

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6

**MINUTES OF THE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**MEETING OF  
September 10, 2007**

7 The Board of Selectmen held a meeting on Monday, September 10, 2007, the Salem Town Hall,  
8 33 Geremonty Drive, Salem, NH.

9  
10 **PRESENT:** Chairman Everett P. McBride, Vice-Chairman, Elizabeth A. Roth, Secretary Arthur  
11 E. Barnes, Selectman Michael J. Lyons, Selectman Patrick Hargreaves, and Town Manager Dr.  
12 Henry E. LaBranche.

13  
14 **CALL TO ORDER**

15 Chairman McBride called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m with the Pledge of Allegiance, and  
16 introduced members of the Board, Dr. LaBranche, and the other Town staff in attendance.

17  
18 • **Fire at Transfer Station**

19 Dr. LaBranche announced that the Transfer Station would be open for business again  
20 tomorrow. He provided the Board with an update on the damage, including that there was no  
21 structural damage to the main part of the building. He stated there may be some damage to  
22 the roof, and that the rest of the damage was cosmetic. Structural engineers have inspected  
23 the building and will be making recommendations for repairs.

24  
25 1. **2008 Operating Budget Review**

26 Dr. LaBranche explained that all outstanding departments would present their budget this  
27 evening.

28  
29 • **Financial Services**

30 ***Tax Collector (a/c 20600, page 83 – 85)***

31 Ms. Cheryl Bolouk, Tax Collector, presented the budget for the department. She pointed out  
32 that the only increase was in the areas of salaries and benefits. In response to a query from  
33 Chairman McBride regarding the availability of electronic banking for the payment of taxes  
34 etc., Ms. Bolouk stated she would like to see all software bugs resolved first. Chairman  
35 McBride stated he would like to push for this to be available as soon as possible.

36  
37 *Line item 4453 (Meetings and Training):* Selectman Hargreaves was informed that the  
38 amount expended so far is \$502, and also that the increase requested for next year is due to  
39 the fact the conference will be held at a more expensive venue next year.

40  
41 *Line item 4408 (Vehicle expense):* Ms. Bolouk explained for Selectman Hargreaves that she  
42 has not put in for her conference expenses yet, in response to his query about why the current  
43 amount expended in this line is low.

44  
45 *Line item 4403 (Technical Services):* It was explained that the Town has yet to be charged  
46 \$950 for the post office box rental and the lock box fee will be on the second billing.

1 Chairman McBride enquired about the success of the lock box, and was told that they had  
2 27% of people use it in the spring and 28.5% in the fall. Ms. Bolouk informed the Board  
3 what percentage of taxes were collected between 2004 and 2007.

4  
5 ***Collections (a/c 20550, page 80 – 82)***

6 Ms. Bolouk explained that a step increase has been requested for a part-time Clerk.

7  
8 ***Legal (a/c 10310, page 29 – 30)***

9 *Line item 4399 (Legal Services):* It was pointed out that this line item was for legal fees that  
10 are incurred for mortgage title searches. These are required by the State. Selectman  
11 Hargreaves was informed upon enquiring that the expended amount in this line through July  
12 is \$51,061. He requested a final update on the figure from Finance before final votes.

13  
14 ***Trustee of Trust Funds (a/c 10348, Page 46 – 47)***

15 Ms. Bolouk explained there was a projected increase in fees. She stated they did go out to  
16 bid and the bid came back high, and that an agreement was worked out with Citizens Bank so  
17 the fees could be reduced. There followed a discussion on fees for prior years.

18  
19 Ms. Barbara Lessard, Town Clerk, presented the budgets for the following accounts:

20  
21 ***Town Clerk (a/c 20400, page 75 – 77)***

22 Ms. Lessard stated there were no major increases for this account, and overall the increase  
23 amounted to 3.37%.

24  
25 ***Elections (a/c 20500, page 78 – 79)***

26 Ms. Lessard explained the overall increase in this account amounted to 265%, and this was  
27 due to the fact there would be four elections in 2008, as well as an increase in temporary pay  
28 (due to an increase in the minimum wage in NH). She also pointed out that the equipment  
29 maintenance contract will begin in 2008, as the warranty expires in June 2008. Also  
30 mentioned was the need to appropriate more money for ballots.

