

TOWN OF THORNTON

June 5, 2007

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

6:45 The meeting was called to order.

Board members present: Arthur Gross, Jim Parziale and Roy Sabourn

Also present: Administrator Andrew (TA), Jim Demeritt, Grafton County Commissioner Martha Richards, Ralph Perron, and Road Agent Tom Dubey, Nancy Byerly

Neighborfest – Ralph Perron stated that the group has not met recently. He stated for the board that his mission is to have the proceeds from sale of the property divided between the towns of Thornton and Campton, with stipulations as to how the monies can be utilized. He noted that people from Thornton donated considerable monies to the Neighborfest organization.

Grafton County Commissioner Martha Richards stated that the county's budget spending is expected to increase by 22%. Ms. Richards reported that it is a very tough budget and the hearing on May 21 was well attended. Currently the legislative delegation is looking over budget. On June 25 the delegation votes in the morning to finalize the county budget. Terry Murphy from Bridgewater made a suggestion that the County bond some of the capital improvements over 5 years. The budget has grown from \$29 million to \$32.8 million. Over 17 million additional needs to be raised. Thornton's portion for 2006 was \$387,694. Thornton is around 2% of total budget.

Capital expenditures- The court house roof is leaking. Barns repairs for nostalgia are expensive. Almost \$1 million on one barn alone is projected. Selectman Sabourn inquired if it is now rotten underneath? Ms. Richards stated some of the clapboards are in need of replacement also. There is asbestos on the roof that needs to be mitigated.

\$400,000 is budgeted for pilings to save an embankment and remove dumped items. No petroleum products were found on the site with exploratory drilling. A million dollars is budget to continue jail studies. If the budget is approved a bond would be sought in the fall for about \$50 million for a 260 bed addition and rehabilitation programs. Less recidivism is the goal. The jail may be relocated behind courthouse for logistics of being close. The idea of a regional facility with another county has also been discussed. The other counties prefer to have their own jails.

The women's program will continue to take detainees from Coos County.

Drug Court is a proven method utilized to break the cycle and allow an individual to become a member of society again. This program is for Grafton County residents only.

Milk prices are increasing. The farm is selling some animals, and the Sheriffs department is anticipating a little more in receipts.

There are about 400 employees, about 1/2 of them work in the nursing home. The COLA and state retirement system have shown an increase. The county has good employees with good benefits. Employees hired before July of 2003 are paying 13% of their insurance premium; those hired after are paying 20%. The county regularly loses people to Glencliff due to the states benefit plan.

The farm has 70 cows. The buildings are old some of them over 100 years. The inmates work at the farm every day. There are a lot of intangible benefits of the farm including learning to work as part of a team and being tired at the end of the day. The prison does not have an area for rehabilitative training.

Ms. Richards listed several social services available in the area that are partially funded through state monies such as the Bridge House, the Circle Program, Pemi Youth Center, Whole Village, Grafton County Senior Citizens, and access to state programs through a cooperative effort between the Whole Village Center and State Agencies. Old Age assistance, Aid to Permanently and Totally disabled are also available. Juvenile services amounted to about \$95,000 last year alone.

Ms. Richards stated she is a former nurse by training. The county is looking to scan records in the near future. There is a nationwide shortage of registered nurses. The county nursing home is very impressive. Selectman Sabourn stated that in a recent visit he found everyone to be very cordial and helpful. The facility was clean and people were very pleasant. The facility is a good choice if you have need of it.

Ms Richards recommended that board members take a tour of the jail. There are a lot of people that go on off site programs and utilize monitoring services. She continued that it costs about \$26,000/year to house an inmate. Many of the individuals have mental health issues that also need to be dealt with. 85-90 % of the prison population has alcohol or drug related issues.

Minutes of commissioner's meetings are available on-line at www.graftoncounty.nh.us. Ms. Richards noted that drug cards are available through the commissioners' office and that they can even be used for prescriptions for family pets.

Ray Burton and Mike Cryans are the other two county commissioners.

Selectman Sabourn inquired if the percentage of cost is based on total evaluation. YES. Selectman Sabourn stated that although it is nice to have the farm, the reality is what does it cost? Ms. Richards stated she expects the farm to post a loss of \$95,000 this year. Ms. Richards stated that Craig Zanzow is going to put together a business plan. She asked if the board would recommend something else. Selectman Sabourn suggested there be a plan where an inmate could be trained in something that they can use in the future. Ms.

