

Minutes of the December 8, 2008 Meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Present: Neal Fox, Bill Richards, Joe DeFreitas, Delbert Cloud, Road Foreman Robert Hyde, Lucien Hinkle, Fire Chief Robert Dean, and Assistant Fire Chiefs David Aldrighetti and Scott Taylor.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Neal Fox, the Board first reviewing and approving the weekly payroll and payables. The Second Constable's report of November 30, 2008 was reviewed and placed on file. The minutes of the November 24, 2008 meeting of the Board of Selectmen were approved by motion of Bill Richards, seconded by Joe DeFreitas and unanimously carried.

Several matters of business stemming from previous meetings were addressed: (1) by recommendation and motion from Neal Fox, seconded by Bill Richards and unanimously carried, Beverly Washburn was appointed to serve on the Human Services Advisory Committee, (2) a letter was endorsed for mailing to Frances Rhynhart re. Christian Hill Road, and (3) Delbert Cloud updated the Board on the current status for the FY07 Ancient Roads Grant, and the Emergency Watershed Protection Program's assistance to private property owners (the permit from the Army Corps of Engineers having just been received this same date).

The time was then 6:30 PM, and Chairman Fox welcomed the members of the Bethel Fire Department. Discussion ensued re. the type of responses made by the Department during the current year, mutual aid circumstances with nearby Towns, and the various equipment and vehicular needs of the Department. David Aldrighetti encouraged the Selectboard to continue appropriating an annual amount into the "Safety and Equipment Fund" as would be comparable to the now completely amortized purchase of the Eagle One truck. In addition to safety equipment, the fund could be accruing for purpose of acquiring a "first response van" which is regarded by the Department as the most important vehicular need at this time. Such a van would replace the present 1981 Chevrolet van which is becoming badly rusted and is not actually large enough for the purposes it is used for. Robert Dean said the Department does not need a new van immediately, but really would in the near future, his belief being that a good used van with low mileage could be found. Scott Taylor referenced the increasing costs for signs, safety equipment and gear, all of which are essential.

Chairman Fox encouraged the Department Officers to give thought toward the future in terms of the duties and responsibilities which might become assumed by the Department over the years ahead. Note was made of the difficulty in meeting and maintaining a "first responder" certification, and thus how fortunate the Town of Bethel is in having the White River Valley Ambulance service so close by.

David Aldrighetti spoke of the Department's intent to continue an annual inspection of all fire hydrants, and wondered what the status might be of repairs for the ones that failed to work in this year's inspection. Delbert Cloud advised that repair parts are at the Town Office for most of them, and that assistance is being provided for the repairs by the "Vermont Rural Water Association" in the immediate future. Mr. Aldrighetti also informed the Board that the boiler at the fire station has developed a serious leak, and it appears that the boiler is cracked. Delbert Cloud will follow up on this matter.

The members of the Fire Department left at approximately 7:30 PM. Lucien Hinkle offered that he supports the matter of maintaining a safety and equipment fund for the Department, much preferring that methodology to the alternative of reacting to needs on an emergency basis which would cause significant variations in the General Fund budget.

Chairman Fox then welcomed Robert Hyde, and inquired if the Town Crew appeared to be adequate in number for the duties required and adequately equipped. Mr. Hyde replied in the affirmative, noting that the weather has thus far been favorable. Lucien Hinkle questioned if the 10 hour work days with three days off were the best schedule, suggesting that five (8 hour) days might be better. Delbert Cloud said the 10 hour days had been scheduled many years ago in the interest of efficiency when equipment often has to be moved to work sites that are several miles distant, and that this has always been thought to be good. The only recent change has been with the elimination of the guaranteed 5 hours per week of overtime that had previously been scheduled on Fridays; with competitive rates of pay as are being paid, it was felt that 45 hour

work weeks are not an appropriate regular schedule. The Town Crew does report for work whenever there is a need in either highway or Water Department matters, and this often necessitates work on any (or all) of the three days not regularly scheduled.

Chairman Fox asked if the Town Crew is taking advantage of training opportunities which are frequently offered by various sources of instruction. Mr. Hyde again replied in the affirmative, adding that many of the workshops associated with equipment operations are generally available during the summer months.

Discussion turned to the "Highway Equipment Fund" and the replacement schedule associated with it. After a thorough discussion, the following conclusions were drawn: (1) the one ton truck should be kept on schedule for trade in FY 2010, (2) the 2004 Sterling plow truck should similarly be kept on schedule for trade in FY 2010, (3) recent acquisitions of tires from Pete's Tire Barn at a cost of \$5,248.00 should be posted to the "Fund," as well as the \$5,235.00 cost for equipping the three dump trucks with covers as required in the Act 250 permit for gravel pit operations, and (4) a proposal from Southworth-Milton to do an evaluation of the condition of the 928G loader should be accepted.

Discussion then turned to ways in which cooperative purchases and mutual aid associations might be structured to provide financial betterment to the participants. Delbert Cloud will prepare a letter for the Board's consideration and potential transmittal to nearby Towns re. such potentials. Robert Hyde then departed at approximately 9:10 PM.

A November 25, 2008 memo from Laz Scangas of Arnold & Scangas Architects was next discussed, this relating to a review of the 2002 plans for rehabilitation of the Town Hall prior to final preparation of bid documents. Lucien Hinkle raised questions about the recent roof replacement project, and the means by which ventilation of the attic would be done. The Board thanked Mr. Hinkle for his interest in the project and offered him an opportunity to borrow the draft plans to evaluate the project, which he agreed to do. Mr. Hinkle also encouraged the Board to hire a "Clerk of the Works" for the project (as is intended), and he volunteered to help in reviewing qualifications for such a person if the Board would like. Delbert Cloud advised that the "Save America's Treasures" grant agreement is now fully executed by all parties, the time frame for work performance under that grant being from November 1, 2008 to November 30, 2010. He also advised that the Section 106 Report transmitted to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation by Lyssa Papazian on November 6, 2008 has been accepted by that Division, this in essence meaning that the methods and materials have been approved for construction as far as the Division of Historic Preservation is concerned. With discussion concluded on the Town Hall project, Mr. Hinkle departed at 9:40 PM.

The Board then reviewed drafts of Town Report pages setting forth budgets and data for the Water Department, Wastewater Department, and Solid Waste Program. It was agreed that the format of data is appropriate for use. No action was required or taken on the budgets themselves at this time as they are in draft form only.

At 10:15 PM motion was made by Bill Richards to enter executive session to discuss litigation in which the Town is a party, this motion being seconded by Joe DeFreitas and unanimously carried. Delbert Cloud was the only person remaining with the Board for the executive session; no minutes were kept. Upon return to open meeting at 10:40 PM no motion was forthcoming.

It was agreed that the customary schedule for Christmas bonuses should be approved, this being formalized by motion of Bill Richards, seconded by Joe DeFreitas and unanimously carried. The motion to adjourn was then made by Bill Richards, seconded by Joe DeFreitas and unanimously carried, the time now being 10:45 PM.

Neal Fox

Bill Richards

Joe DeFreitas