

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES OF 9-27-04 APPROVED

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on September 27, 2004 at the Town Office Building by Chairman Jonathan Wood. Members present: Paul Brown, Dick Wood and Norman Weldy. Also present: Town Manager Richard Bates. Absent: Jack Barnes.

Chairman Jonathan Wood led a salute to the flag and a moment of silence for departed citizens.

Chairman Wood requested a round of applause for the newest members of Raymond, Jacob Hunter, Leiland Carolyn and Madison Tate. He stated that these are just first and middle names, no last names will be used.

Public Forum

Town Manager Bates pointed out that an Amended Agenda was posted as two items were inadvertently left off the original agenda.

Chairman J. Wood pointed out that the public forum is an opportunity for the public to come forward and speak their minds and where the Board may disagree, they will not be disagreeable and the Board will not argue with the public.

Chairman J. Wood stated with no further public comments, the public hearing is now closed.

Public Hearing – Donation by Ardell Welch to the Raymond Police Department

Chairman J. Wood opened the public hearing and read into the record a letter from Chief David Salois. (A copy of the letter is on file with the Town Clerk's Office). Ms. Welch has donated a \$35.00 check to the Raymond Police Department and Chief Salois has requested it be deposited into the General Account. Chairman J. Wood asked for public comments. Selectman D. Wood thanked Ms. Welch for her donation. Chairman J. Wood then closed the public hearing.

Selectman Weldy asked if this donation was going into the general fund or the DARE account. Town Manager Bates stated Chief Salois' letter stated it was going into the general account. Discussion ensued regarding DARE account and general fund. Selectman Weldy stated there is no general account for the police.

Motion by Selectman Brown to deposit the \$35.00 check into the DARE account. Seconded by Selectman Weldy. With no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Request for a Road Race in Riverside Park. Emery Landis is here to tell us about the road race and answer any questions.

Chairman J. Wood stated that Mr. Landis is requesting permission for a road race from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on October 23rd in Riverside Park. The race will be completely contained within the park. Mr. Landis has already spoken to the Public Works Department and the Recreation Department and they did not anticipate any conflicts with this road race. Mr. Landis has secured insurance for this race naming the Town of Raymond and Riverside Park as insureds. Selectman Weldy asked Mr. Landis why the Town and Riverside Park are listed as insureds? Selectman D. Wood stated that they are told to do that. Having the Town listed as an insured gives a little more coverage. This lists their insurance company as first coverage and the Town's policy as additional.

Motion by Selectman D. Wood to give authority to the Raymond Area Rotary Club to hold a bicycle race on October 23 at Riverside Park. Motion seconded by Selectman Brown. With no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

Request to Use the Town Common

Kathleen McDonald has requested the use of the Town Common to hold a Jack-O-Lantern auction to benefit the Ricky Cooper Fund, the young Raymond boy who was badly burned. Ms. McDonald's letter was then read into the record. (A copy of Ms. McDonald's letter is on file with the Town Clerk). Ms. McDonald is looking to use the common over the Columbus Day weekend, possibly that Sunday. All proceeds will go into the fund set up at Citizen's Bank for Ricky Cooper.

Town Manager Bates stated that he recommends approving this fundraising event.

Motion by Selectman D. Wood to give Kathy McDonald the authority to hold a fundraising Jack-O-Lantern auction to benefit the Ricky Cooper Fund on the common either the 9th or the 10th of October, with the request that Ms. McDonald notify the Town and the Police which date it will be held on. Motion seconded by Selectman Weldy. With no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

Proclamation Request for White Cane Safety Day

The Board received an email from Bruce Gillis requesting the Town acknowledge White Cane Safety Day on October 15th. Mr. Gillis cited RSA 167-C:4 in his email. RSA 167-C:4 states that the New Hampshire Governor shall proclaim October 15th each year as White Cane Safety Day. White Cane Safety Day has been an annual proclamation day since 1964 and was created by public law 88-628 on October 6, 1964. President Lyndon Johnson proclaimed the first White Cane Safety Day in 1964.

Chairman J. Wood then read into the record Mr. Gillis' email. (A copy of Mr. Gillis' email is on file with the Town Clerk's office).

