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MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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MEETING OF May 5, 2008

10 The Board of Selectmen held a meeting on Monday, May 5, 2008, the Salem Town Hall, 33
11 Geremonty Drive, Salem, New Hampshire.

12 **PRESENT:** Chairman Elizabeth A. Roth, Vice-Chairman Arthur E. Barnes, Secretary Michael J.
13 Lyons, Selectman Everett P. McBride, Jr., Selectman Patrick M. Hargreaves, and Town
14 Manager, Jonathan Sistare.

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CALL TO ORDER

17 Chairman Roth called the meeting to order at 7:00PM with the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman
18 Roth then introduced the Board members and Town Manager Jonathan Sistare.

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1. Meeting Minutes

21 There were no minutes available for approval at this time.

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2. Chairman Comments

24 Chairman Roth commented that the better weather was arriving.

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3. Finance Director-Quarterly Financial Report

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28 Finance Director Jane Savastano commented that there was an overview provided to the Board
29 which included an update of the Town's financial condition through March 31, 2008 with
30 regards to the following categories: Statement of Appropriations, Revenue Report, General Fund
31 Balance, and Water/Sewer Unreserved Fund Balances.

32
33 Ms. Savastano commented that she was concerned with the following items:

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- 36 • Gas which had gone from \$2.37 to \$3.23
 - 37 • Diesel which had gone from \$2.61 to \$3.88
 - 38 • \$115,000.00 possible shortfall based on averages from April-December
 - 39 • Employee benefits annual buyback over by \$21,000.00

40 Ms. Savastano commented that the fuel oil was based on an average of what we were actually
41 paying through June, with Fuller, which was \$2.15.

42
43 Chairman Roth and others commented that they had already purchased their home heating oil
44 and suggested pre-purchasing. Selectman Hargreaves asked if we received guaranteed price oil
45 and Ms. Savastano replied yes.

1 Selectman Hargreaves asked if that included gas. Ms. Savastano commented that we pay three
2 cents more over market price, and pay no taxes, adding that the contract was with Dennis Burke.
3 She added further that this budget should not have been cut during the budget season.
4

5 Ms. Savastano commented that the electricity supplier portion under contract for the School and
6 Town, was locked in at \$.93 cents per kilowatt until December of 2008, and added that this was a
7 good thing since it had increased to \$1.11 as of May 1.
8

9 Ms. Savastano commented that the Winter Weather Operation Fund had \$190,000.00 left, plus
10 the trust fund.
11

12 Selectman Hargreaves asked which departments were spending the most on fuel for vehicles.
13 Ms. Savastano replied that the police, highway and fire use the most. Selectman Hargreaves
14 asked if it was necessary for police vehicles to be left running 24/7.
15

16 Selectman McBride commented that he thought it was easier to leave the vehicles running.
17 Chairman Roth added that this was in the interest of public safety to leave the vehicles running,
18 and added further that all are being hit with the fuel crunch, both municipalities and at the local
19 level, and suggested that we look outside the box to acquire fuel at reasonable rates, and further
20 suggested that this be done sooner rather than later.
21

22 Selectman McBride asked if we bid out fuel oil with the school. Ms. Savastano replied that we
23 did in the past, and added that the purchasing coordinator was looking at alternatives.
24 She further added that there was a state base plus a percentage being added on. Selectman
25 Hargreaves suggested that we talk to oil companies and see if we can get a better price based on
26 the fact that we are guaranteeing so many gallons. He further asked the Town Manager to see if
27 any vehicles were being unnecessarily used or if individuals could carpool.
28

29 Selectman Hargreaves asked if the 2006 audit had been received. Ms. Savastano commented that
30 the 2006 audit had been preliminary reviewed and was in process.
31

32 Selectman Lyons referenced next year's budget, and asked if he had guidance from the Board.
33 Jonathan Sistare commented that guidance was sought, and noted he would be addressing the
34 budget by the end of June. Selectman Lyons suggested that discussion be brought up earlier in
35 regards to this budget season.
36

37 Chairman Roth commented that we should be proactive as a Town regarding our finances.
38 Selectman McBride commented that we should have the temperature set for the AC at 72
39 degrees and at 66 degrees in the winter in an effort to conserve.
40

41 Ms. Savastano commented that revenues had not been looked at consistently in past years and
42 added that this would be a focus. She added that she would specifically be looking at
43 ambulance billing, as there was a lot of write offs. Ms Savastano also commented that more of a
44 review process would be put in place. She noted further that the cost of water and sewer meters
45 had increased, and noted that she would be looking at fees in general.
46

