

**APPROVED**

**Board of Selectmen  
12 October 2010  
Minutes**

**4:35 pm** - Chairman Betty Ann Abbott read “This meeting of the Selectmen of the Town of Gilmanton is now open, and the matters presented and discussed here shall be for the purpose of managing the prudential affairs of the town and to perform the duties by law prescribed.”

Present were Chairman Abbott, Selectman Rachel Hatch, Town Administrator Tim Warren and Clerk Lois Dionne. Selectman Guarino was not in attendance. Also in attendance were officers of the fire department including Deputy Chief Joe Hempel, Captain Dana Middleton, Captain Bryan Boyajian, Lt. James Beaudoin and Lt. Frank McClary.

Deputy Chief Hempel explained that the reason the department officers had requested to meet with the Selectmen tonight was to discuss filling Chief Lockwood’s position, who is retiring in December. He said they were asking if the Selectmen would consider delaying the hiring of a new chief until they had a chance to get several items in order. There is the issue of buying a new truck, hiring a third firefighter and getting the budget set for next year. Deputy Chief Hempel said the officers are updating the standard operating guidelines, and would like to see these things through before getting a new chief.

Chairman Abbott said she had heard that the student-training program had languished. Deputy Chief Hempel said the program had changed drastically, but is still in place. He said there is no longer a tuition fee for the program; Gilmanton was the only town charging a fee, so the better students went to other fire departments. Deputy Chief Hempel stated that there is no longer a reason to have a tuition fee; it used to be paid to the fire association and went toward payment of the mortgage, but that mortgage was recently paid off. He said the association would no longer run the program, but that he and Firefighter Pickowicz would be overseeing the program.

Chairman Abbott stated that regarding delaying the hiring of a new chief, when the Selectmen had met with Sheriff Wiggin after the incidents with the fire vehicles, it had been recommended that we get LGC to assess the policies and procedures of the fire department. She said the Selectmen had acted upon that advice, and last week had met with Scott Weden, Ron O’Keefe and Wynette DeGroot from LGC about having an evaluation of the fire department. Mr. Weden is Public Safety Manager at LGC with a background of twenty-five years in public safety, both as fire chief and police chief. Mr.

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, and Wynette DeGroot works in the risk management department at LGC, and has been working with Gilmanton for several years.

Chairman Abbott explained that the assessment would include a complete review of department policies and procedures, assessing staffing, fire apparatus, budget, taxes and interviewing staff. They also work on recruitment, and have successfully recruited several fire chiefs, who are still on the job after several years. Chairman Abbott said they had asked LGC to submit a proposal and outline for the scope of service.

It was explained that this assessment in no way reflected on the firefighters. The Selectmen felt very fortunate in the employees at the department. They were impressed with their abilities and the level of commitment to the department. They have stayed committed to the fire department and to the Town while going through three chiefs in a matter of a few years.

There was a brief discussion of the assessment, and the Officers understood the Selectmen's reasoning, and felt it would be good all around and be beneficial to the department. It would also mean holding off hiring a new chief until the assessment has been done, which is what had been requested of the Selectmen.

**Safety Building** – Deputy Chief Hempel informed the Selectmen that they want to start moving things slowly into the new safety building. There was a brief discussion about the setup of the building, and the upcoming open house.

**5:15 pm** – MOTION – Selectman Hatch moved to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Abbott seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Dionne  
Recording Clerk