

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES**

July 18, 2005

PRESENT:

Mark Kaplan, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Douglas W. Lyon, Selectman
Jessie Levine, Town Administrator
Ruth I. Clough, Selectman

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bob Andrews, Recreation Director
Ann Bedard, Sewer Department Clerk
Carol Fraley, Finance Officer
Linda Hardy, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
Richard Lee, Road Agent
Ginny Foose, Tracy Library Co-Director
David Seastrand, Police Chief
Peter Stanley, Fire Chief
Bob and DJ Lavoie, New London residents
Debbie Cross, Intertown Record
Carolyn Dube, Argus Champion

Chair Kaplan called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

Minutes: Ms. Clough moved to approve the public and non-public minutes of July 11, 2005. Mr. Lyon seconded. Approved 3-0.

Personnel Policy: The Board of Selectmen met with the Department Heads to continue the review of the draft revised personnel policy. Ms. Levine said that they had left off at vacation time last week. Since then, she had spoken to some people about questions raised at last week's meeting, and it is not illegal to have different vacation policies for exempt and non-exempt employees. She distributed copies of earned time policies from the Town of Derry and City of Portsmouth.

Mr. Lyon said that a few years ago, Colby-Sawyer College revised its leave policy to eliminate sick time altogether; if employees need to be out for sick or personal reasons, they will be paid for the day. The concept is that the employees are adults and should not have to cough into the phone if they need time off for personal reasons. He said that it has been overwhelmingly successful and that any abuse has been minimal and becomes a personnel issue. Ann Bedard asked what happened in the event of serious illness, and Mr. Lyon replied that the College's short-term or long-term disability programs kick in at that point. Mr. Lyon said that he could not understand why any employee would need the 15 sick days a year that the Town provides.

Mr. Lyon asked Department Heads for their thoughts on such a program. Chief Seastrand said that it's a little hard to answer because he is not sure what would happen if such a plan were in place. Ms. Levine said that she thinks it has in part been successful because the College also gives 20 days of vacation, in addition to times when the College is closed down. She said that New London has less vacation time, so employees have used their sick and personal time as extra time off. She referred to comments from the employee questionnaire that indicated that one of the biggest concerns among employees was the lack of incentive for not using sick time. Employees who exhausted all of their sick time ended up with more

leave time than employees who did not. Employees who did not use their sick time could accumulate up to 90 days of sick time, but were otherwise not rewarded for not using their sick time.

Bob Lavoie shared his experience with the federal government, in which employees could accumulate sick leave forever and would receive compensation for that unused time upon retirement. He said that if employees abuse sick leave and become sick, they would not be paid for their absences after their sick leave was exhausted. He also said that abuse of sick time could be addressed during performance evaluation.

Ann Bedard said that she has seen earned time programs that require the earned time to be used within a certain period of time so that it never accumulates beyond a certain point. After some discussion about leave time policies, including a review of Portsmouth's policy, Richard Lee suggested adding one week's vacation to the Town's existing vacation policy and cutting sick time in half (currently the Town gives 15 sick days). He proposed allowing sick time to accrue up to 30 days, at which point employees could convert unused sick time to vacation time at a rate of 3 sick days to one vacation day. The Selectmen discussed that and other possibilities, and asked Ms. Levine to draft two options for review by the Department Heads and Selectmen.

Richard Lee asked if an earned time policy would include a payout of unused time upon departure or retirement, and Ms. Levine said that most earned time policies do include payouts.

Ms. Levine asked the Selectmen whether they wanted to add a tuition reimbursement program to the personnel policy. She referred to a copy of the Town of Amherst's reimbursement policy, and added that Department Heads had liked the idea but thought that reimbursement should be tied to performance in the course and length of employment, so that employees did not leave as soon as they had completed their courses. This led to a discussion about which courses or programs of instruction would qualify for tuition reimbursement. Bob Andrews suggested that it include graduate courses, and the Selectmen ultimately decided that any course that is related to someone's job, whether towards a degree or not, could qualify for reimbursement subject to Department Head approval. Mr. Lyon suggested that there should be a maximum amount for such reimbursement, and the other Selectmen agreed.

Mr. Stanley asked if part-time employees could be allowed to buy-in to the Town's health insurance program, at the employees' expense. He said that the Town's health insurance costs are much lower than premiums offered to smaller groups, and it would be a tremendous benefit even if the part-time employees had to pay the entire cost. Ms. Levine said that she would talk to the Local Government Center about whether they would even allow part-time employees to receive coverage. The Board of Selectmen favored the idea.

On the discussion of computer and internet use policies and right-to-privacy, Chair Kaplan asked Ms. Levine to find out whether Tracy Library had a policy for the use of its public computers. In addition, Ms. Levine will talk to the Town's employment attorney about searching employees' computers and the prohibition of weapons in the workplace.

The Board of Selectmen asked Ms. Levine to make the changes to the policy and circulate a new draft. She will discuss the leave policy options with Department Heads at their meeting on Tuesday, July 26, and submit a final draft to the Selectmen for the August 1st meeting. After that, the Selectmen will hold meetings with all town employees to talk about the changes.

The Department Heads departed the Selectmen's meeting at 11:00 AM.

OLD BUSINESS:

Local Government Center Board of Directors' Retreat: Ms. Levine said that she attended the Board of Directors' Retreat in North Conway last week, and it was very educational. She said that the Local Government Center recently won a bid to provide prescription drug benefits to all State of NH employees, and that the additional membership should decrease drug premiums for existing members. She said that she is trying to be conscientious about being a member of the Board while on Town time, and hopes that it will be beneficial to the Town in the long run.

Elkins Planning Study: Ms. Levine said that the best time to hold the first meeting for the Elkins Planning Study is at the Selectmen's Meeting of August 8, 2005, at 10:00 AM. This is the first meeting with the planner, Selectmen, and Planning Board to talk about the scope of the project, and is not the actual planning workshop. Ms. Levine said that a few residents of Elkins are aware of the meeting, but she has not sent a general notification because this is not the public workshop phase of the project.

Assessing Update: Ms. Levine said that the Joint Board conducted first round interviews of four candidates on Friday and will invite two for a second round interview later this week. She plans to draft a *Quicklink* to residents notifying them of the Joint Assessor appointment and the plans for a statistical update.

SIGNATURES:

Building Permits:

- Permit 05-073: Robert & Dolores Bausch, 209 Squires Lane (Map 96, Lot 27), permit to install a 10' x 16' shed – Approved
- Permit 05-074: Peter & Susan Roos, 496 Knights Hill Road (Map 95, Lot 41), permit to replace existing deck and increase size by 2 feet – Approved
- Permit 05-075: Brian & Alicia Simoneau, 65 Edmunds Road (Map 95, Lot 25), permit to add 2-story deck on rear of house – Approved
- Permit 05-076: New London Shopping Center, 295 Newport Road (Map 59, Lot 8), permit to split former Hubert's space into two units and change egress – Approved
- Permit 05-077: Christopher & Nancy Tatum, 493 Burpee Hill Road (Map 70, Lot 12), permit to add in-ground swimming pool (18' x 36') – Approved

Sign Permit Applications:

- Temporary Sign Permit Application by Northeast Shakespeare Ensemble (NESE) for 4 SF sign at Whipple Memorial Town Hall from August 11-28 for Gin Game – Approved
- Temporary Sign Permit Application by New London Garden Club for 6 SF sign at the Information Booth from July 17-23 for New London Garden Club Antique Show – Approved

Other Items for Signature:

- Disbursement Voucher for the week of July 18, 2005

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There being no further business, the Board of Selectmen voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:20 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessie Levine
Town Administrator