

MINUTES  
October 23, 2006

The Selectmen met for their weekly at 6 p.m. in the Town Office. Present were Selectmen Sharon Davis, James McGarr, Charles Wheeler, Jon Homer, and Charles Cheney.

The Board began their meeting by reviewing and signing the manifest. They also approved four new residents, signed two Intents to Cuts, one building permit, and a timber tax warrant.

At 6:30 p.m. the Board met with Democratic candidate for Grafton County Commissioner, Martha Richards. Mrs. Richards introduced herself, and gave a brief summary of her background. She has been involved in many volunteer, and community activities including serving as a School Board Member, volunteer at the Speare Memorial Hospital, Girl Scouts, the Plymouth Main Street Program, the Chem Free program, and the Plymouth Community Closet. She has a nursing background which she feels would benefit her in understanding how the County Nursing Home operates, and she commended the Grafton County Nursing Home for its high rate of care. Mrs. Richards brought along an organization chart of the different departments within the County. She feels that the Board of Commissioners need someone with some vision, and believes that a Capital Reserve Fund should have been set up long ago towards the building of a new Jail. She commented that even by bonding this project that it will significantly impact the bottom line of the County budget. She also questions whether it is fiscally sound to continue to run the County farm. She would like to see the area develop a good public transportation program, and cited the one in Berlin as a good example. Mrs. Richards and the Board Members also discussed the Sheriff's Department and the new Drug Court. She ended by saying that she felt it was time that the Commissioners had a woman on the Board. She thanked the Selectboard for their time.

The Board met next with Fire Chief David Tobine. Chief Tobine had attended an ambulance meeting in Plymouth on Tuesday, and brought back some grim figures on the increase in the ambulance service with Plymouth for the next two years. Campton will see an increase of 17.30% over the next two years. As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, anyone using the ambulance service will be billed, residents included. The income from this additional billing will be used to offset the bottom line, but Chief Tobine pointed out that the bottom line has increase significantly. The Town of Plymouth will be passing on some of the Fire Chief and Deputy's salary to this budget, and when a new building is finally decided upon will pass this cost along to the contracting Towns as well. Chief Tobine pointed out that due to the increase in calls, the Town of Plymouth cannot guarantee service. Chief Tobine pointed out that some calls have been picked up by Waterville Valley or Ashland, because both of Plymouth's two ambulances were already out on calls. The Selectmen asked the Chief what he thought the solution was, and he indicated that with the increase to both Campton and Thornton's budget, it may be time to seriously look at the Towns having their own ambulance service. He indicated that in order to cover this service that he would need four people to cover daytime service, and felt confident that the call company could handle the night and weekend calls. The Call Company cannot handle day calls as people are at their full time jobs, and even if local, cannot leave these jobs to respond when their pagers go off. The Chief had discussed this idea with the Campton, Thornton and Ellsworth Boards back in 2003, and at that time, the Boards did not feel we were at the point to make this change.

The Selectmen suggested that he go back, and updated his figures, and be prepared to discuss this again when he gathers this information.

Next on the agenda were Diana Timson Leach and her husband John. For the past few months, there have been discussions and proposals going back and forth about the bridge to their house on Bog Road. Woody Timson, our long time Cemetery Sexton had passed away this spring, and Diana is the executrix of the will, and will inherit the house. Woody's son John, who also lives at the property, took over his father's duties at the Cemetery. A delivery from Home Depot of fencing for the Cemetery was made to home, and the forklift truck went through some of the planking on the bridge. The subcontractor for Home Depot's insurance company was contacted, but it was determined that the bridge was already in need of repair, and they would not cover any damage. For many years, different Road Agents have been maintaining this bridge, and there have been many stories as to whether this was a Town bridge or a long time agreement to take care of the bridge by various Town Officials. Long time residents, Robert Pulsifer and Lester Mitchell came in support of the Timson Family, and stated that as long as they could remember, the Town has taken care of the bridge. The Selectmen feel that since this bridge only serves one residence, and there is nothing in writing, deed etc. that indicates this is a Town bridge, that they made the offer to fix the bridge, this one time with the understanding that the bridge will no longer be maintained by the Town. Discussion ensued back and forth about whether this was or was not a Town bridge, and whether it would be appropriate to fix or not fix it. Selectman McGarr made a motion to repair the bridge as necessary, and replace the planking with pressure treated lumber, and if any of the stringers are damaged to replace them. This was seconded by Selectman Homer. Discussion ensued that this was being done, not because the Board claimed ownership of the bridge, but that the damage was done due to a Town function, delivery of the Cemetery materials. This was voted in the affirmative by all. The Board also agreed that they would put an article in the warrant for Town Meeting to see if the voters want to discontinue maintenance of this bridge, and if they vote this down, the Town will continue to maintain it.

The Board then met with assessor Mark Nieder. Mark indicated that he had spoken to Ann Marie, and she had advised him of the Board's vote not to continue the cyclical work. Mark wanted to know if the Board wanted him to at least continue to measure and list the quarter of the Town each year, and not make any value changes. He indicated that he has already hired additional people, and bonded this work, but if the Board did not want to continue with this work, he would need a letter for his bond company to cancel the bond. The Board would have Mark continue the annual pick up and abatement work. Mark did suggest to the Board that it would be more expensive to do the revaluation in one year as prices will increase by that time. He also questioned whether the information that they had from Commissioner Gabler was accurate that most of the Towns in Grafton County do not conduct cyclical work. The Board had largely based their decision not to do this because of the increase in the County tax. They felt that the Towns that kept their valuations up to date were penalized by the formula used to determine each Town's County tax responsibility. Selectman Wheeler felt that he wanted to get some answers as to which Towns did this work, and which didn't, and was going to make some inquiries tomorrow. The Board promised Mark that they would get back to him next week.

The Board then went on to reviewing their correspondence. Chief Warn sent along a memo advising the Board that Adam Donnelly has submitted his resignation. The Chief would like to

meet with the HR Committee at their earliest convenience to discuss putting part-time officer, Richard Butterfield on as full-time. The attorneys for the Town and Pike have agreed on the wording for the purchase and sale agreement on the Pike land, and the Board signed their copy to send along to Brian Donovan at Pike. Selectmen Charles Wheeler and Sharon Davis, the HR Committee, agreed to have him come in at their November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting at 5:30 p.m. Ann Marie advised the Board that former Town Attorney Daniel Crean sent a letter to advise us that he is resuming his law practice on a limited part-time basis. Ann Marie advised that Road Agent Butch Bain has received the Senior Road Scholar designation through the NH Roads Program, and Town Clerk/Tax Collector Hannah Joyce has successfully completed her second year of the Joint Town Clerk/Tax Collector certification program.

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. One typo was corrected, and with a motion from Selectman Wheeler, and seconded by Selectman Davis, the minutes were approved as written, voted in the affirmative by all.

The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Foote  
Town Administrator