

Minutes
Board of Selectmen
March 17, 2003
Police Station Community Room
7:00 p.m.

Chairman Gerard Nolet called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Selectmen Gerard Nolet, Brian M. Ashe, Hal W. Haberman

Also Present: Town Administrator Susan Wright.

Acceptance of Minutes: The Board accepted the minutes of the March 3, 2003 regular and executive sessions.

Visitor Comment & Questions: No one was present for this section.

WMECO Petition Hearings: The Board opened the hearings on two petitions brought by WMECO. They were for South Park Avenue and Ellington Street to add transformers to the areas because of outages experienced last summer. Present for WMECO was Dominic DiLizia who stated he was filling in for the Technician who prepared the petitions. Paul and Joan Lagunowich from South Park were present. They stated this would make the third device bordering their property and they wanted to know if alternative locations could be found. Kathy Niman of Ellington was present stated her overwhelming opposition to the placement of the transformer in front of her property. She stated she had researched transformers and was strongly opposed to this installation. It was noted by WMECO that all would be underground. The Board asked the WMECO representative to work with the residents to come up with alternatives. The Tree Warden's objections were also read into the record and he stated opposition based on damage to trees. The hearing was continued until the next meeting.

New Business:

1. Annual Town Report: The Board reviewed the recommendation from Cindy French, Selectmen's Secretary regarding the Annual Town Report. The Board voted to award the contract for printing to Priority Press, the lowest bidder for \$2,275.25 for 750 copies. It was decided by the Board to print half the number of copies this year and put the Town Report on the website. The cover draft was also approved.

2. Annual Inspector of Animals: The Board voted to appoint Animal Control Officer Warner Cross to the position of Inspector of Animals, a position as required by the Department of Food and Agriculture.

3. Reserve Fund Request: The Board approved a request submitted by the Town Accountant to seek a Reserve Fund Transfer of \$1,920 for the Liability Insurance Account due to additional charges resulting from changes to the vehicle inventory.

Town Administrator Report:

1. Town Forum: The Board noted the time, date and place of the Town Forum. The Board reviewed the presentation prepared by Chairman Nolet and agreed with the content of the presentation. A handout for the meeting, detailing the proposed cuts will also be prepared.

2. *Governor's Budget:* Ms. Wright briefly reviewed for the Board the content of the conference call with the Governor's staff regarding state local aid.
3. *Fire Truck Financing:* The Board of Selectmen discussed the Fire Truck Financing and made no decisions on the financing. The Appropriations Committee has recommended that no borrowing be done to finance the truck. The Board will discuss again at the next meeting.
4. *Charter Commission Update:* The Board reminded residents that nominations for the Charter Commissioner are due to the Town Clerk by April 1, 2003.
5. *Leaf Program:* The Board reviewed and approved a press release prepared by the Superintendent regarding the leaf collection program which will resume the first week of April.
6. *Employee Health Insurance:* The Board was notified about an upcoming meeting with unions in the four towns in the Scantic Valley Health Group.

Correspondence:

Long Meddowe Days: Chairman Nolet will speak at the Memorial Service on May 18th at noon on the Town Green.

Letter from Moira Murphy regarding Traffic Safety at Turner Park: Referred to the next Traffic Safety Committee Meeting.

Allan Compton Letter: Seeking information on the Board's policy regarding defense of suits against the town.

Northern Tree Bill for Sidewalk Plowing: It was noted that no one had ever sought permission to use an outside source for sidewalk plowing. The bill was deemed unacceptable by the Board of Selectmen.

Letter from Nick Marinelli, Boy Scout: The Board noted a letter from resident and Boy Scout Nick Marinelli, Boy Scout Troop 32 regarding his objection to a trash fee.

Executive Session: The Board voted to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contracts and collective bargaining. The Board noted that they would return to open session to discuss the FY04 budget and in particular the Police and Highway Department budgets. At 7:50 P.M. a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Nolet	yes
Mr. Ashe	yes
Mr. Haberman	yes

At 8:30 P.M. the Board entered back into Open Session and took up the FY04 Budget.

Police Budget FY04: The Board discussed some of the issues they had with the recommendations from the Chief for cutting \$163,049 from the budget. The Board suggested the following cuts:

Reduce Crossing Guards from 24 to 18	\$24,000
Purchase One Less Cruiser	\$25,800

Eliminate Radio Maintenance	\$ 6,000
Trim Expenses	\$ 2,677
Trim Medical/Injury Account	\$ 1,100
Cut Overtime Account	\$15,000
Reduce Training	\$ 6,000
Cut ½ time dispatcher	\$16,000
Eliminate One Officer Position (Fei)	\$41,025
Trim Vehicle Maintenance	\$10,000
Furlough for Chief – One Week	\$ 2,076
Total Recommended Cuts	\$149,678

There was much discussion about the cuts and where they differed from the cuts proposed by the Chief. The budget reductions fell short of the \$163,049 by \$13,371 and after much discussion, the Board decided not to trim anymore from the Police Budget.

Highway Budget FY04: The Board then met with the Superintendent of Streets to discuss the revised budget cuts he recommended to meet target of \$98,000. After much discussion the following cuts were proposed:

Move 2/3 of one position to the Recycling Center Budget	\$21,000
Move Parks and Recreation Fuel & Utilities Expenses to Park Budget	\$15,540
Implement a User Fee for a drop off leaf program expected to generate	\$ 20,650
Charge labor to the Stump Grinder Account	\$ 3,025
Charge Asst. Supt. for Engineering labor for C.90 work to C.90	\$ 3,000
Furlough for Superintendent and two Assistants	\$ 2,000
Reduce Clerical (Barbara) Hours by 3.5 hours/week	\$ 2,950
Reduce Workforce by one equipment operator/laborer	\$ 30,000
Total:	\$98,130

The Board also approved a press release prepared by the Superintendent regarding the leaf program. The Board also approved adding the sidewalk plow to the list of surplus property eligible for disposal at the upcoming auction in April. The Board noted that the plow was no longer reliable, was costly to repair and maintain and did a poor job at clearing sidewalks anyway.

Furloughs: The Board discussed the matter of furloughs for all Department Heads. It was noted that no response had been received from the School Committee on the Board's request to consider a similar action including their Administrators. After much discussion, the Board voted to implement a mandatory one week furlough for all Department Heads and their Assistants.

Seeing no further business the Board voted to adjourn at 10:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Wright
Town Administrator