

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – August 6, 2009

Selectmen James Trow, Joseph Cuddemi and Philip Germain were present. Also attending the meeting was Chris Clough and Monadnock Ledger-Transcript reporter Joshua Bond. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

From 5:37 p.m. until 6:32 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(a). The Selectmen voted to hire the Employment Practices Group to undertake an investigation of a formal personnel complaint.

Town Administrator Denise French joined the Selectmen's meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Fire Chief Allan Wilson met with the Selectmen and discussed his July 31st letter in which he advised the Selectmen of a disabled/possibly ruined computer at the Fire Station which could be the result of a July 29th electrical storm. Backup computer plans are in place. Additionally, Chief Wilson asked that a fire alarm system at the Fire Department be a priority when it is fiscally feasible. Chief Wilson also informed the Board that the Fire Department is the recipient of a water rescue boat donated by the Peterborough Fire Department. The Selectmen unanimously voted to accept the boat on behalf of the Town. It was agreed that training and floatation devices would be secured before the boat is put into service. Also donated, to the Bennington Fire Department Association, is a trailer to be used for HazMat response. The Selectmen unanimously voted to accept the trailer on behalf of the Town. The Administrator will arrange to insure both items as soon as detailed information is received.

Chief Wilson also reported that Kristie LaPlante will continue as Fire Inspector. She and Code Officer Peter Hopkins will work together to determine permitted occupancy at the VFW, Town Hall and the Fire Department. August Fire Department Minutes were delivered to the Selectmen. The Administrator reported to the Chief that the duplicate gas account at Rymes has been terminated as he requested.

From 7:42 p.m. until 7:55 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(a). No decisions were made.

In other matters the Selectmen took the following action:

- Reviewed and approved Minutes of the July 22, 2009 (3) and July 28, 2009 (2) Selectmen's meetings.
- Reviewed and approved the July 29, 2009 (2) and August 5, 2009 Accounts Payable Registers and the July 29, 2009 and August 4, 2009 Payroll Registers.
- Heard a report the Town's property insurance agency (LGC/PLT) met with Peter Cordatos on August 5th at his Acre Street home to review property conditions and discuss Mr. Cordatos' concerns. Later in the morning the claims representatives met with the Administrator and the Road Agent. A formal written response is expected.

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- Heard a report that Peter Cordatos spoke with the Administrator August 5th and made the following demands: 1) that the Town removes the pipe, 2) that the Town removes the trees and 3) that the Town fills the pipe hole he dug. The Selectmen will await receipt of LGC/PLT's response before responding to Mr. Cordatos.
- Heard a report that the M11/L4 property owner advises the travel trailer should be removed from their property by the end of September. The Administrator advised the owner that the camper is for vacation purposes only and cannot be considered a residence; no child living in a camper is entitled to enrollment in the Conval School District. Written documentation from the property owner informing the Town of the extended placement of the travel trailer and the plan for removal of the vacation home was requested.
- The Administrator will speak with the Supervisor of the Checklist employee who has been patiently waiting to receive a replacement wage statement to let her know the status of associated accounting tasks. The matter should be brought to completion within a couple of weeks.
- Received a Planning Board Notice of Decision stating the July 27, 2009 approval for Crooked Mountain Ski & Ride Area to add an addition to an existing deck at the "ATC Building". The applicant was advised that approval from the Town of Frankestown is required since the proposed deck straddles the Town line.
- Reviewed a July 18th VFW rental incident with Caretaker Chris Clough. The incident seems to stem from the gross amount of access keys that have been distributed through the years. The Selectmen agreed that the building should be rekeyed and a minimal number of non-duplicate keys released. Mr. Clough will check with VFW Officials to receive input before the project is undertaken.
- The Selectmen voted to solicit bids for janitorial tasks and requested a draft scope of work for consideration at their August 19th meeting.
- Received a courtesy copy of Dario Carrara's letter to the Water/Sewer Commissioners stating that sounds of a water leak have completely disappeared since the Town repaired the water main in front of his 9 Cross Street house.
- Divine Mercy Parish has notified the Town that the Church will be winterized after Labor Day and no longer available for election activities. The Administrator will solicit Conval School Officials seeking their approval for the Town to use Pierce School for future election events.
- July Police Statistics were reviewed, as was the revised Special Police Details amendment which reflects a (State) change to the retirement fees to be withheld.
- Suggested that the Town would rather pay a higher hourly wage to a private contractor than to hire the contractor as an employee.
- Suggested that the Planning Board utilize Southwest Region Planning Commission for planning expertise before hiring a consultant. If a consultant is needed, SWRPC should be able to recommend a suitable entity.
- Discussed citizen complaints received regarding the 15% increase in water and sewer utility rates which went into effect with no advance notice to the consumers and was applied to water and sewer services received dating back to mid-April. The Administrator will obtain a copy of Antrim's utility rates for comparison.

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- The following Transportation Enhancement Project items were addressed:
 - ✓ Minutes from the July 29, 2009 Pre-Construction Meeting were reviewed.
 - ✓ On behalf of the Board, Selectman Trow signed the \$53,130.91 Construction Phase Services contract on July 29, 2009.
 - ✓ Emergency Contact List has been dispersed.
 - ✓ Selectmen approved payment of FST's Invoice No. 2 in the amount of \$2,611.31.
 - ✓ Rates for a Revenue Anticipation Loan are being sought.
 - ✓ St. Patrick Church Officials have authorized the Town and its contractors to park in their lot during the work week until such time as the Church is sold.
 - ✓ Application deadline for the next round of TEP funding is September 15, 2009.
- Signed two Employee Time-off Request forms.

Prior to meeting in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(c) to discuss Elderly Exemption Re-qualification Applications, the Selectmen discussed the affect of automatic increases for Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustments to prior-approved taxpayers. The Administrator will seek legal advice as to options the Town might consider to retain eligibility for those at risk of losing their exemption due to the automatic increase in Social Security benefits. The Nonpublic Session lasted from 8:43 p.m. until 9:29 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Denise French
Town Administrator