

GILFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
May 8, 2013
Town Hall

The Board of Selectmen convened in a regular session on Wednesday, May 8, 2013, at 7:00 p.m., at the Gilford Town Hall, 47 Cherry Valley Road, Gilford, NH. Selectmen present were Kevin Hayes, John O'Brien and Gus Benavides. Also present were Town Administrator Scott Dunn and Executive Secretary Sandra Bailey.

Staff members in attendance included Finance Director Geoff Ruggles, Police Chief Kevin Keenan, Police Lieutenant Jim Leach, Police Lieutenant Kris Kelley, Fire Chief Steve Carrier and Public Works Director Sheldon Morgan.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance** – The Selectmen recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **Announcements/Presentations**
 - 2.1. Chairman Hayes announced that the Board of Selectmen is seeking civic-minded residents to serve as community volunteers on various Boards and Committee.
 - 2.2. Chairman Hayes announced that the Memorial Day Commemoration will be held on Monday, May 27, 2013, with a parade commencing at 9:30 a.m. from the Community Church parking lot.
3. **Review/Approval of Minutes**
 - 3.1. Selectman O'Brien moved to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2013 meeting, as presented. Selectman Benavides seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.
4. **Consent Agenda**
 - 4.1. Selectman O'Brien moved to approve the previously signed items for the period April 22, 2013 through May 3, 2013, as listed. Selectman Benavides seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

<u>DOCUMENT DATE</u>	<u>DOCUMENT</u>	<u>MAP/LOT #</u>
02/28/13	Change of Status - Lemay	
03/31/13	Change of Status - Godin	
04/10/13	Abatement - Lien	223-408.200
04/15/13	Abatement Denial - Savery & Williams	203-201.000
04/15/13	Payroll Register	
04/16/13	Payroll Register	
04/18/13	Abatement - Schrupp & Deery	226-091.000
04/19/13	Lakes Region Golf Course	205-007.000
04/19/13	Abatement Denial - New England Forestry Foundation	various
04/22/13	Change of Status - Shea	
04/22/13	Payroll Register	
04/23/13	Accounts Payable Manifest	
04/23/13	Payroll Register(2)	
04/23/13	Release of Lien - Messier	203-130.000
04/24/13	Veteran's Tax Credit - Hill	252-053.021
04/24/13	Veteran's Tax Credit - Reynolds	229-022.000
04/24/13	Veteran's Tax Credit - Huntoon	227-200.000
04/24/13	Veteran's Tax Credit - Prescott	229-021.000
04/24/13	Sewer Abatement - Wood	203-002.000
04/29/13	Change of Status - Dahll	

5.0 Public Hearing

5.1 Waste Disposal Fee Schedule – Town Administrator Dunn provided an explanation for the proposed change in the Waste Disposal Fee Schedule. The proposed fee schedule is designed to mirror the fee schedule for household trash that the City of Laconia has in place, which is where the waste from the Town of Gilford ultimately goes. He further stated that the City of Laconia raised their cost for the disposal of household waste from \$30 per ton to \$60 per ton last year and as of July 1, 2013, will be raising the cost to \$90 per ton. The rationale in making this change is to move from a taxpayer subsidy to a user fee system.

Chairman Hayes then opened the Public Hearing for comment from the public. Mark Corry of Intervale Road began by stating that he does not think that anyone from the Gilford Recycling Center keeps track of how many visits a resident makes to the Recycling Center to dispose of yard waste.

As far as the matter of increasing the rate from \$30 to \$90 a ton to mirror Laconia, he stated that Laconia's increases have come in increments and for Gilford to increase the rate by \$60 is excessive. He also stated that having the trash hauler at Gilford Meadows Condominiums increase their fees would adversely affect the residents. Despite a decrease in the tax rate, residents would still be affected by paying more to their trash haulers.

Doug Lambert of Farmer Drive stated that this matter first came to his attention in an article in the Laconia Daily Sun. Mr. Lambert further stated that taking care of trash disposal is beyond the ability of Gilford residents and should be a function of Town government, much like public safety issues. He continued, stating that these increased fees would affect all residents of Gilford, whether they have curb-side pickup, use a dumpster or a private hauler.

