

DRAFT

These minutes have not been reviewed
or approved by the convening board or commission.

**TOWN OF LUDLOW
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

REGULAR MEETING

December 1, 2008

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Howard Barton, Jr., Chairman	Brett Sanderson	Earl Washburn
John Neal	Bruce Schmidt	

STAFF:

Frank Heald	Pam Cruickshank
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OTHERS PRESENT:

George Fairchild	Sandra Johnson	Ted Reeves
Leo Graham	Marilyn Ledoux	Michelle Stinson (LPC-TV)

1. **Call to Order**

- A. Chairman Howard Barton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- B. All members present

2. **Approve Minutes of Previous Meetings**

- A. Howard Barton advised that the minutes to be approved are from the regular meeting of November 3, 2008. Page #3 was missing from the printouts in some of the board members' packages.
- B. **MOTION by Earl Washburn and seconded by Brett Sanderson to table approval of the minutes from the November 3, 2008 until the next meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**

3. **Comments from Citizens**

- A. There were none.

4. **Discuss and Approve 2009 Ludlow Transfer Station Rates**

- A. Frank Heald advised that at this point, there would be no changes in the fees. One citizen did voice concern about the fee for brush.
- B. George Fairchild said that since fuel prices have dropped and NRRRA costs are down, they are not recommending increasing the rates at this time, but would ask you to keep in mind that they may need to reconsider this in 4 months.
- C. **MOTION by John Neal and seconded by Earl Washburn to approve the rates as submitted.**
- D. Bruce Schmidt asked if there is enough money to make changes that were discussed in the past to revamp the set up and make it more efficient.
- E. Frank Heald said that they can always spend money to make the station more efficient, but it may not benefit the costs.
- F. Bruce Schmidt said that a few years ago there was a plan regarding parking and traffic.
- G. George Fairchild said that at one point they considered moving things around, but realized they would need to spend quite a bit of money. They would need to move the scale, compactors and the recycling building.
- H. Howard Barton said that when he went up there to dispose of trash the other day, he had to sit there quite a while waiting.
- I. Frank Heald said that his sense it that the initial design was flawed, but it would cost too much to rearrange things.
- J. Howard Barton said there are problems with parking and traffic flow.

- K. Frank Heald said there were two comfortable traffic lanes. Single stream recycling would help and may come as the commodities market drops.
- L. Bruce Schmidt said that the station is a service used by all in town, like the roads and schools. We should look at making it more efficient. A tremendous number of people use it. We should make it user-friendlier. We need to clear up the traffic and parking.
- M. George Fairchild commented that some people really take their time and also park where they shouldn't and don't respond well if anything is said to them.
- N. **Motion passed unanimously.**

5. **Sign Resolution to Increase Weight Limits on Interstate Highways in Vermont**

- A. Frank Heald advised that this is a resolution from VLCT concerning federal weight limitations on interstate roads. The federal limit in Vermont is 80,000 pounds and in neighboring states it is up to 99,000 lbs. This puts heavier use on Routes 103, 7 and other similar roads.
- B. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Brett Sanderson to approve the request VLCT and authorize the chairman to sign the resolution. Motion passed unanimously.**

6. **Discuss Purchasing Policy**

- A. Bruce Schmidt said that he had asked for this to be included on the agenda. This board should consider how construction projects are assigned to contractors. We need more transparency. We need to look at how the state does it and ask contractors to provide lists of rates.
- B. Earl Washburn asked if Bruce Schmidt is really talking about two different policies. Our concern is the bidding process and policies.
- C. Bruce Schmidt said that he does not think they have a bidding policy and maybe we need to look at that.
- D. Earl Washburn said that he agrees.
- E. John Neal asked Frank Heald to get copies of the state's policies for the board.
- F. Frank Heald said the state has a similar procedure to the way we do it. We do go to contractors for pricing and have lists of contractors. If the project is under \$3,000, we go down the list and hire the equipment as needed. In a real emergency situation there is not a lot of time and we hire the best-qualified contractor for the job.
- G. Bruce Schmidt said that he does not often see announcements in the papers that the town is accepting bids for a project. There was concern voiced by a citizen about this.
- H. John Neal asked for a ballpark estimate on the amount spent yearly by the town on this type of purchases.
- I. Frank Heald said it is in the budget draft under highway, water, and sewer and also in the village budget. He does not have a ballpark figure.
- J. Howard Barton asked about the list of vendors.
- K. John Neal said that he would like to see the raw numbers on outside vendors. The town needs a policy on how we let these projects out.
- L. Frank Heald said he could get the numbers together for the local contractors.
- M. Brett Sanderson estimated about \$30,000 to \$50,000 per year.
- N. Frank Heald said he would get them the numbers.
- O. John Neal asked how the funds get distributed.
- P. Earl Washburn said the board might have to adjust the limit from \$3,000 to maybe \$2,000.
- Q. Bruce Schmidt said that he does not want to slow the process down. The state has a list of contractors and fees. This has nothing to do with emergencies. We need more transparency to show there is no favoritism. The taxpayers expect this board to get the best prices. He would like Frank Heald to make the bids open to everyone. The board is not going to question who gets the bid, but he would like to encourage locals who are qualified to bid for the projects.
- R. Frank Heald said he would get the state information for them and the board can discuss the limits.

