

HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of the February 5, 2013 Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER - by Chairman Coutu the meeting of February 5, 2013 at 7:03 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - led by Town Planner John Cashell.
3. ATTENDANCE

Board of Selectmen: Roger Coutu, Ben Nadeau, Rick Maddox, Ted Luszey, Nancy Brucker

Staff/Others: Steve Malizia, Town Administrator; John Cashell, Town Planner; Chief Jason Lavoie; Patrick Colburn, Town Engineer; Kevin Burns, Road Agent; Jim Michaud, Assistant Assessor; Chief Shawn Murray; Kathy Carpentier, Kathy Carpentier; Lisa Nute, IT Director; Patti Barry, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Dave Yates, Recreation Director; Jeff Rider; Leo Bernard; Linda Kipnes; Bernie Manor

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Discussion relative to union contracts

Chairman Coutu said those of you who picked up an agenda was a discussion relative to the union contracts. We decided to put that off for one week for lack of a better explanation. Technical problems.

- B. Cable - replacement of defective video mixer

Chairman Coutu recognized Mike O'Keefe. For the purposes of clarification, I attended the last Cable Committee meeting. In order for you to have complete transparency as you all know, it has been difficult for me to make let alone Selectmen meetings and committee meetings. I have failed to attend the last couple of Cable Committee meetings except for the very last one and they were holding off because of this particular problem. The video mixer is a critical component of what we need and what we use on a weekly basis. I was enthused where we now have a full committee. We have a full committee of members who all want to have hands on, volunteer, and participate in making this one of the better municipal cable broadcasting networks in the Southern New Hampshire region. I believe they're all committed to doing that. I join with them. They know they have my full support. I listened to the detail that was provided to all of us relative to the video mixer. At this point in order for you to understand what is involved and what the cost is, I'll introduce first Mike O'Keefe and then Jim McIntosh. Mr. McIntosh's official title is Cable Facilitator and Mr. O'Keefe is the Chairman of the Cable Committee.

As Mike O'Keefe mentioned in the memo to the Board, this is a critical piece of equipment that's been in place since the Access Center opened. It's failed. We've had numerous attempts from the distributed and the manufacturer themselves to repair it and they've been unable to. They've basically told us that there's nothing more they can do. Given its age, it's essentially out of warranty. We have limited options but to replace the system. Once we knew that, we researched options for replacing it and there's really two companies that make products that do that. One is the same company that's there now. Because of the issues we had, we'd prefer not to go that route. The other option is this system made by NewTech. We know given the cost of the system that this is going to have to be put out to bid. Before we moved much further, we wanted to come before the Board to see if we could get your approval to move forward. We know the list price of the unit, so we could potentially if you were so inclined to make a motion to approve a not to exceed number, we could move forward in that direction.

Chairman Coutu asked Mr. O'Keefe to give the Board a little bit of the estimation of the technical nature of a switcher and why it's critical for a cable facility such as ours. Mr. O'Keefe said it is a video switcher but they kind of classify it more as a live production system. It's more than that. A switcher itself is what you use to transition between multiple cameras during a production. This thing also handles all the graphics; it handles playback of video that's stored on the system, handles audio. It does special effects. The system we're looking to put in as a replacement is actually also an upgrade as well because it's 4 years later from the model we have now. It's a significantly more advanced system. It will also let you do what they call "virtual sets". So if you have a green backdrop you can put virtual sets behind you. It comes with 24 of these sets and you can design your own. We're finding more and more people who come into the Access Center to do programs went to use that technology because quite frankly the gray and the black curtains behind with a few ferns behind chairs is kind of boring. It's really the centerpiece of the production. There's no way around not having it. We're working right now with a loaner system from the vendor. Even that system is not behaving 100 percent.

Chairman Coutu said you made a statement earlier that NewTek and one other company were the two companies that manufactured this. Is it possible that there are other companies and regardless of whether there are not if this Board were to allow you to go out to bid and then come back to the Board with your best bid price, what is your outreach? How do you advertise this bid process? Mike O'Keefe said assuming the Board's okay with specifying the model that we're recommending, we would obviously advertise. Every time we've done bidding related to cable, we also directly solicit bids from vendors that we know supply the equipment. There's at least 2 or 3 in New Hampshire that sell this. There's a couple in Massachusetts as well. So we would send any bids back to those vendors as well. Chairman Coutu said it's not necessarily the manufacturer that would be bidding, it would be a retailer and they can compete amongst themselves for the lowest price. I get it now.

Selectman Maddox asked if it made sense to buy a new one with all the whiz bangs since you spent \$30,000 on the one that's now less than 4 years old and it's failed. The more stuff you put onto to something, bells and whistles as I call them, the more chance of failure. Are you better off buying a middle of the road device that might last more than 4 years for \$30,000? Mike O'Keefe said the one we have now wasn't \$30,000. I don't know the specific price because it was part of the overall bid for everything that we installed at the studio at one time. I think it was closer to probably \$15,000 to \$20,000 at that time. This one actually isn't the top end. There was one above this. This is the middle unit. One of the reasons we specified this is the number of inputs it supports. It supports 8 inputs. The next model down is 4 and that would be too restrictive. I really don't think the fact that it's more sophisticated is more likely to fail. They actually build in more fail safe mechanisms in higher end systems. This has some hardware fail safes in terms of power supplies and things like that.

Chairman Coutu asked if Mr. O'Keefe was saying this system is more compatible with our network the way we have it set up internally. What you would require for a spec. would be more compatible than a higher end or other models? Mr. O'Keefe said it was definitely more in line with our environment. The higher end system is designed more for professional television stations. This one would be more appropriate for an access center.

Selectman Maddox had a follow up question. I know you need to get this. Is 4 years the life span of a piece of equipment like this? Mr. O'Keefe said it shouldn't be. I think essentially we got for lack of a better word "a lemon" in this case. Jim McIntosh said this wasn't normal. Mr. O'Keefe said they've been frustrated with the process of trying to get it fixed which ultimately it wasn't able to be done which is why we steered away from this previous manufacturer. Even dealing directly with the manufacturer we weren't getting satisfaction.

Mike O'Keefe said one of the things we took a look coincidentally when we were looking at purchasing this system, the manufacturer came out with a promotion this month. They're giving a \$7,000 rebate for people who want to upgrade from an existing system. Not to confuse the matters here but as I mentioned in my Memo, we have a very basic version of this system that we use in the field. I think you've all seen it at the Deliberative Sessions. That's the system we use when we're doing productions out in the field. That was purchased way before the Access Center even opened. I don't remember the year but it was a couple of years before we even had the Access Center. So we've had that for many years. We could potentially take advantage of this trade in program and trade in that old system for a new system to replace that and still come in under the list price of new 855. Essentially we'd be getting 2 new systems for about the price of 1 if we take advantage of that rebate. If we don't do that, we just buy the new one for the studio at essentially the same cost.

Chairman Coutu asked are you saying that if I were to entertain a motion for the purchase of a NewTek Tricaster not to exceed \$30,000, there's a potential we could get 2 of them for that amount of money. I think it's a no brainer. Mr. O'Keefe said yes. Jim McIntosh said one would be the size that we're going to be using at the Access Center which is more powerful is a smaller. The other one would be a portable unit. Chairman Coutu said we'd replace the one at the Access Center. Mr. McIntosh said we'd replace the one at the Access Center and we'd be upgrading the one that we use for portable use for standard analog to high def. Chairman Coutu said it was a no brainer. If you can get 2 for \$30,000, that's what we should shoot for.

Just to be clear, Mike O'Keefe said one is the very low end model and one is...there's not two of the same. Chairman Coutu said he knew that. The low end model is to replace what we use at the Community Center. The other model is the like the NewTek system that you wanted to go out to bid with originally to replace the system we have that's not functioning at the facility. If we build a new facility, we'll transfer with all the rest of the equipment.

Selectman Luszey asked if they needed a new portable unit. What you're really saying is you only need \$15,000 and not \$30,000. Mr. O'Keefe said it didn't work that way. The system we're replacing list price is \$30,000. If we trade in this portable system, we get a \$7,000 credit which essentially will pay for a new upgraded portable system. Selectmen Luszey asked if the value was dependent on buying the new system. Mike said it wasn't but if we trade it in, then we have no system for portable use. Selectman Luszey said personally, I'm confused. It sounds like we're talking apples and oranges. If the one that's broken you need to replace, that's X number of dollars. Then you have one that you use in the field. You're saying that's Y number of dollars. It sounds like you can trade that one in for a

very lucrative deal and almost be a 1 to 1 swap which is independent of what you're spending on to replace the broken unit. So I'm asking if you were to trade that mobile unit in, what about the unit that's broken. Is there any residual value on that you're going to get? Mike said no because that's a different company. They're not offering any...this is all from the same...Jim McIntosh said we want to see about trading is actually from NewTek Tricaster also. It's just an older version. The money that they're offering is a customer loyalty incentive award like if you had General Motor points or something, you could put it towards a car. Well this is what this is. They give us an opportunity to trade up in value.

Selectman Luszey said he didn't have a question but I do have a comment. Mike made a statement that if we authorized the purchase of this, he's confident he has money in his budget for other stuff. This week there's been a number of memos, and I've copied you on it about the AC for the proposed new senior center. That one line item right now I have a memo that says it could be up to \$20,000 that's outside of the warrant article. We need to address that. My thinking would be is we would have to look at using some of the equipment line item monies from cable to support some of these unexpended...Chairman Coutu said all of the excess as I understand it, and the Town Administrator and Mr. O'Keefe can correct me if I'm incorrect, all of the monies that are surplus in cable are going to be used for the construction of the facility this year. Selectman Luszey said that's been accounted to...Chairman Coutu said that's make sure I'm saying the right thing. That's what the plan was. Selectman Luszey said the answer to that is yes. At Saturday's Deliberative Session, that has been accounted for based on all projections and the Finance Director can correct me if I'm wrong but all of what we believe will be available is in the warrant article. The AC costs that's coming up right now is above and beyond of what we have available with any excess funds that might be available in the cable center and the warrant article.

