

# TOWN OF THORNTON

## February 27, 2007

### Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

5:30 The meeting was called to order.

Board members present: Arthur Gross, Ralph Perron and Lee Freeman

Also present: Administrator Andrew (TA), Howard Clement, Jim Demeritt, and Road Agent Tom Dubey (RA)

Howard Clement came forward to discuss a list of questions and comments he had dropped off at the office earlier in the day.

Planning Board-It was noted that the members would be elected vs. appointed, but the requirements are the same. The board invited Mr. Clement to the "Meet the Candidates" night on 3/6.

Upper Mad River Road. Mr. Clement had been informed that the \$30,000 appropriated was for repairs on the dirt portion. Mr. Clement had not been aware that the dirt portion was town road.

Zoning amendments. Mr. Clement inquired if there is money appropriated to take care of new maps in the budget? The Board responded that FEMA would have the mapping cost responsibility.

Fire Department. Mr. Clement noted that Articles 9-12 concern Fire Department and inquired if Campton has like questions on their warrant? The board responded that Campton's town meeting is before ours and the Thornton board will know the outcome of the articles in Campton prior to our meeting so that the board can adjust accordingly.

Assessing. Mr. Clement inquired what the \$30,000 assessing capital reserve is for? Selectman Freeman responded that it is for reevaluation and that the board is trying to bulk up capital reserves to have available funds if the school addition passes next year.

4155 Personnel Administration. Mr. Clement noted that the same line item in the school's budget is for less money. Selectman Freeman read the breakdown of employees and retirees covered under the plan. Selectman Freeman continued that there is a new government-reporting requirement relative to disclosing of the number of retirees insured by the town and costs associated with their coverage. Selectman Freeman stated the town just received notice from the town's auditing firm that there is also a new auditing standards requirement for in house accountant expertise. The auditors suggested that the town have a certified public accountant on budget and then the auditing firm would audit

the CPA's reports. There will be a note in the auditor's report indicating a material weakness unless these stipulations are met.

Police Budget. Mr. Clement stated that the department budget does not include the costs for retirement, FICA and Medicare. This practice does not allow for a true picture of the costs of running the department. The board agreed and stated that the town should check with the Department of Revenue Administration relative to applying it to the department budgets in the future.

ADAPT. Mr. Clement inquired why we are we continuing the program when the high school just cancelled their drug program? Selectman Freeman stated the board views ADAPT as Thornton's Park & Recreation program. The requested increase is mostly due to a reduction in the availability of grant monies.

Mr. Clement calculated that the amount of money it takes to run Thornton is increasing at about 6% per year. Revenues from taxes are increasing at about 9% per year. He inquired if assessments are going to level out so that we know where we are going? Selectman Freeman responded that they would not. Selectman Freeman stated that the town's assessments reflect 85% of market value now. Mr. Clement inquired if the town is getting further behind? The amount budgeted will only support an assessor 2 days per week. Selectman Freeman responded that the town is in a boom/bust cycle. The town reviews 20% of the properties per year. After 5 years, the whole town will have been reviewed. Mr. Clement stated someone is always upset about his or her values. Selectman Freeman agreed stating that the volatility in valuation reflects what the market bears.

Mr. Clement inquired about a promise in last year's town report stating that the report would be more understandable. He continued that meetings are poorly attended because people don't understand what is going on. He thinks that there would be better attendance if people could understand the process more.

Mr. Clement stated that the surplus/rainy day fund should be addressed openly at town meeting, along with how it is generated. It was his opinion that the "dummy" numbers put forward in the budget process creates the surplus. Mr. Clement stated he would identify the surplus as a line item. Selectman Freeman responded that the Department of Revenue Administration sets up the format. Mr. Clement asked why is there such a large surplus? Selectman Gross stated the board has to estimate what the receipts are going to be and then revisit the amounts at tax rate setting time. Selectman Perron suggested that the town could change town meeting to be held in the summers so that we would have more definite numbers available.

5:57 Road Agent (RA) Tom Dubey. Selectman Perron thanked the RA for cleaning up Mirror Lake Road where the melting snow had pooled. The RA stated his department would have to dig out the drainage area again next year.

