

**Newington Board of Selectmen
Meeting**

**March 15, 2004
Newington Town Hall
6:30 p.m.**

In attendance: Chairman Board of Selectmen Jack O'Reilly, Selectman Cosmas Iocovozzi, Selectman Jan Stuart, Building Inspector Charles Smart, Road Agent Leonard Thomas, Town Planner Tom Morgan, Laura Coleman, George and Ruth Fletcher, Surveyor, David Hislop and AA Cynthia Gillespie.

Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 6:25 p.m.

Selectman Iocovozzi made the motion to accept the minutes of March 1, 2004. Seconded by Selectmen Stuart. Vote 3-0.

Report of Perambulation

A report on the Perambulation of Municipal Boundaries between Portsmouth and Newington was presented by Town Planner Tom Morgan, Surveyor Dave Hislop and Building Inspector Charles Smart. The Perambulation was reviewed and accepted by the Board of Selectmen. Selectman Stuart made the motion to sign the Perambulation document that will be recorded with the Town Clerk and the State of NH. Seconded by Selectman Iocovozzi. Vote 3-0.

Miscellaneous

Ruth Fletcher, resident, presented her concerns to the Board. Mrs. Fletcher's main concern was the letter that had been sent out the week of March 5th and the use of the words "misinformation" and "detailed and correct" in italics and underlined. She inquired who had written the letter. Chairman O'Reilly said that it was a joint effort, by the Town Hall Staff and the Board reviewed it. Mrs. Fletcher then asked who wrote the paragraph at the top of page two. AA Gillespie said that she wrote it. Mrs. Fletcher asked, "Where did I get this paper from?" AA Gillespie said that she gave it to Mrs. Fletcher. Mrs. Fletcher said, "Then who gave me the misinformation?" AA Gillespie responded that the misinformation was not given from herself to Mrs. Fletcher. The misinformation was given to the public. AA Gillespie added that had she known that Mrs. Fletcher was going to publish the information, she would have given her a more detailed break down in the first place. However, it would have taken longer to get Mrs. Fletcher the information.

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Mrs. Fletcher asked how the two reports are different. AA Gillespie answered that the second report is a more detailed breakdown. AA Gillespie continued by saying that Mrs. Fletcher is a professional person that has worked in Town governments for 20-30 years and understands the information she was looking at. To send that information to the general public, some of whom do not understand the information, than a better break down is necessary. The information published is misleading to the common person. Mrs. Fletcher objected to this and said that she didn't think it was misinformation. She added that the bottom lines are the same. AA Gillespie said that was incorrect, the bottom lines are higher than what they were originally. Mrs. Fletcher said that was only because AA Gillespie added in the retirement, and in her original letter Mrs. Fletcher had stated that the retirement was 13.44. AA Gillespie said that was correct. Mrs. Fletcher then said the other difference was two people who got an extra \$500. AA Gillespie said that the \$500 was taken out of the annual base wage column. AA Gillespie added that the annual base wage is a combination of things and before Mrs. Fletcher published this information Mrs. Fletcher came in and asked what was included in the annual base wage and if outside detail was included in this figure. AA Gillespie told her that it was. The information was published without notation of the inclusion of outside detail in that figure. The information that was published made the employees look like they made more money than they did.

AA Gillespie stated that in the Town's payroll system, wages such as outside details and emergency management are listed under annual base wage. To get the outside detail broken out, AA Gillespie had to go to a department level. AA Gillespie said that if she had known Mrs. Fletcher's intent to publish the information she would have be glad to have taken the time to break down the detail. Laura Coleman asked if benefits were included on the same line that made it appear that people were making more. AA Gillespie responded that the annual base wage on the first report had other wages included in that number. She pointed out, as an example, Roy Greenleaf's annual base wage. On the first report his annual base wage is listed as \$52,344. On the second report his annual base wage is actually \$49,644. The reason for this is that in addition to his annual base Chief Greenleaf receives \$2,700 from emergency management. In order to get this break out AA Gillespie stated that she had to go to each department and have them pull out every payroll to get these figures. AA Gillespie said the only way to see the distribution of the wages is to look at the General Ledger. Getting this information from the payroll system was the quickest way to get the information for Mrs. Fletcher.