Selectman Luszey as you said, Chairman Coutu said you CC'd me on those copies. I was so upset when I read those - very, very upset. I think it's beyond reason to think as Mr. O'Keefe I think tried to elaborate in one of his replies, and his reply I think his was the last one in the series that the unit that we paid much less than \$20,000 for installed - \$7,000, or \$8,000, or \$9,000 is going to cost us \$20,000 to move. It doesn't make sense.

Selectman Luszey said, "Mr. Chairman, I'm with you." Chairman Coutu said he knows that is a number that was thrown out. Selectman Luszey said those are the numbers that are coming back from the architect. If we don't act planfully, we could be sitting here saying where do we get the money to put an AC unit in there. That's the only thing I'm saying.

In terms of funds to accomplish that, Mike O'Keefe thought they'd be available. Right now we have \$65,000 in the line item for small equipment. If this goes through, it's \$30,000 out of that. So we have \$35,000 there. We also have an extra \$20,000 which was related to refitting the building if we were to leave but that's not going to happen in this year's budget so that will be available. In theory all this work will happen in the 2014 budget. Chairman Coutu said right. In the 2014 budget, did we not put in a line item for transition? Mike said yes. Chairman Coutu thought that was a considerable amount of money I thought to transition everything - all the equipment and everything over to the other building. Selectman Luszey stated what Mike just said is there's money in the 2013 budget for transition. Chairman Coutu said he didn't know. I don't know what Mrs. Carpentier how she's planning the surplus out of the 2013 budget based on what numbers I don't know. Did you sit down with Mr. O'Keefe and come up with an estimate of what the surplus would be. Kathy Carpentier said they just used what was budgeted in the line item that was budgeted. I believe its \$61,000 that is intended to go in. If there's anything above that that would be...Chairman Coutu said Mr. O'Keefe what you're saying is there will be monies above that. That will make me feel good and it would certainly make Selectman Luszey feel good based on the reading I had today.

Mike O'Keefe said there will be more money but you have to keep in mind that we probably do not want to put that into the capital reserve because we've already done the final numbers for what's coming out. We'd have to actually purchase the unit this year before the end of the fiscal year. Chairman Coutu said they could work all that out in June which is which is when we usually do those things. I'm sure Selectman Luszey will have his finger on that pulse because his pulse is nearly dead like mine after today's numeric fiasco that came across via e-mails. That's not to cast shadows on anybody. It's just that it caught me by surprise as I'm sure it caught you.

Motion by Selectman Luszey, seconded by Selectman Nadeau, to approve the purchase of a NewTek Tricaster (video switcher replacement) and an upgrade to the mobile unit not to exceed \$30,000 from Account 5045-403.

Selectman Maddox asked for this to be in writing. I'm getting this feeling like I'm buying a used car here. You came in with one thing and now you're trying to add the second one in but we're going to use the trade in from over here. Can you put something in writing so all this we have something? I'm going to vote for this Mr. Chairman because I think it makes sense. There's a lot of moving parts to this. Chairman Coutu thought he qualified by saying that he believed there was a \$7,000 upgrade. Selectman Maddox asked what happens if it's \$31,000 to get them both. Chairman Coutu said they voted for \$30,000. We have it in writing. We're committing no more than. Mr. O'Keefe said he was confident there's not an issue there. We want to get this moving as soon as possible. If the Board

approves it, I'm going to put together a bid spec. and hopefully even get it in the paper this week. That would have the specifics of what you're...Chairman Coutu asked if it was also going to include the other unit. That's what Selectman Maddox is...Mike said yes. It will be this, this and this with the trade in.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0.

C. Combining Energy Committee and Recycling Committee

Chairman Coutu indicated that they do have the Chairman of both the committees Linda Kipnes as well as Leo Bernard. We appreciate you being here to help provide us information in making a decision relative to the potential of compromising.

Selectman Maddox indicated that they are two worthwhile and useful groups but your numbers dwindle. We thought that if you were to combine you could take probably similar wants to keep our environment less recyclables, don't waste energy, and put them into one group rather than trying to always find people to fit into both groups. Mr. Chairman I thought it was something we should at least talk to the two committees about utilizing one to take care of our energy/recycling needs.

Chairman Coutu said he would start with Linda. You've heard the discussion before and I know you've expressed some opinions. We want you to be honest with us forth right. We want your gut feeling, your expertise in what you do in energy and whether you feel that there is some viability to combining both. It would make it easier in terms of having a quorum at meetings then in your opinion it's not worth the effort because so I open the floor to you.

Linda Kipnes stated when it first came up a few years ago I was pretty opposed to it. We have had trouble getting members on the Energy Committee and we've had a few members who have signed up and have been appointed and then never showed up. I'm really torn. I don't want to see the Energy Committee be eaten up because the Recycling Committee is bigger and more active. I don't want to lose the focus on energy and we do have 2 new members who were appointed just recently. I don't have a feel for how active they can be or will be.

Chairman Coutu asked what their total membership potential. Ms. Kipnes said 5. Chairman Coutu asked how many they have right now with the three new people. Ms. Kipnes said 3. There are members who are prior members who are not official members but who attend meetings and do projects for the committee. Chairman Coutu asked what are the official members so if they're going to be there we can have...Ms. Kipnes recommended that they come and be reappointed but they didn't. I can't do any more than that. I'm really torn. I'd like to see the Energy Committee be active and do more and maybe it is the way to go is to join with recycling.

Chairman Coutu asked Leo Bernard the same question. Mr. Bernard indicated that Recycling has talked about this. Like Linda said, she's talked with her group and I've talked with our group. We talked about it before. We agreed with Linda at the time. It was best to keep the two groups separate. It's like she was saying, we had a hard time filing our group too. We just finally got a full Board almost. I'm still having problems with some of the members. There's one member who just started school and says she can't attend until after March. Energy is a good source. We agreed if we do get combined that want to keep everything going - Recycling and Energy. We don't want it to die. We know how much Linda has been into this. We want to keep her going. We're willing to help out in any way we can to help her group go.

Chairman Coutu thought from the Board's perspective when Selectman Maddox brought this up, I think that was the vision. There was some reluctance on both of your parts at that time. We just wanted to get a better feel.

Selectman Nadeau's been involved with the Recycling Committee for quite a few years now. There is no way that we've talked about in the past that these two committees - they both go two separate ways. Conserving energy and recycling - yes it would be nice to put them both on the same committee but the Energy Committee does things with the heating and stuff like and the recycling. Totally two separate committees. Two separate types of people on these committees. Just to combine them just to say that we're combining them, I don't think is a good idea. I think the Energy Committee does great by themselves right now. They've saved us money. I think the Recycling Committee is doing fine themselves separately. Yes it would be nice to combine them but it's too separate entities. I just don't think it would work. I think it would be counterproductive at some of these meetings if you got all these people there in doing this. I think it's not broken, don't fix it. We have trouble getting the member yes but I just don't think it's something that will work together as much as we are sitting here hoping that we're going to make it work together. Maybe water and sewer might work together, maybe it might not. Because the volunteers and it's just not there right now doesn't mean that we have to combine these two committees.

Chairman Coutu said he hasn't served on either committee. You served for a length of time on one of them anyway. Selectman Nadeau said both. Chairman Coutu said he tried to keep a pulse on the government the best avenue I

have is watching cable television on Saturday mornings because they show one meeting after another of all the committees. I happened to watch both committees every single time they have a meeting. I agree with you that there's a passion within the Energy Committee to do the kinds of things that they've done like looking at our electrical systems within all of the municipal buildings and recommending certain changes that we approved to be able to save energies and have the out cost that pays itself back and then we start saving money. In terms of the Recycling Committee, the past 3 years have been the most exciting I've seen for recycling. You're out there. You're at every event. You're working with the school kids. You have these banners out. Leo I'm proud of you. You've done an outstanding job in trying to get the numbers up. You have a passion and so do the people on that Committee. You have Cheryl Freed that's writing columns in the paper every week. So I agree with you Selectman Nadeau in that there's a separate and distinct passion for each of those tasks. I, too, would be somewhat reluctant to want to combine the two. Let's at least see how it goes for another year and see if we can recruit people. Again, I'm just one voting member. I'll entertain any other questions or comments anybody on the Board has. At any time you want to interject, you may.

Linda Kipnes was thinking one thing that we do have trouble doing is outreach kind of events. There are so few of us on the Energy Committee. Maybe we could work with the Recycling Committee because they often have tables at events and maybe we could share some of that kind of outreach. We just don't have the people...Chairman Coutu said that's something you guys can work out together. Linda said not necessarily joining together but doing those things.

Selectman Maddox would ask that the two boards have a joint meeting and run this by them. I think if you have an Energy Committee that you say don't fix it because it's not broke well if you don't have a quorum, it's broke. Selectman Nadeau said we just lowered the board to 3 members and an alternate and then they have a quorum. Selectman Maddox said when 2 of those leave, you're going to make it a quorum of 1. I think Mr. Chairman, again, I think that why don't they just have a joint meeting and let them talk amongst themselves - have one meeting together and see if they can work it out. If not, they're separate at this point. They're not going to be combined until we hear back from them. We have a lot to do tonight. I think that's the...Chairman Coutu thought that was a fair compromise. We can move with a consensus. Is there a consensus? Let's let them have a joint meeting. Let them put their head together and see how you best feel about it and then one or both of you come back and let us know when you want to be put on the agenda and we'll entertain it one more time. Is that fair? Linda Kipnes said that was fine with her. The Board of Selectmen said yes.

D. Combining Sewer Utility Committee and Water Utility Committee

Chairman Coutu indicated that as you can see, there's a Memo from the Attorney basically saying just with the alteration of the Town Code, we could do that. For Sewer and Water Utility we have Bernie Manor from Sewer Utility Committee and Jeff Rider from the Water Utility Committee. We've talked about combining these two committees. Bernie you've never been a shy person, why don't you lead the charge and tell us why this is a good idea or not such a good idea.

Bernie Manor said we have the same problem. We have a problem of getting people to come and volunteer beyond the committee. Right now, we're basically the same people on both committees. I think we have one on Sewer and one on Water that are different. The real question became whether this is the right thing to do for the Town. Is it a legal thing or something that we could do? I also understand that there's some change flow what you do in Town Hall and might happen there might also help combine the two together. Right now is a good time to probably talk about it.

