

HUDSON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the September 2, 1997 Meeting

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Chairman E. Lorraine Madison at 7:36 p.m.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** was led by Selectman Terry Stewart

3. **ATTENDANCE**

Selectmen: E. Lorraine Madison, Shawn N. Jasper and Terry Stewart. (Rhona Charbonneau and Ann Seabury were absent.)

Staff/Others: Paul D. Sharon, Town Administrator; Priscilla Boisvert, Executive Assistant; Steve Malizia, Finance Director; Coleman Kelly; Pierre Comtois, SUN

4. **SETTING BUDGET PARAMETERS**

Selectman Jasper said the Board needs to decide their goal for the tax rate: stable, increase or decrease. Then, with the help of the Finance Director and Assessor, they can determine how much money they have to spend in order to accomplish their goals. He suggested they attempt to keep the tax rate stable. They might end up in a situation where they bond, but they don't know that yet. Chairman Madison agreed with him, saying that would include the Town Garage. Paul said the other half of the equation, which the Board has no control over, is the assessed valuations.

Selectmen Jasper said Jim sent a memo to the Budget Committee, telling them what he felt the growth was going to do, so it gives them some idea. It was something like \$1 growth. They need to get Jim's best guess for the growth and then equate that into how much extra that gives them in the budget. The other number to look at is surplus, which is used to reduce the tax rate. If the lapses have been consistent, they can make educated judgements. Jim will have a good idea, based on building permits that have been pulled. If they look at the 5-year average on both, it will give them a good idea and they will be on pretty safe ground.

Chairman Madison asked for the surplus figure. Steve said \$1.8 million, plus change. Selectman Jasper said that's what it was last year and they kept \$900,000 in surplus. The Chairman warrant articles should be kept to a minimum, limited to what they absolutely need because they really want to push for the Town Garage.

Chairman Madison mentioned, for the record, that Selectman Charbonneau wanted everyone to cut their budgets by 2%. Paul said the problem with that is 75% of the budget is fixed, so you're trying to gouge out a 2% reduction from the remaining 25%, which is hard unless you eliminate programs. Selectman Jasper said they aren't in a mode where they need to be considering a reduction in Town services. People are satisfied with what is being provided and they should continue with that. Unfortunately, the Town is continuing to grow, and they have to keep up with that. Chairman Madison agreed with that. Selectman Stewart agreed they should try to keep the tax rate stable.

Chairman Madison reminded everyone of the department heads meeting tomorrow at 3:30. Selectman Jasper said the Board needs to convey their #1 consideration is a new Highway Garage. Chairman Madison wants all departments to work together. If necessary, to all talk in favor of the Highway Garage at Town Meeting. She'd like to see this become a Town project. When another department needs something, such as a new Library or something for the Fire Department, they can all support each other. The voters will not approve more than one capital project at a time. They might as well work together on the projects, one by one, until they get what they need. Paul said that is the first priority, but the department heads should be able to bring their needs to the Board.

Selectman Jasper said it is the responsibility of department heads to tell the Board what their needs are; it is the Board's job to make the political decision. The department heads would be remiss if they didn't; that would be irresponsible. But they should rank their requests, according to priority to give the Selectmen an understanding of what they feel the most important items are. Chairman Madison agreed, saying if the department heads need something, the Board needs to know what it is.

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Selectman Jasper said it is important for department heads to supply complete backup materials for new requests (personnel and equipment) and give a complete, in-depth analysis, including (but not limited to) what hasn't gotten done, what the impact will be to the tax payer, what service it will provide, etc. Chairman Madison said if there's something in there that the Budget Committee had asked for more backup on previously, that material should also be included.

She recapped by saying that everyone was in agreement they wanted the tax rate to remain stable. She did not agree with a 2% cut. Neither did Selectman Jasper who said cutting, just for the sake of cutting, was not the way to go. Back when he was on the Budget Committee, he is the one who suggested putting \$300,000 into roads every year. Now, years later, the roads are in the best shape they've ever been in.

Selectman Jasper the Board wants the capital items (personnel and new equipment) up front. Rather than pulling them out from the budget, like they did last year, the department heads should submit them in warrant article form. Chairman Madison agreed.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Waiving Ordinance Publishing Procedure for 097-02

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Stewart, to waive the Board's procedure to publish the full text of adopted ordinances for 097-02 (amending the Sewer Use Ordinance) carried unanimously.

The rationale for waiving the procedure was the high cost of publishing the full text, which would be close to \$400, and that the ordinance pertains only to industrial users, all of whom were given advance copies of the complete text prior to the public hearing. The public notice will indicate date of adoption and that anyone interested in 097-02 can read the file copy at Town Hall or the Library.

B. CIP Meeting

Selectman Stewart said CIP is meeting on Thursday night at 7:00 p.m., and the Public Works garage is on the agenda.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. by Selectman Stewart, seconded by Selectman Jasper, carried unanimously.

Recorded and Transcribed by Priscilla Boisvert

Executive Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

HUDSON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

E. Lorraine Madison, Chairman

Rhona Charbonneau

Shawn N. Jasper

Ann Seabury

Terry Stewart