

Town of Hampton



TOWN OF HAMPTON MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2008

PRESENT: William Lally, Chairman
Richard Griffin, Vice Chairman
James Workman
Richard Bateman
Richard Nichols
Frederick Welch, Town Manager
Atty. Mark Gearreald, Town Attorney

7:00 PM Chairman Lally called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

I. Announcements and Community Calendar

Mr. Workman thanked all Town employees for their diligent efforts through the crisis, which is still ongoing. The Friends of Lane Memorial Library will be holding a Silent Auction for doll clothes all proceeds benefit the Children's Room.

Mr. Griffin congratulated Wally's Pub for opening a new room and improving their property.

II. Appointments

1. Chief Silver deferred to the EOC Team in light of the situation.
2. Chief Sullivan, Chief Silver, & John Price, DPW – Unitil Power Situation Update

Chief Sullivan opened with bringing everyone up to speed on the Emergency Operation Center. They opened the EOC about 2:45 am on Friday morning dealing with road closures and significant impacts on the Town. Initially about 85 to 90% of the Town was without power. Since then the numbers have improved and the last numbers they received had about 89 to 90% with power restored. The EOC has been in constant contact with the State EOC. A shelter was not opened in Town due to the Red Cross not having enough staff. The Police Station was open for anyone who wanted to come in and warm up.

The Fire Department went door to door to check on residents mostly on the West end of Town since those residents have wells. Chief Silver received donations from Poland Springs, which were distributed to residents.

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Chief Sullivan introduced Mr. George Gantz, Vice President of Unitil.

Mr. Gantz from Unitil explained that this is an unprecedented event for the State and the Company. Unitil lost 100% of their customers in Massachusetts, 2/3rd of their customers in the Seacoast Region and 1/3rd of their customers in the Capital Region. The damage was very extensive. On Friday, all crews that they had, were deployed, and mutual aid calls went out to all neighboring regions. There are more crews being deployed from Tennessee and should be here tomorrow and deployed here in the Seacoast area. Power restoration is expected to be done to all the areas by Wednesday, with the exception of problems involving single service wires to individual homes. Every crew is working 16 hours on 8 hours off. He informed individuals that damage done to the wires on houses is the responsibility of the customer and they must bring in an electrician to do these repairs.

Mr. Gantz does not know the specifics of Hampton and but is happy to answer any questions.

Chairman Lally questioned the 98% that is on line and that the 11% that are still without power will be restored by Wednesday. Mr. Gantz confirmed that is the case, but that is the hardest to give an estimate of time but confirmed that the power will be on on Wednesday.

Mr. Griffin questioned if the homeowner should be deciding if they are responsible for repairs to wires on their property. Mr. Gantz explained that there is a process to have these lines tagged by Unitil but if it is very clear that the wire attached to the house is damaged the homeowner might want to find an electrician.

Mr. Nichols asked if there is someone that residents can call to see if they might have a specific problem to them or if it is a problem of the power company. Mr. Gantz stated that could not answer Mr. Nichols question on when personal would be able to address an individual homeowners situation. Chief Sullivan explained that we have numerous circumstances where power is active and the weather head is intact all the way to the meter but the eye bolts are ripped off the side of the house.

Chief Sullivan said residents can call the EOC and they will come out and take a look for determination. There are still some 24 to 25 streets that are still blocked and impassable because trees and power lines are down. This is the main reason that there is no school tomorrow.

Chief Sullivan also explained the safety concerns of using generators and other devices. He explained that the Fire Department has been out to survey the area and been great with instructing homeowners with help in using these devices properly.

Mr. Workman asked Mr. Gantz, if the Wednesday timeframe is based on using the same number of crews or if more would be coming. Mr. Gantz said that more crews would be coming to Hampton and it will be the Tennessee crews. Mr. Workman questioned Mr. Gantz that crews are not being pulled out of Hampton as the rumor has been going around.

Mr. Gantz stated firmly that they will not be pulling crews out of Hampton.

Chief Silver stressed that residents do not touch any down wires. They may appear to not be energized but that is an unknown, so do not try and move them.

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Chairman Lally complimented the EOC on a job well done. The Fire Department has been calling the Elderly, the Police are going door to door for wellness checks and DPW is out clearing the debris from the streets.

Chief Sullivan noted that the hours at the Transfer Station have been extended from 8 to 8 for the remainder of the week for collection of debris.

Mr. Price explained that starting tomorrow at 7 AM three crews will be out to cut down some of the larger limbs. Also, if people can put limbs out towards the end of the property the department will be by to pick them up.

Chief Sullivan reiterated that all perishables at this point should be disposed of and can be disposed of at the Transfer Station.

Mr. Bateman mentioned that if your property has been damaged you will want to document it and take as many pictures as possible. He also went on to point out that the crews are working as hard as they can to get the job done.

Mr. Welch let people know that if they are running generators that do not have an automatic disconnect from the power grid they need to make sure that their main switch is off. Also if you are running a generator please notify the Electric Company and the EOC.

Chief Silver added that residents need to be sure to turn the generator off when refueling and beware of carbon monoxide.

III. Minutes of December 08, 2008

Mr. Bateman MOTIONED to accept the minutes of December 08, 2008. Mr. Griffin SECONDED.