In terms of the flow at Town Hall, Chairman Coutu asked if Mr. Manor was talking about collections. Mr. Manor indicated that if you were to combine the offices of Sewer and Water together, you could have one covering for the other in Sewer and Water. I don't know if that's part of your workflow analysis or not but that's a possibility. Chairman Coutu said that was one of pet peeves he'd like to see corrected. There's a lot of things I'd like to see done. See where the Board goes. You're not adverse to it right now or are you in favor of it? Bernie Manor said they were meeting separately and the same people are separably meetings at two different times, we're not. Chairman Coutu asked if they meet at 5:30 right. Mr. Manor indicated that they meet at 5 p.m. Both committees meet but different nights and different weeks. We could combine the meetings and meet at 5 p.m. Instead of meeting and doing an hour, we'd do an hour and a half and get it all done. It's about what it takes us to have a meeting.

Jeff Rider said he pretty much agreed with what Bernie said. At one time there were 4 out of the 5 positions people were on both committees. Right now we both have one vacancy and 1 person who is not on the other committee. To me it certainly makes sense to be able to combine those. As far as working within the Town staff, there's some interaction there naturally anyhow because all of the sewer billing is based on the water billing. Again if you're looking at some type of consolidation or things on your staff, that might be something to take a look at. I know right the Town Engineer attends both meetings. I'm sure he we would not necessarily be opposed to having only one night meeting.

Chairman Coutu asked Mr. Rider if he's had any opportunity to have this kind of exchange with members of your Committees respectively. Mr. Rider said they've talked about it informally - particularly with 3 members that are on the same committees. I didn't hear any negative discussions. I know there was one member on the Water Utility that is not on the Sewer Committee. I suggested to him that since we had an opening he might want to apply but he never took that opportunity. If you do combine the committees, I'm not sure what would happen with those individuals who aren't already on the two of them.

Chairman Coutu said they'd have to look at the membership based on water user versus sewer user or we would change the Town Code accordingly. That would require a little more research. Mr. Rider believed right now both committees allow 2 non users. I am one of them and I think Bernie is the other one. That's already taken care of. Chairman Coutu said if we combine them, we're going to have to look at that makeup. We may have 2 sewer utility users that are not water users and vice versa. Mr. Rider said they do have one on the Water Utility who is not a sewer user.

Chairman Coutu said if they were to direct the Town Administrator to look into the Town Code as suggested by Attorney Buckley and come up with some sort of rewrite on the Code relative to a new Water/Sewer Utility Committee, you'd have no objection to that? Mr. Rider said none at all. Chairman Coutu didn't think they were in a position to move now without having done more research on the Town Code, the requirements for membership, who should be on what, or however we work it out, how many members we're going to have in total. You have 5 voting members or both of you - you both have allotment for 2 alternates. Mr. Rider and Mr. Manor both said one alternate. Chairman Coutu asked Mr. Malizia how long a period of time would it take to research this to see what part of the Code needs to be changed. Mr. Malizia indicated that the Attorney has told you what part of the Code. Do you want a proposal? Do you want him to rewrite it? That's what he offered to do here. Chairman Coutu asked the Board if they wanted the Attorney to rewrite it. I'll entertain a motion.

Selectman Maddox said if it's the same dedicated people on both meeting on two different nights one to talk about sewer and one to talk about water, combining them together seems to make sense. You have the same people; you'll have one committee reporting. It seems to make a lot more synergies as far as they don't have to come in on Tuesday this week and say we're talking about sewer and then two weeks later we're talking about water. They can talk about both, the billing issues, those types of avenues that we can do a better job of and not wasting 2 nights down when we can do a better job. This seems like...Chairman Coutu said he didn't disagree. I just think we can't move until we have the co-chairs. Selectman Maddox thought we need to have what we need to do as far as the Code. I think we need to decide whether we make it...Chairman Coutu stated the Town Attorney has offered to assist in rewriting the Code.

Motion by Selectman Maddox, seconded by Selectman Brucker, to authorize the Town Administrator to ask our attorney to review Code 270-2 of the Hudson Town Code relative to combining Sewer and Water Utility Committees.

Selectman Luszey asked if this motion was to move forward or is this motion just to send the Town Attorney off to go fetch a rock? Are we making the decision to combine this and start the wheels in motion to do it or are we just asking them to go and...Chairman Coutu said why don't we treat that as a second motion. I'm all for combining them at this point. Let's treat it as a second motion. First, let's authorize telling the Attorney to do something. Selectman Luszey said wouldn't it be more appropriate Mr. Chairman to make a motion to do something and then put the wheels in motion to make it happen versus...Chairman Coutu asked if they were willing to withdraw your motion? Selectman Maddox said no. It's just a procedural thing. We're going to do it whether it's first or second. We're making ourselves nuts here.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Selectman Luszey, seconded by Selectman Maddox, to authorize the consolidation of the Water and Sewer Utility Committees once we have an amendment to Code 270-2 from our Attorney.

Steve Malizia indicated that they needed to hold a public hearing before you do that. You're changing Town Code. You need to have a public hearing. So you may authorize or think that this is a good idea and it is, but you need to have a hearing. Selectman Luszey agreed with that but we need the motion to do it. Once all this paperwork is done...Mr. Malizia said that's the problem. You can have a motion to do it; just you can't do it until you have the hearing. Selectman Maddox said they'd amend that motion contingent upon after the public hearing.

Motion by Selectman Luszey, seconded by Selectman Maddox, to authorize the consolidation of the Water and Sewer Utility Committees once we have an amendment to Code 270-2 from our Attorney contingent upon after the public hearing, carried 5-0.

Chairman Coutu stated that this might work out great for both of you and certainly the Town Engineer. It will free him up some time. Selectman Luszey thought the Green Team and Energy Committee will be delighted that we'll be conserving fuel, time and energy.

E. Workflow Analysis

Chairman Coutu recognized Selectman Ted Luszey.

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Selectman Luszey indicated that what brought us to this is if you recall back a number of months ago, I asked if I could take a look at doing an analysis of the Admin. and custodial level of support functions and work flow within the town government. The department heads after a meeting with them, came back to this Board and requested that they have an outside professional facilitator work with them in looking at the work flow analysis. The Town Administrator held a department meeting on October 17th with a professional facilitator. The output of that was a workflow improvements document that I believe you all have with no work flow analysis performed. I use that language specifically because the request was for a workflow analysis.

In November, Selectman Luszey said the Board of Selectmen was then informed that our Code Enforcement Officer who also acts as our Hudson Building Inspector was going to be going out on a short term medical leave which lead to another discussion by me to propose the combining of all inspectional services. We asked the Fire Chief to go off and look at what it would take to do that. He came back to us, he presented a proposal which was rejected by this Board and was asked to go fetch some more information as to what it would take to combine the inspectional services.

After that meeting, Selectman Luszey met with the department heads again and requested to have an open dialog relative to my organizational changes document that I've been working on over a number of months. At the direction of the Chairman of this Board to share my thoughts, my thinking with the department heads. The result of that meeting was if it's not broken don't fix it which brings us to tonight. Each of you have not only my proposals that I presented and shared with the department heads, but you also have the Town Administrator's workshop output. With that, I'll now turn the floor over to Mr. Malizia.

Steve Malizia said what you said is true. The department heads met several times. I believe you were also in attendance at some of those earlier meetings. To that affect, the department heads focused on some areas of efficiency on what we perceived to be some efficiency or some recommendations. The document was prepared and submitted to the Board I believe in October somewhere in the budget process and as you can see from the document, there are 3 highlighted recommendations. When I say highlighted recommendations based on the meeting that we collectively had with a facilitator. I can read it to you or you can read it but in a nutshell what we looked at was some efficiencies in the water and sewer utility function whereby we would combine those operations, allow for cross training, and backup purposes and a one stop hopefully shopping for folks who utilize those utilities. We also recommended that it would be under the Finance Department. The Finance Department right now has water and the Town Clerk has sewer. I believe the reason the Town Clerk has sewer is because of the collection part. In other words, you have to put a lien on sewer. It's a lot easier to shut off water than it is sewer. The conversation was held and that was a recommendation. It should be fairly minimum to do something like that. The question always is in this building is where do you put people? Space - it's always a problem.

Mr. Malizia said the group further looked at Engineering and moving Engineering personnel back up to the Community Development office. As you're well aware, this building has an Engineering office downstairs and a Community Development office upstairs. Many years ago, they were combined upstairs. The community or the folks that use those functions basically had one stop, one place to go. When this group looked at the operation, they thought that was a prudent move to relocate Engineering back up to Community Development which allows for more cross training of the personnel up there and was an attempt at the time to centralize permitting and the use functions - the user community - the folks that generally use those services. That was the recommendation. As part of that whole process, the group also looked at the secretary, the front counter support person. For several months, we've been using temporary labor personnel and it was this groups recommendation that we back fill that with a secretary, which is what we've had before up at the counter to provide and to give backup support, and still provide counter service and hopefully efficient customer service to the folks that walk in and that telephone in. That in a nutshell is where we were when we did this work in October. Obviously there are other ideas and other things that have popped up - chiefly being the inspection, discussion that Selectman Luszey had but at the time, that was not something that we discussed. Again, our recommendation which you've had since October is basically those 3 things with some options. Again, space is an issue. You don't have a really great layout here. Things just sort of evolve. These are recommendations but again there's a lot of conversation that needs to go on if we're going to start moving functions around. Where do they go? Where are they most efficient?

If you're looking at water and sewer customers for example, Mr. Malizia stated most of the folks that come in tend to be maybe the older part of the population. They seem to like to come in to pay their bills. They try to make it easier on people not having to go through a maze to find somebody. Where do you put them upstairs? There's not really a lot of empty space up there without reconfiguring something. We looked at some options of how you might move people, things around. One of the thoughts, one of the conversations - I'm not saying it's the recommendation but one of the conversations was move Administration downstairs. Move those folks upstairs or keep those folks all upstairs. Administration is our office area. Maybe people don't need to come see us as much as they come to see these folks. Should we move Engineering? We might have more space to free up IT which is also part of a conversation that we've heard that they have some space needs. They're a back room function more or less. They don't have a lot of public coming in. They could assume some space over here. When we have those conversations that was the mindset we had. It's not the end all be all for the entire organization. It's where we were at that time. Hence you've had that document now for 3 or 4 months. Again, there might have been some things that have changed or some conversations that have arisen which might not make all this even feasible. If for example you were to combine inspection and if you were to locate it in the Community Development area, you're not going to put Engineering in there with them. Again, there's been other things introduced that I'm assuming you are still talking about or still going to have conversation about and might potentially be getting more information about from the Fire Department, for example, that could change some of this. Again, this was that snapshot at that time. That's where we were at.