31  
32 • ***Community Development (page 90 - 104)***

33 Mr. Bill Scott, Community Development Director, presented the budget for the following  
34 accounts:

35  
36 ***Community Development (a/c 30000, page 91 - 93)***

37 *Line item 4400 (Contracted Services):* Mr. Scott explained that money had been included for  
38 converting microfilm records to digital. This project has been brought over from the  
39 Planning Department. He explained they are looking to apply \$10,000 for a partial scope  
40 next year to convert two thirds of the documents, as they wish to increase customer service  
41 by replacing the RPC. He then explained what the process over next couple of years would  
42 be for replacing files.

43  
44 In response to a query from Selectman Hargreaves as to whether they had other quotes, Mr.  
45 Scott explained they had obtained five quotes but the one accepted was from the only local  
46 company. He pointed out that when the files have been converted they can then be run on

1 any PC. There followed a brief discussion with Chairman McBride regarding ensuring the  
2 security of the data when documents are sent outside for conversion.

3  
4 *Line item 4200 (Office Supplies):* Selectman Hargreaves was informed that the amount  
5 expended to date for this line item is \$589.

6  
7 ***Planning (a/c 30200, page 94 – 97)***

8 *Line item 4400 (Contracted Services):* It was explained that the amount of \$8,000 requested  
9 in 2007 was for the master plan survey, and why the money has not been spent so far.

10  
11 Mr. Scott informed Selectman Roth that the last master plan had been done in 2001. He  
12 explained the purpose of the survey and how it affects the master plan, and that the plan will  
13 probably be rolled out in approximately 18 months.

14  
15 *Line item 4453 (Meetings & Training):* Selectman Hargreaves was informed that the  
16 amount expended to date was unchanged from the budget sheet, but that there would be  
17 some training coming up in the fall.

18  
19 ***Inspections (a/c 30300, page 97 – 100)***

20 Mr. Scott stated the only changes in salaries and benefits were associated with the Codes  
21 Administrator position.

22  
23 *Line item 4210 (Operating Supplies):* Mr. Scott pointed out the laser measure and digital  
24 memory for the camera.

25  
26 Chairman McBride asked if Mr. Scott was satisfied with the position of Code Administrator,  
27 and Mr. Scott spoke about an ordinance which the Codes Administrator has been developing  
28 to assist the Town with the problem of collection of signs such as political signs, which will  
29 be brought before the Board of Selectmen.

30  
31 Chairman McBride enquired as to when the Town would be able to provide their inspectors  
32 with hand held devices with connection to the Town computer records and Mr. Scott  
33 explained that IT have been looking at the possibilities but it was some time off at present as  
34 there were other things which needed to be integrated before this. Chairman McBride stated  
35 he would like to see this put into the CIP. Mr. Scott spoke about the fact that these devices  
36 would not reduce due diligence of inspectors.

37  
38 *Line item 4210 (Operating Supplies):* Selectman Hargreaves was informed that the expended  
39 amount in this line to date was \$162.

40  
41 *Line item 4453 (Meetings & Training):* Selectman Hargreaves was informed that the  
42 expended amount in this line to date was \$528.

43  
44 *Line item 4587 (Recording Fees):* Selectman Hargreaves asked for an explanation of this line  
45 item and was told that the Town has to budget for these, but the individuals pay the fees.  
46

1       **Health (a/c 30310, page 101 – 104)**

2       *Line item 4810 (Mosquito Control):* It was pointed out that this item has gone up due to an  
3       anticipated increase in costs. Mr. Scott explained he would file for a grant this year for  
4       reimbursement to cover the entire amount under this line item. He explained that spraying  
5       was not included in the line as it is done as an emergency situation and they look to see if the  
6       money for it can be found elsewhere in the budget.

7  
8       A brief discussion took place with Selectman Roth regarding the controls the Town used and  
9       the effectiveness of pre-emptive work on mosquito control.

