

# TOWN OF THORNTON

## January 16, 2008

### Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

8:00 The meeting was called to order with the Board of Selectmen, Road Agent (RA) Tom Dubey and 2 engineers from Quantum Construction Consultants, LLC to discuss options for the repair of the covered bridge at the Woods at Mill Brook. The RA and Ms. Martin left the meeting for a site visit at the bridge.

9:00 The regular meeting was called to order.

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

Also present: Administrator Andrew (TA) at 9:15, Gifford Kriebel, Jim Demeritt, Road Agent (RA) Tom Dubey, and Capital Improvement Committee members - Mitch Manseau, Cindy Schofield, Sally Davis, and Ron Jansen

It was noted that a separate warrant article would be presented for an upgraded defibrillator for the Fire Department. The cost for the defibrillator is \$21,000. The regular budget will reflect \$5,000 and the remainder will be in a separate warrant article reflecting an offsetting revenue amount from operations. Fire Commissioner Jim Demeritt stated the department had used the new ambulance in December to assist Waterville Valley and there should be revenues coming in

It was moved to accept minutes of the 1/8/08 Selectmen's Meeting as amended.  
APPROVED (x3)

Selectman Gross questioned if the checklist supervisors received a cost of living increase. TA responded that they have not in the past. They were given a \$.50 increase a few years ago. If the board desires she will calculate in an increase.

Giff Kriebel inquired if the employee policy indicates when someone should get a step increase. All agreed that the personnel policy directives should be adhered to.

9:35 RA Tom Dubey returned to the Selectmen's Meeting from the covered bridge site. He reported that the engineer took some pictures and has the opinion that the bridge is too short. That in conjunction with the bend in the brook has a negative impact on the flow of water.

Mr. Demeritt asked if road crew would go out on Mill Brook and fill some of the voids left by the frost. He noted that one of the box culverts has dropped and there are some real bad holes. The RA noted that in fact the road is heaving vs. the culvert dropping. The board agreed that the RA would add some sand in the holes to avoid damage to vehicles. Mr. Demeritt reported a hole on the hill by Oolies (Robert McAuley).

Selectman Gross inquired if a new person hired in the Highway Department would start at an advanced step. The RA responded that his recommendation would depend on the individual's experience.

Selectman Gross inquired what time the board would like to meet with John Carpenter. It was decided that they would meet on **Monday 1/28** at 9 AM and they will also reschedule that week's selectmen's meeting to that date. The Budget Hearing is scheduled for 2/13 at 6 PM. Next week's regular meeting will be on Wednesday 1/23 at 9 AM and the meeting on Wednesday 2/6 would also be at 9 AM.

The Board reviewed correspondence and manifests, approving accordingly.

The TA inquired what cost of living increase the board wished her to work with in budget preparations. Selectman Gross stated that 3% was agreed to relative to the fire department and he thought it fair to utilize that amount. A 3% COL calculation for the 2008 budget was APPROVED (x3)

Mr. Demeritt inquired if the board is looking at changing health insurance with the escalation in prices? Selectman Gross responded that Campton pays 100% of their employees health insurance premiums. Thornton employees pay 15% of the premium. He continued that the SAU is looking into alternative plans and the board joined the SAU group when Mr. Freeman was a selectman.

Selectman Gross inquired if the secretary position at the fire department is anticipated to be full time next year. Mr. Demeritt stated he would work against it. He continued that one of the problems this year was that their computer had crashed and data needed to be re-entered.

A right of repurchase letter for 2 parcels in Waterville Estates was sent to Andrew Louis, Lui Realty Trust for parcels taken by Tax Collector's deed.

10:30 Capital Improvement Committee (CIP) – Cindy Schofield stated her appreciation in allowing the CIP to discuss their plan with the board. The CIP's goal is to take into account costs and level fund expenditures utilizing the Capital Improvement Plan. She noted that some towns take the plan and utilize it to present one warrant article to fund the plan. This can help with level funding of taxes.