Chairman, Selectman Luszey said he didn't have anything to say tonight. I have said about all I'm going to say about this. You have my document in its entirety. I hope all the spelling errors are out of it. I don't have an administrative staff at home to go through and make sure I have all my spelling. You've seen my purpose, my goals, my thinking. You've seen the work I've done on the analysis, on the work flow for zoning and building inspectors. You've seen the Fire Chief's proposal on combining inspectional services. This Board's duty is to lead. We've had discussions in the last few weeks about the role of the Administrator and our roles and what they are. I have sat here and listened to this Board to say that department heads report directly to us. If that is a fact as it has been stated to me a couple of times now, we owe it to them to give them direction and leadership on where we want to take this Town and the organization. I've been trying to do that. I now leave it up to you to either continue the conversation or to call it.

Chairman Coutu asked if anyone wanted to speak first about an opinion about the overall proposal, or any parts of it that we think we should entertain, or do we abandon it. If there's a true feeling amongst this Board as there has been stated to me by several department heads that isn't broke so why are we fixing it. Some of you have privately said that to me, then let's have that discussion and let's either move on and put this behind us or let's take those parts of this plan that we can like and we can adopt, and start moving in some direction. That's where I want to go at this time. I don't want to drop the discussion right now unless you all say it ain't broke let's not fix it. Selectman Luszey had said a long time ago at that point he would be done with it.

Selectman Maddox thought there are some things that we should look at but I also think, and I've said it for a decade now, government is glacial. Some of that is by design. Some of that is by whatever. It takes us a while to get from point A to point B. We need to take a look at this. I think there's some items on here that makes sense. I think that combining the inspectors into the Fire Department makes sense. I think that moving some things around, I think the question would be of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector. If they're already collecting the sewer bills, could she also do the water bills so there'd be one counter to go to drop off all payments so you wouldn't have people going downstairs to the Water Department? I think it takes us a while to get to an answer. I think that Selectman Luszey is a drive the thing home kind of guy and sometimes in government it just doesn't go that fast. You've got several different ideas on here that seem to kind of not make sense but again, I think we should have a discussion Mr. Chairman. I do not for myself anyway do not want to simply abandon this. I think there are parts of this that we could utilize to give better customer service, better information transfer if you would, and possibly some savings. Chairman Coutu said he certainly didn't disagree with you.

Selectman Brucker said she knows you've put a lot of work into this Ted and I certainly respect your work and your desire to improve things. I do see that combining the sewer and water makes sense with the Finance Department. I'm a little confused on the Engineering Department. The Engineer always attends the Water. Chairman Coutu indicated that Pat was the Engineer. Selectman Brucker said he always attends Water and Sewer. What daily business he has with those, I'm not sure. Chairman Coutu said minimal. Selectman Brucker continued by saying where will they be exactly. Also I think I like - initially I wasn't sure about all the inspectors being put together. I think that could make sense. I do think that it's important to keep our administrative personnel there - the secretaries and receptionist where they need to be. Just today I saw two commercials that talked about the premium that people place on having a person to talk to on the other end of the phone or one credit card touting concierge service because you get a person to handle things for you. I think we value that. I don't want to eliminate those people or have everything on a computer. I guess that's where I am. I think it's important to listen to the department heads on what they feel is important and will make things operate in a smooth manner. I think they've had some good suggestions too.

Selectman Nadeau thought this plan I can wrap myself into it about 50 percent of it. Moving certain things over makes sense, not replacing some employees makes sense. I think there's a way that we can make our services a little bit more easier to work with by combining the inspectional services exactly how we do it and how fast we move along. It doesn't have to be done today but it's something that I don't want to drop either. I think we have to figure out how things are going to go together and what we're going to need for secretarial support, what we're going to need for support for our inspectors, what we're going to need if there's IT things that - I'll us mapping the services for the inspectors so that they're not driving from Robinson Road to Lowell Road to the middle of town 6 times in one day. I think that's something that we need to look into. I think there's a lot of services that we can combine. A lot of times when people come in, the elderly people - I've seen this - come in to pay their sewer bill they go into the Sewer office and pay their sewer bill and hand the lady up there a check to go to the Water Department, or they can drop it in the box right in the hallway. I think there are things that we can make more efficient in the Community Development office. I think it's going to take time. The real answer is knock down the fire station, build a new one where Town Hall is, and make this a lot better and bigger but we don't have the money or the space at the moment to do either one of those. Again, that's something that we really need to look at in the future of where we want to go and what we need for space. When we built this downstairs, this was going to be the creation and fix all of our space needs in Town Hall. That's not the case.

Selectman Nadeau stated that we have more meetings that take place in this building. We have more things that are happening than we had 20 years ago when I first got involved. So there's things that need to be changed. I think that this plan is a good plan. Again like Selectman Maddox said, things are glacial and they do take time. I'd like to move forward with sections of this and I just can't jump into this whole plan as it stands. I think it's something that we need to start seriously working at and pecking away at in how we're going to move things around and how we're going to hire. That's where I stand on this.

At Chairman Coutu's request, Selectman Luszey I had asked you to come and meet with me last Friday. You came to my store and we spent a considerable amount of time going over this entire plan, how you felt personally about where you thought this was going to go. I saw your frustration. You didn't think it was going to go anywhere. We joked about tearing it one more time. I told you to let's be patient. Let's see where people want to go.

Chairman Coutu indicated that Selectman Nadeau called me. You didn't vent. You talked to me based on what I heard tonight, you basically told me the same thing you just said tonight. We got into a little more detail but you certainly haven't contradicted anything that you've said to me earlier about how you felt about the plan. I believe if I'm not mistaken both of you had a discussion as well. Selectman Brucker you called me also. You expressed the same things that you said tonight. You neither deviated from this evening from what you said and of course I was listening attentively to both of you to see if there was going to be any deviation from any remarks that you've made to me personally. You both said that there were things in this plan that you liked which gave me hope for Ted because I don't want Ted to think that we're ready to abandon all of this.

First and foremost, Chairman Coutu appreciates your integrity both of you. Selectman Maddox you and I have not discussed this. We discussed everything else. I don't know why we never got to this. I appreciate your honest expressions and the fact that you're willing and I certainly am willing to move. We need to do this one step at a time but government doesn't have to be as glacial as it always is. It will continue to be glacial if we don't move. We need to start moving. I'm not saying tonight but I think we need to start giving our Town Administrator direction.

First and foremost in Chairman Coutu's mind, first and foremost in my mind is that we have department heads that we come to rely on that I certainly have worked with and observed for the past 5 years. In the past 5 years, that's not to say that I haven't been thinking forward, I think about the grand scheme of things. I was thinking like Selectman Nadeau. We certainly need an entirely different administrative office building than what we have for town government. We certainly need a new fire station but everybody is going to picking away at the taxpayers. There are two prawns in my side about this building and how things operate. They're minor but for yet for me they mean so much. I can't understand why we send senior citizens downstairs to pay their water bill. It doesn't make sense to me. We have people collecting money upstairs and it should all be consolidated. I'm a strong advocate of that. This has taken way too long. The second thing, and this is not a personal assault on the Town Planner or the Zoning Administrator, I don't want them to feel that. When I hear from Selectmen directly and it's happened to me and when taxpayers are calling me saying I'm trying to call down there and all I get is full mailbox. I can't leave a message. You get a message from one person that says don't leave a message on my phone call my secretary. You call the secretary and she says leave a message and her box is full. That certainly doesn't give a personal touch to our government. As a matter of fact, if a potential developer is calling, I'd want to go to another town that somebody can answer a phone and talk to me. I think it's disgraceful that we don't have people answering the phone in the Community Development. When I asked one of the girls for an explanation, her answer was I'm too busy at the counter and you just have to understand that. I walked out of there and said if she worked for me I would have fired

her a long time ago. Be it as it may, she no longer works her by her choice not mine. It all seems to work out in the end.

The point is Chairman Coutu said those are a couple of things I'd like to see addressed. The part of the plan that I think is most workable almost immediately because you put a lot of thought into it, and you did a lot of planning, and you involved department heads that were receptive for the most part in the idea. I've had this discussion with Selectman Brucker and Selectman Nadeau. Selectman Maddox stated so this evening and hasn't said anything any differently than what we felt. We think that we should move...I got that impression. I certainly think that we ought to move on the consolidation of inspectional services almost immediately. I think that's doable. I would want to tweak a couple of things and get everybody's we're all going to have our opinions on how it should be done. I think that that's something that we could move on almost immediately because sooner or later we need to make a decision on hiring a building inspector. Sooner or later we need to make a decision whether or not we need a third person in that office and if so, who should it be because I can't see having inspectional services one stop shopping and still have only 2 girls working there handling what they need to do for Planning, handling what they need to do for the Code Enforcement officer, and being able to handle one stop shopping while the inspectors are out. I strongly believe that if we're going to make this consolidation that we need a, this is my opinion now, we need obviously to fill the position of clerk that we have vacant in that office or look at transferring someone - it was recommended that one of the clerks in the Fire Department could do some of this work. I think that's a doable plan. I think that to try to do all of this all at once with combined communications coming up, it's an awful lot to swallow and I think the transition should be not necessarily slow, we should move, but it should be orderly and it should be uniform but I would rather do it sooner rather than later if we're going to tackle this one piece at a time then let's pick a piece and let's go for it.