10  
11      •   **Recreation (pages 190 – 199)**

12      Ms. Julie Kamal, Recreation Director, presented the budgets for the following accounts:

13  
14      **Administration (a/c 60300, page 191 – 195)**

15      She stated the only changes in this account were in salaries and health benefits for the new  
16      director.

17  
18      *Line item 4400 (Contracted Services):* Selectman Hargreaves was informed that the  
19      expended amount in this line through August was \$6,967 and Ms. Kamal explained they will  
20      have billing for the portable toilets through November.

21  
22      **Facilities (a/c 60320, page 196 – 197)**

23      Ms. Kamal explained there was a decrease in line item 4452, Building Maintenance.

24  
25      **Outside Programs (a/c 60330, page 198 – 199)**

26      There are no changes in this account.

27  
28      **Community Contributions (a/c 70200, page 208 – 209)**

29      Ms Kamal reported an increase in this account due to the custodial cost and their anticipated  
30      salary increase.

31  
32      Chairman McBride stated he appreciated Ms. Kamal's hard work for the Town over last 24  
33      years.

34  
35      **Human Services (page 178 – 189)**

36      Mr. Bob Loranger, Human Services Director, provided the budget presentation for the  
37      Human Services accounts, explaining that Direct Assistance is mandated by the State and  
38      what the purpose of it is. He provided a summary of each account which included the  
39      amount expended to date, and where he expected each account to be by the end of 2007. He  
40      mentioned the special programs which are not funded by taxpayers or the town, explaining  
41      that businesses and civic organizations provide the funding for these programs, providing  
42      specific details on some of the programs and donations they had received.

43  
44      **Administration (a/c 60100, page 179 – 181)**

45      Mr. Loranger stated he expected to be at budget by the end of 2007 and had no significant  
46      changes for 2008.

1       ***Direct assistance (a/c 60110, page 182 – 183)***

2       Mr. Loranger explained this account had the most significant changes and that it was a  
3       volatile budget. He stated the month of August had been extremely expensive, versus the  
4       first three months of the year which had been extremely low. He provided details of  
5       adjustments for 2007 which had been necessary to make. These brought the total for 2007 to  
6       \$98,130 instead of the budgeted amount of \$91,210. He also provided details of adjustments  
7       which had been made to the 2008 requests since the budget book had been prepared; pointing  
8       out that the total amount was unchanged at \$109,900.

9  
10       *Line item 4918 (Counseling Services):* Mr. Loranger explained for Selectman Roth the  
11       reasons for reducing this item to \$500 for 2008 are due to only having expended \$285 to  
12       date, and the fact that they refer residents to a community health agency.

13  
14       ***Outside human services (a/c 60200, page 184 – 186)***

15       Mr. Loranger explained he expected this account to be under budget at the end of the year by  
16       just over \$5,000. He pointed out the line items which will be reduced for next year,  
17       explaining that line item 4997 (Greater Salem/Derry Transportation Council) will be taken  
18       out of the account altogether as this will be part of the CART program.

19  
20       He explained that the four warrant articles from last year were moved to Outside Human  
21       Services budget for this year, pointing out those line items they have been added to.  
22       Chairman McBride obtained confirmation from Dr. LaBranche that these warrant articles had  
23       been on the ballot for three years, confirming the Town policy of adding warrants to the  
24       budget after the passage of three years.

25  
26       Mr. Loranger pointed out that the \$113,390 received in grants provided \$2,494,729 in the  
27       value of services to the community, which equaled \$22 returned for each \$1 spent.

28  
29       Upon request, Selectman Hargreaves was provided with up to date figures on expenditure to  
30       date on the following line items:

31  
32       4916 (Home Health Care/Clinics) - \$475

33       4921 (Retired Seniors Volunteer Program) - \$2,000

34       4923 (A Safer Place) - \$1,000

35       4969 (Community Health Services) \$8,000 – Selectman Hargreaves asked for the  
36       justification in the requested increase for 2008 for this line. Mr. Loranger stated billing is  
37       done quarterly and only two quarters have been billed so far this year. He stated there is no  
38       other program like it in the country and explained how the program worked and what it  
39       included. He pointed out it helps residents who are working but who do not have health care  
40       and it provides \$40 in service for every \$1 the provider contributes to the Town. Mr.  
41       Loranger stated there is a high utilization rate from Salem residents of the service and  
42       explained they have asked the Town to help make up some of the decreases they are  
43       experiencing in assistance from various organizations who contribute to them.