Motion by Selectman Weldy to declare October 15th White Cane Safety Day. Motion seconded by Selectman D. Wood. With no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

Health Insurance for Town Employees

Chairman J. Wood explained that there has been a number of presentations and discussions about the health insurance for Town employees. Selectman D. Wood stated that he feels that the Board cannot ask the Town employees to take a cut in pay. If you compare the Town employees insurance and the School employees insurance, both coming out of the same taxpayers pocket, it is a reasonable comparison. With the school, the contracted employees have an Anthem Blue Cross JY Plan with a monthly cost for a family plan of \$1,262.28. The plan that the Town employees have for family at paying 100% of that insurance, the school pays 85 %, the plan that the Town employees have at 100% is only \$1,053.65. Selectman D. Wood stated he has a hard time telling the Town employees that they have to pay a percentage of their insurance out of pocket, when it is already costing the Town less to insure them at 100% then it is to insure a school employee at 85%. From Selectman D. Wood's perspective, and knowing that there are going to be changes to the insurance next year or the year after, he would like to continue with 100%, knowing it is costing us less, until the law is in place and we have some competition in the State and then possibly we will see some better prices from everybody, but where it is costing less to insure a Town employee at 100% then it is to insure a school employee at 85%, it doesn't make sense to me to tell them that they have to take a cut in pay to pay a portion of that insurance.

Selectman Weldy asked if the contract with the school is a one year or three year contract. Chairman J. Wood stated it is a one year contract.

Selectman D. Wood goes on to say that the alternative is that we agree to pay 85% of JY plan for any employee that chooses to go that route. It is going to cost us money, but it gives them the option of the better insurance policy with them paying a percentage of it.

Chairman J. Wood asked if there were any questions from the public.

Linda Hoelzel asked if the insurance was taken through NHMA and was told yes. She wanted to let the Board and Town Manager know that if you leave NHMA and go to Primex there is a two year wait to go back on a NHMA policy.

Town Manager Bates stated that the employees understand the need to be sharing in the insurance costs. The issue here is about fairness. How do we accomplish that without hurting the Town employees. The Town employees feel like they have already given up a portion of their pay increases in the previous years, not just last year, but in previous years to keep 100% coverage and then we have seen the insurance be graded with less of a policy, higher deductibles, higher co-pays and it is mostly just an issue of fairness. A small group, about 56, who take the insurance with the Town compared to the several hundred with the school, who are yet again being asked yet again to come up with some other means to help bear the burden, and I am the last person to want to make that

comparison between the town and the school, because I think it just drives a wedge between the town and the school, I am very reluctant, very, very reluctant to bring that up, but I know that that is something the employees think about. We are a small portion of it. If you look at the numbers, even if the Town employees pay, it is a small portion, \$75,000, compared to the impact of what the school has, with the hundreds of employees that are there. Chairman J. Wood asked if perhaps Town Manager Bates is saying to the townspeople, that at deliberative there should be some changes made to the school's insurance policy. Selectman Brown has a comment. Raymond employees are Raymond's best assets, unquestionably. This issue is the toughest one he has seen since he has been on this Board. There is a tremendous conflict between this ever increasing insurance rate and the taxpayers of Raymond. Selectman Brown does not want to see anybody go backwards in pay. He would like to see them get paid more. They probably don't get paid as well as they should and they do work hard for this Town. They work hard for this Town and you can tell by looking at the Town that they do. But, what are we going to do. Certainly, I don't want the increase of 15% of the premium, I have not made a decision yet one way or the other. I can see a small amount phased in over a period of several years, but ultimately, the taxpayers are going to make the decision come next March. Selectman Weldy would also like to emphasize that the best assets of the Town are the work force. For all the years that he has been a selectman, this is a tough, tough situation. Selectman Weldy feels that the ones who get hit the most in situations like these are the people at the bottom. The department heads don't feel it as much as the people under them. He would like to see if the employees could be pooled together in one group and the department heads in another. The other part of the equation is the school's one year contract that is coming up for renewal. Maybe we could roll this all together into one pool. It is paid for out of the same pocket, so why not put everyone together under one plan. Selectman D. Wood suggested that the Town employees pay be increased to compensate for the 5%-10% or 15% of the premium cost. In doing this, 10% for example, of one person's salary is totally different than 10% from a department head's salary. Selectman D. Wood can't think of a way to compensate the employees to make up the difference in what they would have to pay for the 5%-10% or 15% of the premium costs. He feels it makes more sense to wait until the new law takes effect and we start getting some competition in companies coming to New Hampshire selling health insurance. Chairman J. Wood stated there has been a 20% increase in the cost of health insurance. There is an anticipation that we will continue to see this as we go into the future. On an annual basis, the school JY plan is \$5,600 roughly for a single person, the school staff is \$4,800 for a single person and the towns plan is \$4,600. On the other end of the scale we have the family, the annual cost to the town of the school's JY plan is \$15,000, the annual cost to the school staff is \$13,000 and the annual cost of the town's plan is \$12,500. Chairman J. Wood is concerned that employee contribution to the health insurance having a negative impact on their total compensation they receive in terms of dollars. In terms of an employee having health benefits or not having health benefits is what they see. It doesn't matter if they are the highest paid employee or the lowest paid employee. They either have it or they don't. The value of its use doesn't really come into question. It is the perception of the value of having it 100% paid. Chairman J. Wood believes that 15% would be onerous, a 5% this year would be the beginning and that is what he feels. Selectman D. Wood stated that he feels that why the employees

