

**HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**Workshop Meeting Minutes of April 1, 2008**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Chairman Ben Nadeau at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting room at Hudson Town Hall.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** was led by Susan LaRoche of the Recreation Committee.

3. **ATTENDANCE**

**Selectman:** Ben Nadeau, Rick Maddox, Ken Massey, Shawn Jasper and Roger Coutu

**Staff/Others:** Steve Malizia, Town Administrator; Dave Yates, Recreation Director; Recreation Committee: Chairman Mick Regan, Vice Chairman Sue LaRoche, Jeremy Griffith, Rupert Cote, Tim Boland, Mike Mell, Jeanne Johnson and Alternate Bob Iannaco; Mary Ellen Davis; and Tom Tollefson, HLN.

4. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**Recreation Department/Committee**

Chairman Nadeau recognized Mick Regan, Chairman of the Recreation Committee and asked him to introduce the members. Mr. Regan said Sue LaRoche was the Vice Chairman and other members present were Jeremy Griffith, Rupert Cote, Tim Boland, Bob Iannaco, Mike Mell and Jeanne Johnson. Mr. Regan thanked the Board for this opportunity to discuss some of their issues. There are eight members of the committee, but it takes a lot more citizen volunteers to run their programs. He wanted to acknowledge their time, effort and hard work to make all of the programs as successful as they are. He also acknowledged Recreation Director Dave Yates (who was present), Office Administrator Sue Kaempf, and Custodian Reggie Provencher. The committee works hard for the whole cross-section of citizens of Hudson, trying hard to improve programs or institute new ones as much as they can within the limits of their budget and space. They compiled a list of items for discussion tonight, which was in the Board's packet. On the Rec website, it says, "The town of Hudson is located on the east bank of the Merrimack River. It covers approximately 29 sq. miles and is home to about 25,000 people. Hudson offers quiet open spaces and an abundance of recreational opportunities, including two golf courses, the Robinson Pond recreational area, a skate park and a number of sports fields and facilities. In addition, Hudson has developed into a small industrial and commercial center, thanks in part to its proximity to critical highways—the FE Everett Turnpike on the west and I-93 to the east." That verbiage sells the town to outsiders, who are looking to relocate. A good portion of that is what the committee is involved with, so they have a lot of responsibility to the town.

Sue LaRoche said the committee has tried hard to provide the town with recreational programs that affect a cross-section of the citizens, from toddlers to senior citizens, which they hope to increase interaction with shortly. Along with that, they also feel that, because they do a good job, the Selectmen don't get a lot of complaints about any programs that the Recreation Department runs. As they all know, the squeaky wheel gets the grease, and if the Selectmen don't hear any complaints, they can only assume things are running well. The committee, Dave Yates and Sue Kaempf, try their hardest to run the programs. They feel like they are doing a good job; the town has grown; the demographics may be changing a little bit and they'd like to change and update their programs accordingly, and they want to know how the Board feels about supporting the recreational programs. They developed a one, three and five year strategic plan, which they hoped would improve what they offer.

Mr. Regan said they realized that they do not have policies and procedures, creating what they needed along the way, but they plan to compile them in a manual. Ms. LaRoche said in trying to put this presentation together, they did some research to try to find out if they are a committee or a commission, and what its charge actually is, and they are in limbo with that. Along with the policies and procedures, they want the Selectmen's input on what they are supposed to be doing.

Selectman Massey asked what the difference was between a committee and a commission. Mr. Regan said it's basically setting policies. As a committee, they work under the Board of Selectmen and anything they need to change would have to be presented to the Board of Selectmen. The alternative is more or less, their group would create policies. They would define their needs and requirements, etc., and would probably limit the Board of Selectmen's interaction with them. Selectman Massey asked if there was a statutory differentiation between the two. Ms. LaRoche said she didn't know. On other boards she has served on, there was a differentiation between committees and commissions. Selectman Jasper said it's been a number of years since he looked into it because the question came up a number of years ago. They were not established as a commission, and there is a statutory difference. A commission has certain statutory responsibilities where a committee, such as this one, serves at the will and pleasure of the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Regan said they want to establish Recreation Department by-laws; basically, how they function. The next item under the One Year Plan was something they've discussed internally, which has gotten a lot of press. The Seniors need a place of their own, and they (Recreation) need to come to terms with how they are going to present them. They discussed taking them (Seniors) under the Recreation Department and find a suitable building for them. They took a big hit at the elections and everybody agrees they deserve a building of their own, and they (Rec) wants to get there. Ms. LaRoche said most of the Seniors' activities are recreation and health, so the Recreation Department would be the most logical area for them to be in. They want to assist the Seniors, to complement them so they can maintain the programs they have now, but make them a part of the town so they can all support them with the same vigor they have with the youth of the town in their sports and recreational leagues. Rec could take the burden off the Seniors of running their own programs.

Selectman Jasper was encouraged to hear that because that's the direction they should be moving in. What happened a few weeks ago isn't to anyone's advantage. It made a bad situation worse in many respects. One of the mistakes the Board made last year was not really keeping tabs on what the actual usage is. The number "100 people" was thrown out, and while this is only hearsay, it appears that number is not terribly accurate. As a matter of fact, the article in the paper about a month before the elections spoke of 50 people and, probably, for the time being, Oakwood in its current configuration, with some parking changes, is probably a large enough structure to accommodate

most of the activities that are going on there. The problem was they talked about 100 people consistently, and there's not enough parking to do that. The first thing they ought to do is determine just how many people are using the programs. If it's just Bingo, is there another facility in town where they can go consistently that will hold 100 people. Ultimately, they need to be assisting in developing a program that belongs to the town and comes under the auspices of the town and not a private organization, particularly if they are going to have a building at some point. It might be the Community Center if, hopefully, the Rec Center can go out to Robinson Pond, where the program belongs in the summer. Ms. LaRoche said if the number is 50, there probably are 250 more that would want to become involved, if they can expand programs and have consistency in the programs. The goal is to build the program, not just maintain it. Selectman Jasper said once that happens, as it is built, they'd be working towards the Recreation Department's new facility and they can look at what they can do with the Community Center. One of the things he was thinking of was when they get ready to build a facility at Robinson Pond, they ought to be looking at rehabbing the Community Center at the same time, so the Seniors don't think they are being left in the cold and move forward with both projects at once, so both groups have what they need, when all is said and done, and do that under one bond. He didn't know how anyone else felt but, otherwise, there will be friction.

Selectman Maddox concurred with Selectman Jasper. For years, he's said they have to be done together to make it work. To that end, the Board of Selectmen needs to grasp on to whether they are going to have a separate Senior committee, or try to roll it in under the Rec program. There have been arguments on both sides and they need to have a discussion, whether it be after this or at some other point, how they are going to go about this. There are 4,000 citizens in Hudson that meet the criteria of senior. He's not sure that asking the volunteers that are doing X with how many programs and participants already to take on that additional, it's something the Board needs to resolve sooner rather than later. They can't say here's your new rec facility; here's your run-down building. They need to be tied together.

Selectman Massey said if they are going to have programs, they need a facility and the current facility lends itself only to large congregations, not to having other types of recreational activities or leisure type activities. For example, the current Community Center has no place to put pool tables or gaming tables. That building has to be available for elections. Until they decide what they are going to do on the recreation side, it's being used for recreation. To talk about senior programs without a facility is not going to get them anywhere, so he concurred with Selectman Maddox, that there may have to be a dual solution. Today, he visited with the Nashua Council on Aging people and for \$1 a year, they lease the facility on Temple Street from the city of Nashua, so the private organization is in control of what goes on inside that building and they are required to pay for the operating cost of the facility and for any salaries, and they currently have three paid people. There is an example where the programs are all run by a private organization. The building was constructed in conjunction with HUD and the city leases it to the Seniors for \$1. They don't have to take, as a given, that the senior programs have to be run by a committee. The town could provide a facility, similar to Nashua, but that's down the road in terms of how that would happen. Whether it should come under recreation is a discussion they should have separate from tonight.