44  
45       In response to a query from Selectman Hargreaves, Mr. Loranger stated the program is for  
46       adults who are not eligible for any other health care program.

1       ***Building (a/c 60420, page 188 – 189)***

2       Mr. Loranger pointed out that electricity costs had increased and he had adjusted estimated  
3       expenditure for 2007 up to \$6,370, bringing the total estimate for the year to \$26,698. He  
4       explained he has adjusted the request for electricity for 2008 to \$6,630, bringing the total to  
5       \$25,990.

6  
7       *Line item 4401 (Contracted Services):* Selectman Hargreaves was informed that the contract  
8       amount in this line item for cleaning services has increased to \$5,790 and that they go out to  
9       bid for this item each year.

10  
11       **Senior Services**

12       Ms. Patti Drelick, Senior Services Director provided the presentation for the following  
13       accounts:

14  
15       ***Administration (a/c 60400, page 201 – 203)***

16       Ms. Drelick stated most changes are due to increases in contracts or annual cost increases.  
17       She confirmed that the overtime was for the Custodian.

18  
19       Finance Department confirmed the expenditure to date for the following line items at the  
20       request of Selectman Hargreaves:

- 21       Line item 4451(Postage) - \$312  
22       Line item 4458 (Vehicle Maintenance) - \$553  
23       Line item 4210 (Operating Supplies) - \$377  
24       Line item 4200 (Office Supplies) - \$137

25  
26       Selectman Hargreaves queried whether there were any outstanding bills for line item 4251  
27       (Postage) and Ms. Drelick confirmed the major cost in this line is for their newsletter  
28       mailing. There followed a discussion regarding the number of issues which have been paid  
29       and the costs per issue. It appeared that only one out of five issues of the newsletter has been  
30       paid so far, and Chairman McBride asked Ms. Drelick to check on this.

31  
32       ***Senior Activities (a/c 60410, page 204 – 205)***

33       Ms. Drelick stated this account has been reduced annually, and she is proposing to reduce it  
34       further. She explained the Council on Aging has been supportive in paying many of the  
35       items. Chairman McBride stated it would be nice for the taxpayers to know the level of  
36       support the Council on Aging provided, and Ms. Drelick stated that in 2006 they contributed  
37       over \$17,000 in services, repairs and equipment for the Senior Center.

38  
39       ***Ingram Senior Center (a/c 60430, page 206 – 207)***

40       Ms. Drelick explained that the modest increases in this account are due to increases in  
41       maintenance supplies and in the number of customers they are servicing.

42  
43       *Line item 4457 (Ground Maintenance):* It was explained that the large increase in this line  
44       for 2007 was due to the fact they put down bark mulch.

1 Chairman McBride suggested Ms. Drelick have available for the town meeting information  
2 on how many people the Senior Center serves. Dr. LaBranche pointed out that this  
3 information was contained in Ms. Drelick's memo to the Board.  
4

5 *Line item 4201 (Maintenance Supplies):* Finance Department confirmed for Selectman  
6 Hargreaves the expended amount to date is \$1,363 for this line.  
7

8 Ms. Drelick asked for the opportunity to present the Board of Selectmen with a staff redesign  
9 based on the growth they are experiencing at the Center. She explained she had been able to  
10 make this cost neutral by working with the Council on Aging.  
11

12 She provided figures for the increase in members (600% growth since moving to the new  
13 building and growing) and explained they currently have 2.5 staff positions and 180 active  
14 regular volunteers, and the front desk is currently manned by volunteers in shifts. She  
15 explained about the difficulties of running the Center with the current staff levels, including a  
16 lack of continuity.  
17

18 In response to a query from Chairman McBride on how she tracks the numbers, Ms. Drelick  
19 explained there are registration forms and an attendance list which can be analyzed. She also  
20 explained they are currently going through a list of people in their database who have not  
21 completed a registration form to identify those who are still attending the Center and those  
22 who should be taken off their list.  
23