stated they felt it would be inevitable for them to pay something, was back when we started this, we changed plans, the plan that the town currently has is a BC/BS two-tier plan, we indicated that the town would be paying 100% because it was cheaper than the plan that they had had and with the plan we had prior to this there was talk that the employees would have to contribute toward the premium. One of the reasons the employees agreed to switch to a lesser insurance plan, was that it would continue to be paid at 100% because it was cheaper for the town. It is still cheaper. At the time it was done it was cheaper and it is still cheaper than what they have at the school. Selectman D. Wood's feeling that why the employees stated that they understood at some point they would have to pay was because they were told at some point in time this is going to come to a halt. The cost to the town for the employees insurance is still cheaper than the schools, which is paid at 85%. Chairman J. Wood stated that when it comes to the Board's decision, the school does not enter into it. It can be taken into consideration, but the Board has to look at our budget and our expenditures and show the school by example. Town Manager Bates stated that the problem for the town's employees is that they look at that and say we are tired of being an example. Selectman D. Wood stated that this Board has been exemplary in trying to keep the budget down, because he feels a new school is necessary and we have been trying to keep our budgets low in order for that to happen. Well, the voters haven't made that happen. The Board of Selectmen decided that they would not fund the 1% cost of living that we had done the two previous years, in an attempt to keep our budget down. Now we are going to say, "we are not going to give you a 1% cost of living and now we are going to take 5% of the premium for health insurance." For the family plan 5% works out to \$12 a week. Town Manager Bates stated the family plan is \$12 a week, but if you use the Joe Average employee, which is a snapshot in time of just one employee, the average wage, if you take all employees and divide it ... you come out with a number that is almost \$40,000 a year, which is the average wage of town employees. The insurance is \$12 of that persons raise, but that person could be getting a \$20.76 raise, so out of that almost \$21 raise, \$12 of it is going to pay for the insurance cost so they will really only be realizing an \$8 a week raise and that is for the average employee. Chairman J. Wood wanted to remind the Board that the insurance committee gave an opportunity for the town to pay 100% of the Comp 1000 plan and 15% of the Tier Two. Selectman D. Wood stated that the Comp 1000 had a \$3,000 deductible in it. Chairman J. Wood stated that the point is, in that scenario, there was an option whereby the employees could choose between the two. Further discussion among the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager regarding the insurance. Chairman J. Wood is going to table this until next week to make a decision when there is a full Board. He is also going to go for public comment and then from comment from each member of the Board and comment from the Town Manager, as advocate for the town employees. Chairman J. Wood is suggesting that this year it be adjusted to 5%.

Chairman J. Wood asked for comments from the public.

Linda Hoelzel stated that most of the town employees live in town and understand. She believes the towns savings to be around \$75,000, which is a drop in the bucket, to make their employees a little bit happy, I think to keep a good employee. Ms. Hoelzel stated

that she appreciates the benefit, and she also gives more than 100% and she knows most of the town employees do. It is a small thing for us to be compensated for.

Lynn Booth asked the question if the comparison between school and town could also include the pay scales of employees. To try and even off the differences.

Town Manager Bates reiterated his view on this matter and added that a plan needs to be in place so they know what will be happening from year to year and have consistency.

Town Manager Bates asked if the Board wants him to come up with some sort of plan on how to get this done over a period of three years or five years, would that solve the problem? Would that be what the Board is looking for?

Selectman D. Wood reiterated his view, and he doesn't want to be argumentative, but Ms. Booth's point on the salary discrepancy. The general public say "but I have to pay for a portion of my insurance" so why shouldn't the town employees have to pay for a portion of their insurance and he guesses it goes back to what is your plan and how does it compare to the plan that the town employees have. He further discussed his views and believes this needs to be put to rest for another year and see what happens when the new law comes in effect.

Selectman Weldy agrees with Selectman D. Wood and feels we should wait until next year when the new law comes in effect.