Mr. Regan said the next item was the addition of a full-time program director, in place of individual sports directors, to complement the Recreation Director, who would oversee all sports programs and senior activities. Currently, they have a lot of minor directors—soccer, basketball—and the intent is to combine all of them into one employee, who would oversee all of those programs—and the seniors would be part of that job description, also.

Selectman Massey said any organizational structure he's ever seen says that a one-on-one reporting relationship is not good because, effectively, they'd be duplicating everything. He asked how this would work if all of the programs came under this one individual, and that individual would report to the Director. If that's the case, what would the Director do and why would they only need one person underneath because effective organizational structures almost never have a one-on-one reporting structure. How would this work? Ms. LaRoche said right now, the program directors are basically part-time employees; they are there to oversee the activities that takes place when they are taking place. The Soccer Director is at the fields on Saturdays all day long. Unfortunately, during the week, it leaves Dave and Sue to handle all of the questions about registrations and games and cancellations and referees and all of the day to day workings of that activity, so that person would be in charge of overseeing all of that during the week, as well as becoming the director of a senior program. In the one, three and five year plans, they are trying to implement getting centers for both the seniors and the kids and, perhaps, even some revenue-producing centers for the town so that the recreational experience is improved for all. That's something that's going to take a lot of time on the part of the Recreation Director—investigating fields, investigating the building of such, the organization of such, overseeing the budget and implementing the day to day activities. Dave Yates isn't going to be sitting and twiddling his thumbs while the Assistant Director is out working his fingers to the bone. There's plenty of building and expansion that's going to happen, so there is more than enough work to go around for both people. Selectman Massey asked if the intention was for a full-time position. Ms. LaRoche said yes, and there would be no more individual sports directors, i.e., basketball director, soccer director, softball director—whatever recreational programs they run. All of those positions would be incorporated into this one full-time position. They would still keep part-time summer staff, the high school/college kids they hire for the summer programs. That staff would remain. They would use the funds spent for the part-time directors to fund the one full-time position; 60% of the position would be funded by the amount of money they already spend for those program directors.

Chairman Nadeau said they asked if the summer director position would be rolled into that, as well. Ms. LaRoche said yes. Chairman Nadeau said by doing that, this person would be working nights, such as movie night and the basketball tournaments. Ms. LaRoche said yes. Selectman Maddox said when they came forward during budget season, he thought it totaled about \$14,000. Ms. LaRoche believed it was about \$15,000. Selectman Maddox said the savings equates to about half of the salary, but this is a full-time person, which would get benefits, so they'd have to add on another \$10,000 - \$12,000 so that brings it to only a third of the salary. He could not justify having a programs director; they've been putting all of their eggs in one basket. If that person leaves, all of the programs fall—and the reporting structure with the programs director reporting to the Recreation Director. He couldn't support that. He could support one person, and that's what's needed in that group. A program director is needed and he's not sure a rec director on top of that is the way to go. Ms. LaRoche said any of the other towns around the size of Hudson have a full time Recreation Director and a Program Director. They service approximately 9,000 individuals in town that have taken part in programs from toddlers, youth, teens and adults. It's a mammoth undertaking and the

program director would work odd hours. This person would be working nights and weekends, maybe having a Monday and Tuesday off, and then working Wednesday through Sunday. It could be 8:00 – 11:00 a.m. and then whatever the rest of the eight hour day is, or however they structure a 40-hour week for this person. It's someone who is going to have to enjoy what they are doing and enjoy running around. The recreation budget, if proportioned out to the growth of the population, has not increased significantly. It's only about \$3,000 over the last 10 years and their revenue has come up equally to offset some of the cost of the programs. To say they're not going to get their money's worth or that it's not a necessary thing—it's a monumental task to put the programs together, to manage them and execute them. Dave has done a fabulous job and to say he doesn't need any help, she doesn't see it—and she has been on the committee for almost six years. She is amazed that they run the programs they run with the staff they have. They are lucky to have the volunteers they have. Otherwise, the programs would not run as smoothly as they do.

Selectman Coutu said he hasn't taken a position on whether or not to bring on an additional staff person. He can see how this person would be extremely busy in the summertime, but how would it be justified from September through March? Ms. LaRoche said soccer runs from August through October; as soon as that finishes, they go right into basketball; as soon as that finishes, they go right into softball. There may be only two weeks of down time. Selectman Coutu asked if that would justify a full-time position, over and above the Recreation Director. Ms. LaRoche said when they put this program together, they also included this person as being the senior coordinator and developing other programs, as well, along with Dave. What they have now, and they see it day to day, between dances and comedy nights and everything else they run, there is enough work to keep this person busy, as well as developing other programs—more recreational type programs as opposed to sports programs, that a lot of people feel is lacking in town, for adults as well as children. That portion needs to be developed and it warrants having this position, as well as a Recreation Director.

Chairman Nadeau said a survey was done recently and asked if the results of that survey could be forwarded to the Board within the next week or so that would indicate what the people in town are looking for. Ms. LaRoche said they did a survey that was sent home with all of the kids and they would get a copy to the Board.

Selectman Jasper said most of them couldn't say what anybody in town does with most of their day, except for Steve, so this wasn't a reflection on the committee or on Dave Yates, but the problem is the Board doesn't have a real clear understanding of how Dave's day is spent. In order for the committee to justify what they are proposing, the proposal that comes forward needs to be very detailed in terms of how Dave Yates spends his day now; how that doesn't allow certain programs to receive the attention they need; and what programs they would want to develop; and then to actually have a model of what the two individuals would be doing and how that would differ, because he doesn't have a clear vision of how the time is spent now, or how two people would spend their time and how that would work. That's going to take more detail, more than sitting here and talking about it. The committee has a clear understanding of that, but the Board doesn't, and that puts them at a disadvantage. When you look just at the numbers, it can't be justified. As Selectman Maddox said, it's probably about a third or maybe less if it's a \$30,000 position, with another \$10,000 - \$12,000 in health benefits, depending on the person's marital status, so it's a hard sell.

Sue LaRoche said they came here tonight to say what they'd like to do. Do they have all of the numbers lined up? Probably not. They have job descriptions they can get to the Board, and maybe Dave could write up an list of his day-to-day activities and what they see the program director doing. That's something they can do. Selectman Jasper said what he does now, and then what he would do when the program director comes on, because that will be vastly different. That's probably the biggest hurdle right now.

Selectman Massey said leaving aside the question of senior activity, he thought he heard it said that one of the rationales for the program director was that, although the individual sports volunteers run the programs, they are not around on a daily basis to handle questions on registration and times, etc., etc. Did they give any thought to that being an administrative function, that it could be handled by another aide in the department? He agreed with Selectman Jasper, that they need to see a lot more flesh behind the proposal in order to make an informed decision. Ms. LaRoche said they could certainly put together more information for the Board—what is done now and what will be done down the road.

Bob Iannaco said they need to come back to a future meeting to discuss an overall, strong strategic plan; what they put together for tonight are goals. He understands they need to come back with more meat added to the goals and develop the plan behind all of the goals. Selectman Maddox said it's a long process. Getting their policies and procedures could take two years to get to the point where everybody concurs. In all reality, those things are going to take longer than they expect, because they are still doing all of the things they are doing, and it's a good thing to do. It's something that needs to be done so everyone understands what the policies and procedures are, especially if the town decides it wants to go to a commission. Without written policies and procedures, probably no one would vote for that. Time is eaten up quickly working on that. Mr. Iannaco said they understand that they will have to meet more than once a month to tackle some of these issues, so the commitment is there by the committee.

