

TOWN OF WEBSTER
Office of Selectmen
945 Battle Street/Rte. 127
Webster, NH 03303

Webster Board of Selectmen's Meeting – July 27, 2009

7:00 P.M. Roll Call – Present: Chairman Thomas Mullins and Selectman George Hashem. Selectman Dave Klumb was absent.

Selectman Hashem made a motion to accept the minutes of July 13, 2009 as written; seconded by Chairman Mullins and approved.

Chairman Mullins made a motion to appoint Barbara Corliss to the Landfill Committee and the following to the Webster Fire Department:

- Adam Pouliot – Fire Chief
- Jonathan King – Deputy Fire Chief
- Colin Colby – Captain
- Marjorie Blanchette – Lieutenant
- Corey Welcome – Deputy Fire Warden; and the following to the Webster Volunteer Fire Department:
- Emmett Bean, Sr.
- Sara Becker
- Elizabeth Blanchette
- Robert Brophy
- David Collins
- Kara Culpon
- Kevin Culpon
- Arthur Dickerman
- Adam Doucette
- Robert Drown, III
- Ryan Dubuc
- Roy Fanjoy
- Karrie Jenovese
- Matthew King
- Jason Carter
- Norman Provencher
- Matthew Turyn
- Angela Welcome; and
- Corey Welcome

seconded by Selectman Hashem and approved.

The Board signed the payroll check and vendor manifests.

The Board signed the following for Administrative Assistant Judith Jones:

- An abatement for the July taxes on Map 10-4-72A;
- Purchase Order #18 in the amount of \$485.00 to Ray Kimball for scrapping and painting the south end/front of the basement entry wall of the Town Hall (material and labor). Selectman Hashem made a motion to approve the PO, seconded by Chairman Mullins and approved; and
- Pole Licenses for the Town Clerk.

The Board signed a Timber Tax Levy for Map 7-60 and Gravel Tax Levies for Map 9-23-4 and Map 6043 for Financial Administrator Wendy Pinkham

A public hearing will be scheduled for August 10, 2009 to accept a parcel of land being offered by Gabe Gabriele in the Pillsbury Lake District.

Selectman Hashem made a motion to recess until 7:15 P.M. so that the meeting could be moved to the dining area; seconded by Chairman Mullins and approved.

Lieutenant Philip Mitchell presented the Police Department's semi-monthly report.

Road Agent Emmett Bean advised that the tar has been removed from Pearson Hill. He will be grading the dirt roads over the next few weeks. He is also working on pricing of cutting edges and plows in order to request a purchase order. He inquired about the pricing of salt for the next season, but Mrs. Pinkham advised that she had not been contacted with that information.

Selectman Hashem inquired as to whether the Police Department has received compensation for the damage to the DARE vehicle. Lieutenant Mitchell advised that the Chief has been in contact with the responsible party and they will be presenting payment in the near future.

Chairman Mullins addressed the Board of Selectmen's responsibility of running the Selectmen's Meetings, noting that it was not run like a Town Meeting. He advised that there is no statutory requirement to allow public comment and in order to help facilitate the orderly control of future meetings he advised that the Board will: Set the agenda and can add or delete at will. Future agendas will be divided into two categories: those wishing to be on the agenda to discuss policy will be heard during the public discussion with a limit of five minutes (noting that this time can be waived if necessary) and those with other issues will commence after the Department Heads, typically beginning at 7:30 P.M. In order to compile an agenda and have it available to the public and on the Website the agenda will be closed on Wednesday at 3:00 P.M. (there may be exceptions at times) so that the agenda may be posted on the Website by Friday.

Bruce Johnson read the following:

July 27, 2009

To the Selectmen,

I (Bruce Johnson) am speaking tonight on behalf of a group of about thirty Webster residents. About ten are here tonight.

We have serious concerns about what we see as the minimizing and denigrating of the police department, attacks on the police officers, and not working with the police department in the interest of proper public safety. Lt. Mitchell, for example, has well served this community for over 8 years. In the past year, as first responder, he has contributed to saving the lives of some of our residents, one immediately following the last Selectmen's meeting. We understand that Lt. Mitchell has been accused of dishonesty for his on-the-spot answer at an earlier meeting that he "typically" takes

overnight calls on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights. Well, gentlemen, this is not a typical year. We are asking two police officers to do the work of multiple officers. We need to cut them some slack, and we need to start working with them. We need to understand that our two experienced, trained officers are a long-term public safety asset, not a short-term financial liability.

Your actions are placing the community and residents in a "Failure to Protect" scenario. Investigations and looming reprimand, suspension, termination, do nothing to enhance public safety in this community. Which leads to the major point: this is not about Brian Milano or Phil Mitchell. This is about our public safety, and we respectfully ask you, as Selectmen, as leaders of this community, to refocus on stopping the downward spiral of the last several months. We are gravely concerned about both the human and financial costs of the path we are on. While we can accept the budget cuts voted upon at Town Meeting, we can not accept the destruction of the police department. As we move forward, we ask you to do three things,

1. Stop micromanaging the police department. Stop the revisions and additions of policies to limit the Chief's authority, and let the Chief follow through with the work he is trained to do. Stop the excessive nonpublic sessions. Be open about what you do, and respect the rights and reputations of others.