24 Ms. Drelick further explained that the lack of continuity in staffing has led to breakdowns in  
25 communication and this has hurt their customer service and the staff have had to spend time  
26 sorting out the problems this has created. She went on to explain her proposal of using one  
27 person full time on the front desk as a Clerk and creating a part time Van Driver position (20  
28 hours/week) to dovetail with the CART program. She explained that more than 50% of the  
29 Van Driver position would be refunded by partnering with the CART program.  
30

31 Ms. Drelick explained the other parts of her proposal which would enable the part time  
32 position to be kept cost neutral:  
33

- 34 • Instituting a non resident user fee could potentially generate a minimum of
- 35 \$5,000/year
- 36 • Eliminating the Activities budget as the Council on Aging feel they could support this
- 37 • Reducing the newsletter to quarterly.  
38

39 Chairman McBride suggested this should be put on the ballot, through the Council on Aging,  
40 and a discussion ensued with the Board members providing their input and receiving  
41 clarification on various points. Dr. LaBranche clarified the background which had led to the  
42 proposal coming before the Board.  
43

44 A discussion also took place regarding whether the warrant article should be put on the ballot  
45 by the Board and Dr. LaBranche clarified for the Board members what their responsibilities  
46 are and what their options are in this matter. Selectman Barnes and Selectman Hargreaves

1 confirmed they felt a warrant article would be appropriate, and the Board agreed they would  
2 support it.

3  
4 ***Community Contributions (a/c 70200, page 208 - 209)***

5 Dr. LaBranche drew the attention of the Board to the line items in this account, explaining  
6 what is included in each.

7  
8 Chairman McBride declared a 10 minute recess, after which he handed over to Dr.  
9 LaBranche.

10  
11 Dr. LaBranche referred the Board to Ms. Savastano's memo which addresses Selectman  
12 Barnes' query on TAN's (Tax Anticipation Notes). He also pointed out that his staff has  
13 offered approximately \$34,000 in cuts, not including anything this evening. He confirmed  
14 that the venue of the meeting on Thursday, September 13<sup>th</sup> has changed to the Knightly  
15 Room at 7:00 p.m.

16  
17 He then made a number of comments relative to the challenges before the Board of  
18 Selectmen with the budget. These included the fact that the Board would have to come up  
19 with \$1.6 million in cuts to get to the Board's goal of a 3% increase; and the fact that the  
20 Police station was moved to the Unreserved Fund Balance.

21  
22 Selectman Barnes clarified that in Dr. LaBranche's calculations, winter management is  
23 currently on the tax rate.

24  
25 Chairman McBride confirmed with Finance Department that \$536,000 would be 13 cents on  
26 the tax rate.

27  
28 A discussion took place regarding elements of the Road Program, and the bond payment.

29  
30 In response to a query from Selectman Hargreaves Dr. LaBranche agreed to obtain  
31 information on the status of Mr. Scott's meeting with the architect regarding the Depot train  
32 station.

33  
34 A brief discussion took place between Dr. LaBranche and Selectman Hargreaves regarding  
35 the life span of water meters.

36  
37 Selectman Barnes raised the issue of gas and diesel contracts and a brief discussion took  
38 place with Dr. LaBranche clarifying they have overcome the problem of price increases by  
39 changing the grade of gas to regular and factoring in a percentage increase to provide a buffer  
40 into the next year.

41  
42 Selectman Roth commented that significant increases across the board are beyond the control  
43 of the Board, such as health care and Dr. LaBranche provided some commentary on health  
44 care costs.

1 Selectman Hargreaves thanked the Department Heads for walking him through their  
2 departments and explaining some of the budget for him.

3  
4 Chairman McBride asked Ms. Savastano to look at water consumption and revenue over the  
5 last two years after the rates were increased, as he was concerned about rate increases  
6 causing a drop in consumption.

7  
8 • **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- 9 ○ September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007 – Final Votes (Knightly Room, Town Hall)

10  
11 **MOTION:** by Selectman Hargreaves

12 ***Motion to adjourn the meeting***

13 **SECOND:** Selectman Roth

14 **VOTE:** 5-0-0

15  
16 Without further business, Chairman McBride adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

17  
18 Notes/Minutes Taken by: Sandra Maxwell

19  
20 Approved: Board of Selectmen

21  
22 Date: October 1, 2007