Selectman Maddox thought they've started to go down that road. Not as fast as some would like but we're moving in that direction. We've tasked the Fire Chief with coming back and I think that if we're going to do that, I think we need to take a look at the entire scope of that. We talk about one stop, how does that happen? Is there a way that X, Y, Z electrician can come in and give his license and have money on account. Those type of things. How we're going to dispatch? What software are we going to need? There's a bunch of things that need to be done and we've tasked the Fire Chief. We're doing that. I think we need to wait for him. He's coming back this month to bring that information back and see where that takes us. I think that if you have 3 inspectors for the lack of a better definition for right now...

Selectman Luszey didn't mean to interrupt but he did mean to interrupt. We asked all the department heads to be here to engage in this conversation and right now it's all been one way...Chairman Coutu indicated they were welcome to speak. Selectman Luszey thought this was a perfect entry point to have the Fire Chief come up and start talking interactively about that. You say we've tasked him off to go do something, I don't believe so.

Selectman Maddox thought that maybe we expand what we ask the Chief to look at as far as space needs and personnel. Right now if we had 3 inspectors, the 2 fire and Community Development and now they're crossed trained to be able to do multiple jobs, we should take a look at if we are going to get better at dispatching cross training, maybe we look at reducing the fees so you're not driving 3 different people all over town. We could reduce those fees to the citizens. You have one inspection by one person and maybe those fees go down. It's probably something we should look at because their hours are predicated on one person going out to do them all separately. Again, there's a number of things that the Chief needs to look at before we just simply say go do it. That's all I'm trying to drive at here is it's not as simple as do we need an extra person? How many hours is it going to take to do this? There's a bigger picture of the whole thing Sir.

Chairman Coutu said he was a little confused. You keep throwing dispatching into this mix. Selectman Maddox said as far as dispatching how they get there. It's called in here "administrative support" for the permitting as far as...Mr. Malizia said he means when you call for a permit you make the arrangements to go there. He's not talking dispatch. He's talking you make the appointments, you make the arrangements. That's what he's talking about. Selectman Maddox said into the permitting department, admin. support that says you're going to go to this area of town at this time of day. Hopefully we're not going to send people from West Road to Winslow Farms Road. We're going to get much better at that. Or as I said if we lower the fees to everybody but you want it now, there's a fee for now. Again, you're looking at the whole big picture. Rather than racing him back just to go yeah, I think he needs the time to do the job right.

Chairman Coutu agreed. I think too that just to be concise because Selectman Luszey and I have discussed this is they won't be fire inspectors and they won't be building inspectors. They will be town inspectors. They will all have one title, one job description. They will remain in their respective units. One of the questions I asked you Chief and you gave an affirmative answer is did you talk to your inspectors and you said you did. They said they were fine with it and then obviously if we were to hire a third inspector, he or she would have no choice but to be fine with it because that's the job. With that Chief, you heard the comments made. You heard Selectman Maddox's concern and request about expanding your role. What is your input? Please speak freely.

Chief Murray said absolutely. Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Board. You heard earlier that we were willing to look at this and cooperative of it because we interact both fire and building on a daily basis. I believe in the concept. We have other fire departments regionally in the area that have gone to inspectional services and there certainly is a benefit in improving efficiencies. As a matter of fact, I think Selectman Maddox just hit it on the head. Government is glacial is not done intentionally. We're talking about taking these inspectional services, combining them together. There's 3 essential areas - physical area - organization of that, and what is the capabilities of the employees that we're going to mix together to be able to move towards making this all go smoothly, including scheduling and everything like that.

Chief Murray indicated that Selectman Luszey talked about the Board needs to give direction and leadership. I would propose and ask the Board and assure you that we can make this successful if the Board does just that - give me the overall goal or objective that you want, let me and my staff along with Community Development - we had a very good meeting with John Cashell about a week ago trying to figure out how he operates and what his needs were and stuff. I can assure you Mr. Chairman if you give me some goals, you allow me some bench marks a little at a time that in a short period of time we will be able to come forward to you with little written plans telling you how we can progress I the future. I believe it can work. I believe we can empower our employees. I believe we can even improve our employees' knowledge, education, and expansion so that in the future we can back each other up, they learn new skills in areas so they don't stagnate in their jobs for 10 and 15 years as an Administrative Aide, and potentially you give them the ability to progress in their careers down the road because we're going to provide them with more education and skills training and in anticipation of where technology is going today. That basically was our proposal too. There are a number of specific steps we have to start lining up and look at to see how they're going to fit together.

Chairman Coutu asked as Chief Murray you stated before and I want to hear from you again a confirmation that it is your intent that if we were to put this structure in place, you would have Deputy Buxton supervise this operation. Chief Murray said that was correct. He would be assigned at least initially to frame this up, get it working, and set up. Certainly he's managing 42 people now - 4 different groups, 24 hour a day emergency operations and he's done an outstanding job. He's worked in the Inspectional Services Division. As you know, we had to move him over to operations and he was beginning to make some great in roads there.

Chairman Coutu asked Chief Murray to give us a little bit of latitude here as members of the Board of Selectmen who are by nature management by absentia because we are elected officials. We for the most part have jobs or things that we do on a daily basis. We trust our Town Administrator to run the affairs of the Town on the basis of our output on each Tuesday night and with the direction that he's been given in the past. He has a handle on who it's run. In terms of organizing an entire structure within a municipal system, there's not a field of my expertise nor do I believe it's an expertise of Selectman Nadeau, Selectman Brucker, Selectman Maddox and Selectmen Luszey on a municipal side. He certainly has it on the corporate level and he's had that experience with HP. It is transitional here? Yes. A lot of it is. I understand that. For the most part, we're not familiar with combined inspection. It sounds great. It looks like it's an easy thing to do. Throw some people up there, throw some desks in there, get them to work. We know there needs to be structure. You have had communication and you continue to have communication with Fire Chiefs who have done this and continue to do so in their municipalities.

Chairman Coutu stated that Deputy Fire Chief Buxton as you indicated to me both privately and publicly will be leading the charge and has some expertise in this field. I would think that based on the conversation that we had here tonight, though as general as it was and a lot of it was a little more detailed than I thought I was going to get from each member relative to what parts of this plan do we want to work on right away, there was some sort of a consensus that we should move on the inspectional services division combining it. We're not the professionals to design this whole thing. We can say to you well come back with a plan where the desks are going to be. There's a cost involved. There's communication. There's phone lines. There's computers so IT has to be involved in the process. Then there's how many people? What are we going to need for clerical staff? That has to be worked with Mr. Cashell and Mr. Oleksak. They occupy the same office. So there's a lot of little minutia that takes place in order to put the whole package together. I understand that. For you to come to us and say give me direction, where do you want me to go from here, I can't tell you. Maybe Selectman Luszey can tell you a lot better than I can. I know that we want to combine - it appears that there's a consensus that we want to combine inspectional services. How do we arrive at that? I don't think we are the experts to do that. Selectman Maddox perhaps you have more expertise than I thought.

Selectman Maddox said I'll tell you I do. I did service work. I understand scheduling. I understand all of that. We do have a resource. This is not like we're inventing the wheel. Merrimack is right up the street. A road trip. I'm the kick the tires kind of guy. Maybe we could ride with their Inspectional Services Department and get a feel for what are they using for software? Why do we want to invent the wheel? What are they using? Bedford was the other one that we met with. Let's pick their brains. What are they doing that works well? What would they do differently? I think

that was one of the questions we asked them. How long does it take to get this training? So there's a number of questions that I have that if the Board doesn't mind I'll meet with the Chief sometime this week and rather than dragging it out tonight, I'll give them some of the questions I have. Again, are they using a scheduling program that says how do they set it up rather than just Microsoft Outlook?

Again with all due respect, Chief Murray said I guess what I'm trying to get the Board to do is tell me what do you initially want to see? Do you want me to first focus on the internal structure? Who's going to do what and not how to do it. I want you to tell me what you want to see for a goal. I want you to give me a benchmark say I'd like you to come back in 2 weeks, 3 weeks with this segment of the plan and give us an update of where you're going with it. Chairman Coutu said where I would like to go is I would like to turn that around, give it to you and Deputy Buxton, and say you have 1 week to come back with a plan to show us how you want to put this whole thing together, and you break it down for us. I don't have that expertise. It's not my forte. Ask me to set up a convenience store, I'll show you how to do it in 2 hours. To put together, relocating people, inspectional services, secretarial staff, and how what is the fit with Community Development as it exists today, who should be leading the charge? Those are things that we need the answers for to make an intelligent plan. Mr. Cashell I was going to invite you up. Did you have your hand up? Mr. Cashell said yes. Chairman Coutu said you're welcome to come up and participate.

While we're waiting for him, Chief Murray said one of the examples would be if we're going to combine Inspectional Services, we're using the IMC Dispatch Fire Software where you can put all your permit information and it also links all pre-fire plan information about every commercial structure, building, and things like that. Currently Community Development doesn't have that software. That software requires, unfortunately, a license. In our preliminary work, we know we're going to have to find some funding for that. So that's going to be one of the pieces we're going to identify. What it does in the long run is it ties Community Development in with Fire so when any inspector opens up a site record, they have all of our information and we have theirs on permits and everything else. Subsequent to that, the staff over there hasn't been trained in IMC. So I have to arrange to get them the training for it. It's not intense training. It's a database training but they need to attend that training. That's one of the pieces or benchmarks before we could even bring everyone together to do that. That's going to take a certain time period. The physical layout, we can design something and what we looked at in a sense already is we can make that happen fairly quickly. That's going to be a minor expense. It's locating equipment and working with these guys for a work flow. That's another benchmark or something that's going to take a little longer. The counter customer service piece - how do we back up that counter person so that when they're out, someone is going to be there to cover that? All that type of structure is the other piece. The personnel piece. Chairman Coutu said he just wanted someone to answer the phone.