VOTE: 4-0-1 (Workman)

IV. Old Business

1. Town Manager's Report

- Bids were awarded to JCI Jones Chemicals, Inc., to provide Bisulfate at 99 cents per gallon and Hypochlorite at \$2.28 per gallon for the Wastewater Treatment Plant for 2009 and 2010. Jones Chemicals was the low bid of 3 bidders.
- The State Department of Transportation has notified us that the previous cancelled painting of the Tide Mill Creek Bridge has been rescheduled for work in the spring of 2009.
- The Town has been notified that the Route 1A Hampton Harbor Bridge will be subject to one-way traffic starting December 16th.
- The Town, through the Fire Department, has been awarded a FEMA Grant in the sum of \$57,948 for the purchase of personal protective clothing. A public hearing will be scheduled for December 22nd for the Selectmen to accept the grant. The Town's share of the cost is \$2,897.

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Questions:

Mr. Nichols clarified that it would be the south bound side of the bridge that was closed. He also suggested that when the other side is closed that some sort of signs be posted letting pedestrians know since that is the side with the sidewalk.

2. Other Old Business

Mr. Bateman brought up the topic of doubling the Land Rent on several properties at the beach. He would like to have a feeling from the Board to engage perhaps in a gradual increase rather than doubling. This might be a difficult time to do something like this and maybe a gradual increase might be a good idea.

Mr. Nichols commented on a letter that was received by the Board from the residents at 4 M Street. He has a lot of compassion for them with an increase of 55%. However he went on to point out that a mortgage on this property would be over \$7,000 annually and the leased land cost is \$4,430.

Mr. Bateman knows the increase is going to come but he does not want to see the casualties of this large increase.

Mr. Griffin explained that he has received so many complaints about the electricity but they always finished up with the tax increase. Many residents are complaining about the responses they are receiving from the Assessing Department. They feel that they are being talked down to by the employees in this department.

Mr. Nichols commented that the over 100 residents that are going to file a class action suit against the Town would like to meet with the Board. Mr. Nichols feels this would be a good idea. Mr. Griffin agreed.

The Board gave Mr. Welch permission to contact this group of 100+ residents to see if they would like to come in and meet with the Board.

Mr. Bateman would like to schedule one thing under Old Business for next week the gradual increase to Land Rent.

Mr. Gearreald explained that a warrant article would probably need to be drafted since the current lease states a 2% increase. The other way to address this would be abatement petitions.

Mr. Welch explained that due to the economy we might need to do a re-valuation.

Mr. Griffin asked when the next report would be coming from the Trustees of the Trust Fund. Mr. Welch explained that it would probably be coming out in January after the year is closed. Mr. Nichols suggested that the Board invite the Trustees in February or early March.

V. New Business

1. Authorization to ensure State Fiduciary Payments through legal action, if necessary.

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Mr. Welch explained to the Board that the State has a deficit and the Governor made an executive order on the 21st of November cutting a substantial amount of money out of the Department of Environmental Services. The Commissioner sent a letter indicating that they were not going to participate in any new grants for Landfill Closure Programs or for State Aid Programs for Wastewater Treatment. If this affects the current programs that the Town has the loss would be about \$50,000 for December and somewhere in the order of \$150,000 for 2009. One concern is that we have a number of Sewer Grants that all the paperwork has not been completed and this could cost the taxpayers an additional \$5.8 million.

Mr. Welch did stress that we do not know the States intentions and that we are just suspicious. The main reason for the suspicion is that the Town has not received the payment from the State, which usually comes on the first of December.

Mr. Nichols MOTIONED to authorization legal action, if necessary, to ensure State Fiduciary Payments. Mr. Griffin SECONDED

VOTE: 5-0-0

2. Mr. Gearreald brought the Board up to date on the status of the Retirement Systems new rule of including and making temporary and part time positions to participate. He explained that the initial rule has been rewritten since there was so much opposition. There will be a meeting this Friday to discuss this rule. The Board is in consensus to allow Mr. Welch and Mr. Gearreald to submit comments about this rule.
3. Draft Warrant Articles
 - a. Confirmation of Acceptance of Rosa Road and Warner Lane.
 - b. Authorization of Town Clerk to accept fees by Credit Card – Mr. Gearreald explained that RSA 80 allows the Town by ordinance to impose a service charge/fee.
 - c. Elderly Tax Exemption Increases – Chairman Lally read the draft.

Mr. Nichols suggested that on January 5th we have a list of all the warrant articles and the fiscal impact.

VI. Consent Agenda

1. Rotary Club of Hampton permission to hang banner for the "Third Annual Pizza Bowl"
2. Randy Radkay – Request for permission to open street this month instead of in April 2009
3. Dance Hall Permit and Pool Table Permit – Stacey Jane's at 9A Ocean Blvd.

Mr. Workman MOTIONED to move the consent agenda. Mr. Griffin SECONDED

VOTE: 5-0-0

VII. Closing Comments

Chairman Lally reminded residents that the Transfer Station will be open this week from 8 to 8. Public Works will pick up any brush that residents leave at the edge of their property.

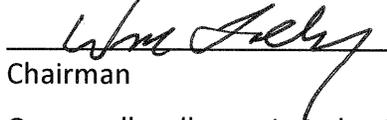
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Chairman reiterated what Mr. Gantz confirmed, but not promised earlier in the meeting; that the power will be restored to remaining 11% on Wednesday

Mr. Griffin MOTIONED to adjourn. Mr. Bateman SECONDED.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM


Chairman

On a roll call, motioned with all members present and voting unanimous, the Board of Selectmen entered into to a Non-Meeting with Legal Counsel under RSA 91-A:2, I, c