Mr. Regan said in order to develop the program, the need additional space. Future development. Basically, the one-year plan is they have to start somewhere. If they don't start now, they won't go anywhere. In all of his years on the committee, they've never had a face-to-face with the Board of Selectmen. They've never had a question and answer type of thing. The goals they brought forward tonight was to get feedback. They didn't have any intention of anything decided tonight, just an open discussion of where the Selectmen want them to go. They will take that information and hash it out and come back, hopefully, within six months or so. Regarding the feasibility study, they need to find other space. One of the areas they do not cover well is the south end of town. There are pieces of property they need to look at; some are good, some are wet, some are rocky, but they need to identify property they can go forward with for one plan or another, whether it's a playground, a ball field, etc. They need to take the first step forward to start the process. The first would be to identify town-owned land, or parcels the town could buy.

Selectman Maddox said there is a document in the Selectmen's Office that is titled something like Open Space 2000 that was done in 1988 that looked at any number of parcels for playgrounds, parks, etc., the acreage and potential for recreational uses. Perhaps copies could be made because it might be a useful document. He believed his is the only one in possession of a rough sketch that the former Town Engineer and former Town Planner were working on for Robinson Pond. They went out and looked at the wetlands, the slopes, etc. and laid out a very rough sketch a number of buildings and some fields to show how they would fit on that parcel. He will get a copy of that to Mr. Yates. Mr. Regan said that would be a good first step. Ms. LaRoche asked if it was done recently. Selectman Maddox said it was a sketch, kind of vague, but it shows the boundaries of the town-owned land, wetlands where they could put a couple of butler buildings off of it—Mr. Yates said about two years ago, he was given such a rough sketch, but he hasn't seen this one. Selectman Maddox said it also shows two softball fields, softball fields and a soccer field. He'll get a copy of that to someone.

Selectman Massey said he was going to be on the opposite side. Before they go too far down the road, casting in concrete a recreational complex at Robinson Pond, they need to answer the question, is Robinson Pond the place that on a Sunday night, in the middle of December, snowing like hell, that they would want children picked up or dropped off at. He understands its viability during the summertime, but he is questioning a complex that would be the entire thing they are talking about, especially if they erect a building there, whether during the summer months it's viable, given the road condition of Robinson Road—very curvy and dark—and they'd be asking people to drop off and pick up their children at 7, 8, 9, 10 o'clock at night. Until they can resolve whether that's going to be a permanent solution to all the recreation needs, or simply what they do with a summer program, he is not willing to sign on to developing a set of plans for Robinson Pond. Ms. LaRoche said the committee isn't sure that's the spot they want to be looking at, either. That's something they need to investigate. She didn't have access to what parcels of land is available in town, so if they could get a copy of that, it would make their life a lot easier. They could figure out how much acreage they would need and what would fit where. Getting them that information would be most useful.

Selectman Jasper said he understood Selectman Massey's concerns, but he didn't envision this being their one and only facility. Regardless of what happens, he envisions the Community Center would be available for some activities. They won't suddenly have every person in town going to Robinson Pond and he hoped they have enough sense that if they are having a blizzard, they cancel the activities in advance. He suggested that in his 20 years on the Fire Department, the worse accidents he worked were on the main thoroughfares of town, where people tend to drive with much more confidence in bad weather than they do on the curvy, back roads, so he wasn't quite as concerned about that. The summer program is a large part of what they do and makes the most sense to have the summer program where there is a great natural resource—the pond. He didn't like having them out under the power lines in the dirt and pavement. He hoped they would look at this as being part of the solution to what they need and not the only thing. In the winter, they will be doing primarily basketball programs and those will continue to be spread out all over the place and maybe that would not even be the place to have another basketball court, although he suspects it would be. The committee has to come back with an overall plan of how to handle all the recreational needs.

Mr. Regan said the last item on the one year list was reimplementation of a capital reserve fund for future expansion projects. This used to be funded every year for improvements at \$25,000. Mr. Yates thought it was up to \$140,000. (Remarks not discernable.) Mr. Regan said the first item on the three year plan was implementation and development of additional field space. Obviously, that would discontinue with the one year first step forward. The way the town is growing, the need for fields, the overuse of current fields—the School Board is very nice in letting them use their fields, but as the town grows, with the number of kids they will have, they will damage them. A field every year or two would take that much less load off. Conversion of Recreation Committee to Recreation Commission is something they touched upon earlier.

Selectman Maddox said when they come back, to bring back the supporting RSA documentation, so they'd have some idea of what they are looking at. There's not the growth in Hudson there was from 1980 – 2000. They are seeing a great slowdown in houses and the schools are seeing a reduction in incoming classes, so they need to look at that and the committee needs to have some of that data. Yes, they need to add field space, but they are seeing a graying of the town. Maybe some of the fields are not needed, but trails are needed—whatever—to facilitate recreation for a broad spectrum of the citizens.

Selectman Massey said he'd like to see the pros and cons for a Recreation Committee versus a Recreation Commission. In order to make the change, he'd like to understand what that means to the town. He'd like to know why a commission makes more sense than a committee and what that then entails upon the part of the town and, ultimately, the budgeting process.

Mr. Regan said the next item was something he touched upon earlier—construction of a playground in the south end of town. They really have nothing down there. Someone from the south end has to drive all the way to the middle of town to use a playground. It's just something they need to look into seriously. They need to start somewhere. It doesn't need to be large.

Selectman Maddox said they skipped over revolving fund for self-supporting activities. He'd like to see that done on a trial basis. If they moved some money around and put \$10,000 in a revolving fund, not the entire budget, he'd be willing to look at that. They talked about archery or any number of things they might want to do that they didn't even think of 18 months ago. If they went through the program with its expenses and income, and there was still 10—or whatever that number may be, that may be a compromise to just saying here you go. Selectman Jasper said he was very opposed to the revolving fund issue because there should be some planning involved in what they do. In the middle of the year, they shouldn't say let's try archery because there are more people that need to be involved in the process and it has to be well thought out and well vetted, and to vet that plan is to come through the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee, making a presentation, if necessary, at Town Meeting. He hoped Selectman Nadeau would back him up that revolving funds don't always turn out to be what they are supposed to be and there are certainly some issues with the ones that exist at the high school and how those funds are generated and used and what they go for. The governing body loses a great deal of autonomy under that, and they are the people who are elected to manage the funds and the prudential affairs of the town and justification for how money is spent. If there are appropriate uses for a revolving fund, it would be in the area of something that is continuing, such as sales of an item, and all they would do is sell and

repurchase stock. Otherwise, to say they're going to have an archery program and it's going to cost \$30,000, you just put it in the budget that way and that's the way it works. He's hesitant to go down that road, knowing what he knows. It's a good concept, but doesn't always turn out that way and there are problems with revolving funds, not the least of which is lack of accountability.

Selectman Massey said he was leaning more towards Selectman Jasper, but that's only because he didn't understand how they envisioned a revolving fund working. He would not want to wake up some morning and find out that the town had been committed to a program and once you create a program that's successful, it's very hard to get rid of it, and then find out that the town is on the hook to fund it in the out years. He'd want to see a lot more information on how they would structure a revolving fund and how they would take care of accountability and management of it. If they do it, as Selectman Maddox said, start small and see how it works. Ms. LaRoche said that goes hand in hand with the committee coming back with information on committee versus commission and they will have documentation on what exactly will be involved in the revolving fund. If they charge \$40 for someone to play basketball and if it costs \$40 to run the program, the money would flow through, which was what they were trying to accomplish by that. They will certainly have more backup when they come back with the details on committee versus commission.

