

# BOARD OF SELECTMEN

## DEEP RIVER TOWN HALL

Regular Meeting, continuing as Joint Meeting with Board of Finance, February 23, 2010

ATTENDANCE: Selectmen Dick Smith, Art Thompson & Dave Oliveria.

Richard Daniels, Margo Hilfinger, Bob & Cathy Jenkins, Jonathan Kastner, Cathy Kehlenbach, Peter Lewis, Joyce Metz, Rich Strukus, Peter Terenzi. Members of the VNA Board of Directors and staff were also present during part of the evening.

1] This meeting was called to order at 6:46 pm by Dick Smith.

2] MINUTES: Regular Meeting – February 9, 2010

Motion by Art Thompson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dave Oliveria, to approve the minutes of the previous meeting with the following corrections:

The expiration of the term of Angus MacDonald as an alternate member of the Planning & Zoning Commission should be December 1, 2010.

The word “accrued” in the paragraph at the top of page 3 should be “occurred.”

APPROVED 3-0

3] Elementary School Lighting Upgrade

It was agreed that this item be discussed and acted upon during the joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen & Board of Finance, scheduled for 7:30, to prevent repetition.

4] Appointment to Design Advisory Board

Motion by Oliveria, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Thompson, to appoint Jeff Hostetler to the DAB, with a term to expire December 1, 2010. Hostetler was recommended by the Deep River Historical Society.

APPROVED 3-0

5] Executive Session

At 7:15 the Board convened an executive session to discuss a grievance filed by the Deep River Municipal Employees Organization regarding hiring at the VNA in violation of the contract with the town. No action was taken, and the executive session was adjourned at 7:35.

6] Visiting Nurses Association

The two boards heard a presentation regarding the VNA by Board of Directors President Daniels, followed by a question & answer session. In his report Daniels disputed the financial numbers provided by the town's VNA Study Committee, the Accounts Manager and the First Selectman. He based his argument on one year: FY 2008-09. The VNA Study Committee had studied four prior fiscal years, beginning with FY 2005-06.

In his presentation Daniels also stated that the Board of Finance had not increased the VNA budget for FY 2009-10, and that they were thus under-funded. Smith responded by reminding Daniels that there had been no increase for any department other than for contractual agreements and utilities for the FY 2009-10 budget year. Smith also advised Daniels that the VNA had received increases of a total of \$55,000 over the previous two fiscal years, in addition to salary and benefits increases. Daniels continued to assert that the agency was under-funded. Smith's response was that regardless of previous years' increases the VNA had over-expended its budgets during each of the past four completed fiscal years by more than \$50,000 each year.

Thompson stated that he felt that much of the information contained in Daniels' report was not relevant and was, in effect, a "smoke screen," and that the Board of Selectmen needed to concentrate more on the cost of contracting with a regional agency *versus* the cost of the present system.

Oliveria received answers to some questions he had posed at earlier meetings. However, due to the nature of the wide-ranging discussion at this meeting some of his questions remained unanswered.

A copy of Mr. Daniels' report is on file with the Town Clerk. Also on file at Town Hall is a binder containing all documents, correspondence and other relevant material gathered during the review of the operations of the VNA.

As the result of a disagreement by Mr. Daniels as to the true cost of the VNA for Fiscal Year 2008-09, the Board of Selectmen & Board of Finance agreed to hire the Town's auditors, McGladrey & Pullen, to prepare documents that reflect the true cost of the VNA for the past four completed fiscal years: 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 & 2008-09. The Board of Selectmen & Board of Finance plan to hold one or more public information meetings concerning the future of the agency and will need indisputable figures to present to townspeople, so that there cannot be any disagreement over the validity of the numbers.

Board of Finance member Nichole Coutant mentioned that the Memorial Fund operates under the umbrella of the town's Federal tax ID # tax number, and that therefore the town must have input into its operation. Mr. Daniels reply was to the effect that the Memorial Fund would no longer use the ID #.

### **Residents' Comments:**

Peter Terenzi, a member of VNA Study Committee, noted that the committee had recommended a forensic audit. It his belief is that the money is, in fact, the responsibility of the Town of Deep River, and that it should be under town's control because town officials could be liable for its proper administration.

Diane Recchia, a member of VNA Study Committee and a Registered Nurse, asked that the board request the number of uninsured and under-insured clients serviced by our VNA. Ms. Recchia also stated that she knew of a case in which a Deep River resident, a former client of the VNA, was being visited at his home and treated privately by a VNA staff nurse, and that he was paying the nurse directly.

Richard Strukus, a resident of Bushy Hill Road, complained that snowplows were being driven too fast, and that during a recent snow event a plow had broken a wood post in front of his house. Smith advised Mr. Strukus to present a bill and that the Town would replace the post. He will also discuss the speed issue with drivers.

3] Elementary School Lighting Upgrade (postponed for discussion at this time)

The town received an energy conservation grant of \$38,531. Added to that is a grant from C L & P of \$19,190.73. The total cost of the project will be \$64,174.96. The town's contribution would be \$6,453.23. As a contingency the board voted to appropriate up to \$7,500. Motion by Thompson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Oliveria.

APPROVED 3-0

7] Smith gave his report, which is attached to these minutes.

Motion by Thompson, second by Oliveria, to adjourn at 10:45 pm.

APPROVED 3-0.

Richard H. Smith  
First Selectman

RHS/jk