

TOWN OF LISBON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
SELECTMEN'S SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
7/21/2016

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Thomas Demers (T. Demers), Peter Nightingale (P. Nightingale).

Town Administrator: Dan Merhalski (D. Merhalski).

MEETING OPENED: T. Demers opened the meeting at 5:32 pm.

SELECTMEN'S BUSINESS:

Review of Minutes of July 11th, 2016 Regular Meeting:

P. Nightingale said that he had reviewed the minutes and was fine with them as written. T. Demers said that he would like to have some more time to review them and would like to wait until the August 8th regular meeting to approve them. P. Nightingale was in agreement to wait.

Discussion of Candidates for Vacant Selectman Position:

The Board reviewed the current list of applicants for the vacant selectman's position. Mary Lou Forsyth, one of the applicants, stated that she was removing her name from consideration due to new work-related commitments. The Board reviewed the other four candidates for the position and after a brief discussion with the members of the public and the Town Administrator, decided to hold a Special Meeting on August 1st at 5:30pm and to interview the candidates in Executive Session, if they were available for that night. Dorothy Blodgett questioned why it was necessary to hold the interviews in Executive Session? D. Merhalski said that interviews are required to be held in Executive Session in accordance with RSA 91-A, III(b) and (c). The Board agreed to hold the interviews in Executive Session. D. Merhalski said he would contact the remaining candidates and if they were available, he would schedule the meeting and let the Selectmen know. The interviews will be in half-hour blocks.

Public Comment:

P. Nightingale asked the public if they had any comments? Scott Champagne asked about Tucker Clark's status as an application was submitted to be appointed to the ZBA? P. Nightingale said that the Board had appointed Tucker to the ZBA at the meeting on the 11th. D. Merhalski said that the appointment paperwork had been drawn up by the Town Clerk and that he would be appointed once the Board signed the appointment paperwork and the Town Clerk swore him in.

There was discussion about the Town Administrator and the recently submitted petition. The Board stated that they would be responding to the items identified in the petition and they would release the response on the Town's web site.

Dorothy Blodgett asked if the Town's Newsletter could have a hard copy placed in the Library Resource Room. D. Merhalski said that he would ask Karla Houston, Librarian, and if it was ok, he would provide a copy for the Library.

Matthew Yaramian asked about the Town's current veteran's tax credit of \$200 and if the Board would support raising it to \$500, in line with surrounding towns? T. Demers said that he supports the idea but he wanted to find out first what amount of taxation that would equate

to. D. Merhalski said that he would find out and let the Board know. The process for this change would require an article on the warrant for Town Meeting, which the Board could sponsor, or the public could attempt a petitioned warrant article.

James Raia asked if he could remove the wooden pallets at the Town's property on Pine Knoll and Route 302? The Board agreed that he could have the pallets. Mr. Raia volunteered to sign a waiver of liability, which D. Merhalski said he would write up for him.

Ina Lippard and Joe Ardolino spoke about water quality at their residences stating that the water was blue and had an odor of chemicals to it. They had contacted Utility Partners for a test, but they had not heard anything back yet. D. Merhalski said he would contact Utility Partners and ask them to go out to the site and test Mr. Ardolino's house as it was not tested originally and get back to the residents and the Board with the results.

The water rates were discussed by the public and the Board was asked about the amount of the reserve to be used to pay down the water rate. The Board said that the rate had been artificially low over the years and that the fund balances for the water and sewer funds would have been exhausted at the end of the year if they had tried to keep the rates the same as last fall. The result would have been a much higher bill next year. D. Merhalski said the rate was set based on the budget divided by the amount of usage, so the idea of using less water to reduce the rate was not possible at a town level. The budget would stay the same regardless of whether 10 million gallons was used or 1 million gallons. The individual bills would be lower with a lower usage, but a reduced usage only means that the rate to be spread among the rate holders would go up as the costs would be the same and they needed to be spread out among the rate payers regardless of the amount of usage. Comment from the public asked about why the Town Meeting gets to set the budget and not the rate payers? D. Merhalski said that the only way to change that would be for the water and sewer systems to be broken off as a separate entity like a water board, which would be able to set who was able to vote to set their rates, but this would require a vote at Town Meeting and establishment of such a board with its own staff to run the systems. P. Nightingale asked if there was a recommended minimum amount to maintain in the fund balances for the water and sewer funds? D. Merhalski said that there was no such formula that he was aware of, as DRA set the recommendation for the general fund, but these funds were not a part of that. P. Nightingale asked D. Merhalski to ask around to see if there was a recommended amount, or an average amount from other such water and sewer operators in New Hampshire. D. Merhalski said it would take some time, but he would look into it and report back to the Board. T. Demers also asked if there were flow meters outside of the main well house that could be used to check for water leaks, etc. as that was a reason for the spike in usage a few years ago when the frost level sank deep enough to cause frozen lines. D. Merhalski said he would ask the DPW and Utility Partners about such meters and their locations.

P. Nightingale made a motion to adjourn, seconded by T. Demers. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Merhalski, Town Administrator