7. **Discuss and Act on Johnson Land Issue**

- A. Frank Heald advised that the memo he enclosed in the packets was comprehensive. Sandra Johnson purchased land on Okemo Heights that were separate lots. She wanted to build a house on the combined land. The zoning administrator asked for a survey in order to join the lots. It was then found out that there was a strip of land between the lots that was

deeded to the town and would not have shown on a title search. He went through the minutes of the meetings around the time of the property transfer and there was no mention of the transfer. The land was deeded to the town and the village. He called Dean Brown, town manager at that time, and Mr. Brown had no recollection of the transfer. Loran Greenslet thought that it may have had something to do with the sewer, but does not have anything to do with the current configuration of the sewers. The bottom line is that there is no reason to retain the land. There is no appraisal on it. It is about 20 feet wide and there is no evidence that the town ever paid for it.

- B. Earl Washburn asked what was on the backside of the property.
- C. Frank Heald said nothing that would affect the transfer. He added that his suspicion is that the same situation may exist elsewhere.
- D. Earl Washburn said it might have been a ROW.
- E. Frank Heald said that it goes between the lots and does not appear on the tax map.
- F. Earl Washburn said that if it serves no purpose, quit claim it.
- G. Frank Heald said that the village would also have to sign the Quit Claim deed.
- H. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Earl Washburn to Quit Claim the property to Sandra Johnson and that the transaction would be at no cost to the town. Motion passed unanimously.**
- I. Quit Claim Deed was executed by Howard Barton and notarized.

8. **Department Head Reports**

- A. Howard Barton noted that all reports are in.
- B. There were no other comments.

9. **Budget Workshop**

- A. Frank Heald advised that with the exceptions of Capital and Health Insurance issues, the draft is more or less complete. At this point, is it about \$120,000 over last year and maybe he can find about \$50,000 or \$60,000 plus Capital. Compared to other towns, we are not bad off. Ambulance will break even and he suggests that they let the voters vote directly on the Cemetery budget as they did last year.
- B. John Neal said that he went through the draft over the weekend. He noted \$138,000 in cuts without capital. He noted that interest money is down and the biggest increase will be insurance.
- C. Frank Heald said that the health insurance increase could have been as much as 26%, but will end up being about 15-16%.
- D. Bruce Schmidt noted that the VLCT CIGNA plan was supposed to help.
- E. Frank Heald said that this is an older group, utilization is up, medical is up and medical inflation is up. There are only 2 commercial carriers in Vermont – CIGNA and Blue Cross and CIGNA is less expensive. We are probably faced with a couple more years of increases. On the Income side, with the first 5 months interest in from tax collections, we can move the revenue line up \$15,000. It all depends on how much we collect and how long it stays in the bank.
- F. Bruce Schmidt asked if they would be having the department heads come in to discuss their respective departments' budgets.
- G. John Neal said he would like the board members to take time to review this draft and develop their lists of questions.
- H. Howard Barton agreed.
- I. Bruce Schmidt said they could start to look at some departments tonight. He added that he had highlighted some things and noted that there is not a lot of fat in this budget.
- J. John Neal asked which departments they would like to start with. This is not something they should rush.
- K. Earl Washburn said that he really had not had the time to review the draft.
- L. Bruce Schmidt said he would like to look at the listers and also recreation. He pointed out that summer labor was decreased from \$18,000 to \$10,000. He also has some questions about West Hill.
- M. John Neal asked if Recreation is about money or services to the children of the town.
- N. Frank Heald said that he had the same issues. The summer program will see a declining population of children, but the expense for labor is still there. Does the program justify keeping. Concerts cost about \$4,000 – it is important to continue them. The town offers a plethora of programs for children through seniors. It is a philosophical question.
- O. Bruce Schmidt said that he agrees with John Neal in that it is not always about the money. But, he feels that the board still needs to look at the Recreation Department.