Mr. Regan said the five year plan was for a recreational complex to include a free-standing recreational building including offices, locker rooms and multipurpose courts for all citizens' use; free-standing building for use of senior citizen programs; and in-ground swimming pool connecting above buildings with temporary structure (i.e., bubble) for year-round use. That is their wish list for a long way down the road—a perfect complex that all citizens can utilize. If they don't discuss this now, they probably never will. Selectman Maddox said five years goes a lot faster than they think. The committee needs to come up with some sort of estimates because their budget right now is \$350,000 and he can see them blowing past \$1 million with the five year plan, and there are only so many dollars. In five years, the economy may be well, but that's a great increase. Some sort of cost dollars where they think they are going to go with that and what it is going to cost to maintain. On the drawing they worked up, there is the Ted Luszey swimming pool. He was pushing for that, so they kind of showed it could be put on there, but these are things that are dollar-driven. He wasn't nodding to anything that would inflict serious financials on a future board.

Selectman Massey thanked the committee for giving them a lot of things to think about and for taking the time to put all of the information together, but as they say, the devil is in the details. He asked them to think outside the box a little bit. If they are going to propose a swimming pool, why not work with the school department and co-fund a program that could be used for recreational purposes, as well as for swim meets by the high school. If they were going to do that, it makes sense for the school to help fund it. There may be other types of those things that could be co-funded by the school and town. He encouraged them to think about how to enlist the support of the schools.

Selectman Maddox said that he was still tax dollars, whether it was on the school side or the town side, but he agreed the committee should think outside the box. He talked to Ron Falcone, who runs the baseball, and some places have looked at getting a grant from CDBG, or other avenues they can look at to be able to fund some of this building process. Many things to look at. Ms. LaRoche said they have been thinking outside the box, speaking with other groups in town, such as Pop Warner, Hudson Youth Baseball, the schools. Their intention with this facility is just for that, for the entire town to use, including the schools. A swimming pool could be a huge revenue producer, between renting it out to clubs, recreational and rehab, seniors could use it in the mornings and kids in the afternoons. It's a multi-purpose thing. They have looked outside the box and continue to do so. One of the main things they wanted to discuss with the Board was the direction the Board wanted to see them heading in. Some of these are pie-in-the-sky visions that they see as being a benefit to the town. They hear differing opinions from the Board on the direction the committee should go in. They'd be glad to come back with more detailed plans, but what they are looking for was what type of support did the Board intend to throw at them. They need more facilities; they need more fields. Is the Board on board with the Recreation Committee, who feel they need more facilities and fields and programs and expansion? That's the direction the committee was looking for from the Board of Selectmen.

Chairman Nadeau said he was interesting in heading down that road, looking at more fields and more things they can do; a pool. He asked what the committee was looking for for this budget season. Mr. Regan said the biggest thing would be the feasibility study, but he didn't know the time table for that. To find a piece of property, maybe Robinson Pond--it's a start. Something in the south end. Something small. Identify a piece of property. A good idea is how they can utilize that piece of property to its fullest advantage and for the most benefits of the citizens. That and the capital reserve fund. That's something they'd like to see continue. Ms. LaRoche said, obviously, they have to justify a program director position before they can even think about establishing that, so they will go back and come up with some facts and figures for the Selectmen that will justify that position.

Selectman Coutu said from his perspective, he can support any direction the committee takes that will offer more services to a greater number of people in town. Personally, at the present time, he supports anything that will be inclusive of the seniors. Too often the citizenry in any community looks at a town as something they get very little from, and pay an awful lot for. No one realizes the value of a fire department until you have a fire. No one realizes the value and worth of a police officer until there is an emergency that requires their need. More people in a community are in need of recreational programs on a daily basis than they are all of the other services in town combined. Rubbish is once a week and police and fire are when you need them; they are there for a purpose. But people of all ages need a place to go on a daily basis, not only for recreational exercise programs, but for opportunities to learn different things about their health, tax services, etc., and there is so much that can be done. He will support and will be willing to put his neck on the line to support funding for some of the committee's ideas, provided (1) the Board of Selectmen will maintain control of the Recreation Department, and he didn't see how they can do that with a commission; and (2) the committee's proposal for the wish list defines in absolute detail, from structure down to recreational activities that will be provided. That requires a lot of work and is a lot to ask of a committee, but they are either dedicated or not. There are more and more people interested in working with Dave and with the Recreation Department and would like to see something more viable, more concrete for the town than what they presently have. And he will support that, but the plans should be as finite as possible so that the Board has a clear view of where they are and where they want to go, if this becomes a reality. He didn't want them to

think of this as pie-in-the-sky, but as a reality, and then they will be a lot more successful. Don't think of it as a dream, but of something that can be done.

Selectman Massey said they are looking at some demographic changes and they may impact recreation the same as they are going to impact the schools. In particular, the Baby Boomers needs and wants are different than the current senior population. In general, the committee is focusing on the right things and he commended them for what they've done, but the demographics need to be looked at in terms of whether or not... they could expand five ball fields and find out there are no children to use them because the demographics are changing, so that piece has to factor into it. The second piece is that he, personally, would want to see them coordinate with... and didn't believe they could afford to have duplicate programs for seniors, so somehow or other, if they propose to be doing something for the town on behalf of seniors, it's incumbent on the committee to sit down with the current organization and find out how and where; you either complement them, subcontract to them, or some form or other, but he didn't want a set of programs that are competing against each other. The current group is doing a pretty good with the programs they have, given their limited resources. That has to be part of the committee's thinking, too—how to incorporate that organization.

Ms. LaRoche said they do see the demographic changes happening, which is why they introduced the fact they'd like to be a part of the senior population more so than they are. They would love to assist the seniors and relive the burden of running a program from the seniors. They are all getting closer to that age when they will be taking part in the programs themselves. To allow the people who have put in all their time and energy into their programs for years to sit back and enjoy the program instead of having to run the program is one of the committee's goals. They would complement, assist or work with the seniors to relive the burden of running the programs and bring them under the town and support them 100%. They want to maintain what the senior's have now and build upon that. To do that, it will be difficult without someone in that position to be either a liaison or a program director or whatnot—and the committee will outline the duties of a program director for the Board. All of this goes hand in hand and isn't something they haven't thought about. Tonight, they thought they were coming to present some ideas to the Board and then get some feedback from the Board, going back and doing some more homework. That was the intention.

Selectman Maddox said he was going to be the Grinch. There are only so many dollars. They took out the \$25,000 from the Recreation Department's budget because they were trying to get to a budget number they wanted to hit. Recreation is not a core service of the town. Police, fire, plowing the road, those type of things. He supports doing something, but they have to look at it in the context of cost. While there are some excellent ideas, they may not be able to fund it. The dollars are going to be the driving force in some of these things. He asked who made the spreadsheet. (Response not audible.) Selectman Maddox said there were some great numbers in there and the one he wanted to ask about—and some of the numbers were wrong; the population of Laconia is not 169,000. Pelham's budget is \$198,000 but their return fund is \$300,000. What are they doing that Hudson is not? Where are they going that they are bringing in more than they are expending? They don't need to answer him now, but those are the questions he will have for them at budget time. For instance, Claremont and Lebanon includes the Parks Department, so those numbers are skewed when they start to take their averages they came to at the bottom. If they are going to come in with this type of document, they need to take the two towns above Hudson, the two towns below and the ones that directly abut Hudson and show what they are doing in recreation. He's trying to be the bad guy to say dollars are the issue and this year, the budget is going to be a real test of that. Why is Pelham's number so striking that they are bringing in more than they are spending?