John Cashell said he didn't know what happened that day but...Chairman Coutu said it wasn't that day. It was many days. John said seriously whatever the case is but I just want the Board of Selectmen to realize that as far as the Fire Department is concerned, the Community Development Department, we've been a great partnership for many, many years. Many years before I came here 10 years ago. There's always been a long standing agreement of cooperation, working together. We're all trying to give the people of this Town the most professional, courteous, effective inspection services available. So we don't have any problem whatsoever with Community Development Department especially site plan and subdivision review that I'm involved in on a daily basis working and merging with the Fire Department personnel and making that partnership even stronger than it is. I look at this a progression in the right step if we're able to accomplish it. I want the Board of Selectmen to know we're willing and able to do that with the Fire Department. I've worked with Rob Buxton for the last 5 years. He's no longer involved in a daily basis with the site plan and subdivision issues but John O'Brien is. He's capable and comes with a ton of experience for this Town from his previous position. We're working cooperatively together. Rob was exceptional in his efforts working on site plan and subdivision work. As a matter of fact, the Planning Board really grew to rely on his expertise in making sure that all of the plans that the Planning Board reviewed were thoroughly reviewed as far as fire safety issues are concerned. We're open and ready to take on this task.

Chairman Coutu said they were looking for a spirit of cooperation. However, I don't want to let something go by the wayside here. Selectman Maddox stated that he would like to have an opportunity to put some questions together and present them to you. The end result is going to be dependent on how we vote and whether or not we agree to do the consolidation in the final phase. I think it's fair that any Selectmen who has a question should have an opportunity to speak to the person or persons who are going to be putting the plan together to know so that they have some satisfaction that their queries are going to be answered and that they're going to have a better feeling about the direction that we're taking. If Selectman Maddox calls you with a question relative to this, give him an answer sooner or later.

Chief Murray said absolutely Mr. Chairman. My point isn't not to work with him or answer his questions and stuff. The immediate problem we just ran into over the last month or so is and there's zeal to want to help us and get this done. We're getting bombarded from multiple people. One person wants to do it this way. Another one wants to do it another way. I'm absolutely open to suggestions because sometimes we don't always look at it from that way. Selectman Maddox has been tied with Community Development and Planning for a number of years. I would do that

with any Selectman. I guess my point is thought if you're going to send us off on this journey; it's when we start getting pressure from all sides because someone wants to do it one way or the other. That's where we get into a conflict and that's where things...

Chairman Coutu said he understood where Chief Murray was coming from. If we send you off on this task, I want you to draw in a circle of people and work with that circle. You come up with the plan based on what you've heard here this evening.

Selectman Luszey said Chairman Coutu just about said what I was going to say. I don't believe that we should be getting down into the tactics. That's their job. What we should be doing is outlining and defining the parameters in which they're to operate. Part of what I've attempted to do is in that parameter setting is set the personnel count at which I believe through my research and analysis that this function can take place. What I would not like to see come back to us is a plan that says we need 5 inspectors, 4 more Admins., and things like that. I think it's up to us to define the level of personnel that this organization should encompass and then instruct the Chief to go off and put the execution plan to make that happen and that would get at some of your questions around automation, scheduling, and things like that. I don't mean to put words in your mouth.

Chairman Coutu thought Selectman Luszey was right Selectman Maddox. Selectman Luszey you and I have had intense discussion about this. I am not ready to hire more people than the total number that's available. It certainly can work within those parameters. I think that's going to be a guideline that I think he got that loud and clear just now at least from 2 of us. I don't think we need to have more than 3 inspectors. I've had conversation with the Chief about this and never suggested that we needed more bodies. I think we need to look at the overall operation of the office once it's going to be impacted by an additional 3 people for sure, and then we need to look at Mr. Cashell is obviously going to be there and has his responsibilities. Mr. Oleksak is going to be there and has his responsibilities. Then we need to look at the clerical staff and what we need to support that.

Selectman Luszey said it's some of the conversation I've actually had with the Chief. When we talk about organizations, and you just did it, and that is you equate an organizational structure to a physical layout. I don't do that. The inspector's core work is out in the field. Not to bias or anything but you could give those people a laptop and put it in their car and that's their office. We keep saying we need all this space. I'm not there even at that level. All I'm at is how the organization is structured. The framework for the organization and the workflow in that. Let the Chief go off and figure out how that tactically gets executed because we keep going down into the tactics here. Chairman Coutu said he agreed. I'm not going to disagree with you.

Selectman Maddox thought that would be fine if these were all firefighters and Chief knew exactly what needed to be done. I think there are some variables that he's still grasping. You have personnel that are going to be in that office that he does not control. There's going to be support staff that you keep implying that somebody from the Fire Department is going to do a lot of this that may not be able to happen. I think there are a lot of still questions that need to be answered before he can come back and give us an overview before we start picking it apart. We're asking him to do a lot of things with unknowns. I think the first thing that needs to be done is what needs to be done, how many permits are there, how many could be actually done by one person now rather than two or three? That takes some analysis. I think he needs to the end of the month not next week. Chairman Coutu agreed it's not next week. Selectman Maddox said he needs some time to be able to look at that. Again, some of this stuff is not going to be under his control theoretically. Mr. Cashell has an Admin. that covers the counter but not going to be reportable into inspectional services. That's kind of that stick in the cog that needs to be looked at.

John Cashell wanted to make sure everybody is clear too. I'm coming here to the table tonight for site plan and subdivision issues pretty exclusively. I'm dealing with a lot of zoning matters right now because Bill is out. As far as building, electrical, and plumbing issues, that's strictly Bill's domain, his expertise. Julie his Administrative Assistant - they really need to be at the table and talking interactively with the Fire Department and this goal. Right now unfortunately Bill I don't know how long he'll be out but you can communicate with him by phone but he's really trying to recover right now from major surgery. He's not a player in this process right now. I'm not here at the table speaking for Bill whatsoever. That nitch part of Community Development. I'm just saying site plan and subdivision wise, we're up and Adam and ready for any progress to move forward and any efficiencies that can move forward. We've had such a strong partnership anyway. A lot of interaction, almost on a daily basis, with Fire Department personnel and it's been fantastic. I know some towns there's no cooperation. There is a tremendous amount of cooperation with the Fire Department and the Planning Board needs and my role in that.

Chairman Coutu asked if Mr. Cashell has heard anything relative to Mr. Oleksak's potential coming back. Mr. Malizia indicated that he has not stated it. Chief Murray indicated that he did see Bill last week. We are going to communicate and talk about those things. He told me he was going to reach out and call me. So we are going to discuss those too.

Chairman Coutu indicated that he and Selectman Luszey were basically on the same page. I need for you to reiterate what I've said earlier is that you need to draw an inner circle of expertise. You need to do some outreach to get answers because you're not going to have them all. You're each going to be able to contribute to the mix but we need to come up with a concise plan and a deliberate set of goals and how we're going to achieve their goals. I agree with you Selectman Luszey. I'm not equating number of desks to number of people. We can have 3 inspectors work off one desk and I understand the concept of working from laptops. Police do it every day. They can do their reports in the field now as opposed to the old days. I had to go in and type my reports. You don't have to do that anymore. You can do it in the field while you sit in the cruiser watching traffic go by and doing traffic stops. I think that what's important is that you need the least amount of outside interference but the most outside information that you can gather to put this package together. I think it's not too much to ask because you volunteered to take charge of this operation if it were to come to pass and you've done a lot of homework already. You take advantage of what's out there, what other communities who have done this are doing, what the costs are going to be involved. In terms of housing, you looked at it. Staffing you looked at it and you need to communicate with the people that are already in the office so that we have compatibility. I don't want everybody upset because we're making some changes. This is the direction that this Board I think wants to go in but we need to have a plan. Do we expect you to come back next week? I don't think so. I think we can start by setting a date that we would expect to have some sort of an overdraft of where you are, where you've gone, and how much you've accomplished. I think it's not unreasonable that you should have that at the workshop on the first Tuesday in March.

Selectman Luszey said after that, all bets are off. Chairman Coutu said they could have 2 new members of this Board at the end of the month.

Selectman Nadeau thought this was a good start in this plan starting with inspectional services. Looking at the chart, the 3 inspectors that's exactly where I was thinking that we were going to go. The administrative support looking at the overall picture in that department, I'm not looking to hire a new person to fill the position that's open. I'm looking at moving personnel around to fill the vacancies and cross training.

Chairman Coutu said to Selectman Nadeau that he wanted to be clear. There are 2 positions open in that department. One is an inspector and the other one is clerical. Are you talking both positions or 1 of those 2 positions? Selectman Nadeau indicated that he just said I was looking to fill the open inspector's position and cross training and moving our clerical support around because I think that with what we have for clerical support, we should be able to accomplish this goal of this department. Chairman Coutu said he didn't disagree with you. Selectman Nadeau said whether it's moving one from here or over to there, I think it's something we need to look at. We need to look at some cost cutting measures in order to do this and I think we need to keep an open mind in this decision process. I don't want to cut ourselves short but I don't want to be looking in trying to create things if it clearly shows that we need to do this, and then we need to do it. If there's a way to cross train somebody and not do certain things, and I think by using some of this computer software that everybody keeps telling me about, I think we're going to be able to cut down on some of the needs of our clerical staff. I just want that to be out there in the open that there's where I'm going and what I'm looking for.

Chairman Coutu said it was imperative that we all have an open mind to whatever the recommendations are. It's on the basis of what he brings into us an after a thorough analysis by this Board, that we have an open mind and then if we feel that it's exacerbated because it's requiring too much staff, then we need to make those decisions. To do that, we do have to have an open mind. If the need is there and it's documented, then we'll have to react to that. Like you, I'd want to see the whole scheme and see how it's going to...Selectman Nadeau just wanted to be up front and tell you which way that I'm looking.

Chief Murray said he was going to ask that. I haven't gone into depth and looked at those admin. positions. I have a sense of where they work because we met with John. Selectman Luszey knows we have a fundamental disagreement on that counter position. Selectman Luszey indicated the second counter position we have the fundamental disagreement. Chief Murray stated you have a temporary employee. Is that the one? Mr. Malizia said she's a temp. She's from an agency. Chairman Coutu said they needed to come up with a plan and then we'll look at it. If we decide that we can better utilize personnel in a different way than what you propose, we'll have that discussion.