The RA thanked Selectman Freeman for the pizza he supplied the highway department during the snowstorm on 2/14. It was appreciated by all.

Selectman Gross inquired if there was any reason that an employee had not submitted for sick time pay. The RA asked the individual but he did not change his time sheet. The board directed that the individual be paid the 1.5 hour sick time next week. APPROVED (x3)

3 garage doors to sell. The board agreed with the RA's request to advertise them. PASSED (x3) Selectman Perron stated that the winning bid will have to remove the garage doors within 30 days.

Selectman Freeman stated that we should start charging storage for a truck that has been sold but not picked up. It was moved that \$5/day storage will be charged starting 2 weeks from when notice is mailed or that the individual can send back the title. PASSED (x3)

Letter to Vice Principal Price and Superintendent Halloran. The board was planning on sending letters but it is still under discussion. The RA requested permission to give the board his "two cents". He continued he would like to get the situation cleared up by sending a letter or something to the effect that the highway department had nothing to do with the reported issue. He would like it understood that no one from the highway department sent a letter and no one made a call to the SAU office or Vice Principle's office. He continued that since the minutes of Selectmen's Meetings are out on the web, he wants to have the highway department's name cleared. Selectman Freeman responded that if the board received a letter from the school, it probably would be sealed due to individuals names. Selectman Perron stated that the sense of a letter received could be released for inclusion in the minutes.

Selectman Freeman questioned the fuel bill. He noted that the same mileage was recorded for many fills. The RA responded that he was aware of it and that Chad got in the habit of doing it last year when filling the tank carried in the truck for filling the other equipment. The RA stated that they would be correctly entering in future. It will be a non-mileage utility card number if it is for filling other equipment. The generic card has been used for hand tools. Selectman Freeman stated we should use that card for filling the utility tanks so that truck usage isn't falsely affected. Jim Demeritt stated the employees should be documenting everything for each vehicle. The State can audit their records and come back on the town because there are gallons reflected to each vehicle, and they could say that someone is stealing fuel. He continued he would hate to see someone get held responsible for having saved on paperwork. Selectmen Freeman stated he understands the reason but the department needs to get a little closer to the letter of the requirements.

The RA agreed his personnel will swipe as many cards as needed and try to estimate each vehicles needs more accurately. Mr. Demeritt inquired if the RA keeps a paper record of who is using which vehicle and how much fuel is needed. The RA responded that he does not; he trusts his people. A detail report comes out with the DOT fuel bill, and he keeps a

book that details what is being done and the weather conditions on each day. Selectman Freeman agreed he doesn't think there is any abuse. It is just paperwork and justification.

Sandwich Notch Road signs. It appears that when people are getting maps online it looks like Sandwich Notch Road is a shortcut. The RA stated that the road is posted as "Not Maintained for Winter Travel". Thornton's portion of the road only extends ½ mile past the Scrimshaw's house. He continued that the Town of Sandwich put a lot of money into rebuilding their portion of the road last year. Selectman Freeman inquired how often is it a problem for Thornton? The RA stated he has not had a problem. The Board agreed there is adequate signing at this time. PASSED (x3) The board will send a letter to the Sandwich Selectmen.

Selectman Perron inquired which contractors maintains which roads in town. The RA listed the contractors. The TA stated she would confirm/complete the listing with the RA on Wednesday for the minutes. The following is a list of plowing contractors and their routes:

Steve Small: Snowood Dive, Liberty Lane, Doe Run, Holland Trail, Sandwich Notch Rd, Chickenboro Road, Andys Drive, and Weeping Birches in exchange for the town's portion of Goose Hollow Road in Waterville Estates

Ray Landry: Woodwinds, Gateway Hill, Orris, Windswept, and Judges Road

Roland Downing: Town Office, Church St, Lebreque, Levasseur, Avery McGee Robbins Nest, Depot St, and Dobson Hill Road

Tim Collins: Mt. Woodlands, Four Wheel Drive, River Run, Steele Bridge, Covered Bridge, Waterthorn, and assistance on Mill Brook Road

Ralph Bradley: Thornton Gore, Johnson Brook, and Dick Bradley Road

Brad Benton: 175 Estates, Horner, Anderson Hill, and Star Ridge Road

Selectman Gross inquired if everything is going well in the department? The RA responded that it is.