1 Selectman Hargreaves asked how much the Board of Selectman wrote off in 2007, and so far in
2 2008 in regards to ambulance billing. Ms. Savastano noted that a clean up process was
3 happening in the budget, and added that she would take a closer look.
4

5 Selectman Barnes commented that the policy in place was recommended by previous boards, and
6 suggested that it be looked at again.
7

8 Ms. Savastano stated that she would look at this policy, adding that we do not send clients to a
9 collection agency. Chairman Roth commented that if all efforts had been exhausted that perhaps
10 our policy was softer than appropriate.
11

12 Selectman McBride commented that we charge everybody the same. Chairman Roth commented
13 that we needed to look at areas to generate more revenue. Selectman Hargreaves stated that he
14 had no problem writing off residents accounts, and added his concern was out-of-towner's being
15 written off, or people that do not pay taxes. Chairman Roth interjected that we could not do that,
16 as that would be in violation of Federal Law. Chairman Roth suggested that we explore areas for
17 ambulance billing, and commented that we must supply information on how we must treat
18 ambulance users, as there were federal guidelines to follow. Selectman Lyons suggested that
19 perhaps we should hire a collection agency and change our policy. Chairman Roth concurred that
20 we should look at our collection policies.
21

22 Selectman Hargreaves asked what hardship was. Ms. Savastano stated that if an individual fell
23 below the poverty guidelines, it was a State policy that they could apply for hardship and have
24 the fees waived. Selectman Barnes commented that the hardship information was provided when
25 the bill was received.
26

27 Ms. Savastano commented that the fund balances were provided. Chairman Roth asked if these
28 balances were as of December 31, 2007. Ms. Savastano indicated that they were.
29

30 Selectman McBride commented that these were the balances prior to town meeting.
31

32 Selectman Hargreaves asked if the utility rates would have to be increased. Jonathan Sistare
33 commented that they were now looking at rates based on a five-year basis, not a one-year basis.
34 Selectman Hargreaves commented that he was concerned with keeping this rate stable. Jonathan
35 Sistare stated that they may be able to keep the rate stable, and stated that they would come back
36 with an analysis. Chairman Roth commented that if we did not look at this over a five-year
37 period we would most likely not have usage spikes or a huge increase.
38

39 **4. Mosquito Control Update** 40

41 Health Officer Brian Lockard commented that the mosquito control program began the week of
42 April 21st and outlined the key components in the memo provided to the Board. He indicated that
43 the traps would be put out in the next couple of weeks and also noted that spraying would be
44 limited because of exposure issues. He indicated that the larvae stage process was most
45 beneficial, and added that although surrounding communities had encountered issues, we had
46 not.

Discussion:

Chairman Roth asked if we could substantiate the success of the program based on the larvae spraying. Mr. Lockard replied no, the success was based on the complete effort of treating all wet areas, catch basins, etc.

Selectman McBride asked if we treated school catch basins. Mr. Lockard responded that these would be treated by mid June, adding that DPW would clean the catch basins before they were sprayed.

Mr. Lockard noted that the Town had received over \$10,000.00 in re-imburement for spraying last year.

Chairman Roth asked when the PSA's would start. Mr. Lockard commented that the program has started and information was being provided.

Chairman Roth commented that the Town was being proactive in controlling this issue.

Selectman Hargreaves asked if we had checked Stillwater Pond. Mr. Lockard responded that he believed it had been tested, and added that ponds and lakes could not be sprayed, but noted he would check. Selectman Hargreaves announced the Mr. Lockard's number as 890-2050, and encouraged the public to call with any questions.

Selectman Lyons commented that we had spent \$47,000.00 on the four components, and asked if the larvae citing was the most effective. Mr. Lockard commented that the residual affect lasts longer, noting that spraying only hits once, and dollar for dollar the larvae citing was the most effective.

5. Town Manager's Report

Jonathan Sistare asked the Board to entertain a motion relative to the Salem Garden Club's request to place signs in the right-of-way at Foss School and at the corner of Geremonty Drive and Veterans Memorial Parkway to announce the annual plant sale.

MOTION: by Selectman McBride

Motion to grant a request by the Salem Garden Club to temporarily place signs in the right of way at Foss School and at the corner of Geremonty Drive to advertise the upcoming event, and to remove them immediately following the events completion.