John Cashell said the department heads when we came up with our proposal and presented it, the only personnel that was included in that study - the report that we gave to the Board of Selectmen and everybody was in support of - was the rehiring on a permanent basis of the secretary/receptionist in the Community Development Department. That particular person is as busy as anybody in that department. In order for us to even come close to functioning at the level of constituent service that everybody in this Town wants we absolutely, positively need that position. Selectman Coutu you said earlier that you didn't get somebody on the phone. That was in the middle of summer and Sue at that time may have been the only administrative person answering the phone at that point in time. We'll get that much worse with just 2 people. There may be Fire Department personnel in there. This is another discussion that came

about months after Sue left, which was in September. We've been operating on this temporary full-time position matter since that many months ago. It was a month ago this evening that you said if we couldn't come to terms with this whole issue by February 5th that a decision could be made at least to go out to advertise for that position and try to get that critical position in place. I have a feeling we're in the midst of losing a second temporary person very shortly. I haven't been able to confirm that but we did lose a good person already to another full time position. I think this person has another full time position opening. That means we're going to have to train somebody else. We really do need to get that position filled, trained, up to speed, get them ready for this new progressive measure that we're going to try to implement in town government. It's not somebody sitting there on their hands and not doing anything. That person is vital to the proper operations and they stay busy all day long. We're not just asking to fill a seat. We really do need that person to help facilitate the office needs. Any given day Julie could be out; Pam's out. I'm interrupted answering the phones too. It's crazy.

Hear me John. Chairman Coutu said we go a little deeper than this. We're a couple of Woburn guys. We're honest with each other. We've had honest discussions. You've expressed yourself to me in the past 5 years when you felt you had to. It didn't happen to me once this summer John. It happens all the time. There's no excuse for a citizen to call Town Hall and being told to leave a message and then they're told the box is full. I don't know whose phone that is. I don't know what number it is. It's in the Community Development Department. I want it to stop. I want somebody to answer the phone. I don't care how it gets done. As a member of the Board of Selectmen who gets calls constantly from citizens who are complaining that they don't have a person to talk to in that department, it upsets me. It's happened to Selectman Nadeau. It's happened to Selectman Brucker, and she's your Liaison. It's happened to Selectman Luszey. Selectman Maddox has never told me whether it's happened to him and he used to be the Liaison to that department. It's not fair to our citizens that they call a phone whether it's the zoning phone, your phone...and I'm going to get to the other issue. It was not a one-time thing and it's upsetting to and it's upsetting to me that this has not been rectified because I've talked about this in the past. It's really upsetting me. Maybe you'll be rid of me at the end of March or everybody will in this town. Who knows? As long as I'm a member of the Board of Selectmen and people are calling me and complaining, I'm going to try to get the problem resolved whether I call Mr. Burns and the problem can't be resolved, I know Mr. Burns is going to call me back and tell me why. I appreciate that. I don't expect anybody to perform miracles. I'm here as are the other 4 members of this Board of Selectmen to represent the people and the people are complaining and so am I because it's happened to me. So I know the people aren't lying.

Now let's get to the secretarial position. Chairman Coutu said you're right we did have that discussion and we did talk about this being the target date. Let's look at the positions that are in there now. Julie Kennedy works for Bill Oleksak directly. Correct? John Cashell said right. Chairman Coutu asked John who works for you. John Cashell said Pam Lavoie. Chairman Coutu asked if she was a permanent employee. John Cashell indicated correct. Chairman Coutu said that you each have a secretary. So what we need is somebody at the desk, which I don't dispute. I understand because I'm not a big advocate of hiring temp. employees for that exact reason. As soon as they get a full time job somewhere else, they're going to leave. So we keep retraining, retraining, retraining. Retraining costs money and I understand that. If it were up to me personally, I would move to hire that position tonight. It's critical. We need to have a third person at that counter. However as Selectman Nadeau stated and as Selectman Luszey stated and I concur, there may be another way of doing this without having to hire somebody. Maybe we do need to hire somebody. I just want to give the Fire Chief a little more time to put this whole package together.

Chairman Coutu asked if he was getting the message from you correct Selectman Luszey relative to that position. Selectman Luszey said you are but a point that needs to be made is that work in the Community Development office needs to change also. There are processes, and procedures, and work flow that is taking place that probably shouldn't be taking place that is consuming admin. resources. If you were to free that up, you would have the support you need. I'll go on the record saying right now I don't think every department head needs an administrative clerk. I think 1 administrative person between the Zoning Officer and the Planning Officer is sufficient. Chairman Coutu said he disagrees.

Selectman Maddox said this brings me back to where I started 45 minutes ago. We don't know what these jobs are. I think that the Fire Chief is at a disadvantage because he doesn't know either. I think that we need to hear what Pam does for Planning. How much time does that really take? How much time is she on the counter? The same thing with Mrs. Kennedy. I think that we are at a disadvantage and the Chief is at a disadvantage. Some people on this Board think that one of his fire admin. are coming over on this deal. Selectman Luszey indicated that he did not say coming over. Selectman Luszey said but going to be able to do the work from her other location remotely - virtual. I just think there's a lot of questions Mr. Chairman that still need to be answered before we get to hiring somebody. Chairman Coutu said they are back to square one.

Chairman Coutu asked Chief Murray if he needed any further advice from us. Chief Murray said no I don't. Chairman Coutu thought that you, again, need to draw an inner circle and work on it. It is too much to ask and does the Board agree that the first workshop in March gives him sufficient time to be able to put some sort of a draft together for us?

Selectman Luszey said the first workshop in June is fine. I said what is going to happen is happening. We are going nowhere. Chairman Coutu said that wasn't true. Selectman Nadeau didn't think that was true. Chairman Coutu said they made tremendous progress tonight. With all due respect, and that doesn't mean I don't respect you. We've made progress here tonight. It's not the whole package but it's a step in the right direction.

Selectman Luszey asked what did we make progress on. We have asked the Chief to go fetch another set of stones. Chairman Coutu said it was pretty evident to me that this Board wants to combine inspectional services. We've gone public with it. Selectman Luszey asked to make a motion on it and go do it. Then the response to that motion...Chairman Coutu asked to make a motion to what? Selectman Luszey said to combine inspectional services. Chairman Coutu didn't think that any one of us want to make a motion until we see the final plan but we don't do it that way. We need to see the final plan. What we may have differences on - the only thing I can see we may have some differences and this Board is a clerical position. Selectman Luszey said you are now doing what we shouldn't be doing. We should be giving the Chief directions and the parameters to go and fill it. Chairman Coutu said they did. Selectman Luszey said they haven't given them parameters. You just said go make a plan. Chairman Coutu said we gave them direction. Selectman Luszey said we gave them only part of the direction. We should constrain him on the resources. If I had it my way, even a budget number on what he can and can't spend to do this and expect him to come back with a plan. That to me is coming back with a plan. All we've asked him to do is go put some words on paper for us to look at to see if we're going to agree with it again. We have not agreed that we're going to do this.

Chairman Coutu asked Selectman Luszey if that would make him happy. Selectman Luszey said it would make me happy if we made a motion to do this so that in March if one of us ain't here, this work is going forward.

Selectman Nadeau thought where we're headed with this is in the right direction. I think we need a little bit more planning. I think that the Chief knows where we want to go. I'm hoping he knows where we want to go and where we want to get to. As we know, it just doesn't go that fast all the time but I think we're moving in the right direction.

Let me try to help. Selectman Luszey asked what is it we're looking for. When you say a plan, what is your expectation of what is going to be called out in that plan? From Chairman Coutu's perspective, again, I'm not a municipal management expert. I ran a portion of a municipal government. I expect him to come in with a plan that's going to have a new job description because we're going to have 1 new job title for all 3 persons. I think that he's going to do a study on what the workload exactly is going to be between the 3 of them and whether or not or how the part time electrical inspector is going to fit into this whole operation. He's going to have to consider the number of vehicles that are going to be out on any given time and the cost associated with putting out those vehicles. As Selectman Maddox said, we hope that in the future that the Inspectional Services Division is done in such a way that one minute we don't have a car at the south end and then an hour later he's at the north end. If they're going to be at the south end, all those inspections should be done at the same time. Those are the kinds of things that are cost effective that need to be put into the plan.

Aside from that, Chairman Coutu thought there are going to be costs associated. I think there are going to be program IT needs. I think that he needs to work with our IT Director, find out what the cost of the licenses are, in the final analysis what the total costs would be to bring this combination together which would be IT costs involved. If it means putting a single desk up there and if we don't have one, what it's going to take to get one in there. Do we need t have at least 1 computer out there? Are we going to deal strictly with laptops? I think those decisions have to be made. I think he has to show us the organizational structure as he's outlined it. It's going to be the Deputy Fire Chief down to the inspectors. Then there's going to be at least somebody in that office has to be a support person for that team. I think he has to show that entire structure. Beyond that, I don't know what we expect from the Fire Chief.

Selectman Luszey said now you've articulated what is expected to come back. Chairman Coutu asked Chief Murray if he got that. Selectman Luszey said if that comes back, it's either yes or no. Chairman Coutu said he'd be happy. It would give us a position that we can say yes or no. That's enough information for me. With that Ted, I'm done.

Selectman Brucker thought without his going out and speaking to Merrimack, Bedford, or wherever else they have the same arrangement with all the inspectors together, I think he'll get a lot of information from that. He may come back and say well it's going to cost us \$25,000 to do this. We may decide not to do that. I think in terms of making a motion tonight, it's premature.

Chairman Coutu thought in the final analysis I think that Selectman Luszey stated it quite clearly. If we have all of those facts before us, this is what we need to do. This is what's going to be involved. These are the costs associated. We can make a decision yes or no. It's up or down at that point. If we say the cost is going to be \$35,000, I don't want to spend \$35,000. He may be able to find some resources to cover the expense and say okay we can do this without having to take in money somewhere else. We need to look at all of those things. I think Selectman Luszey is in accord.