Selectman Brown believes that the Board needs to do something, even if it is only a token thing. He feels the Town Manager should put something together that he feels will work and have the Board look at it next week.

Chairman J. Wood stated this matter will be tabled until next week, but he wants the Board to remember as they are contemplating this during the week that they only want to speak about this out here, please do not want to speak about this in the back room. The employees and the townspeople need to see that this is not something that was cooked up in the back room. He also wants them to remember that the Board is looking at it as this year's budget. The Board is not looking at it as what will happen way down the road, we have to look at it as a discrete unit. What is the Board going to do this year. Again, the landscape of insurance will be changed next year. The landscape of employee benefits may be changed next year in compensation, but the Board has to do is look at it from this year's perspective as what the Board is going to be doing for the budget. Chairman J. Wood hopes more of the townspeople will come and give us their perspective. He anticipates that a vote will be taken next week, when a full Board will be present.

Unfinished Business

Polling Place Deficiencies. Doris Gagnon and Kathy Hoelzel came forward to speak about this matter.

Town Manager Bates stated that the current handicap spaces do not comply and are dangerous. The temporary ones that were put up for this past election did comply, but on

a temporary basis. The Town has applied for a grant of \$400 to repaint those spaces and put them where they were marked for the election. We have not heard back from the State. Within the next two or three weeks the striping company is coming in to paint the Town's roads and we could just have them come in and paint that at the same time. With regard to the door opening, from what Town Manager Bates understands, the new maintenance director of the schools has been down and is looking at a five foot door opening to replace that door. It probably won't be completed for the November election. There is not enough time to get that done, but he was in and speaking to Richard about getting the door replaced and also getting the railing down the center put in. We can't replace the ramp, in order to get it at the right pitch it would have to go back all the way to the door threshold. The ramp was built in 1976, before ADA and at that point in time any ramp was probably acceptable.

Kathy Hoelzel complimented Rick Greenwood. He did an awesome job setting up the voting booths. He was very accommodating, he was there every time they needed him. He was great.

Chairman J. Wood asked the Board by a nod of heads to authorize the Town Manager to assure that the striping company, when they come into town, stripes the lot correctly, with or without the grant. Selectman Brown nodded, Selectman Weldy nodded, Selectman Wood nodded and Chairman J. Wood nodded. Town Manager Bates will have the handicapped spaces painted by the striping company when they come to town.

Kathy Hoelzel also brought up the subject of voting booths. The old wooden ones are in terrible condition and they take a long time to set up. We didn't set them up for the primary, but they have to be set up for the election in November. There currently is 43 new booths. According to the law we need 42.4 for the presidential elections. For Town voting, where the ballots take longer to complete, we need more to keep the line moving. Town Manager Bates stated that Rick Greenwood would like to have new booths every year. These booths are not built to last forever. Some of those are going to be cycled out and some of them we are going to need to increase our booth capacity. So I think his goal was to get some more. If you want to get rid of the wooden ones Ms. Hoelzel believes you need to buy 20 new booths. The cost for 10 booths is \$1600.

Chairman J. Wood asked Ms. Hoelzel if she was going to have sufficient funds to hire enough ballot assistants? Ms. Hoelzel stated she has to have six ballot assistants at all times. You have to have one booth for every 125 voters. Chairman J. Wood stated that they will try to squeeze 10 booths into the budget for this year and put 10 in the budget for next year.

Chairman J. Wood asked the Board to vote via nod to have the Town Manager to buy 10 booths now and 10 more at the end of the year, if there is money in the budget. Selectman Brown nodded, Selectman Weldy nodded, Selectman D. Wood nodded and Chairman J. Wood nodded. Town Manager Bates will order 10 new voting booths now.

There has been a request to adjust the Agenda and next we will have the interview of Lynn Booth.

Planning Board Appointment – Lynn Booth

Lynn Booth came before the Board and was interviewed for the position on the Planning Board. The Board will make a decision on appointment at the October 4th meeting.

Ledoux Tax Abatement and Update

Town Manager Bates stated that the taxes for the first half of the year in the amount of \$49.00 needs to be abated. We will then send the Quitclaim Deed to Mr. Ledoux for his signature. Once we receive the executed Quitclaim Deed from Mr. Ledoux, the Board of Selectmen will execute their portion of it.