Mr. Yates said last year, Selectman Robinson brought that up, so they looked into it. Pelham has a revolving fund, which they talked about earlier, and all of their programs pay for themselves, excluding salaries and overhead. The \$198,000 is what that costs the taxpayers. That is for the Recreation Director, the Assistant Recreation Director and all the overhead. Hudson's programs actually cost less money than Pelham's. If they take the revenue, in comparison to the budget of \$350,000, Hudson's programs cost the taxpayers about \$160,000. Pelham, a town half the size of Hudson, costs their taxpayers \$198,000. Selectman Maddox said that's what they need to find out because the chart sent him in a different direction.

Selectman Massey said he could not understand what first prof, second prof and third prof was. Ms. LaRoche said first professional would be the Recreation Director, second professional would be the Assistant Director and the third would be administrative staff.

Selectman Jasper said the devil is in the details and he can't promise what he will support without knowing the details of the proposal. They do a pretty good job of balancing wants and needs. They are servicing about 9,000 residents, not 16,000 so to get the 16,000 to pay for the 9,000 can be difficult. There are a lot of parents involved in there, so that number jumps up, but most people recognize that they won't be parents and many of them would rather pay for something for a few years than forever, so they need to continue to balancing act of having reasonable fees to support the activities, so it's going to depend on what they come in with and how they fund that and what the impact is to the taxpayers. Claremont has parks and recreation in there, but Claremont is one of the towns that sued over education funding and if you follow that around, they don't bring in any revenue from their program. They, apparently, feel everyone should pay for their schools and nobody should have to contribute to their parks and recreation. It's always interesting to see how people do things and what their thought process is, and that one is very interesting because that's a town of 14,000 people. Selectman Maddox added and a \$15 million budget.

Selectman Jasper said he did support what the Recreation Committee was doing, which was long overdue. They are all committed to trying to work with them to move forward because they do have to. He's mindful of the demographics and to a large degree, Hudson's population of students has leveled off and not likely to grow any time in the future. The overall populations may, but he didn't think the student population would, at least that's what the school district is projecting for the next few years. He didn't think it would behoove them to be too aggressive in over-building, which is what they may have done with the school system a few years ago.

Mr. Regan said they put this together and bounced ideas back and forth a number of times. Sometimes they put blinders on. He asked if any Selectman had anything the committee might not be addressing—programs, demographics. They basically put down what they thought of, but are open to suggestions. They could add more programs. The goal is to build the programs, bring in more citizens. That's what they pay taxes for. Selectman Massey said this weekend, he noticed in the paper that the college crowd has started playing Kittage on the ground, so maybe that's something they could look at. Mr. Regan said they'd look into that.

Selectman Jasper said, relative to an earlier comment by Selectman Maddox that recreation isn't really the purpose of government, he didn't think it was in their best interest to go out there looking for things to start or do, necessarily. They should be responding to the demands of the clientele. When people in significant numbers are looking for something, the Rec Department should hear about it and the Selectmen should hear about it, and right now, they are not. It is better to do what they do well than to try to do too many things and do them all poorly.

Selectman Maddox said or expensively. What he's looking for from the Rec Director is a calendar of the things that are going on in town, rec-wise, hopefully, something that is already existing on the web site, to give them some sort of idea of those programs, the hours and the amount of people in them so, again, in a month, you can look at a calendar and say OK, you did soccer or basketball or whatever, this is a night time issue, 200 people, 27 people. Again, the Board just doesn't have those kinds of numbers to facilitate... they have the programs and revenues. What time does that take? The basketball program runs 12 weeks? Mr. Yates said basketball runs from mid-October and is just finishing up. Selectman Maddox said OK, so the amount of time that takes up, so they can, again, look at what those programs are and how they involved they are and what kind of time they take up. Again, he's not exercising much, so he's not using the programs, but it's something they need to be educated on as to what the programs are and what amount of citizens are using them.

Mike Mell said he had a question for Selectman Massey in regard to the Seniors and the Recreation people reaching out to them, and also to Selectman Jasper in how to incorporate them and welcome them into the Recreation Department. Do you, as a Board, know how much revenue they bring in, as a group? Would that be something they could look at by talking to them? The Seniors got a raw deal this year, and there is some bad blood. The Seniors seem to feel they got a bad rap from the Rec Department and, as a new guy sitting on the committee for only two, three weeks, he recommends leaving everything at the door and open dialogue with them. He knows Selectman Massey has worked a lot with them. How does the Rec Department reach out to a body of people that don't want to reach out to them—as he has learned in the last few weeks. How do they incorporate the Seniors and get dialogue going? From what he has heard, the Seniors feel they are being pushed out by recreation. He sat with the Seniors for 14 hours at the polls and these are all things he has heard. He didn't know the history, other than what he has heard. He thinks the Rec Department has gotten a bad rap in regards to forming dialogue with the Seniors. The Rec Department has opened their arms to the Seniors to see how they can work under one umbrella. If the Seniors don't want to talk to Dave or to the Recreation Department, how do they approach them? What is the direction the Recreation Committee should take?

Selectman Massey said the Seniors have a Board of Directors called the Hudson Senior Council on Aging. A member of that Board considers himself to be the liaison between the Seniors and the recreational programs, and that is Lee Lavoie, so it might be worthwhile for the Rec Center to have a conversation with Lee and any other people from that Board of Directors. They don't want to go do programs without at least having some consideration for them. They were surprised to find out that donuts were being served to seniors on a weekly basis. They said, "What are they trying to pull?" Talk with Lee Lavoie to get some of his thoughts because he shares some of the same concerns about wanting programs that are supported by everybody in town.

Mr. Mell said Lee Lavoie is a great guy, level headed and welcomes ideas to make Hudson a better place. He has no problem reaching out to Lee Lavoie, or any of the Seniors, to find out their concerns, and try to leave all of the bad stuff in the past and try to move forward. They have to start fresh somewhere and have open dialogue, either one on one or one group with the other. He could reach out to Lee Lavoie, but he could say no, or yes. He wants to know from the Board how to approach the Seniors to open up dialogue, and touching base with Lee Lavoie is a good plan, a good start. He was concerned because at the meetings, he hears all of the past, all of the history. He's only been in town five years, so he's more open-minded. They are all going to be seniors one day, some faster than others, but he senses tension, and there shouldn't be any.

Selectman Massey said there is another consideration. That organization has been in existence for at least 30 years, and they've been reasonably successful with what they have, with the programs they have. Some of them are quite successful—the trips, the Bingo, the line dancing. Those are the ones they tend to talk about as being successful. Anything that would open a dialogue, but would be conscious of the fact that that group, as a group, has accomplished a lot on their own. The operating costs of the Community Center are paid by the town. That organization does not pay for the use of that facility. It was estimated that their proportionate share was \$15,000. Any dialogue has to start from the premise that they've been reasonably successful. What their issue is that in order to expand their programs, they need a place to do the kinds of things seniors are engaged in today, and the current facility has never lent itself to expansion to those types of programs. How do they expand programs for the seniors, above and beyond what they have? That's where the dialogue should start. Ultimately, there is the funding mechanism. He was surprised to find out today that the Nashua Senior program is totally self-funding. If they don't generate revenues that are equal to or greater than their expenses, they are in the hold. The city is not providing them any financial support, so they are doing all sorts of interesting things to raise money to pay for all their programs. This is an organization that is proud of what they have accomplished and they just don't want to see it ignored.

