

APPROVED

**Board of Selectmen
7 October 2010
Minutes**

6:00 pm - Chairman Betty Ann Abbott called the meeting to order. Present were Chairman Abbott, Selectman Rachel Hatch, Town Administrator Tim Warren and Lois Dionne. Selectman Guarino joined the meeting at 6:30.

Also in attendance were Wynette DeGroot, Scott Wheaton and Ron O'Keefe from the Local Government Center.

After Attendance, everyone stood for the "Pledge of Allegiance".

Tim Warren stated that the reason we had asked to meet with the representatives from LGC was our concerns about the policies and operations of the fire department, and we wondered how they could help us get the issues under control.

Chairman Abbott stated that we have a set of policies, but they aren't being followed. She added that the Chief has since given his notice of retirement, but we would like to have a firm understanding of how to improve the management of the department before we get a new chief.

Scott Weden is Public Safety Manager at LGC with a background of twenty-five years in public safety, both as fire chief and police chief. Ron O'Keefe has twenty-seven years in fire service, and had served as fire chief in Durham before going to LGC, and is a nationally designated Chief Fire Officer from the Center for Public Safety Excellence. Wynette DeGroot works in the risk management department at LGC, and has been working with Gilmanton for several years.

Mr. Weden said Ron could conduct a study assessment of the fire department; he added that they also work on recruitment, have successfully recruited several fire chiefs in New Hampshire; he added that the ones they have placed are still on the job after several years. Their recruitment includes collecting and reviewing resumes, setting up a professional board, an oral board, polygraph tests, psychological exams, full background checks, reference checks and advertising costs. Mr. Weden said they work in collaboration with the NH Chief's Association, so felt they could provide what we are looking for both in recruitment and assessment of the fire department.

Ron O’Keefe explained that the assessment included him doing a complete review of current fire department policies, procedures and level of services, interviewing staff, preparing an overview of the community, compare the department to fire departments in similar sized communities regarding size of department, staffing levels, apparatus, services provided, budget, tax base, etc., recommend specific ways to improve the department in a cost effective way, review apparatus and facility needs, and initiate discussion and outline a strategic plan for the fire department.

Wynette takes care of risk factors once the management study is complete including helping with the sustainability of what training is needed. She was involved with the special driver training programs that members of the fire department recently attended.

Chairman Abbott asked that LGC submit a proposal and outline for the scope of service and thanked the members of LGC for attending the meeting.

Hazard Mitigation – Selectman Hatch stated that the Hazard Mitigation Committee had met last night. She said they are about half done gathering their information. She said they meet about once a month, and their goal is to finish their project by the end of the year. If they have a draft submitted by the end of the year, even if it has not been formally approved, they will be in compliance.

Safety Building Update

Grant – Chairman Abbott stated that we had received formal notice from Steven Finnegan at the State, that Gilmanton has been approved for a grant of \$57, 045.00, which will offset the energy upgrades and the radio tower; we will be coming in on budget for the project.

Tower - Chief O’Brien said the crane should be here the end of next week to start erecting the tower.

Certificate of Occupancy – Tim informed the Board that we would be receiving our Certificate of Occupancy for the building tomorrow.

Generator – Tim reported that the Safety Committee had met today, and had gone to the safety building because there was concern about the location of the generator, and that it could be damaged when plowing snow because if the banks got high, the generator might not be seen. It was felt that a fence could be placed around the generator to protect it. There was also concern about a couple of pine trees that are leaning, and it was felt they should be removed.

Open House – Tim said he spoke with the police and fire departments about being in charge of refreshments for the open house; they are willing to accept that responsibility.

Joint Meetings – ZBA & Planning Boards – Due to three recent cases that have been heard by the Zoning Board in which variances were granted, and then the applicants should have gone to the planning board, and didn't, or because of the variance from the ZBA, it made it difficult for the planning board to enforce their regulations because the applicants felt the variance had given them the right to do as they please without getting planning board approval.

There was considerable discussion about how having a joint meeting could have avoided a lot of problems for both boards as well as the applicants. Having a joint meeting would allow all parties to know what is needed from each board, making the whole process go much smoother, as well as being less expensive for the applicant.

There was also discussion that when an applicant applies to the zoning board, they don't, and sometimes won't, always tell them that they plan to do anything with the property that would require planning board approval, so a variance is granted based on the information in the application to the zoning board. It is only after the applicant receives the variance that they decide they wish to subdivide the property or make other changes that would require planning board approval. The planning and zoning clerks were asked that, if possible, when an applicant comes in with an application for either board that the clerk ask the other clerk to speak with the applicant at that time so they can try to determine if a meeting is required with their board, and a joint meeting could be suggested at that time. It could then be explained that a joint meeting would be beneficial to the applicant in that the process would be smoother, quicker and less expensive.

7:45 pm – Selectman Hatch moved to Enter into Non-Public Session as per RSA 91-A:3, II(a) - Dismissal, promotion or setting compensation for public employees or the investigation of any charges against him, unless the employee affected has a right to a meeting or requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted. Selectman Guarino seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

The Selectmen discussed a personnel issue.

7:58 pm – Selectman Guarino moved to come Out of Non-Public Session. Selectman Hatch seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

8:00 PM – MOTION – Selectman Guarino moved to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Hatch seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Dionne
Recording Clerk