Motion by Selectman Brown to abate the taxes in the amount of \$49.00 on Tax Map 12, Lot 86 for the first half of 2004. Motion seconded by Selectman Weldy. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Recreation Advisory Board – Sandra Ellis

Motion by Selectman D. Wood to appoint Sandra Ellis to the Recreation Advisory Board for a two year term. Seconded by Selectman Brown. With no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

Southern NH Planning Commission – John Page

Motion by Selectman Weldy to appoint John Page to the Southern NH Planning Commission. Seconded by Selectman Brown. With no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

Committee Updates

Selectman Brown has no updates

Selectman Weldy attended a Highway Safety Committee meeting on Tuesday, September 21 at 2:00.

Chairman J. Wood stated that in the 9-13-04 Minutes, where the Board passed a motion for the “No Passing Zone” on Route 107, it was stated that the Board would like a no passing zone on 107 between Raymond and Kingston. It wasn’t what we meant. So the Board needs to acknowledge that we only wanted the one strip of 107 that is in Raymond that is in front of the ball fields as a no passing zone.

Motion by Selectman Weldy to have a no passing zone on Route 107 for the strip of road in front of the ball fields. Motion seconded by Selectman D. Wood. With no further comments, motion passed unanimously.

Chairman J. Wood stated that the whole Board attended the Ethics Committee meeting, he attended the Insurance meetings with the town employees on Wednesday and Friday.

Correspondence

A letter from Vachon, Clukay & Company. They have performed our audit. Town Manager Bates stated that they had a concern with the Trustee of the Trust Funds, the processes that went through and some recommendations were made. Chairman J. Wood read the letter into the record. (A copy of the letter is on file with the Town Clerk).

A Community Conservation Roundtable on October 28, 2004.

A Memo from the Sick Leave Bank Committee requesting 24 hours be dispersed to an employee who has requested it. Chairman J. Wood read the memo into the record. (A copy of the Memo is on file with the Town Clerk). **Chairman J. Wood polled, all in favor, Selectman Weldy-yes, Selectman Brown-yes, Selectman D. Wood-yes. All opposed – none. Motion passed unanimously.**

Town Manager Report

Tax Collector attended the annual Tax Collector's Conference this past week.

The sidewalks downtown were replaced over the summer because they were wearing out too fast and they were under warranty. The sidewalks have been sealed this past week. The old firehouse is being repainted and it is now a stunning red. Unfortunately, the paint that is being put on will peel off again. Rick Greenwood will be coming forward with a plan at some point in time to put vinyl siding on that building some time in the future to take care of that because it is going to be a constant process. The library siding is in the CIP to be repainted in five years, one side per year.

The Recreation Department, along with the Police Department had the Raymond Coalition for Youth Teen Night Out and it was very successful. Over 35 teens attended. This is used to discuss what teens in the community would like to see in a teen or youth center.

Police Department: Officer Loveless and Officer Allaire completed SWAT I training at the NH Police Academy. Two new police officers just started and are underway in their field training program. The new officers are Aaron Berube – full time certified officer from the Brentwood Police Department. He has an associates degree in Criminal Justice. Joseph Keating is the other officer. He is a full time certified officer from the Sandown Police Department. He has an associates degree in Criminal Justice. There is also a new

full-time dispatcher, Tracy Tarmy, Town Manager Bates believes she is a Raymond resident.

22 building permits were issued, 10 for new living units.

There is a new Finance Clerk, April Rives and she is a Raymond resident.

Town Manager Bates attended a Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce Roundtable a week and a half ago. It was held at Osram Sylvania. There was a tour and a roundtable discussion about what businesses need for international economy. There were representatives from the Federal Government there. Town Manager Bates also attended the Legislative Policy Conference in Concord, as well as the New Hampshire Municipal Manager's Association Meeting. He also attended a day long seminar on Conflict Resolution, with all of the Department Heads. Craig Wheeler and Town Manager Bates attended a Manufacturing Summit at the Grappone Center in Concord. There were several other people in attendance at that summit but only three municipalities were represented. It was mostly manufacturers from New Hampshire. He also attended the Ethics Training held for the employees on the 23rd. He will also be attending the ICMA Conference beginning Saturday, October 16th through Wednesday, October 20th. The move to the high school is set to be on October 11th. The 11th is a holiday, there will be no Board of Selectmen meeting that day. We will be having our budget meeting sometime during the week next week.

Selectman Weldy would like to wish Mr. and Mrs. Barnes a happy 50th Anniversary.

Minutes

Selectman Brown asked for a correction to the Minutes of September 13th. Second paragraph fix the spelling of "fowl" to "foul".

Motion to accept minutes with change by Selectman Brown. Seconded by Selectman Weldy. With no further comment, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting is adjourned at approximately 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy L. Cramer
Executive Secretary