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- P. Frank Heald said he would ask Howie Paul to come in.
- Q. John Neal asked that Police Chief Billings also be asked to come in. He asked what were the anticipated Capital purchases.
- R. Frank Heald said that Fire Chief Kolenda indicated that the fire department would be replacing 2 trucks with one that will cost about \$350,000. Frank Heald suggested that the Fire Department spend some of their funds, take some out of the fire truck fund and bond the balance. The last payment on the aerial truck will be in FY2010 and the first payment on the new truck will not be due until FY 2011. It would be a 15-year note. Other possible capital expenditures may be the highway garage, the gazebo, flood control dams and the buildings and grounds mower. Also discussed was the brining system, but the project would run \$60,000 to \$70,000 and may not have cost benefit. The balance of the equipment is in pretty good shape for another year.
- S. Howard Barton asked for a rough guess for about how much to take out of the Capital Fund.
- T. Frank Heald said there is \$283,000 in it. The truck will run \$350,000. If the fire department pays out of their budget \$50,000, that would leave a balance of \$300,000 for the new truck. If they take \$100,000 out of the Capital fund, they would then take a \$200,000 note.
- U. Howard Barton asked when they would have firm numbers.
- V. Frank Heald said before the next meeting on the 15th.
- W. Bruce Schmidt noted a 15% increase for fuel oil.
- X. Frank Heald said that fortunately he did not lock the price in May or June when prices were higher.
- Y. Bruce Schmidt asked about the new full timer in the highway department and asked whether the department is now fully staffed. He also asked if we are hiring the right people with regard to types of work they do. We need to ask Ron Tarbell.
- Z. Frank Heald said that the town gets very efficient use of its employees and equipment. Sometimes it is better to hire out and hire local contractors to do specialized work.
- AA. Bruce Schmidt asked about the cost of the electricity for the streetlights.
- BB. Frank Heald said that the new bulbs use more electricity and the rates have increased.
- CC. Howard Barton said that the electric company did an update of inventory and some of the lights that had been listed as in the village were actually in the town and that has now been updated. That accounts for some of the difference.
- DD. Bruce Schmidt asked about the lease payments on the Cat tractor/mower.
- EE. Frank Heald said that is something the board must decide, whether to continue leasing, purchase or drop. We have to decide it in this budget process.
- FF. Bruce Schmidt also asked about the Municipal Transit System. He thought there would be more of a savings with Saturday overtime adjustment.
- GG. Frank Heald said that overtime is an unfortunate necessity of transporting the athletic teams.
- HH. Bruce Schmidt asked for Dan Parker to also come in for discussions. He would like to discuss the after-school programs. What is the process and who decides when a bus is needed.
- II. Frank Heald said there are activities they could cut. The schools want to provide transportation. He has had discussions with the Superintendent of Schools and the principals to get a grip on this. Athletics plays a serious part of this. There are also field trips and free day care. Where do you want to draw the line?
- JJ. Howard Barton asked about bus trips to Cavendish.
- KK. Frank Heald said there are morning, mid day, and late afternoon runs.
- LL. Bruce Schmidt asked about Police dispatch and if the costs are covered by the 6% increase. We must consider our increases and insurance increases. He also asked about the Ambulance Department and what their increases consisted of. Should the Select Board look into this or are they where they should be. He suggested having all of the big department managers come in and discuss their budgets. It is always good to hear their comments.
- MM. John Neal suggested starting with highway, police and recreation departments at their next meeting.
- NN. Bruce Schmidt said that they might also be able to get to some of the other smaller departments.
- OO. Frank Heald asked the board members to look through the draft and if possible, let him know their questions before the next meeting so that he can research the answers.
- PP. Bruce Schmidt said that the draft was a good job.

10. **Other Business**

- A. Dorsey Park
- i. Bruce Schmidt noted that the flag had been moved and asked that the light be turned off. He asked what the status of the field repairs is.

- ii. Frank Heald said that he has been assured that the field will be repaired at no cost to the town.
 - iii. Bruce Schmidt said he would like to see that in writing and would like to see a game plan for the repairs. They have to think about softball and the championship teams.
 - B. Ambulance Committee
 - i. Brett Sanderson asked about the status of the report.
 - ii. Bruce Schmidt said that the committee is meeting next Monday.
 - C. Snow Plowing
 - i. Bruce Schmidt advised that his mailbox was knocked down by the Cavendish snowplow.
11. **Set Date for January Meeting**
- A. The Select Board will hold its next regular meeting on Monday, January 5, 2009 and a Special Budget Workshop on December 15, 2008. Both meetings will start at 7:00 p.m.
12. **Sign Warrant Orders**
- A. Howard Barton advised that warrant orders have been signed.
13. **Executive Session/Contracts/Personnel**
- A. Frank Heald advised that an executive session was needed for contracts and personnel.
 - B. **Motion by Brett Sanderson and seconded by Bruce Schmidt to enter in to Executive Session for Contracts/Personnel. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - C. Board entered into Executive Session at 8:35 p.m.
 - D. Out of Executive Session at 9:04 p.m. No action taken.
14. **Adjourn**
- A. **MOTION by Brett Sanderson and seconded by John Neal to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - B. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Howard Barton, Jr., Chairman

John Neal

Brett Sanderson

Earl Washburn

Bruce Schmidt