Mr. Mell asked ignored by whom. Selectman Massey said pick one. It's to recognize that this is an organization that has accomplished a lot in the past. They are constrained in what they want to do in the future because of lack of facilities to do it in, and therein is where the solution lies. How do they find the facilities to have them do the things they want to do. When he says "them," they don't want to constrain it just to an organization called... contrary to what some people might have thought, the warrant article to build a senior center was not a warrant article for an organization called the Hudson Seniors, a private organization. That was going to be a public buildings, managed and controlled by the Board of Selectmen and one of the major occupants of that facility would have been this organization. It is a private

organization, but they have a lot to contribute. An open dialogue with Lee to start with might help, and be aware that they are very proud, and rightly so, of the things they've accomplished to date, on their own.

Selectman Coutu said one of the things they've got to realize is that, as a town, they are trying to do something that not too many towns have tried to do in the past. Recreation and senior activities have always been separate functions. Tonight, they've talked about uniting the two groups. He is looking in that direction only as a cost savings measure, as opposed to any other reason for doing it. The ideal situation, to save money for the town, is to have a joint venture and, as such, it would no longer be known as the Recreation Department. They would have to come up with some sort of a community title, if they go in that direction. In terms of bringing some sort of unity between what seems to be an adversarial relationship between the Recreation Department and the Seniors, he'd like to see it come to an end—if it exists. They don't know their committee liaison assignments yet. Regardless, he has listed the Recreation Department as one of his choices, but that's up to the chairman. He knows he's the junior member, and others may want to be liaison to the Rec Department. Whether or not he is liaison to the Recreation Department, or with the Seniors, he told the Recreation Director after meeting with him, that he will do whatever he can in the next year, for the length of his term, to unify both groups. He has some ideas on that, and one of them is a unity breakfast. He would support and would help to raise money to put together some sort of unity breakfast and invite a limited number of seniors—about four or five—in the core group, and four or five people from the Recreation Committee and have someone serve as a moderator. That would go a long way to bringing both parties together to try to reach some sort of consensus. If that consensus is both groups go their separate ways, then that's the direction the Board will have to take because they can't force upon people that which they do not want and nothing will work if that's the attempt of the town, or the committee, or the seniors. It needs to be done in a unified way and the first way they will resolve the problem is to get both bodies together somehow, and a unity breakfast usually works. He would go in that direction, he would support it and would hope that his colleagues would, too. If the majority objected, he wouldn't pursue it because he respects the body, as a whole.

Selectman Jasper said Selectman Coutu has picked up on an important point, and that is the name of the committee, to begin with. They have already branched out and are doing more than recreation with their current activities and there is other recreation in town, some of it through the management of the Conservation Commission with various trails and whatnot. Perhaps, if they are looking at encompassing senior activities, a name change would be appropriate, such as the Department of Community Activities. That's something the committee needs to be comfortable with and should talk about, and when they come back to the Board, see if they want to have a name change and how that fits into their overall mission statement.

Selectman Massey supported Selectman Coutu's suggestion and the conclusions to be reached.

Selectman Maddox said this is the dialogue the Selectmen need to have. The Selectmen need to decide if they are going to set up a separate senior committee or if it's going to fall under the rec program. He has no heartburn about Selectman Coutu's program to get them together to see what they think, but they need to be cognizant of the fact that, according to federal standards, there are 4,000 seniors in the town of Hudson. If there are 100 or 50 that are using it presently, they are missing out on 3,900 citizens. They need to look at, not only this group—and their trips are great and whatever it is they are doing—but all programs that will benefit 3,900. That's his concern. A building, a fancy name for a committee, it's really where they are going to go with this, but he has no problems getting the two together. If they are not going to work together, there are issues that can't be resolved, then the Board can't squish them together and hope it flies. He is in support of what was said, but they need to be cognizant of the fact that it's more than the 100 or 200 in his particular group. The citizens of Hudson over age is 4,000. Hopefully, they can take some discussion of this item going forward.

Selectman Jasper said that is why it's important that, regardless of how the meeting turns out, if it does take place, although it would be nice for everyone to meld together and move forward, that this is a private organization that decides what it wants to do, based on the needs of those people who run the organization. They are not, nor should they be, trying to represent the whole town. That's the Selectmen's job. While he wouldn't say they should duplicate things they do, they might want to look at things in a different light. He hoped they could move together, and this was the problem that came up in March. Ultimately, it's a private organization looking to do a public project and they never came together on agreements or understanding on the details—and the devil is always in the details. Good luck!

Chairman Nadeau asked if there were any closing comments from the committee. Mr. Regan thanked the Board for its time. They struck a few nerves and got some dialogue going, and that was the ultimate goal—start the back and forth ideas. The committee's ideas may be far-fetched, but the Board of Selectmen is the springboard. The committee just wants to know if it is doing a good job. They seldom have any complaints about any of their programs. Ms. LaRoche said it was nice to open the dialogue this evening and they appreciated the Board's input and, hopefully, they were appreciating the committee's input, as well—but they don't want it to stop with tonight, so when do they come before the Board again, and how do they continue this dialogue?

Selectman Jasper said it will be through the liaison. When the committee is ready to come back, it will be arranged through the liaison and the chairman. Chairman Nadeau agreed.

Selectman Maddox said he'd thrown the shark in the pool. One of the things that did happen was they displaced the seniors that use the Community Center in the summer. He asked if Mr. Yates has located a replacement home for them for this year, saying that was something he should be doing. Since the Rec Department has put them out of there, it is incumbent upon the Rec Department to find a place to put them. They need to get working on that.

Selectman Jasper said that would be helpful and the first thing would be to talk to the people at the Legion and see what the actual usage was over there during the summer because, perhaps for those nine weeks, Oakwood may work. They went there, but veered off because of the numbers, but what he is hearing is those numbers may not really necessitate a hall any bigger than what Oakwood holds. If that doesn't work, the Legion seemed to work and maybe arrangements could be made for that to continue.



Chairman Nadeau said one of the things with the summer program, and with the seniors going someplace else, maybe they should look at Oakwood as one of the places for the summer. There is no school; there is plenty of parking across the street. That's one of the things the Recreation Director should look at for the summer. Mr. Yates said the first year the seniors were displaced, the Board had recommended using Oakwood. He contacted the state health officer to ask about bringing meals into the Rec Center. He said it would be fine for the nine weeks, so that was the recommendation three years ago. For the last two years, the seniors, on their own; they got the VFW and then last year, they went to the Legion. The Rec Center is not used in the summer, so that would be the recommendation. It is handicapped accessible; it holds 200 and there is plenty of handicapped parking in front of the building and, with school not in session, there is plenty of parking at HO Smith School and on the street. If the Rec Center isn't suitable, he can try to find another place, if that is the direction of the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman Coutu said the liaison assignment is going to be critical, no matter who it is, to try to help resolve some of these things. He would like to pursue the idea of a unity breakfast, as quickly as possible, and maybe they can resolve a lot of these things and get both of these groups unified, in some way. They can at least get a dialogue started and maybe the seniors will be a little more receptive. He's been to Oakwood and sees it as a viable alternative for the nine weeks and thinks it could work, but it's a mindset that needs to change and he's willing to work to achieve that.

Selectman Maddox said he agreed with Selectman Jasper; they need to find out some details. Three years ago, when they wanted to move the seniors to the Rec Center, that caused more ill-will than anything. That's one of the things "you" can do to bridge that gap back again. The Rec program doesn't just say "you're displaced," but "we have found a home that's, hopefully, acceptable," rather than just leaving it to "us" to go find another place. The Rec Director is the person that should work on that.

Mr. Malizia said two or three years ago, they did offer, they did price out places, they looked at other options and to be blunt, they are a private group and didn't want to go there. They town couldn't make them, and they chose to go to other places, but the town still paid the insurance for them for those two years. If a private group doesn't want to do something, the town is hard pressed to make them. This has come up before, and maybe the unity breakfast will resolve it, but when you get to a certain point, you get set in your ways—and they didn't seem to want to go to the Oakwood facility. It was offered; accessibility and the cooking facilities were looked at, and they would be able to be serviced there. The offer was made, but the want to the VFW on their own—but the town is willing to work with them.

