

**TOWN OF DIXFIELD**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Board of Selectmen**  
**November 10, 2008**  
**5:00 p.m., Dixfield Town Office**

**Board Members Present:** Bettina M. Martin, Norine H. Clarke, James L. Desjardins, Raymond E. Carlton and Brad E. Dyer

**Board Members Absent:**

**Administration Present:** Eugene R. Skibitsky (Town Manager), Charlotte M. Collins (Minutes), Jim White (Water Dept.), Leo Jolin (Public Works)

**Citizens Present:**

**Press:** River Valley Access Channel, Eileen Adams (Sun Journal)

1. Chair Martin opened the Selectmen's Meeting at 5:00 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** On a motion from Mr. Carlton and a second from Mr. Dyer, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 10/27/08.
3. **Approval of Warrants and Payroll:** On a motion from Mr. Carlton and a second from Mr. Dyer, the Board voted unanimously to approve the warrants and payroll as listed on the agenda.

**4. Department Head Reports:**

**a. Public Works:** Leo Jolin presented the Board of Selectmen with an overview of the work accomplished during the past month:

- Ice rink shack completed
- Sand pile ready
- Salt shed full
- Still waiting for DEP approval of snow dump

Problems have been discovered with the sidewalk plow; brakes need to be repaired which will be quite costly. An estimate of \$1,870 for parts was given to the Town Manager. After a short discussion, the Board consensus was to have the equipment repaired as soon as possible.

**b. Water Department:** Water Operator Jim White reported on the following:

- The town has passed the lead and copper tests. This test is done every three years and is scheduled again for 2011.
- 20 meters have been purchased and are being tested before installation.

- Flushing water mains has been completed; it took 420,000 gallons to flush and clean all the lines.
- Hydrants are all pumped out for the winter.

**Public Comment: None**

**5. New Business:**

a. **Right-of-Way Over Town Property:** Mr. Mitchell, who has requested access to his property by obtaining a right-of-way over town property, was not present. The Town Manager will reschedule for a future meeting.

b. **Annual town Report Schedule:** The Town Manager explained that the former Town Manager had disrupted the printing schedule of the Annual Town Report, and he would like to see it available for the public as soon as possible to the year-end closing. Consensus of the Board was to return to the former schedule. A short report for the year ending June 30, 2008 will be printed; it will include all legally required reports.

c. **Abatements:** A list of tax abatement requests from Assessing Agent Paul Binette was presented to the Board of Selectmen. The list included some abatements, some denials and a supplemental tax. After review of the detail, Mr. Dyer moved, seconded by Mr. Carlton, to approve the list presented. The vote was unanimous.

d. **Water Department Temporary Service Variance:** A request for a temporary water service variance was presented to the Board from William Leighton whose mother, Harriet Leighton, is no longer living at the residence. The request was to stop water charges until such time as the home is sold.

On a motion from Mr. Carlton and a second from Mr. Dyer, the Board voted unanimously to approve the temporary service variance for the Leighton property located at 7 Fairbanks Avenue.

e. **Tim Hanson Inquiries – Draft Letter Approval:** The town received a letter from Mr. Tim Hanson that included several inquiries regarding the Water Department's year-end financial balances. Mr. Skibitsky presented a draft letter of response to the Board for approval. On a motion from Mrs. Clarke and a second from Mr. Carlton, the Board voted unanimously to approve the letter.

f. **Poodunk Snowmobile Request for Donated Funds:** The Town Manager received a request from resident Jon Holmes that would allow the Board to approve New Page volunteer donations for the area snowmobile club. Presently, New Page Volunteer funds have been given to the Recreation Committee, and the snowmobile club would like to receive the New Page matching funds for volunteer work on the local trail system.

On a motion from Mr. Dyer and a second from Mr. Carlton, the Board voted unanimously to approve New Page volunteer donations for work on area snowmobile trails be given to the Poodunk Snowmobile Club.

**g. Water and Sewer Departments' Financials:** The Town Manager presented the Board with Revenue and Expense Reports from both the Water and Sewer Departments. The period covered: January, 2008 through October, 2008. A first draft of 2009 budgets were also given to board members. The 2009 sewer budget is based on the reality of 2008 actual budget figures. During the year 2009, the Sewer Department hopes to repay the town for any amounts outstanding in accounts receivable.

It was reported that water productions costs in the whole area were down due to the wet summer. Revenues are also down possibly due to the loss of the elementary school.

The Sewer Department reports that much work was done by the Ted Berry Company that will not need to be repeated next year.

The Town Manager requested that the Board review the budgets and that final approval be voted on at their first meeting in December. Mr. Skibitsky also stated that all information will be given to the Water Advisory Committee and he will seek a good, working relationship with the committee members (see attachment).

**h. Appointment of Water Advisory Committee Member:** Due to a vacancy in the Water Advisory Committee, a new member needed to be appointed. Selectman James L. Desjardins offered to serve. On a motion from Mr. Dyer and a second from Mrs. Clarke, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Selectman Desjardins as a Water Advisory Committee Member.

## 6. Old Business:

a. **Tax Acquired Property:** A list of tax acquired properties was presented to the Board to decide on a course of action regarding the disposition of properties (see attached list). The taxes owed cover a period of 2001 through 2008 totaling \$57,886.68 (not including interest and costs).

Mr. Dyer moved to place out for bid all tax acquired property; seconded by Mr. Desjardins. A lengthy discussion followed regarding property owners who are making payment arrangements and those who haven't. Mr. Dyer also was adamant that all properties be treated equally. Mr. Dyer withdrew his original motion.

