

MINUTES
SELECT BOARD
TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH
Tuesday, April 20, 2010 – 7:00pm
1 Grove Street, Peterborough, New Hampshire

Present: Joe Byk, Barbara Miller, Elizabeth Thomas

Also Present: Pamela Brenner, Rodney Bartlett, Nicole MacStay

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Representative Peter Leishman – Legislative Update

Rep. Leishman distributed copies of the latest amendment to the State budget. He said that there have been discussions about eliminating any further water and sewer aid and pushing out new projects to 2012 in an effort to save approximately \$2 million in the DES budget. He showed where dozens of agencies are seeing 5-10% cuts including the judicial system and DHHS. Other proposals such as hikes in the cigarette tax are getting pushback because a great deal of business on the state borders comes from people who come from neighboring states to buy cigarettes, alcohol and lottery tickets. He then asked for input from all in attendance.

Chair Miller asked if Massachusetts is going forward with the installation of a new toll; **Rep. Leishman** said that they will not. **Chair Miller** asked where the gaming bill stood; **Rep. Leishman** said that it will be voted on in the morning; however the bill in the house does not have a lot of support. **Mr. Byk** asked if the Republican Party had proposed any alternatives to the Governor's proposal. **Rep. Leishman** said that he knows that the republicans on the Finance Committee are looking to come up with their own amendment for cuts. **Mr. Byk** asked what is being looked at for cuts. **Rep. Leishman** said that local aid is the primary target, with education funding downshifted back to the communities, and a proposed constitutional amendment to overturn the Claremont decisions. He explained that a number of representatives believe that education funding should be a local responsibility, however he believes that the state has a responsibility because it sets forth many of the rules and guidelines.

Chair Miller asked what has happened to the Homestead Act that Rep. Peterson has put forward. **Rep. Leishman** said that it has no real support; there were concerns that it would tax businesses more than residences, and while it would give a good exemption on one's first home, it would push the burden onto people living in apartments, business owners, second home owners and so forth.

Ms. Brenner spoke regarding retirement system reform, saying that while we all love to call Massachusetts "Tax-achusetts" public employees there have tiered systems for their retirement, and those who work there for many years pay a different percentage from those who are new hires. While she realized that it is probably a non-starter, she asked why there couldn't be a discussion regarding new employees paying a higher percentage. **Rep. Leishman** said that former Rep. Irwin had been working on that issue, and had only asked for a 2% increase, but the proposal was met with such opposition that it was tabled. **Mr. Byk** said that it was recently reported that the SEA has proposed a ramped-up contribution on a dollar basis for the first three to five years of new employment, which would reduce costs and disincentive people who are coming into the system only seeking benefits, not the job. **Ms. Brenner** said that has more to do with union negotiations than retirement system reform. **Rep. Leishman** said that the retirement system is underfunded, and currently has a \$2 billion shortfall. The legislature has suggested that all state employees take a

furlough to prevent layoffs, which the judicial branch employees did. They saw a 3% cut in their pay, but there were no layoffs. Other employees refused furloughs, and as a result there were hundreds of layoffs in other departments.

Ms. Brenner said that there is a huge infrastructure problem with roads and bridges, and in her opinion there should be an increase in the gas tax, not only to take care of roads and bridges, but also to encourage conservation. She noted that when gas was up to \$4.00 a gallon there was a widespread effort to conserve, but once the price went down that effort seemed to have dissipated.

Rep. Leishman agreed that the 10-Year plan is not even close to being funded, however the governor has said that he would veto the proposed increase in the gas tax, so the legislature did increase registration fees. The Board thanked Rep. Leishman for his update.

Rodney Bartlett – Project Updates – Wastewater Treatment Plant

Mr. Bartlett began by reporting that the bids for the Wastewater Treatment Plant have been opened. Six bids were submitted, and all were within 5% of each other. He said that the project has been estimated at \$8.5 million, and the bid from McMillan came in lower than that. A number of documents have to be put together for Rural Development and NHDES. Once both agencies have given their approval, he will return to the Select Board for awarding to McMillan. **Chair Miller** asked if they have to award to the lowest bidder, and what would happen if quality of work is an issue. **Mr. Bartlett** replied that to award to a higher bidder with ARRA funding there has to be an excellent reason.

Electricity Contract

Mr. Bartlett then reported that he has concluded negotiations with Constellation/New Energy for the new energy contract. The current rate from PSNH is 8.6 cents per kilowatt hour, and the new contract signed with Constellation is for 7.6 cents – a savings of between \$17-18,000 for the next fiscal year. This year the ConVal School District and the towns of Hancock and Temple were included in the contract; the savings to ConVal is anticipated to be \$40,000. **Mr. Byk** said that he had met a resident at the last Greenerborough festival whose business is to represent consumers with several Constellation-type companies and get the best rate. **Mr. Bartlett** said that if you go on the PUC's website they have a list of all the suppliers in New Hampshire, almost thirty, who broker power. **Mr. Bartlett** then explained the energy supplier process.