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Mrs. Fletcher asked how the numbers were different. AA Gillespie answered that the numbers are higher because of retirement. Ms. Fletcher said other than that she did not give out misinformation. AA Gillespie continued that the footnotes that were published in the Newington Neighbor were also a problem. The footnotes indicated that only one person received vacation pay. AA Gillespie said that the vacation pay for that person was something that the Board of Fire Engineers gave to that person because he couldn't take his vacation last year. AA Gillespie added that everyone received vacation pay last year. It would not be reasonable to think that none of the Police Officer's took a vacation. AA Gillespie said that vacation pay is included in the annual base wage column. Mrs. Fletcher said that AA Gillespie just broke it down more, and her published report was not misinformation. Mrs. Fletcher stated that the word "Misinformation" is defined as erroneous information. Mrs. Fletcher asked AA Gillespie if she felt the information was erroneous. AA Gillespie responded no, but it was not enough information and that it was misleading. Mrs. Fletcher said that the letter didn't say that, it said misinformation and was underlined and in italics. Mrs. Fletcher said that she resented the implication and feels that it was done deliberately. Chairman O'Reilly said it probably should have said misleading information as opposed to misinformation. He added that some people reading what Mrs. Fletcher had published would think that the Town's employees are millionaires and they are not. He added that the letter had been toned down from the original.

Mrs. Fletcher said she knew where the original came from and implied that Selectmen Stuart did too. Selectman Stuart asked for Mrs. Fletcher to address this issue. Selectman Stuart said that she had nothing to do with writing the letter. Mrs. Fletcher asked than who wrote the letter. Chairman O'Reilly answered that Secretary Brenda Foster and AA Gillespie wrote the letter and he reviewed it. Mrs. Fletcher said, "Wait a minute, the letter says "The Board of Selectmen." AA Gillespie said that information was gathered from the departments and compiled into this letter. Mrs. Fletcher said that she was surprised that somebody who is an accountant would put net worth in the letter. AA Gillespie answered that she didn't put that in there. Mrs. Fletcher said she knows that it was from David Low because she heard him use it at the Town Meeting. Selectman Stuart said that one of the worst things in this Town is when people assume certain things. Selectman Stuart said that she agreed with the letter and supported it. However she does not support or agree with the letter that Mrs. Fletcher had written and published. Selectman Stuart added that she didn't agree with Mrs. Fletcher going to Fosters and the Portsmouth Herald. She said if Mrs. Fletcher had a problem she did not make it known at the Public Hearing or at any of the budget meetings or in any way to the Selectmen. The first knowledge of this problem came from reading the newspaper.

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Selectman Iocovozzi said the biggest problem is the wording. Mrs. Fletcher agreed and said that the Selectmen sent the letter despite the wording. AA Gillespie added that everything that goes out of the Town Office gets approved by the Selectmen before it is sent out. Chairman O'Reilly said he read the letter and made comments. Mrs. Fletcher objected to the wording. Selectman Iocovozzi said that there is a misunderstanding on the wording. Mrs. Fletcher said that she believes it was done deliberately and was meant to be a slam. Mrs. Fletcher added that when she came into the Town Office on Thursday that Brenda couldn't get out of her chair quick enough to get in AA Gillespie's office and shut the door. Another time AA Gillespie came in the back door and scooted over to whisper to Brenda. So she knew it was done as a deliberate slam.