Selectman Massey said it was important to determine what the needs are and his recollection of three years ago was there would have had to be some things changed at the Oakwood facility. It may have changed since then, but it comes back to the fact of what it is that will be used. An example of the issues are that on the day they do their meals on wheels from St. Joseph's, it's the same day they have line dancing, which means somebody has to be there to set up and take down the tables that are used for the eating portion, etc., so there are a lot of logistics issues, no matter where it is at, but especially if it's going to be in a town property. That conversation needs to be had, relative to the things that they do. Are they capable of being done in that facility today?

Ms. LaRoche said she was part of the Recreation Committee when they came before the Board three years ago when the issue came up about using the Community Center versus Oakwood, for safety and liability issues. Steve outlined the fact that the committee did do due diligence to try to assure the seniors that the building at Oakwood was ample for their needs. Last summer, the committee tried to extend an olive branch. They said they would have summer staff go to the facility to set up the tables and break them down; whatever they needed to have done at the Oakwood facility, the Recreation Department was willing to do. They tried to run a Bingo game last year with the seniors and the kids, trying to pull them together, and two seniors showed up. They are trying to do what they can. In the past, it may or may not have been done, but the Recreation Department has a lot to offer the seniors, and the seniors have a lot to offer the kids. It can be a win-win situation. The Board of Selectmen and Recreation Committee are committed to that. If the unity breakfast works, it will be wonderful. They are all aware of the needs of that population, and they want to help. They don't want to replace what they are doing; they want to assist what they are doing, improve upon it and take some of the burden off of them. That's the purpose behind the proposition to bring seniors in underneath recreation. It's time to do something like that in this town.

Chairman Nadeau thanked the Rec Committee for coming tonight and looks forward to seeing them on a future agenda. Ms. LaRoche thanked the Board for its input. They've been sent off in a direction, they will do their research and they will be back.

Chairman Nadeau declared a brief recess at 8:50 p.m.

## 5. OTHER BUSINESS/REMARKS BY THE SELECTMEN

**Town Administrator** Selectman Maddox said, as a new Board, he'd like to look at the Town Administrator. Over the last few meetings, he has seen stuff coming before them that isn't ready for prime time. The Town Administrator should be given the task of checking to make sure some of this information is correct and ready. The Fire Department came in with three year old information. They had a public hearing about eminent domain and they sat there and drowned because the consultant wasn't prepared. The department head that was there didn't come up. The Town Administrator should have more authority from the Board to look at the items and not put them on the agenda, unless they are ready.

Selectman Jasper said they've had similar conversations in years past; he's not sure if it was with Steve or with Paul. To the degree that can be done, it should be done and probably is being done. He didn't know that the questions that came up at the public hearing relative to the land taking could have been anticipated. He didn't think about it until that night when he heard the back and forth and the concerns and the discussions. It was painful, but didn't know if it could have been avoided. As far as the Fire Department coming through with the same numbers, he didn't give that any thought. He saw the numbers. It's hard to know what somebody is going to pick up on. To that degree, he hopes Steve is looking over the information and formulating questions to determine if something is ready to go forward. It's going to

happen. There isn't any way to avoid it. That's what they do. They flesh out issues and talk about them—sometimes until the horse falls over. That's just part of what they do.

Selectman Maddox said but they should do it less. They need to spend more time like they did tonight. This is the type of thing they should be looking at—where is it the elected officials believe they are headed? Not trying to deal with the minutia that the Town Administrator should be doing more of. They need to release some of that to him. He, personally, believes that the Community Development Director should have known where that conversation was going and had someone here who was prepared, rather than the Board spending 45 minutes trying to dig out of a hole that they just didn't have the answers to. Those are the kinds of things the Town Administrator should be looking out for. Again, no one thing, and he has the greatest respect for what Steve does every day, but the Board needs to spend more time on this type of issue, looking forward, talking to their committees because they have the time to do that because they are not talking about a hot dog stand for five meetings and those kinds of things that tend to bog them down.

Mr. Malizia said he killed one of those things already; he stopped it at the gate. When he can, he does, but part of it is this form of government. The Selectmen are the elected officials, the governing body. He has made it a practice to try to keep a free flow of ideas. Sometimes that is painful and sometimes it is ugly. He does work with department heads and does counsel them and does recommend certain things, but conversely, they also report to the Board and give the Board valuable information. He's not qualified, for example, to be the Chief of Police. If the Chief has a program or a proposal, Mr. Malizia tries to point out the benefits or the detriments to try to guide the Chief of what will work in the packet, or may not work, but if the Chief has an idea or a proposal or a program, Mr. Malizia said he has been very cautious not to censor them. Obviously, there is a lot of minutia that goes through, but some of it may just be because of this form of government. He's not a Town Manager, nor is he aspiring to be; he's not trying to usurp anyone's power. The Board has a lot of power, which is clearly seen during the budget process. There are things that, if he was in a different position, may vet differently, but when folks want to come forward with their discussion item to the Board, he feels that they and the Board should have a dialogue about it, under this form of government. He respects what they are saying about double-checking things, and that's always an area that can be improved upon. They can work harder and make sure things come as cleanly as they can to the Board. They're not perfect and isn't saying they don't make mistakes, but he's always been careful as to censoring. This democracy requires a lot of free flow of information. The Rec Committee came in tonight and one of the spread sheets had an error in population. To be blunt, he didn't pick it up. He sees hundreds of pieces of paper that go across his desk. Sometimes things are going to get through. He apologized in advance because it will happen. He's probably caught 200 other errors, but they'll never know what he catches unless he gives the Board a stack of paper and says, "look at all the mistakes I found." He didn't want to make anyone look bad, and he didn't want to make himself look better. He was just trying to insure the Board gets a free flow of information that sometimes is messy and sometimes doesn't work out. As Selectman Jasper said, he didn't think that, on some of the issues that Mr. Jordan brought up—he's not sure he was citing from factual information; he had all kinds of things he was throwing up to the Board. He didn't disagree that they could have had a chart that could have had some better delineation of what they were doing, but conversely he didn't want this government to grind to a halt because of trying to anticipate every contingency, and give them a stack of paper, and have every expert come in and have the lawyers come in because someone might ask a legal question that can't be answered. He will try to vet the information more thoroughly and try to cut down on errors and/or items that may not be clear because clarity is important. When he writes a memo, he keeps it to a page and condenses it to digestible bits. It's something they all need to work on. Perhaps some of the presentations the department heads make need to get to the core of what they are trying to do and maybe not put so much stuff out there that nobody knows what the heck they are talking about any more. They can really get out of line, but he respects Selectman Maddox's point. While he doesn't mind staying on top of things, his concern is that the free flow of information may not be there. He doesn't want to be the cog that drives this form of government to a halt by saying he won't give the Board anything until it is all perfect. They'll be having some very short meetings.

Selectman Massey said he was in the same ballpark as Selectman Jasper on this. First of all, as he learned early in the process, the Town Administrator is not codified in the state statutes and, as such, the Town Administrator has no legal authority to do anything. The only thing he has the authority to do is what the Board delegates to him to do. Consequently, it's difficult under those circumstances to be effectively nothing comes to the Board except it going through the Town Administrator and vetted. If they were in a different organizational structure, that would be a different issue. Where possible, the Town Administrator has, as he indicated, vetted a lot of material and, quite honestly, he didn't believe that any of them could have ever anticipated what they heard on the eminent domain case, simply because until the individual brought up the technical minutia about the metes and bounds, when he looked at the drawing, he could see what they were talking about. What wasn't there was a before and after overlay. He understands, but overall, they seem to be doing a fairly good job. They need to be looking at the future, and that's what the workshops are intended to do. They had that impact last year. They wouldn't accomplish much if everything that to be vetted through the Town Administrator and the first time it went awry—well, it just wouldn't work out. He is in agreement with Selectman Jasper.