Beyond this, Mr. Lambert thinks that this proposal is a means for the Town to raise our taxes, without admitting it. He does not think that taxes will be reduced, but rather, will increase and the Town of Gilford will just increase spending in another area. Mr. Lambert then cited other examples of where he thinks money could be saved within the Town budget. He further stated that using this scheme appears to be another way to be able to use \$100,000 of taxpayer monies to maintain a flat tax rate. He urged the Board of Selectmen to reconsider the approval of the proposed fee schedule.

Selectman Benavides disagreed with Mr. Lambert's use of the word "scheme" and finds it offensive. He denied that it has ever been the motive of the Board to eliminate \$100,000 in tipping fees, only to spend the money in another area of the budget. He did agree that the Town must be cautious to not add \$100,000 in costs in the 2013 budget, but continue the same level of funding in 2014.

Doug Lambert further expressed concern with changing the fee schedule, in that individuals and businesses may end up paying more in fees than is offset by a tax reduction. He also questioned why this change was being proposed in the middle of the year since the 2013 budget has already been approved. Town Administrator Dunn clarified that the only area of the budget that would be affected by this change is revenues, which would increase, resulting in a lower tax rate.

Extensive discussion ensued regarding trash disposal costs. Selectman Benavides pointed out that many of the fees listed in the proposed July 1, 2013 fee schedule are already in existence.

Bruce Wright of Cat Path stated that he agreed with much of what Doug Lambert had to say. Having curbside pickup, Mr. Wright stated that despite the fact that the amount of trash seems to be decreasing, costs continue to increase. He also agreed with Doug Lambert that trash disposal is an essential service provided by the Town of Gilford and he would prefer to pay for it through his property taxes because these can be deducted from federal taxes. He is also concerned that the increased fee to trash haulers would be greater than any tax rate savings.

Kevin Leandro of Gunstock Hill Road does not agree with subscriber-based trash disposal fees. He also does not agree with the Town paying the tipping fees for commercial businesses. Mr. Leandro

also cautioned considering a “pay as you throw” program, which would likely result in people putting unauthorized trash in private dumpsters or dumping trash on the side of the road. He also thinks that the Laconia Transfer Station is very poorly managed and thinks that savings could be found in other areas. Town Administrator Dunn pointed out that of the 30 towns in the Concord Regional Solid Waste Cooperative, the Laconia and Gilford unit compacts the most waste of any other unit, averaging 29 tons per load.

Kevin Leandro further stated that he thinks it is the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen to make decisions and not a recommendation from the Town Administrator. Chairman Hayes replied that the Board asked Town Administrator Dunn to pursue this fee schedule issue and conduct a public hearing on it. Skip Murphy expressed concern with tripling the cost of disposal for household waste. He further asked the Board if an analysis had been done on the costs associated with picking up discarded trash throughout the Town of Gilford. Chairman Hayes replied no.

Doug Lambert rebutted the suggestion made by Kevin Leandro to eliminate the subsidizing of tipping fees for commercial businesses. He stated that even though a commercial business may generate more trash, there are other ways where they make less of a demand on municipal services.

Chairman Hayes asked Town Administrator Dunn to look into how many visits it takes to equal a ton (under 1 ton only) of trash, on the spreadsheet he completed for the Board. He then asked DPW Director Sheldon Morgan if this fee schedule change would affect the dumpsters at the Glendale Docks. Director Morgan replied that it would most likely result in increased fees for trash disposal.

Mark Corry pointed out that the Town has several dumpsters, located throughout the Town, on municipal property. He recommended that the ultimate way to resolve this issue would be to submit it as a warrant article at the 2014 Town Meeting, so that the voters can decide.

Selectman Benavides moved to not implement the proposed Waste Disposal Fee Schedule, effective July 1, 2013, as proposed. Chairman Hayes seconded. Selectman Benavides then commented on how tonight’s discussion shows the importance of holding public hearings and having residents get involved in the process. As a result of input received tonight, Selectman Benavides thinks that this fee schedule would be a burden on the taxpayers and he will not support it.

Selectman O’Brien stated that he would still like to hold off on taking a vote, in light of all of the new information received tonight. He further stated that he would like to hear from Town Administrator Dunn and DPW Director Morgan. Director Morgan stated that the intent was to make a user fee that was more comprehensive and put the burden on the people who are generating the trash. This would also help control the costs for residents on fixed incomes. Right now, the Town is subsidizing the trash disposal and if the new fee schedule were to go into effect, that amount would decrease dramatically.