Richards stated she appreciated the input. Selectman Parziale stated his belief that it is a good program. Need the inmates involved with training to work together. He expressed concern that if the farm were gone the inmates might lose the work ethic.

Jim Demeritt inquired if the nursing home is partially fed by the farm's products. Ms. Richards stated that due to federal regulations not can be used. The county is looking into acquiring a waiver. Currently they cannot even use their own milk. Mr. Demeritt stated that it is unfortunate as the inmates put in the work and they would probably like to be able to use their own produce.

Ralph Perron stated it is great to get people rehabilitated, but farming may not be a usable trade. The county should train more in computers, mechanics etc. Ms. Richards stated that the county jail is used only for detention of prisoners for a year or less. Training people to work as a team is very important.

Jim Demeritt inquired what would replace the farm if it goes away. Selectman Gross noted that it is the best area in the state for farming. Selectman Parziale agreed stating that the farming keeps the prisoners motivated and active.

Barbara Sellingham stated that \$95,000 doesn't really amount much on the tax rate for an individual town. Ralph Perron inquired if the farm stand is competing with other farm stands in the area. Ms. Richard stated that they compare and feel that their prices are in line.

Selectman Gross thanked Ms. Richards for coming in and giving the board more insight as to what is being done at the county level.

7:30 Tax Collector, Barbara Sellingham, presented the board with a list of individuals that are subject to be deeding for their 2002 and 2003 tax liens. She noted that the town is still a couple of years behind as to what is subject to deeding. Selectman Sabourn inquired why more was not being deeded? Ms. Sellingham stated that if the 2004 and 2005 liens are deeded next year the town will be up to date.

The individuals have been made aware that this is going to happen. Selectman Gross inquired if the individuals understand it. YES

Ms. Sellingham informed the board that Cherie Foster came in with partial payments for her grandmother when Nellie Pierce owned the property, thus she was aware that there were outstanding taxes and liens. Ms. Sellingham stated she is willing to wait until 7/31 to do the deeding. Selectman Sabourn inquired if it would affect just the Foster parcel? Ms. Sellingham responded that all affected parcels would be done at the same time as everyone has to be treated the same. She will send out letters at the end of June and they will have 30 days to pay the 2002 and 2003 liens. The only reason not to deed would be if taking the property would pose a hardship to the town.

Selectman Sabourn stated the plan seems reasonable. Ms. Sellingham stated that the town has given the taxpayers an extra two years to catch up on their taxes. She continued she does not want to deed property but is required to by law. It is not fair for other taxpayers to subsidize those who do not pay.

Jim Demeritt inquired if there are any elderly that can't pay. NO. There are not any known hardship cases.

The Tax Collector stated that the board should look at the subject property before the deeding date. A letter will be sent to Cherie Foster.

The Tax Collector noted that due to an oversight on town's part Mike Benton's house lot was not taken out of current use classification when construction started. She asked the board consider granting 90 days prior to charging interest on the current use invoice.
APPROVED (x3)

RFP for Municipal Building painting. The board reviewed a list of suggestions submitted by Ed Veisbergs for painting/staining specifications. One item of concern was a time factor for completion. The TA is to add "scrape, prime and paint the exterior doors". Work is to be performed between August 1 to September 30, 2007. A penalty clause for anything exceeding the due date, unless agreed to by all parties, will be subject to a \$50/day fee. Final payment is to be made after inspections and approval by the Board of Selectmen.

Collective Bargaining legislation – SB 88 allows for union organization by moving the minimum number of individuals to form a union from 10 people to 5. HB 143 pushed by injury lawyers' transfers blame to the party with deepest pockets. Selectman Sabourn offered to contact Senator Reynolds to encourage that she votes no on both bills. Selectmen Gross and Parziale agreed. PASSED (x3)

Timber harvest fees – The Board will discuss the rates at the next meeting. Selectman Sabourn stated that prices are down and harvest is difficult due to the windstorm. It is not good wood as a whole and the volume is large. Jim Demeritt stated that a reduced fee might be incentive for property owners to clean up and reduce fire danger.

The TA inquired for Fire Chief Tobine if it would be permissible to proceed with the hydrant installation on Upper Mad River Road prior to having a recorded easement. The board so approved (x3)

Minutes of 5/16/07 and 5/22/07 Selectmen's Meetings were approved as amended. (x3)

Road issues. RA Tom Dubey reported that the brush pile at the Highway garage has been chipped and removed.