On a motion from Mr. Dyer and a second from Mr. Desjardins, the Board voted unanimously to:

- Deal with the oldest dates on tax acquired properties first;
- And those that have not made payment arrangements;
- And start the process of placing them out to bid beginning January 1, 2009.

The Board unanimously approved the motion. The Town Manager will determine what the proper, legal steps are and will report to the Board within a month.

**b. Fuel Bids:** The town previously awarded the fuel bid to Woodstock Energy Company, but no papers were signed. In the interim, Ike Libby of Hometown Energy contacted the Town Manager and was very concerned that he was not contacted about the bid as he was very interested in acquiring the business from the town if he came in at a competitive rate. Bradbury's was also left off. Both were then given a chance to bid; none received from Bradbury.

Irving Forest Products also offered 4,000 gallons of No. 2 fuel oil at the very reasonable price of \$1.50/gal. The town would have to remove it from their premises as they are now using another source of energy. Due to the town's heating oil tanks that can only hold 1100 gallons collectively and no place to store it, the town had to decline this generous offer.

Woodstock bid \$.20 over the daily dock price; Hometown Energy bid \$.16 over the daily dock price.

Selectman Dyer moved to rescind the previous motion in awarding Woodstock the fuel bid for the Town of Dixfield. Mr. Carlton seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously.

On a motion from Mr. Dyer and a second from Mr. Carlton, the Board voted unanimously to accept the bid of \$.16 over the daily dock price for fuel from Hometown Energy.

**c. SAD No. 21 – Harlow Park Agreement:** Town Manager Skibitsky explained that the original agreement with SAD No. 21 and the Town of Dixfield for use of the parks was not signed. Both parties have agreed to share the water bills as follows:

S.A.D. No. 21	Will pay all of concession stand water bill
	Will split the Harlow and Marble Parks' bills with the town

Also discussed was the relocation of bleachers at Harlow Park. Dr. Ward would like to move the baseball bleachers to the football field and possibly move the smaller bleachers to the baseball field. This will be done during the month of November after the ground has frozen.

On a motion from Mr. Dyer and a second from Mr. Desjardins, the Board voted unanimously to approve and sign the agreement.

**d. Thaddeus White Bridge:** The Town Manager reminded the Board of the Thaddeus White Bridge Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony and Dedication that is scheduled for:

**Saturday  
November 22, 2008  
11:00 p.m.  
End of Coburn Avenue, Dixfield**

Dixfield's oldest citizen, Eva Sassi Taylor who holds the Boston Post Cane will ride in an old Model T driven by Hurchial Noyes, and the Dixfield Historical Society will serve light refreshments after.

Mr. Skibitsky also stated that the contractor has assured both towns that the bridge site will be left in very good condition when the project is finished.

#### **7. Town Manager's Report:**

Mr. Desjardins felt that a report from Public Works employee Leo Jolin would no longer be needed and that his time would be better spent in the department.

On a motion from Mr. Desjardins and a second from Mr. Dyer, the Board voted unanimously to discontinue the Public Works Department written report.

- The State of Maine Department of Transportation will be holding a public meeting on November 24, 2008 at the Mexico Town Office to discuss the replacement of the Webb River Bridge. Mr. Skibitsky felt strongly that Dixfield representation is imperative to protect the town's interest. The Board agreed to change its meeting to Tuesday, November 25, 2008.
- Reported about the possible reduction in state revenues received by the town. The State is proposing to decrease Tree Growth reimbursements and reduce Homestead reimbursements by 10%.
- The Fire Department received a safety grant.
- The Water Advisory Committee will be meeting on Monday, December 8, 2008 and would like to meet with the Board of Selectmen to start working on the agreement. The Selectmen will meet with them following their regularly scheduled meeting.
- General Assistance training will be held this Friday in the Town Office.
- On November 18, 2008 the Town Manager will be attending the Tax Collector's Workshop sponsored the MTCTA.
- The employees' gift turkeys have been ordered and will be given out Thursday.
- The Town Manager will speak with Irving Forest Products about the mud buildup on Third Street.
- The ad for temporary snowplow drivers has gone to the newspapers.

Discussion followed regarding the hiring of a "full-time" employee just until the public works employee returns from sick leave. It was felt that this would give the town better coverage.

On a motion from Mr. Desjardins and a second from Mr. Dyer, the Board voted unanimously to appoint a temporary, third employee to the Public Works Department only until such time that our employee returns to work. This also must approved by the Teamsters Union. The vote was unanimous.

**Public Comment: None**

#### **9. Board Questions and Comments:**

Ms. Martin: Ms. Martin requested that talks begin with the Town of Mexico regarding the regionalization of the Police Departments.

**10. Other Business:**

**11. Executive Session:** On a motion from Mrs. Clarke and a second from Mr. Dyer, the Board voted unanimously to go into executive session at 6:55 p.m. (36MRSA 841 Poverty Abatement).

Came out of executive session at 7:03 p.m.

On a motion from Mr. Dyer and a second from Mr. Carlton, the Board voted unanimously to disallow the poverty abatement.

On a motion from Mrs. Clarke and a second from Mr. Dyer, the Board voted to go into executive session at 7:04 p.m. under MRSA 406-6E, meeting with legal counsel.

Came out of executive session at 7:15 p.m.

**12. FYI: So noted.**

**12. Next Meeting:** Tuesday, November 25, 2008, 5:00 p.m., Town Office.

**13. Adjournment:** On a motion from Mr. Dyer and a second from Mr. Desjardins, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlotte M. Collins  
Deputy Treasurer

/cmc