Transcript Dam

Mr. Bartlett reviewed the current status of the Transcript Dam; the question of reconstruction has come up at this time as part of the work being done on the Main Street Bridge and Route 202 retaining wall project. He explained that the engineers originally went into the process with the thought of looking at the dam structurally and taking steps to stabilize it, however every state agency has asked if the Town has considered breaching or removing the dam. It is a low head dam during flooding, meaning that the difference between the level of the water behind the dam and in front of it is minimal. The town cannot consider generating power there without significant expense; the only funding available is to repair, study or breach the dam. **Mr. Byk** asked what would happen if the town did nothing. **Mr. Bartlett** said that water is already going around the easterly side of the dam, and it will eventually breach itself. There was further discussion about the possible effects of breaching the dam.

Motion:

Ms. Thomas made a motion to look at all options for the Transcript Dam; **Mr. Byk** seconded.

Vote:

Ms. Thomas, Mr. Byk and Chair Miller voted in favor of the motion; the motion carried.

Board and Committee Appointments

Ms. Monahon requested that the Board appoint Bob Duhaime to the Heritage Commission.

Motion:

Mr. Byk made a motion to appoint Bob Duhaime to be a member of the Heritage Commission; **Ms. Thomas** seconded.

Vote:

Mr. Byk, Ms. Thomas and Chair Miller voted in favor of the motion; the motion carried.

Motion:

Mr. Byk made a motion to appoint Maude Odgers to the Parks Committee; **Chair Miller** seconded.

Vote:

Mr. Byk, Chair Miller and Ms. Thomas voted in favor of the motion: the motion carried.

Scott Mitchell and EMS Landfill Closure

Chair Miller said that this had been talked about at a recent meeting. **Ms. Brenner** said that the Town needs a vote to authorize the payment all outstanding invoices due to NHBB. **Chair Miller** asked if **Ms. Brenner** is still concerned about ongoing funds; **Ms. Brenner** said that it is possible that the Town will still be dealing with this project in fifty years.

Motion:

Chair Miller made a motion to approve the payment of all outstanding invoices related to the remediation and monitoring costs of the Scott Mitchell and EMS landfill sites and to further approve a transfer from the Landfill Pollution Abatement Expendable Trust account to offset these expenses; **Mr. Byk** seconded.

Vote:

Chair Miller, Mr. Byk and Ms. Thomas voted in favor of the motion; the motion carried.

Water Main Upgrade

Mr. Bartlett said that Sand Hill Road will be closed next week for the water main improvement project. A new connection between Sand Hill Road and Summer Street will be installed. All local emergency responders have already been contacted; the work is expected to be completed by Memorial Day.

Grove Street LID Stormwater Drainage

Mr. Bartlett said that the curbing was installed earlier in the day, and sidewalks will be poured tomorrow. Final paving will be done before the end of the week, and the plantings will be in before Memorial Day. The rain garden in Putnam Park is essentially complete.

Contoocook Valley Regional School District Funding Structure

Chair Miller said that she is the liaison between the Board and the Selectmen's Advisory Committee, whose next meeting is April 27th. One purpose of the meeting is to discuss schools with very low enrollment, but there may be other issues. She said that she has a grandson who attends Dublin Elementary School, and that she believes that having a community school is special; if a town wants to keep a school open, maybe there should be a mechanism to allow the town to decide if they want to pay to keep it.

Mr. Byk said that when he and **Ms. Brenner** recently met with Superintendent Bergeron and ConVal business manager Marion Alese he asked the same question. They looked at the enrollment and registrations for the next year, and discovered that in one of the small town schools there are four children in kindergarten, whereas Peterborough has twenty-two kids, which means that Peterborough is subsidizing the other towns. The Superintendent says that there are gross inefficiencies in the system. **Mr. Byk** said that he hopes Chair Miller will be able to make some headway at the SAC meeting. If the small towns want to subsidize and maintain their schools, they should. **Ms. Thomas** also agreed that each town should pay for its own elementary school. **Chair Miller** said that the Articles of Agreement state that each town have an elementary school, so those would have to change to enable the closing of any school.

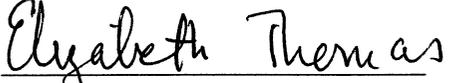
As there was no further business, **Mr. Byk** made a motion to adjourn; **Ms. Thomas** seconded. All in favor, the meeting adjourned at 8:46pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nicole MacStay, Assistant to the Town Administrator

PETERBOROUGH
SELECT BOARD:


Barbara A. Miler, Chair


Joe Byk


Elizabeth M. Thomas