Town Administrator Dunn stated that this ends up being a philosophical decision, as to whether or not the taxpayers should subsidize waste disposal on a community-wide basis, or lean more towards user fees. The new fee schedule will reduce the 2014 tax rate by \$.14, if adopted as presented.

A vote on the motion indicated Selectman Benavides voting yes and Selectmen Hayes and O’Brien voting no. Motion failed.

6.0 Appointments

6.1 Steve Carrier – Fire-Rescue Department Update – Chief Carrier reported that Engine 4 has been back in service since March 25, 2013, even though there are still a few minor items that need to be taken care of, with assistance from the Department of Public Works. In addition, Chief Carrier is very pleased with the Vehicle Maintenance/Preventative Maintenance program that has been implemented with DPW.

The Department is currently in the process of flow testing all of their dry hydrants and Chief Carrier provided the Board with the locations of upcoming repair work.

The Department also continues to be very active with business, new construction and appliance inspections. Two major commercial projects are the Wal-Mart Plaza and Meadowbrook Musical Arts Center.

Firefighter Dion DeCarli has resurrected the Explorer program, which allows high school aged students to work and train with firefighters and EMT's. This program has proven to be a valuable resource for the recruitment and retention of future firefighters. Firefighter DeCarli was also successful in securing a grant to build props that will be burnt to demonstrate the effectiveness of residential sprinklers.

Gilford Fire-Rescue is currently preparing for a busy summer season with a number of events requiring fire and/or EMS coverage. In closing, Chief Carrier pointed out the value of mutual aid, where recent fire events in neighboring communities have been owned by Gilford residents.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the recent dry conditions. Selectman Benavides then inquired about the possibility of the Board touring the new facilities at Meadowbrook. Selectman O'Brien expressed appreciation with the new road recently constructed by Meadowbrook, allowing another point of access.

Brief discussion ensued regarding burning permits. Selectman O'Brien then asked Chief Carrier for his estimation of the operational life of Engine 4. Chief Carrier replied that he is hopeful for five more years. Chairman Hayes asked Chief Carrier for the status of daily or weekly vehicle inspections, to which Chief Carrier replied that Engine 2 and Ambulance 1 are checked daily by the duty shift (fluids). The rest of the vehicles are checked once a week.

The Board thanked Chief Carrier for his update.

7.0 Old Business

7.1 Group Term Life and AD&D Insurance; Short and Long Term Disability Insurance – Selectman Benavides asked Town Administrator Dunn if changing over the LGC's plan would be less expensive than the Boston Mutual plan, to which he replied that it would be less expensive. Selectman O'Brien moved to accept the Local Government Center Health Trust April 17, 2013 proposals for Short-term Disability Insurance, Long-Term Disability Insurance and Life/Accident Death and Dismemberment Insurance as presented. Selectman Benavides seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

8.0 New Business

8.1 Request for Waiver of Deadline for Elderly Exemption Filing – Selectman Benavides moved to accept the late application for an elderly tax exemption from Ellen Moynihan. Selectman O'Brien seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

8.2 Meadowbrook Street Lights – Selectman O'Brien moved to approve the request from Meadowbrook for the Town to assume the cost of the monthly streetlight bill for two new streetlights that they are being installed, one at the corner of Music Row and Kimball Road, and the other at the corner of Route 11-C and Kimball Road. Meadowbrook will be paying for the installation of the streetlights. Selectman Benavides seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

8.3 Road Toll (Gas Tax) Increase – HB 617 – Town Administrator Dunn stated that he has been asked by the Local Government Center if the Selectmen would take a position in support of the proposed 12 cent over 3 year road toll increase. Chairman Hayes stated that he is in favor of the proposal, but after brief discussion, the Board concurred to take no position on the matter.

9.0 Other Business – none.

10.0 Public Input – Kevin Leandro stated that he does not support HB617 for the road toll increase.

11.0 Selectmen's Issues – none.

12.0 Administrator's Report – Town Administrator Dunn stated that an RFP will be sent out shortly for financing of the \$158,000 communications system for the Police Department and Department of Public Works.

Town Administrator Dunn and Chairman Hayes met with DES officials last week regarding Liberty Hill. Chairman Hayes added that he thought it was a very productive meeting.

Town Administrator Dunn stated that the Town is currently not involved in any lawsuits.

The NHMA dues has been paid this week.

13.0 Next Meeting – Wednesday, May 22, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall

14.0 Adjournment – With no further business before the Board, the Board of Selectmen's May 8, 2013 meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gus Benavides
Clerk