AA Gillespie said that she tries very hard to be accommodating to Mrs. Fletcher and George Fletcher and everyone else in Town. However, she feels that from day one there has been nothing she could do to please Mrs. Fletcher. AA Gillespie said that she goes out of her way to put whatever she needs to be working on aside to get information to people who ask for it. Ms. Fletcher asked if AA Gillespie didn't think that was part of her job. AA Gillespie responded "absolutely, I agree", but when all she gets is criticism she doesn't want to try as hard. AA Gillespie added that she has always gotten excellent reviews, every where she has worked. She doesn't know what else to do to make Mrs. Fletcher happy. Mrs. Fletcher said well, this situation certainly doesn't make her happy. AA Gillespie said she has feelings too and has done the best she could do and has never had as many problems working with people as she does here. She has never had this problem anywhere else. She offered to supply Mrs. Fletcher with a list of references. Selectman Stuart and Chairman O'Reilly both interrupted and said that AA Gillespie does not need to justify her credentials.

Laura Coleman said she was not pissed off, just concerned. Assumptions have been made on both sides. Selectman Stuart said that at public hearing everything was explained. Laura Coleman never compared the two documents and her concern is that the numbers don't match the budget and that payroll doesn't give the break down. AA Gillespie said that there are payroll registers that she maintains for payroll that the Treasurer doesn't get. The departments keep the break downs (vacations, sick pay, etc.). This information is kept on a departmental level. Even when ADP payroll was used the information was kept at a departmental level. The breakdowns are listed on the edit sheet which is then proofed. After the checks are cut the payroll register is printed and reviewed. Mrs. Coleman asked to have holiday pay explained. Chairman O'Reilly said

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police work holidays and at the end of the year get their holiday pay for the holidays worked all at once. Mr. George Fletcher said he checks the pay stubs and glances at the hours and pay rates to check for mistakes. He is concerned about there being mistakes in the payroll. He requested that the payroll records be made available to him, so that he can check for errors, before he signs that checks. He added that anyone can make a mistake.

Mrs. Coleman said that comparing the documents and budget just didn't match. AA Gillespie said that something that has to be considered is that budget lines can be for more than one person. The general ledger gives the detail of what is charged to each budgeted wage or salary line. She added that the figures can be justified by running a detail report of each salary account and matching the figures back to the individual payrolls. Mr. Fletcher asked AA Gillespie if she accepted the payrolls from the fire and police departments as gospel. AA Gillespie said that yes she does, because the department heads sign off on all payrolls and she does not have jurisdiction over the department heads. Mr. Fletcher stated that the payrolls are not being checked. AA Gillespie stated that if the department heads are signing off and there is something fraudulent going on then the department head would have to answer for that. Mr. Fletcher said that he did not feel there is anything fraudulent going on however there needs to be additional checks. Selectman Iocovozzi said that the RSAs are very specific that once the department heads sign off on the payroll its part of their budget and their responsibility. The department head has the responsibility to spend their budget as they see fit and as long as they do not go over the bottom line. AA Gillespie said that the payroll is done by the secretary of the department and than reviewed by the department head and then Secretary Brenda Foster and AA Gillespie. She added that one good thing about bring payroll in house is that there is more checks and balances in the payroll process than with ADP.

Mrs. Fletcher asked why the break down of Town Employee Wages weren't in the Town report. AA Gillespie said that it was always done in Rye but hasn't been done in Newington is a long time. Chairman O'Reilly said there is no law saying it can't be published in the annual report. Mrs. Coleman asked if bi-weekly newsletter to announce Public Hearings could be sent out. She added that it was disappointing how many people showed up to the Town Meeting. Selectmen Stuart stated that she feels that things are changing and that not as many people either have the time or are interested in Town Meetings. Selectman Stuart said that it would be extremely expensive to sent out notices every time and that is why the Town Office posts things on the bulletin boards in South Newington and at the Town Hall. She added that she agreed with Laura that the

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attendance was disappointing, but she does not believe the notices would make the difference.