NH Department of Transportation Bridge report. The RA indicated that those items in bold print on the report need to be addressed. Selectman Sabourn expressed concern

relative to the covered bridge at the Woods at Mill Brook. Some erosion problems at one corner need to be addressed.

Bids on Highway equipment – Two bids were received

Jim Sanborn	1983 International S1800	\$ 50.00
Wes Avery	1986 International S1900	\$650.00
	utility trailer	\$100.00

It was moved to accept the bids as submitted as there were no others. PASSED (x3)

Fire Commissioners - Selectman Gross stated that the board needs to name two fire commissioners. Mr .Hiltz has not yet responded to the board's requests. Nancy Byerly stated that she hopes the board chooses people who are sincere. Selectman Sabourn.stated that Ann Marie Foote would be a good selection however her attentions need to be focused on family at the moment. Selectman Gross stated that there are four good candidates.

Selectman Gross nominated Todd Baldwin and Jim Demeritt to serve as Fire Commissioners. APPROVED (x3). Selectman Gross stated that at this point he thinks that these two individuals would serve the town well.

Mill Brook Road Survey – Selectman Sabourn stated he has concerns about why the association wants a copy of the plan. Jim Demeritt stated that the association has a problem with upgrades to the property and would probably use the plans with their attorney against the town. Selectman Sabourn stated he would be opposed to handing out plans. Plans can be reviewed and are available at the town office. After further discussion, the board decided it does not wish to sell plans to the Mill Brook Valley Association at this time. AGREED (x3) RA, Tom Dubey, stated there are a lot of wetlands. Permits and engineering will be necessary prior to construction on the road. Agreed.

Mill Brook Road - Jim Demeritt stated there are two culverts, one by Everett Steele's and one in the hollow by the Cubik's property need cold patch and to be built up. The RA stated that the culvert by the Cubiks is to be replaced but the one by the Steele's will require closing road down for about 4 hours. Selectman Sabourn inquired if the box is broken? The RA responded that there does not appear to be any rebar in the culvert and there are no shoulders that can be extended. Essentially, the road rises on both sides of the culvert in the winter. The concrete culvert appears to be solid at this point. A plastic liner may be able to be inserted in the culvert. Selectman Sabourn stated this will not resolve the road heaving. The RA agreed. He suggested that the costs of reconstructing the road in that area may warrant a separate article for town meeting. Jim Demeritt.stated the town could write a letter to everyone in Mill Brook Valley to let them know the road would be closed at a certain time. The RA stated he just wanted everyone aware of the potential liability involved in having the road closed. The RA stated he would get to the culverts as soon as possible, as soon as his summer help starts work.

Jim Demeritt stated the culvert by the Freeman property also needs to have something done.

Jim Demeritt stated that in January the RA was given permission to take a town truck home and that it should not continue during non winter time. The RA responded that he is required to be on call 24 hr/day, 7 days/wk. He has a town truck so that he doesn't have to drive to the garage when called out. Mr. Demeritt stated he wouldn't have a problem with a 1-ton truck but it is too much wear and tear on the 550's. Ralph Perron stated that the selectmen **insisted** that the Road Agent take home a truck.

Jim Parziale inquired if the police officers take cruisers home? Yes. Selectman Gross stated he does not have a problem with the RA taking a truck home. Selectman Parziale agreed stating, it is not like he lives 50 miles away. Mr. Demeritt suggested that the town look into a cheaper vehicle to run around with. Mr. Perron inquired if Mr. Demeritt was suggesting an additional vehicle. Mr. Demeritt stated that he is; a small Ranger or something. Selectman Sabourn stated he would like to think about the suggestion.

Selectman Sabourn suggested more discussion about pending grant applications prior to approval.

8:50 It was moved to enter non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II a.. Present were the Board of Selectmen and TA. 9:08 - The board returned to public session. It was moved to seal the minutes. PASSED (x3)

9:10 It was moved to enter non public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II a.. Present were the Board of Selectmen and TA. 9:25 - The board returned to public session. It was moved to seal the minutes. PASSED (x3)

APPROVALS

Building Permit:

16 4 33	G.Sigurjonsson	house & garage
17 7 24	N&D Hoyle	replace berm roof w/timber
18 3 11	J.Nadherny	demolish/rebuild shed
Intent to Cut Timber		
3 3 2	M&S Hall	
2 6 9	J.Powers	
11 1 65&66	Steele Rev. Trust	

9:30 It was moved to adjourn. PASSED (3)

**The next scheduled Selectmen's Meeting
Will be**

June 19, 2007
6:45 PM at the Municipal Building