

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2010
HOPE TOWN OFFICE
6:30 P.M.**

Note: These minutes may not be considered an official public record until such time as they are read and accepted by the Board of Selectmen.

Board Members Present: Barbara Bentley, Tim Pearse, Mike Ames, Ray Sisk

Board Members Absent: Kathleen Hastings

Others Present: Jon Duke, Rick Bresnahan, Jean Ettlinger, Tom Farley, Alex Armentrout, Tim Higbee

I. Call the Meeting to Order

Barbara Bentley called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

II. Minutes

a. Minutes of the December 8, 2009 meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Tim Pearse moved, and Mike Ames seconded, a motion to table approval of the minutes until the February 9th meeting of the Board of Selectmen. **Motion passed 4-0.**

b. Minutes of the January 12, 2010 meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Mike Ames moved, and Ray Sisk seconded, a motion to approve the minutes of the January 12th meeting of the Board of Selectmen. **Motion passed 3-0 (Sisk abstained)**

III. Selectmen's Roundtable

- Next regular meeting will be at the Hope Town Office on February 9.
- State roads took a beating from yesterday's storm. Farley and Son will be conducting a survey of the town's state roads and preparing a report for the Town Administrator in hopes of getting swift attention from the Maine DOT.
- County level Board of Assessment Review.
- Homeless Sheltering, countywide GA.
- Feb. 6th, Food Drive AIO

IV. Town Administrator's Report

- The Legal Services RFP has been distributed and the town received nine responses from the 18 firms who were approached to submit a proposal. The screening committee will be interviewing four candidates Thursday morning, and following those interviews, the committee will make a recommendation to the Selectmen for appointment as town attorney.
- Midcoast Solid Waste Corporation will be adopting a budget tomorrow night and the latest draft has Hope's share of that budget down nearly \$3,300 or 6.6% under last year.
- Ann Schneider from MMA's Property and Casualty Insurance division conducted an inspection of town property and records last Thursday. Chief Keller and I walked Ms. Schneider through the various town buildings and the fire department's safety records.

Ms. Schneider was impressed with the results and saw only minor issues that need to be corrected by the town.

- Through the process of pushing snow back at the new fire station, Road Commissioner Ludwig inadvertently hit the well casing and cut power to the well pump. The issue has been addressed and the pump is working once again.
- The Budget Committee meeting with the Selectmen will likely be pushed ahead to February 11th at 7pm at the Town Office due to a conflict with the ORC's meeting on the 10th for future zoning needs of South Hope.

Tim Pearse made a motion to enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405 6A . Mike Ames seconded. **Motion passed 4-0.**

V. Executive Session

a. Personnel Matter (pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405 6A)

Tim Pearse made a motion to exit Executive Session. Ray Sisk seconded. **Motion passed 4-0.**

VI. Old Business

a. Town Office ADA/Maintenance Plan

Discussed the estimates provided by H.P. Cummings for the purposes
Discuss scope of work, cost for each item, include design/engineering

b. Old Fire Station Sale

Approve signing of Purchase and Sale Agreement

Tim Pearse made a motion to authorize Florance Merrifield to sign a purchase and sale agreement, as presented, with Benjamin Leavitt for the sale of the former Hope Corner Fire Station parcel and building. Ray Sisk seconded. **Motion passed 4-0.**

VII. New Business

a. Value In Education

Alex Armentrout describe the genesis of the Value In Education group and their interest in seeing a smaller portion of the property tax dollar dedicated to education funding. VIE, which began in Rockport, has focused its attention on SAD 28 and the Five Town CSD. In Hope, 76% of the property tax dollar is dedicated to education, with more than \$500,000 of that figure marked for the Five Town CSD budget. The Rockport Select Board asked the CSD Board to further investigate how its spending compared to other school districts. Despite calls to see a reduction in the commitment required to support SAD 28 and the Five Town CSD, significant cuts in state subsidy make a net reduction unlikely. VIE will likely recommend a 0% tax increase from the Five Town CSD and SAD 28 due to these cuts in state funding.

Ray Sisk asked if VIE took a position on school consolidation, and Armentrout responded by saying that the group did not take a position and is waiting until further information and decisions are made before taking a stand.

Rick Bresnahan asked why VIE felt that 70% of the property tax dollar is too much to spend. Armentrout noted that municipalities have deferred many capital expenditures and made tough cuts while school costs continue to rise well beyond inflation.

b. Town Clerk Resignation

Tim Pearse make a motion authorize the Town Administrator to sign the Resignation and Release Agreement with Florance Merrifield as proposed. Ray Sisk seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Mike Ames made a motion to accept the resignation of Florance Merrifield as Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Election Warden, Deputy Treasurer, and Deputy Registrar of Voters as of February 26, 2010. Tim Pearse seconded. **Motion passed 4-0.**

c. Approval of Warrants

Ray Sisk moved, and Tim Pearse seconded, a motion to approve Warrants 57-59. **Motion approved 4-0.**

d. Incomplete Invoices on Warrants

Ray Sisk made a motion to direct the Town Administrator to reject all invoices for payment that do not have complete information and specific notation of work completed. Mike Ames seconded. **Motion passed 4-0.**

Tim Pearse made a motion to adjourn as the Board of Selectmen and convene as the Board of Assessors. Ray Sisk seconded. **Motion passed 4-0.**

VII. Board of Assessors

a. Abatement – Thivierge Family Trust

Ray Sisk made a motion to approve the abatement request of the Thivierge Family Trust in the amount of \$817.19, and request the Assessor's Agent visit the property prior to the commitment for TY 2011. Mike Ames seconded. **Motion Passed 4-0.**

Tim Pearse made a motion to adjourn as the Board of Assessors and reconvene as the Board of Selectmen. Ray Sisk seconded. **Motion passed 4-0.**

VIII. Adjournment

Tim Pearse moved to adjourn at 9:35 pm. Ray Sisk seconded. **Motion passed 4-0.**