

APPROVED

**Board of Selectmen
25 July 2012
Minutes**

5:30 pm - Chairman Rachel Hatch called the meeting to order. Present were Chairman Hatch, Selectmen Ralph Lavin and Brett Currier, Town Administrator Tim Warren and Clerk Lois Dionne.

5:31 pm – Selectman Lavin moved to enter into Non-Public Session 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 Currier seconded. Motion passed 3-0. – Chairman Hatch-Yes, Selectman Lavin-Yes, Selectman Currier-Yes.

The Selectmen discussed a personnel issue.

7:15 pm – Selectman Currier moved to come out of Non-Public Session. Selectman Lavin seconded. Motion passed 3-0. – Chairman Hatch-Yes, Selectman Lavin-Yes, Selectman Currier-Yes.

MOTION – Selectman Currier moved to seal the minutes of the above non-public session. Selectman Lavin seconded. Motion passed 3-0. – Chairman Hatch-Yes, Selectman Lavin-Yes, Selectman Currier-Yes.

Budget Committee Meeting – Chairman Hatch asked Selectman Lavin to report on the budget committee public hearing last Friday.

Selectman Lavin said there was a unanimous decision to recommend the raise (school board contract); the “evergreen clause” did not play a part in the contract. He said after listening to everything that was said, he thought he knew Rachel’s position, and felt he had supported it as well. Selectman Lavin said the employees of this town are not the leaders, and it is kind of like the old cliché that the government doesn’t help problems, it creates problems, and all the problems we are having everywhere is because of the leadership, so he chose to support the raise for all the employees. Chairman Hatch stated that the GEA contract is just for the teachers. Selectman Lavin said he would support ours in the future. Chairman Hatch said the school board is going to have a deliberative

session on August 14th and an actual special school district election the same day as the primary, which is September 11th. By doing it this way, it will save taxpayer dollars.

Selectman Lavin stated that the teachers would not be getting a raise the first year, the second year they will be getting a 2.08% raise.

SB2 Discussion – Tim informed the board that on August 15th at 6:00 pm Attorney Mitchell and a representative from his office would be here to discuss SB2. They will discuss how it will impact the town and the time frame. As soon as they get the time line, they will forward it ahead of time so people can review it.

Tim said the budget committee chairman had asked for the meeting. Members of the Board of Selectmen, Budget Committee, School Board and Department Heads will be invited to the meeting so everybody can get the information at the same time.

Confrontation – Chairman Hatch said she had been made aware of two occurrences that happened after the budget meeting. Selectman Lavin said it had happened after the budget committee had adjourned. Chairman Hatch stated that school board member Michael Hatch informed her that Selectman Lavin had confronted him after the meeting, and had indicated that he was a “lousy” school board member. Selectman Lavin said he did not say that. Chairman Hatch continued that Selectman Lavin had indicated that it was the school board’s buses fault for ruining our town roads. Selectman Lavin said he did say that. Chairman Hatch added that it was said that Selectman Lavin had said that because the school district’s budget goes up \$500,000 a year, we don’t have enough money as selectmen to fix the road. Selectman Lavin said that was correct. Chairman Hatch said that Selectman Lavin had then proceeded to swear at Mr. Hatch. Selectman Lavin said he did that, but there were other things before that. Chairman Hatch said at that point Mr. Hatch had told Selectman Lavin that the conversation had ended; he was not going to talk to him if he was not going to talk nice. She said Selectman Lavin had then gone to school board member Frank Weeks and had once again alleged that the town didn’t have enough money to fix the roads because the school district budget was up \$500,000 a year. Chairman Hatch said Mr. Weeks had indicated to her that Selectman Lavin was very upset at the school board; he felt they were big spenders with taxpayer dollars. Selectman Lavin said “yes”. Chairman Hatch asked Selectman Lavin to address the allegations.

Selectman Lavin said they were correct for the most part, but when he was speaking with Mr. Hatch, Mr. Hatch had told him “they (school board) were doing a good job”, and that he (Ralph) as a citizen, not as a selectman had told him “No, you are doing a shitty job”. He said Mr. Hatch had then started getting very loud with him and put him on the defensive, so he started getting loud back, and had used some colorful expletives. Chairman Hatch said it was vulgarity. Selectman Lavin said it was vulgarity, if that was what she wanted to call it. He reiterated that he was talking to Mr. Hatch as a citizen, not as a selectman.

Chairman Hatch stated that when Selectman Lavin was at the meeting, whether it was before, during or after the meeting he was still there as a selectman representing the Board of Selectmen, and his actions were inappropriate as representing the Board. Selectman Lavin said he was not representing the Board; the meeting had adjourned. Selectman Hatch said that didn't matter, they are selectmen 24/7. Selectman Lavin felt the board should thank him for going in with that attitude, because he thinks it is "bull shit"; it is ridiculous that they (school district) have been raising their budget a half a million dollars a year for ten years.