SECOND: by Selectman Hargreaves**VOTE: 5-0-0**

The motion carried unanimously.

Jonathan Sistare announced that a Flood Mitigation Workshop would be held at the Salem High School Media Center on May 15, 2008 at 6:30PM.

1 Jonathan Sistare further commented on the Legislature's action regarding House Bill 1645,
2 stating that the hearings had been held, changes were being made, which would ultimately
3 increase the cost to municipalities. He added further that the Senate refused to put in the hold
4 harmless provision, and suggested that a letter be written to Senator Downing indicating that
5 they were opposed to these changes.

6
7 Chairman Roth suggested that a letter be personally addressed to representatives on Town
8 letterhead, stating their opposition. Jonathan Sistare indicated that the employer rates could go
9 up 50% for Group One in the NH Retirement System.

10
11 Selectman McBride commented that if this was going back to the committee, that they should
12 take an extreme position.

13 14 **6. Selectman Reports/Correspondence**

15
16 Selectman Barnes provided Selectman Hargreaves with a copy of the Lancaster Fund memo,
17 which discussed how to address this fund. Chairman Roth stated that she appreciated the work
18 Selectman Barnes had done, and continued to do, on the Lancaster Fund and the Town Common.

19
20 Selectman McBride asked if we were cleaning the catch basins on school property. Jonathan
21 Sistare replied that he would speak to the School Superintendent regarding this question.
22 Selectman McBride asked the Town Manager to accompany him to look at the drainage behind
23 Lancaster School.

24
25 Selectman Hargreaves stated that they were trying to come up with a plan to relocate the shed to
26 the Field of Dreams and added that the shed was larger than he had thought, and added he was
27 employing the help of DPW.

28
29 Selectman Hargreaves asked if any information had been received from the Police Department
30 regarding the Drug Asset Forfeiture money. Jonathan Sistare replied that this information had
31 been provided.

32
33 Selectman Hargreaves further asked how much money was in the forfeiture fund, what was
34 expended, and if we expended more than the fund balance. Jonathan Sistare replied that we did
35 not expend more than the balance.

36
37 Selectman Hargreaves referenced the fact that the towns of Atkinson, Windham and Pelham
38 allow residents to emit fireworks, and asked if it was possible that the Town of Salem legalize
39 this for the week of July 4 only.

40
41 Selectman Hargreaves also commented that he was continuing to work on a parking ordinance
42 with the help of Mr. Scott, the Community Development Director.

43
44 Selectman Hargreaves commented that the work on the skate park was at standstill, as Wal-Mart
45 had right-of-way concerns.

1 Chairman Roth commented that it was great to see work out in North Salem, which began May
2 5.

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4 **7. Old Business Tabled/Pending**

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6 • **Additions and/or Requests by Public or Board by Vote**

7
8 • **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- 9
10 ○ May 9, 2008, Board of Selectman Retreat
11 ○ May 12, 2008
12 ○ May 19, 2008
13 ○ June 2, 2008
14 ○ June 9, 2008
15 ○ June 23, 2008
16

17 Chairman Roth announced that the Memorial Day Parade would be held Monday, May 26, 2008,
18 with a starting time of 2:00 pm, and commented further that she would be unable to attend.
19

20 Selectman Hargreaves asked if the May 9, 2008, Selectman's Retreat from 2:00 - 5:00 PM would
21 be a public meeting, and further asked if it would be televised and have recording secretary
22 present. He also commented that the time was not conducive to his work schedule and asked if it
23 could be changed.
24

25 Jonathan Sistare commented that the public was welcome and added that there would be no
26 recording secretary attending. Chairman Roth stated that this meeting would be held at her law
27 offices in North Andover, MA. She added further that this meeting was open to the public, but
28 not public input, adding that they were adhering to the RSA's. Chairman Roth also stated that the
29 reason for this meeting was to set goals and brainstorm with the new Town Manager. Chairman
30 Roth added in closing that the meeting time could be changed, as long as certain procedures were
31 followed.
32

33 **MOTION: by Selectman McBride**

34 *To adjourn the meeting*

35 **SECOND: Selectman Lyons**

36 **VOTE: 5-0-0**

37 The motion carried unanimously
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39 **Without further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:19PM.**

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41 Notes/Minutes Taken by: Catherine Kupa, Recording Secretary

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43 Approved: Board of Selectmen

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45 Date: May 19, 2008