is \$28,000. The total operating budget is being revised from \$5,003,739.00 to \$5,012,789.00. Deanna Huot seconded the motion. Motion carries.**

##### **Review and Approval of 2011 Town Meeting Warrant**

Peter Joseph informed the Board that the warrant has been reviewed and approved by the Town Attorney and the Department of Revenue. The Board reviewed the warrant and Peter Joseph read the petition warrant article.

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**MOTION: Deanna Huot made a motion to approve the 2011 warrant articles as presented. Patricia McTeague seconded the motion.**

**Union Contract**

Peter Joseph informed the Board that the grammatical changes to the Union contract were accepted by the Union. The Union will make the changes and give the Board a revised copy to sign. The Board thanked Peter Joseph for his excellent work negotiating the contract.

**V. ADJOURNMENT-**

As there was no further business to attend to, the Board adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brook Rose

Approval Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

LINCOLN BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman Peter Moore

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Selectman Patricia McTeague

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Selectman Deanna Huot