Mitch Manseau stated that the background goes back about 3 yrs ago when the Planning Board advertised a request for proposal for a subcontractor to help formulate a capital improvement plan. He submitted a proposal having been a Town Manager in Maine with experience in the planning process. He noted that he has worked with a very capable committee. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the process and each year improves the plan.

The spreadsheets are a draft prepared to assist the selectmen in the budgeting process and to allow for level funding. He noted that the details and road information sheets are going to look different annually. The consensus of the committee is that outright purchase of

vehicles is better than lease-purchase. Mr. Manseau noted that funding the CIP gives the selectmen more flexibility in meeting town needs when needed.

There are other capital improvements that might meet the funding criteria, an example being the covered bridge. Selectman Sabourn stated that the board did speak with 2 engineers this morning and they did a site inspection. One engineering firm has given us a preliminary report. The consensus is that the bridge is not sized or placed properly. Engineers are going to come up with options including a short-term fix until monies are put aside. Ms. Schofield inquired if the engineering firm would do the needed work. The board responded that they would not necessarily do the work. At this point the board is looking for more of a scope of work needed, so that we can put together an amount to be appropriated. Sally Davis indicated that the bridge is slated in the CIP for work in 2015. This is one example of where the CIP can help us seeing the whole picture. Ron Jansen asked the board if there is a safety issue. Selectman Sabourn responded that it is not currently, but if it becomes one, we may end up with a bailey bridge until the problem can be remedied. It is more of a longevity issue and we need to have a plan for it. He continued that the town had an exercise with FEMA recently along with Campton and we had an opportunity to speak with them. We need to update our hazard mitigation plan to include the bridge at which time we may have some federal monies become available to us for its replacement. There is not a final replacement timeline at this point. The FEMA representative has been supportive that there may be monies available if the bridge is addressed in our plans.

Mr. Manseau noted that vehicles replacements are pretty much in line with the CIP. Looking at where we are in the debt schedules, the current school bond will be paid off next year. Vehicle and project plans give a long term picture of where the town is at. Selectman Gross thanked the committee for the good and helpful information.

Ms. Schofield asked if the new ambulance was operational. YES. There are two EMT's on duty or call for coverage.

The last two pages presented are the paving and town road inventory. Initial data was taken from the NHDOT mileage listing. The RA has been working to classify them by current condition. Mr. Manseau asked how long a cycle the board is looking at for the repaving of roads. It depends on the cost of asphalt. If the town did Mill Brook Road this year, it would cost about \$200K to pave 1.8 miles. If Thornton paid \$150K / year it would be a 20-year plan for repaving. Mr. Manseau inquired what the level of paving efforts is going to be. He noted that roads in bottom right corner of the supplied matrix are the ones most in need of work. Selectman Sabourn stated the board has come up with a number with the RA due to the fact that we are losing ground annually. They are looking at placing \$130K in the operations budget plus another \$20K into the capital reserve which seems to be in line with the CIP. It is appropriate on some of the worst roads that they be ground first. A few roads slated for paving in 2007 were not done due to the cost of asphalt. The RA noted that Routes 3 and 175 have shown that a good road can not be put over a bad road and have it last. Mr. Manseau stated the CIP is just talking paving, and not road re-building.

Mr. Manseau continued, in summary, the CIP is looking at the costs of vehicles, other expenses and paving. There is a lot of money necessary, but the committee would like to assist in level funding and make it easier for the public to plan. The Planning Board can utilize the plan for the implementation of impact fees for subdivisions.