Road bans- The RA will probably post them in two weeks depending on the weather next week. The roads are still pretty firm at this time. He will let contractors know prior to posting the roads.

Selectman Perron reported that the furnace in the Police Department had been incorrectly been set up for natural gas vs. propane. He thanked the TA for following up on the situation and getting the furnace fixed.

Selectman Freeman stated that Chief Joyce has informed the TA that the security camera has been installed but is not functioning at this time. The Chief will notify town office personnel when it is turned on.

The board requested the TA note the subject on the agenda next to scheduled individuals so that the board has an opportunity to prepare.

Selectman Freeman commented the annual personnel reviews need to be done prior to Selectman Perron leaving office. The department heads need to review their employees as soon as possible and the board will review the department heads on 3/13. All agreed.

Town Reports. The TA will ask Beverly Chappell to post it on the web site when they are available. Taylor Made Graphics will be requested to forward a PDF file to Ms. Chappell so that the report can also be posted on the web site.

Notch View Road plan. Beth Masse has requested a copy of the plan that was completed as the residents are supposed to pay for the work. The Selectmen stated that Ms. Masse could review the plan at the town office. The TA will contact the engineering firm to get a cost for having them produce an additional report for Ms. Masse.

Neighborfest/ADAPT meeting. Selectman Perron reported that the Neighborfest board has met with himself and ADAPT representatives, Sean O'Brien and Carolyn Varin. Neighborfest's board requested that the Selectmen vote to support selling Neighborfest's land. Selectman Perron stated that as an individual, he suggested that land be sold, and that the monies donated to the two communities. Thornton's money could then be placed into trust funds with interest earned being distributed to the Senior Center and ADAPT. Neighborfest was originally set up to support the youth and elderly and this would allow the organization to live on. The Town of Campton could invest their monies however they chose.

Selectman Freeman proposed that Neighborfest sells the land. He noted that they have no responsibility to the board to listen to the motion, however there here have been significant monies and time invested by many residents of Thornton.

Selectman Perron made a motion that the Thornton Board of Selectmen recommends that the Neighborfest organization sell their property and split the proceeds between the two towns at a 60/40 match. PASSED (x3)

The Neighborfest board also requested that the following statement be read at town meeting.

“Over the last nine months, the Thornton and Campton Select boards have been in discussion with Neighborfest about use and disposition of the Neighborfest property. All have agreed that sale of the property is a positive move for all parties involved. Neighborfest and the two Select boards plan a joint community focus group in the next month, to obtain additional input from townspeople of Thornton and Campton for further planning following sale of the property. Anyone interested in being part of the process of plan development for the Neighborfest project after sale of the property can leave a name and phone number with Chris Bolan at the Waterville Valley Region Chamber of Commerce office at 726-3804.”

Selectman Freeman stated he has no problem with reading the above statement and the board will have a copy of the town's expectations available for discussion. Selectman Perron stated he thinks Neighborfest will live on in their mission.

6:50 The Board entered non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (a) personnel and RSA 91-A:3 II (e) legal issue.

7:03 The board returned to public session.

Auditors. The board discussed interviewing auditors after town meeting.

Assessing. The board discussed the process. The plan is for 5-year projected re-evaluation of all properties in preparation for certification of stated property values to market value to satisfy the NH Department of Revenue Administration standards in 2009.

Selectman Freeman inquired if there is a warning in the 2005 audit report relative to implementation of SB 112. He requested backup of prior notification if any had been given. The TA will research.

Selectman Perron stated that a he had been asked if the town is going to go forward with repairs on the Municipal Building.

APPROVALS:

Building Permits:

6 5 10 T&S Dovholuk modular home

Intent to Cut

17 3 14 J&R Schoenweiss

7:25 It was moved to adjourn. PASSED (x3)

**The next scheduled Selectmen's Meeting  
Will be  
Tuesday March 6, 2007  
5:30 PM at the Municipal Building**

**Meet the Candidates Night  
Tuesday March 6, 2007  
6:30 PM at the Municipal Bulding**