2. Please answer this question. How are we doing on saving the money needed to maintain 2 full-time police officers? Can you share some specifics as to what you are cutting back and what you are saving? Please do not hide behind the Town Meeting vote and say your hands are tied and there is no money. If there is money to maintain three town office positions again this year, if there is money to cover \$970 to paint part of the Town Hall, if there is money for the lawyer to attend Selectmen's meetings, then there is money to maintain two full time police officers. In the long run, it will cost more to rebuild the department than to maintain it.

3. What is the latest on looking into sharing public safety services with surrounding towns? This was on an earlier agenda, then tabled to July 13, then not addressed at the July 13th meeting. What is the progress on this? Residents are willing to help with this research. We would like to take on some of the burden of finding solutions for our town.

All in all, we would like to support you in maintaining public safety.

We are willing to work with you. We ask that you work with us. Thank you.

Selectman Hashem advised that there were a lot of accusations in the statement just read, some of them were over the top, advising that he did not think that they were appropriate. The Board then thanked Mr. Johnson for his input, with no other comments being made at this time.

Roy Fanjoy discussed perception in general, referring to the last meeting, indicating that he did not leave with a good feeling as he felt that some people were ignored or not recognized and the environment felt a bit hostile. Selectman Hashem felt he may have been responsible for the abrupt ending of the meeting, noting he was not feeling well, and acknowledged that perhaps he should have recognized the public still wishing to speak. Mr. Fanjoy asked for everyone to have a more courteous attitude towards each other.

Normandie Blake inquired as to why the cruiser was taken away from Lieutenant Mitchell, suggesting that it was not in the best interest of the Town, as he had been providing free on-call time to the Town. The Board advised that it was the policy that the cruiser was available when an officer was on-call, but the cruiser was not to be used as a commuter car. Mrs. Jones had checked with the Towns of Boscawen and Bow and was told that they have a similar policy regarding use of the cruisers. Lieutenant Mitchell clarified that Boscawen has three officers that take the cruisers home regardless of whether they are on call or not.

John Clark inquired as to the balance left in the Legal Budget line. Mrs. Pinkham advised of the following balances: Legal Expenses – \$18,308.96; Legal-Newspaper Notices – \$669.37 and Legal Expenses – current litigation – \$10,662.27. Mr. Clark requested a copy of the budget, which Mrs. Pinkham will provide. He referred to the fact that legal counsel was at the previous meeting and inquired as to whether the Board was aware that the Local Government Center offers free legal advice. The Board advised that they use LGC frequently as does the office staff. Selectman Hashem advised that LGC can only offer advice but cannot represent the Town. Mr. Clark inquired as to whether the situation at the last meeting was serious enough to require Town Counsel. The Board agreed that it was.

Chairman Mullins discussed the appointment of a committee (as presented by David Batchelder and approved at the last Town Meeting) to study the feasibility of sharing public safety services with surrounding towns in order to combine services and save costs. It was suggested that this committee include the heads of the various departments involved, a Selectman member (to be determined at a later date) and a member of the public. This would include Fire Chief Adam Pouliot, Police Chief Brian Milano, Road Agent Emmett Bean, Parks & Recreation Member Brenda Silver and public member Robert Pearson, III (having had experience as a former police officer and with highway equipment). Carol Creighton reminded of an earlier time when Salisbury was looking for help on the rescue squad only to discover that Salisbury only had one first responder. It was agreed that the Town would only be looking to swap equal services and would only want to do what was good for the Town. Though there may be many opinions of what was good, Chairman Mullins reminded all that this committee was being formed to investigate the possibility of shared services and was a response to the vote taken at Town Meeting. Chairman Mullins made a motion to appoint the above named folks to the "Public Service Study Committee"; seconded by Selectman Hashem and approved. Mrs. Jones will contact those involved to see if they are willing to serve on this committee. Mrs. Blake recommended a request for volunteers for this committee be put in her paper so that everyone would have a chance, noting that there are many folks with expertise. Selectman Hashem noted that anyone can come to the meetings and participate as all meetings would be posted and open to the public. Mrs. Blake indicated that we needed to convince other towns to participate as well. Chairman Mullins indicated that the only question would be whether any proposal would work or be good.

for the Town. Selectman Hashem noted that this committee was a start, perhaps it would change as time goes on.

7:43 P.M. Selectman Hashem made a motion to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (a) to discuss personnel issues; seconded by Chairman Mullins. Roll Call: Chairman Mullins – yes and Selectman Hashem – yes. Mrs. Jones was requested to attend.

7:49 P.M. Chairman Mullins reconvened the meeting. He advised that the Board voted to seal the minutes.

7:50 P.M. Selectmen Hashem made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Chairman Mullins and approved.

Thomas S. Mullins-Chairman
BOS/jj

George K. Hashem