Chairman Hatch stated that if Selectman Lavin didn't start behaving properly at budget meetings, she would have him removed as the selectmen's representative.

Chairman Hatch said the nonsense of the school board budget is to stop, the Selectmen have no purview over the school budget, and when Selectman Lavin brings up the school budget at selectmen's meeting, it is inappropriate behavior. She said that he, as a selectman, is not to bring up the school district budget; she will not hear about the school district budget at a selectmen's meeting or when he is acting as a selectman. Selectman Lavin said she would because the budget committee meeting was discussing the school budget.

There was a heated discussion between Chairman Hatch and Selectman Lavin as to whether he had acted in an inappropriate manner after the budget committee meeting. Chairman Hatch said this was a verbal warning that if Selectman Lavin acted inappropriately again, he would be removed from the budget committee.

Selectman Lavin said he had done his job during the meeting, and had spoken as a citizen after the meeting had adjourned.

Selectman Currier said when somebody goes to a meeting as a selectmen's representative, even though the meeting is adjourned, while they are in the facility where the meeting held you still have to "wear the selectmen's hat", but as far as getting into a conversation with somebody, you can disagree, but when it comes to an extreme where you can no longer see eye to eye, you need to walk away from the situation.

Selectman Currier said if Selectman Lavin has a problem with the school budget, so he doesn't get into situations, he should go to the school board meetings and tell them up front that he does not represent the selectmen in any capacity. He said he should represent himself so that he doesn't come off as a hot head, and he would get further. Selectman Currier said he could disagree with someone and argue with them, one on one as a taxpayer, but at meetings on town boards, he should be non-confrontational.

Selectman Lavin said the school representative was the one who got loud before he got loud. He said the school spends too much; we have been "playing nice" with them.

Chairman Hatch asked who “we” were. Selectman Lavin replied it was the town; we have been being nice and talking sweet, and every year they raise their budget.

There was discussion as to whether Selectman Lavin was presenting his views as a citizen representing other citizens or as a Selectman.

Selectman Lavin said budget committee Brian Forst was “pretty loose” in the way he had run the meeting, and he was impressed and thought it went well. He said, for the most part, people were directing their attention to the chair. Selectman Lavin said he had just listened for most of the meeting, but a lot of the people were talking amongst themselves rather than to the chair. Selectman Lavin said when he spoke he was very polite, but none of the school board had recognized his opinion or paid any attention to what he was saying, so therefore they had not recognized the opinion of the Board of Selectmen. He said the people on the school board are very vindictive.

Selectman Lavin said he does what the residents put him in his chair to do, not like some others he has seen in those seats; people don’t like their taxes going up every year. He said there are people on social security selling their houses because they can’t afford the taxes.

Chairman Hatch said that as a selectman, he had to stay out of the school district budget and not to mention the school budget again in any selectmen’s meeting. Selectman Lavin replied that would not happen, because he has been nominated to be on the budget committee, and when he goes to a meeting and they are talking about the school budget, it is his job to inform the Board of Selectmen what had been discussed.

Selectman Currier said Chairman Hatch doesn’t mean that Selectman Lavin can’t report about what the school board has brought to the budget committee and report to the Board of Selectmen, but he can’t come in and keep “beating a dead horse”. If he wants to manipulate the school budget, he needs to run for the school board, the selectmen don’t deal with the school board, but leave it out of the selectmen’s office.

Selectman Lavin asked what if some citizen comes to him and asks him to bring it to the Selectmen. Selectman Currier said he couldn’t bring it to the Board of Selectmen. Selectman Lavin wanted it known that Selectman Currier and Mrs. Hatch does not want him to bring any information to the board that they ask him to bring. Selectman Currier said what he wanted to say is that the select board has no power on the school board’s budget, so when he has a person who complains to him to do something with the school board, to tell them that he has no power to manipulate anything on the school board. The school board budget is dictated by the school board, not the selectmen. Selectman Lavin agreed with what Selectman Currier said. He said he would speak with them as a citizen, but not as a selectman.

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Chairman Hatch said she finds it very interesting that residents go to Ralph and not the school board, which is where they should be going. Selectman Lavin said that some residents have told him that when they go to a school board meeting, although they had been on the agenda, they weren't allowed to speak.

There was more discussion about Selectman Lavin's being confrontational and the counter statement that he might be more respected by residents than Chairman Hatch.

7:50 pm - Chairman Hatch adjourned the meeting and left. The other selectmen followed.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Dionne
Recording Clerk