Selectman Jasper said he had a few remarks. He knows full well that when you find yourself in a hole, you should stop digging. However, anybody who knows him knows he's never been afraid to pick up a shovel and dig. He also knows he's damned if he does and damned if he doesn't, so he's going to talk about three things and probably find himself sorry for saying anything, but at some point, he needs to say what he needs to say.

**The Phone Call** The first thing is to the Chairman. He ran into a friend of his, and probably a friend of the Chairman, as well, that he has known for more than 30 years, and this person told Selectman Jasper that the Chairman told the friend that Chairman Nadeau tried to get a hold of Selectman Jasper between Tuesday and Saturday, and that Selectman Jasper wouldn't return the Chairman's calls. Selectman Jasper said the Chairman knows his numbers, and didn't call Selectman Jasper on those numbers, so he was disappointed in that. He didn't know what the Chairman was attempting to do in doing that, expect to make him look more magnanimous and make Selectman Jasper look bad. That wasn't necessary. He is sorry that happened. Some people will say he should have spoken to the Chairman in private, but he didn't know how many other people were told the same thing, and he wanted to clear the air on that. If the Chairman had called him, he would have taken the call, but that did not happen, and he's sorry for that.

**The Handshake** The second thing is there are a lot of people who have been critical of him for not shaking Selectman Coutu's hand the night that he came in for an interview. He and Selectman Coutu have had a good conversation about that last Friday, and Selectman Coutu understands a little better of where he was coming from. It's very difficult when you have a family. He's been ground through the sausage mill in this town for 28 years, but when you have a child in the school system, who is very aware of what's going on, it becomes much more difficult. He never said Selectman Coutu said anything hurtful about his family, and the record reflects that he (Selectman Jasper) said it was hurtful to his family. When you have a family you love and things affect them because of the position you're in, it's very difficult. While he understands where Selectman Coutu was coming from with his series of letters, it was nonetheless difficult at times because of his daughter. When he (Mr. Coutu) stepped up—and a lot of people didn't hear it—he said "Sir Richard," and then he said, "Sir Ben," and as an emotional person, he (Selectman Jasper) wouldn't be doing this unless he was passionate about this town and passionate about what he believes in, and people criticize him for that and call him immature. That night, if someone took a pin and pricked his ears, there would have been blood on the ceiling. He's not going to apologize for being passionate about what he does and how he feels about things. He did the best job he could that night and what he believed was the right thing for him to do that night. He hoped that people can understand that. That's the way he is and he can't change that. It makes him continue to strive on and continue to work for the best interest of the town, in every capacity he has. Because of that, he doesn't put in enough time on his business, at times. With his family, it causes stress, but this is his community, where he has always lived and where his family has been for generations, and he wants to do the best that he can. He is not going to always be successful in that, and hasn't always been. If anyone thinks that they have always been successful in what they've done, and always made the right decisions and it has always worked out right, then run for the Board of Selectmen because they are a better person than he is. The Thumbs Down column is the worst thing a community could have because it allows people to attack anonymously. It would be great if they just had a Thumps Up column. People, like Board members, are on display, including their warts, for everyone to see, but people can hide behind anonymity in that column and that's not helpful for any community.

**The Letter to the Editor** Lastly, there was a letter to the editor a couple of weeks ago, and he gives that person credit for signing their name to it. The only thing he would say there is that person held a position in town and last year, when they were making an appointment, it was made well known by that individual that if they did not appoint the person that she wanted, she would resign her town position. The Board did not, and she did. He respects that position. Anybody who has the conviction to say there are certain circumstances under which I will not serve, and I'll let you know up front what they are, the Board, armed with that information, made the decision and that person stuck to what they had said, and he respects that. He doesn't understand how a person who took that position could criticize him for his level of emotion and his reaction to that. That is totally baffling to him, but he thought people ought to know the whole story behind that, as well. He thanked the Board for listening, saying he'll be prepared for all the Thumbs Down for his remarks. Perhaps he dug his hole a little deeper, but so be it.

**Construction Work at Library & Central Streets** Selectman Massey said he wanted to keep the townspeople aware that effective April 14, weather permitting, the signalization of the intersection of Library Street and Central Street will begin.

**Elected Officials don't always please Everyone** Selectman Maddox said they probably almost all agree they are not the brightest people in town because they put their names on the ballot. They make mistakes. They are human. They are on live television. There are no re-dos. He is glad Selectman Jasper is on the Board; he brings knowledge and a passion. Sometimes, it's a passion he (Selectman Maddox) may not like, but that's the package, and the five of them, with the exception of Selectman Coutu, put their names on the ballot. Other people wouldn't do it because they know the Thumbs, the letters—they can't make everybody happy. They are elected to make decisions, and they make them, and sometimes, in hind sight, they wouldn't be the ones they went with, but it's always interesting.

**The Conversations** Selectman Coutu said this is his second meeting, the first full week of serving as a member of the Board of Selectmen, and he and the Chairman have not had an opportunity to sit down for any lengthy discussions, he is looking forward to doing that in the near future. Selectman Maddox came to him, as did Selectman Massey who phoned him to arrange a meeting, and though brief, they had great conversations and made him feel very welcomed and he felt very comfortable with both of them. He'd go out to have a beer with then any day. Know that they are going to make progress for the town. With regards to Selectman Jasper, they happened to meet last Friday, per chance, in the Selectmen's Office and Selectman Jasper approached him and asked him if they could sit down and talk. Obviously, he was agreeable to that because he holds no animosity. After that conversation, his heart went out to Selectman Jasper because sometimes, though one puts a pen in his hand and he scribbles along what he thinks might be amusing to the average reader, sometimes he does so without thinking of the consequence of how it might affect other people in the lives of those people who you are writing about. He apologized to Selectman Jasper publicly; he apologized to him privately; he knows Selectman Jasper has accepted the apology. He understands fully where Selectman Jasper was coming from and he left their conversation with full knowledge that the two of them will strive to do what they will, as a Board, to make this a much better town and they will live up to the designation that was awarded the State of NH as being the best state to live in, and they will make sure that Hudson is the best town within the best state to live in. He thanked the Board members and Selectman Jasper, who approached him for their conversation.

**Unity Breakfast** Selectman Coutu said he got the general impression that the Board was in favor of a unity breakfast, but he'd like a consensus of such. It is something he'd like to pursue as quickly as possible, unless there is objection, and then he'll back off. Selectman Massey said his philosophy is that he who proposes, disposes. Chairman Nadeau thought it was a great idea. Selectman Coutu said he'd work through Steve and hoped all of the Board could attend. He'll get to work on it as soon as he can.

Chairman Nadeau looks forward to working with the Board and committees, hoping that they can get a lot accomplished this year. There is a lot to do, with the upcoming budget season. The Rec Committee has movie night coming up this Friday at the Community Center.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion to adjourn by Selectman Maddox, seconded by Selectman Jasper, at 9:23 p.m. carried 5-0.*

Recorded by HGTV; transcribed by Priscilla Boisvert, Executive Assistant

**HUDSON BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

---

Benjamin J. Nadeau, Chairman

---

Richard J. Maddox, Vice-Chairman

---

Kenneth J. Massey, Selectman

---

Shawn N. Jasper, Selectman

---

Roger E. Coutu, Selectman