Selectman Luszey asked if they were going to take any action on any of the recommendations from the Town Administrator. Chairman Coutu said they had one personnel request. Selectman Luszey said they had the other item was the combining of the water and sewer. Chairman Coutu thought that on water and sewer - we have a person that works in the Finance Director's office that's responsible for water billing and things related to water, and then we have a person upstairs who is responsible for matters relating to sewer. Are we suggesting here - I see where it says cross training between water and sewer personnel - I would think that we're talking about those 2 people and that we're talking about housing them together. If so, where are we going to find the space to do that? There's certainly isn't enough room in the sewer office upstairs. I don't think you have enough room downstairs to bring a person down. I would like to think that we could have a discussion - an honest, and clear, and succinct discussion with our Tax Collector whether or not all of the collection of the money could be combined in her office as opposed to someone coming downstairs to pay their water bill. If that's the case, how much more workload would that be for her personnel and are they capable of doing that? I don't disagree with the recommendation. I don't understand what is it that we're looking for here putting the two people together? I can understand cross training them. Selectman Luszey said he wants to bring the Finance Director...Chairman Coutu said sure. I can understand cross training and if that's all it is, I'm all for it. Again if you have anything to say, please feel free to say it. You both know that I appreciate all of your input whether you agree with me or disagree with me, I want to hear it.

Kathy Carpentier believed that we share in the opinion that the 2 functions should be together but then there's the who, what, where, when and why that can't be figured out at this juncture. We've debated it. I think we as the whole team decided that being all the department heads decided it was a good thing to do. Between Patti and I, it wasn't who they were going to report to. It could go either way and we'd both be happy with that. Again the building kind of puts us at an issue.

Patti Barry said she did take issue with moving sewer downstairs just because the number of older residents who like to come in. That's a big part of their day coming in and having that face to face contact with Donna. You're going to lose that moving them downstairs. They're not as mobile and they're going to have a hard time on the stairs. I am against moving sewer downstairs. The space is a huge issue.

Chairman Coutu asked what kind of an issue would it present if we asked you to take the responsibility of accepting water bills. Patti Barry said that is something that I put out there and I haven't had a chance to talk with Lisa Nute. I don't see why we couldn't take payments at our windows. I don't know if it's going to be another license because my clerks don't have access to utility payments. It's something we need to address with Lisa.

Selectman Nadeau said one of his concerns with the clerks in that office taking payments for water and/or the sewer bills is the amount of time that that would take up in their time when at the end of the month you have a huge line with people registering their motor vehicles. Now you throw in 3 people trying to pay their water bill and they're elderly. That's 80 percent of the people who come in to pay their sewer and water bills are elderly. Like I said, I've seen Donna upstairs take the water check and go downstairs, 45 minutes later after she's done with somebody and bring it down, and then they process it down here. The easiest thing to do as far as the water part is just putting a box upstairs like there is and they can drop...there's no real reason that they need to come downstairs unless it's for when they have shutoffs and that type of day. The people that are usually coming down here to do that stuff that's what they usually do. The space is definitely a problem. I don't want to see us try to move water. People are going to be more irate waiting in line because 2 people are paying their water bill and it takes an extra 3 minutes for them to process the water bill where we have the people downstairs. If you want to drop your check in that box and walk out, great. To try to put that into Patti's office - I'm here a lot of times between the 11 and 1 o'clock hour and sometimes I come in and the line is all the way around to the Selectmen's office or around in front of the Assessor's door with people trying to go in and register their motor vehicles. Adding this water piece in or the sewer piece, I don't think the sewer piece is going to add in up there, but adding the water piece into that office I think will be a logistical nightmare as far as tying up that office. That's just my perspective of what I see when I come in during those hours. I think that just the drop box upstairs if people knew that they didn't have to go downstairs to pay the water bill but if they needed that type of service, they could come downstairs.

Kathy Carpentier said there's coordination on both. We have people coming down to give us bills and they're going up. People do use the gray box but we also have some of those seniors that like to come down just for the face to face time with the water girls too. They're on a name to name to basis. They're here every single month. We're aware of the situation and I think that Patti and I are going to try to figure out some ways of solving some of the problems but space is not going to allow us to consolidate the operations I guess the determination we came to. We are doing invoice cloud where people will be able to pay on line and pay one bill. It would go to water and sewer. So we're trying to eliminate some of the traffic coming in. We hope to at some point look at cross training the function so when one is not here, they can cover for each other. We're aware of the issue.

Selectman Maddox thought that's really where we want to head. If we're going to combine sewer and water, both of those clerks should be able to do each other's job so that there is coverage and those type of things. If we're worried

about people being able to talk to someone, that's why we're not going to relocate them. I think you have a collection point. People coming in and wanting to talk to the water clerk, I think we have to at some point realize that over time that will go away. I think as more and more people realize they can pay on line; they can drop it off in the gray boxes makes more sense than trying to worry about...so for the very least Mr. Chairman, we cross train the two so that there is coverage for both departments at any given time. That's at least a step.

Chairman Coutu indicated that was going to be my next question. I want you to know that I'm very sensitive to some of the seniors coming down wanting to meet...I could name you a lot of these people because I see them and they talk to me when I'm around. They're doing it and one of them is the father of one our department heads sitting in this room. He enjoys coming down here. He enjoys talking to these people and it makes his day. I agree with Selectman Maddox. I think that we need to go in a direction of cross training. Do you see that as beneficial? Ms. Carpentier and Ms. Barry replied yes. Chairman Coutu asked if there would be a problem if we were to initiate that this evening and said at the very least we want to start the cross training process that that can be started? Ms. Carpentier didn't see a problem with that. Can I ask is it just water and sewer or is it also Tax Clerk her other 4? Chairman Coutu didn't think they were getting that extensive unless we were going to do all the collections in that one office. Ms. Carpentier said it's between the two functions. Mr. Malizia asked if they were licensed or something? Ms. Carpentier said that would be more of an issue. That's what I'm saying. Chairman Coutu said to allow for the cross training of water and sewer personnel.

When it talks about providing one stop for customers of the Town's utilities, Chairman Coutu said at that point I believe you were talking about consolidating collections. Now we're saying it's almost inconceivable because we don't have the space to do it unless we blew out the safe on the side of your building and extended the counter out. I know it can be done. We don't need a safe that big. I'm not advocating that we do that. It's a pretty expensive project. Ms. Barry said that's the roadblock that we kept running into. Chairman Coutu knows that that's a possibility.

Selectman Luszey said the conversations he had the roadblock if we tried to put everybody on that side of the isle, there's a whole big space upstairs which encompasses Assessing too. If you get into the best utilization of footprint of a facility, there might be something you could do with that space too to incorporate some collection plan.

Over the next 3 months, Selectman Maddox asked if all of them could tell us how many people are we talking about. Are we talking about the same 50 people or are we talking about 500 people? I guess if we're dealing 50 people no disrespect to Dad but he can mail the check in. I have no idea. So I think one of the things we need to really get a handle on is how many people we're really talking about here in paying their water and sewer bills in person.

Kathy Carpentier indicated that wasn't their only issue. We as a group do not think that this is a good project just for those 50 or 100 people coming in a month but it's also for cross training, vacation coverage for the late nights. It's bigger. It's to consolidate the functions. Selectman Maddox asked why they couldn't be virtual. If there's only a very limited number of people coming in to pay and the Town Clerk could handle those X number, then the 2 clerks stay where they are. Just they're cross trained to be able to do either job from where they are right now.

Chairman Coutu didn't see any other alternative at this moment. We're stuck with the space we have until we take a better look at whether we can cram somebody into another office. It's the way I see it. Cram them in there, put them in the corner, give them a desk, put a glass in front of them and say collect whatever. It's tough. This is the building we're living with and the downstairs a long time ago was going to be the end all cure all of this Town. There will be no problem if we started the cross training between the two. There would be one upstairs and one downstairs and they can communicate back and forth. You could supervise the process. It eliminates the need for temporary office coverage. In the event that that should ever happen, we do have a floating secretary and I'm sure you're both aware of that. She knows what she's doing and has been trained. A minimal cost to move personnel I agree. Other than the physical location of the two in one unit, we're talking about both of them having knowledge of each other's responsibilities so that we would have coverage every single day. If one is out, the other one is going to cover for that person. Later on, we can look at the physical aspects of collections. I think Selectman Maddox raised an interesting point. How many people are we talking about? How many people a day actually come downstairs and pay their bill regardless of whether they're doing it because they want to do it and socialize or they do it on a regular basis every single month because that's all they know. I never knew there was a drop box until I became a Selectmen.

Patti Barry said they may very well see a decrease anyway once we start with this online payments, which we're looking at March/April time frame. So we may see a good drop in traffic as well.

Motion by Selectman Maddox, seconded by Selectman Luszey, to authorize the cross training of the Sewer and Water billing and collections personnel under the Finance Department, carried 5-0.

The reason why Chairman Coutu said he did it that way is because that was one of the recommendations. You both said you had this discussion and you didn't care one way or another who was supervising it. You have to work

together anyway. I know that you work well as a team and at least we're taking a step in that direction. Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Selectman Luszey indicated that they had one other recommendation. Do we just want to say that's it we're all done with them? Selectman Maddox said there was a lot of recommendations. Chairman Coutu said - relocating the Engineer personnel to Community Development. Mr. Malizia said not until you figure out...Selectman Luszey didn't think they were dependent. Selectman Nadeau said space wise they are. Chairman Coutu asked not to have an argument here on the floor without some control over what we're going to be talking about here. We're talking about specifically relocating the Engineer personnel, which is the Engineer and his secretary to the Community Development office. I think from my perspective anyway, I think it's unreasonable at this to go there until such time as we see a definitive plan from the Fire Chief what he needs for space up there and what we're going to do and that's my opinion. Selectman Nadeau said he was of the same opinion. Selectman Maddox indicated absolutely. Selectman Brucker said yes. Selectman Luszey said it was not my opinion but we won't go there. Chairman Coutu said they had 1 out of 3 so far and when they're not dead, we're putting them off until we see from the Chief.

Selectman Luszey said there are inanimate objects taking up huge amounts of floor space up there.

Selectman Maddox stated since I have a collection of dead horses, I will bring back this fact that if we had authorized the duplication of this room with the cable facility, we'd have a lot of space to be putting people in.

5. OTHER BUSINESS/REMARKS BY THE SELECTMEN - None

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:17 p.m. by Selectman Maddox, seconded by Selectman Luszey, carried 5-0.

Recorded by HGTV and transcribed by Donna Graham, Recorder.

HUDSON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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Benjamin Nadeau, Vice Chairman

Richard J. Maddox, Selectman

Ted Luszey, Selectman

Nancy Brucker, Selectman