Chairman O'Reilly said that at Town Meeting he was asked about the investments accounts reported in the Treasurer's report in the Town Report. There was no number on the investment line. He said that he did not have the answer. He asked Mr. Fletcher if there was a mistake or had something been over looked. Mr. Fletcher said that the difference between the new checking and the investment account interest is only about .35%. Chairman O'Reilly asked if the Town uses the Public Deposit Investment Pool (PDIP). Mr. Fletcher said that he does not use it because right now it is giving less interest. He added that times have changed, there is no to very little interest. Also, he added that he has to keep the funds available, there is no sense putting the funds into a six month CD, because the Town needs to be able to use the funds. Mr. Fletcher explained that the Towns accounts are now being insured by the Federal Reserve. The Bank of New Hampshire pledges their Trust Funds monthly to the Federal Reserve. The Fed backs up to \$5,000,000 of the Towns funds in Bank of New Hampshire with secured Bonds.

Mrs. Fletcher said that she thought since the letter was from the Selectmen that it was written by the Selectmen. Selectman Stuart said that Mrs. Fletcher should know that with the volume of work being done in the Selectmen's office the Selectmen would have to sit in the office every day. That is why the Selectmen hired an administrative assistant. Mrs. Fletcher said that the Selectmen paid the administrative assistant to have a letter go out the fire department. Selectman Stuart said that she's not going to try to make Mrs. Fletcher happy and that she will defend Cyndi's job 100%. Selectman Iocovozzi said that he asked AA Gillespie about the wording and that AA Gillespie had explained to his satisfaction. Mrs. Coleman said this was a major letter that people read and it should have been looked at by all three Selectmen. Selectmen Iocovozzi said that the letter should have been signed.

Chairman O'Reilly made a motion that the Newington Board of Selectmen gives a vote of confidence to Cyndi Gillespie in the job she's doing. Moved by Selectman Iocovozzi. Seconded by Selectman Stuart. Vote 3-0.

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Road Agent, Leonard Thomas asked if he should start replacing the Town road signs. The Board of Selectmen told him to go ahead and start ordering them.

Chairman O'Reilly said it is time to establish the Building Advisory Committee. The Board reviewed the listed of names of those interested in the committee. The representatives from other committees are as follows:

Keith Frizzell	Recreation
Gail Pare	HDC
Kay Akerley	Conservation Commission

Members appointed by the Board of Selectmen are as follows:

Chris Bellmare
Laura Coleman
Richard Spinney
Rick Stern

Chairman O'Reilly said he will be the Board of Selectmen's representative. He asked that a letter be sent to those chosen that states that the committee will be chartered for 1 year, expiring April 1, 2004. The purpose of the Building Committee is to review and evaluate the plans proposals done up by Austin Architect and to report to and advise the Board of Selectmen of their findings. The first meeting will be Monday, March 29th at 6:00. AA Gillespie was instructed to write the letter and the Board will sign it.

Signatures and Approvals

The MS2 report was reviewed and signed by the Board.

A State of New Hampshire Department of Safety Grant Reimbursement Application for the Fire Department was approved and signed.

Selectman Stuart made the motion to accept and approve the Veterans Credit application from Thomas Mills. Seconded by Selectman Iocovozzi. Vote 3-0.

A Report of Appropriations Actually Voted was approved and signed.

An Abatement Application for Hawkeye Funding was approved and signed.

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A memo from Tax Collector Jane Mazeau was read regarding Kathleen Reinhold and her lack of resident tax payments, since 2000. Selectman Stuart made the motion to abate Ms. Reinhold's Residents tax of \$40.00. Seconded by Selectman Iocovozzi. Vote 3-0.

A contract for the Newington Summer Program with the YMCA was reviewed and signed by the Board.

A release deed for an easement to PSNH was reviewed and signed.

An appointment for Gail Klanchesser as alternate to the Planning Board was reviewed and signed. Mrs. Klanchesser was sworn in.

Town Hall Use

A Town Hall Use form for PSH Track Team for a March 18th event was approved and signed.

Selectman Iocovozzi made the motion to appoint Jan Stuart as Chairman of the Board of Selectmen for 2004. Seconded by Selectman O'Reilly. Vote 2-0.

Adjourn 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia Gillespie
Administrative Assistant