It was also noted that having capital equipment expenditures reflected in department budgets does not allow a department to accurately reflect its cost of operations. Mr. Kriebel stated that the plan is currently about \$202K behind what needs to be funded and the plan will have to be redone in 2010. Some lease purchases or additional monies will still need to be budgeted in order to fund the plan. Selectman Sabourn stated the inclusion of the salt shed and a firehouse expansion are skewing the numbers and may be put out at a later date. Selectman Sabourn stated he would not support an increase to the size of the firehouse at this point. Committee members agreed that this is the type of dialogue that needs to be had. Mr. Demeritt stated that the CIP is a wish list that department heads are feeding to the committee. The department heads should feed their information to the selectmen first, and then the board should communicate with the CIP. Ron Jansen stated the board should look at and delete the unreasonable items. Selectman Gross stated the CIP is a good guide to work with. Mr. Demeritt stated the price of asphalt is a big issue in maintaining the roads. Sally Davis inquired how the committee should work with the wish list items. Selectman Sabourn stated it is the selectmen's job to revise the requests. Ms. Schofield stated that some towns have department heads do a presentation defending their needs as it is the department heads that are most knowledgeable about what they are.

Selectman Sabourn stated it would be good to have a joint meeting with the CIP Committee and the department heads. He continued that the committee has done a great job and we need to get from a wish list to reflecting what the town's needs will truly be. It's difficult to put a timeline in place.

Ms. Davis asked if there should be a joint meeting before the committee starts revising the plan next year. Selectman Sabourn stated he thinks that the board should meet with the department heads before the information goes to the committee, so the committee has reasonable numbers for what needs we will be in the future. The committee is currently put in an impossible position trying to interpret the department's desires.

Mr. Manseau asked the board if they would like to do a quick scrub of the 10-year plan so that the committee can go forward. He stated that they can't fault a department head for wanting the best equipment to do their jobs. The RA spoke relative to the sand/salt shed. It is not a wish list item. The Federal government is going to mandate that sand/salt be put under cover in the near future and he was asked how much it will cost to do that. It is just a rough estimate for the CIP. At some point we will get a letter mandating compliance. He continued a lot of thought went into the information given to the committee relative to the age of equipment, etc. The requests are based on longevity of items. Selectman Sabourn stated that the justification should come to the board. The RA stated he just doesn't want people to go out of this meeting thinking that department heads put together a "wish list" that has no justification. Marianne Peabody stated that the CIP committee has

been working outside of the box for the last 4-years to get to this dialogue. It has been a various tedious process and finally the efforts are paying off.

Mr. Manseau stated that the committee wants to present a plan that can be worked with. The Planing Board has agreed that the committee would work with the Board of Selectmen directly to come up with a credible plan that could be introduced into the current budget process for an easier process next year. Selectman Sabourn stated he needs to look at the budget to date and how it relates to the plan along with the capital reserve funds. It is almost too late to apply the plan this year, especially with the school's project.

Mr. Demeritt stated the fire budget alone has seen a 25% increase. Selectman Sabourn stated it is the bottom line that we are looking at, and it will take some review of the information. It is not fair to eliminate items without first talking with the department heads. Mr. Manseau asked if they could get a scrub for the preliminary plan so that the public educational process can start.

Selectman Gross inquired how Mr. Manseau's time is budgeted. It is budgeted through the Planning Board. Mr. Kriebel stated the budgeting process should be amended so that 6-10 years of capital is reviewed at the same time and then the board goes to CIP. The numbers are not something that governance can live with and put out at town meeting. Mr. Demeritt stated there had been resistance to working with the CIP committee in the last couple of years, but now we can sit down and go over the numbers with the departments. Selectman Sabourn stated that the process makes sense and thinks that next year the selectmen can support this process whole heartedly. Mr. Manseau stated they will have to put out a document that is flawed. Selectman Gross responded that in another year the CIP will be a better product. Selectman Sabourn agreed and stated that next year's meeting should happen about 4 months earlier such as August or September. The selectmen should ask department heads for their 10 year plan to review for the plan. Perhaps several meetings will be required for the CIP to be able to present a reasonable plan. Selectman Sabourn stated he certainly thanks the committee for their efforts. It is a tremendous step in the right direction. All agreed that it was a very positive exchange and the plan will come together. Selectman Gross thanked all for their efforts.

12:04 It was moved to adjourn. PASSED (x3)

**The next scheduled Selectmen's Meeting  
Will be  
Wednesday January 23, 2008  
9:00 AM at the Municipal Building**