

TOWN OF THORNTON

January 23, 2008

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

9:00 AM The meeting was called to order.

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

Also present: Administrator Andrew (TA), Jim Demeritt, Road Agent (RA) Tom Dubey, Police Chief (PC) Walter Joyce

The board reviewed correspondence and manifests and approved accordingly.

Fire Commissioner Jim Demeritt stated that it will probably be June before the fire department sees revenues from ambulance operations.

Selectman Gross inquired if the grinding of roads would be considered rebuilding. The RA responded that it is repairing as part of the paving process.

Police Chief Joyce stated that he had heard the Capital Improvement Committee had come to the selectmen and said that he hadn't discussed the cruiser with them. He stated he had sat down with them in October and gave them a listing breaking down which cruisers are to be replaced when. He read the scheduled replacement schedule and gave the board a copy. Selectman Sabourn stated the cruisers were shown on the plan, so he wasn't sure what was being discussed; there must have been some misinterpretation of timing. The PC stated he has worked with the committee and believes in the planning process.

The PC stated he had not had a response from the board relative to a proposed notice for non-compliance of 911 house numbering and wants to get started on the enforcement. The town office will need to make copies of the regulations to give out at the counter. Selectman Sabourn stated he remembered discussing the notice, but none of the board members remembered having seen the draft. All agreed to review the draft and get back to the chief. The PC noted that house numbering is even more important since there are a lot of new road names and sometimes the police department doesn't get to the scene first because they don't hear the fire or ambulance call until it comes across the scanner. The board reviewed the notice and APPROVED it as presented (x3). The PC stated that the notice will be delivered with a letter if there doesn't appear to be anyone home. Mr. Demeritt suggested that the information go in the newspaper to remind people that haven't yet complied and that there are potential fines that could be levied. The notice could also be placed on the web site. The PC will notify Joel Freeman for the newspaper and the TA will notify Beverly Chappell for the website.

Selectman Sabourn stated that Ms. Chappell had asked if it would be okay to put the dates of future school meetings on the town's calendar. The board whole heartedly approved.

Minutes of the 1/16/08 Selectmen's Meeting were approved as amended. PASSED (x3)

Selectman Gross inquired if the part-timers at the Transfer Station need to be certified. The TA responded that she did not think so, and will verify the fact.

The board discussed a letter from the LGC looking for funding to support a law suit relative to the potential increase of mandated town contributions to the NH Retirement System. They are requesting just over \$199 from the town. Mr. Demeritt stated that there was a period of 8-10 years when the market was good and the state didn't pay attention to the investments when the market was dropping. The NHRS had reduced the percentage contributed by the towns based on the investment incomes. Now the fund is under funded and the state wants the towns to make up the shortfall. The NHRS shouldn't have reduced the town contributions and now they are looking for the town's to fund the shortfall and correct their error. Selectman Sabourn stated they are talking the monies generated now to fund the future costs. He thinks the board should commit to helping pay for the legal costs to defend the town's rights. It was so moved to contribute to the cost of legal defense. PASSED (x3)

Selectman Sabourn reviewed an e-mail from Mr. Gravel requesting a response from the board relative to additional cars towed to the Ham property. Selectman Gross stated that there is only one car currently on the Ham property. The new cars were removed prior to the board taking action. A letter will be sent to Mr. Gravel.

The TA asked the board for clarification on some payroll and budget issues so that she can move forward with the budget process. Selectman Gross inquired how many steps are on the wage worksheet. Five. The board approved a step increase for both Sue Lyons and Tom Dubey within their wage scales. Part time seasonal highway worker step increases were discussed. The RA stated he would go recommend a step increase if the worker returns the following season. The TA noted that the Library Trustees are in charge of the Library personnel wages and the Police Chief has handled the recommendations for wage increases in his department in the past. The remaining staff is at the top step on the scale and will receive the cost of living increase only.

The board moved that the Treasurer and Welfare Officer be on the same wage level. PASSED (x3)

The TA inquired if the board wished her to change the wage worksheet category to incorporate the extra dollars authorized for Marianne last fall. Selectman Sabourn stated that the addition was authorized recognizing that some employees are not participating in the available benefit package. The TA is to set up a line within payroll for "benefit allowance". This should be added to the personnel policy and handled on a case by case basis by the board. The wage step policy seems to work and department heads should be reminded that it should be utilized going forward. Step increases should be recommended to and approved by the board. All agreed.

The RA stated as a suggestion that his wife's employer issues a bonus check for a fraction of what would be paid if that employee participated in the health insurance benefit.

Selectman Sabourn stated that at last night's school meeting Barry VanDeMoere had told him that he thought that the matter about a letter from Mr. Avalone to Mr. Parziale had wrongly been handled in non-public session. Selectman Sabourn had requested that the TA print a copy of the public meeting minutes and the letter sent by the other board members to Mr. Avalone. The board requested the TA send the copies to Mr. VanDeMoere.

The RA stated that the top rail on the bridge in Thornton Gore has been replaced and someone has already hit it. He examined the site with Police Lt. Foley. There was minimal damage to the bridge. The RA plans to pull and replace the remaining posts on the bridge in the spring.

The RA reported that the holes in Mill Brook Road were filled last Thursday and the outbound lanes are back to being rough again. He has placed some frost heave signs to warn people to slow down. Selectman Sabourn inquired if they had filled the voids with crushed if it would have stayed better. It may have, but the biggest problem is people are traveling too fast. Selectman Parziale agreed. The RA noted that the area by the McAuley property is worse than usual. Mr. Demeritt stated that the underpinning to the road is substandard and all the rain hasn't helped. He would like to see the frost heave by the Steele's property tended a little. The RA agreed saying it was supposed to have been cold patched, but then it started to snow. The RA expressed his concern about wasting money repairing the road week after week.

The RA suggested an alternative to the proposed addition of a full time position. Would the board be interested in a 32 hour, year-round position, so that benefits would not have to be figured in the budget? Selectman Gross stated that in winter the individual would be working more than 40 hours in a regular basis. Selectman Sabourn stated that the budget might look better, but we need to get a person who will stay and work with us - attract a good employee. Mr. Demeritt stated there are enough retirees out there that could fulfill the needs and it would save the town money not to establish a full time position.

11:25 It was moved to adjourn. PASSED (x3)

**The next scheduled Selectmen's Meeting
Will be
Monday January 28, 2008
9:00 AM at the Municipal Building**