

Newington Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes

**October 25, 2006
Newington Town Hall
6:30 p.m.**

Accepted 11/20/06

In Attendance: Chairman O'Reilly, Selectman Stuart, Selectman Iocovozzi, Administrative Assistant Beatrice Marconi, George Fletcher, Al Smith, Tim Field, Dennis Hebert, Jack Hoyt, Joe Mitchell, Guy Young, Lenny Thomas, Mike Goot, Bob Spinney, Lisa Zhe

Pledge of Allegiance

Truck Purchase

Chairman O'Reilly opened the meeting by giving a brief synopsis of all that has happened so far with the discussions to purchase a new plow truck. He spoke of the initial funding request of \$58,000 in Cap Out Lay. He spoke of the many discussions at various meetings that included the debate, should it be a big truck or small truck. A committee was formed for the Town's needs which was headed by Treasurer George Fletcher and had members consisting of Jack Hoyt, Lenny Thomas, Joe Mitchell, Rick Stern, and Larry Wahl. RG Young was asked to be part of it but was busy the evening the committee met. They issued a report that recommended a big truck would be the better purchase. On Oct 16, 2006, the Board voted 2-1 to proceed with the purchase of the larger of the trucks. The Town had one come down for public viewing. The Board of Selectmen inadvertently signed a purchase order to buy the truck, but was reminded that a part of the motion was to put the truck out for bid and that that action should not have occurred. The Town contacted State for their vendor list and contacted several truck companies. Of those we contacted, the Town received a price from Peterbilt, Freightliner and Liberty. The Town has the State vendor list which, thru our research discovered that Peterbilt should have been on the State Contracted Vendor list but wasn't. Freightliner, Liberty and Peterbilt all give the State discount to municipalities. Our purchase policy indicates that we don't have to go out to bid if, in fact we are dealing with State vendors, however, the Town did seek other prices. Liberty was \$58,280; Peterbilt was \$62,564; Freightliner was \$61,267.

Selectman Iocovozzi asked how this went from a replacement truck to an additional truck and stated that's where he had a problem with getting another size truck.

Chairman O'Reilly stated that he felt as if this was the plan they went to the budget committee with. He thought all along it was to be an additional. Selectman Iocovozzi disagreed. He said it wasn't until Selectman Stuart remarked what would happen if one breaks down, did the Board start thinking along those lines. Al Smith read off minutes from the Budget Committee's Public Hearing where it stated the Town was buying a new truck.

Selectman Iocovozzi asked his question again, how the town went from a replacement vehicle to an additional vehicle.

Selectman Stuart stated that it was asked at one of the meetings, where would the town be if the only big truck the town has breaks down. That's where the idea of being better safe than sorry comes in, as it would be too costly to rent – like a road grader. Selectman Iocovozzi went on to say again that it was for the replacement of the Tonka. He remembered a conversation whereas

he was asked what that truck was worth, which he didn't know. He also remembers being asked if it was better just to keep it, and again, at the time he did not know. He felt we told the budget committee it was replacing the Tonka and that it was what we told the towns people.

Rick Stern, a member of the Truck Needs Analysis Committee could not attend but relayed his thoughts via a letter which stated it was his opinion that it would be a wiser buy to get the big truck vs. a small one because of the demands of people these days to keep the roads always clear.

Selectman Iocovozzi asked the Chairman to explain what happened Thursday night when the truck from Liberty was here for a viewing. Chairman O'Reilly went on to explain that because there was a motion passed to buy the larger truck and the announcement of the viewing on Thursday, he assumed it was a continuation of Monday's meeting and he felt the Board was justified in signing a PO. It was later brought to their attention that this was not a valid meeting and on the 23rd, the Board voted to invalidate any business taken on Thursday, the 19th.

Selectman Stuart thanked the truck analysis committee on a good job. George Fletcher mentioned the report produced. Chairman O'Reilly thanked them for a fine job.

Dennis Hebert asked why a truck too big to fit in the garage was being purchased and why the truck wasn't measured before isn't a well thought out idea.

Lenny stated that the big truck we have now fits. He is not sure if the new truck & plow will fit in as he isn't sure out certain measurements. But feels the truck itself will.

Dennis added that this could become pretty costly if a new garage has to be built to house the new truck.

Chairman O'Reilly said that we now have a bay available as we got rid of the van and Selectman Stuart said that the new truck & plow will fit. Jack added that long term, more than likely we'll see a warrant article to start a Cap Reserve to fund a Highway Facility down the road.

RG Young asked if the town used a back hoe/ tractor and if the town had considered putting a plow on the tractor. However, our tractor is used for pushing sand for the sander.

Dennis Hebert said he had no idea of the plans to buy a truck this year. Al Smith spoke of the Cap Reserve and the funding of the \$58,000 this year in Cap Out Lay for just that purpose. Jack added that years the town isn't slated to buy a cruiser, there is generally another item needed in another department so the town tries to plan it so that line never is a big hit and is generally funded for a needed purchase.

Jack Hoyt asked if it was a live bed. George answered by saying yes. Jack Hoyt then asked if modifications could be made to the old trucks to help the shelving. George said it was possible. Jack Hoyt asked the Board to maybe consider modification of the older trucks in next year's budget.

Discussion was moved to how the bid packages were sent out. Selectman Iocovozzi stated that he doesn't feel as if a package can be put together and sent out in two days due to the fact that they didn't know what they want. Al Smith thought that it could be done; ie: here is what we are looking for, so give us a price on something comparable. Al went on to say that if the statistics of the truck were included in the packets then the town is looking for a truck with similar specs that

could work. Selectman Iocovozzi then said that basically we got a price from one State vendor. Beatrice Marconi added that two others had been approached directly from the State Contract list but didn't respond. The others that did respond gave the State offered discount to municipalities of 27.9%. All specs were faxed out to the various vendors for comparable prices. Liberty is on State bid list for parts. Freightliner should have been on list but wasn't and Peterbilt only communicated via fax so we don't know if they in fact do have a current contract with the State. Hilltop couldn't respond on time and Grappone didn't answer. 5 vendors were contacted.

George gave an overview on the new engines. With all of the upgrades and controls there was a predicted increase in the amount by \$5000.00 for purchases next year. Selectman Iocovozzi said that he thought the price may drop over time and that the motors would be better – but felt he had a good argument.

Selectman Iocovozzi was asked how long he felt it would take to put together a good bid packet and responded by saying 6 or 7 months then added that it generally takes firms 2 or 3 days themselves before they respond.

Chairman O'Reilly said that when he scheduled tonight's meeting, it was going to be held contingent upon receiving a reasonable amount of bids and if we hadn't, it was going to be put off until we did.

Dennis Hebert asked 'why the big rush'. Generally bids go out for 30 days. He asked if there were any promises made that the people should know about.

Selectman O'Reilly said this has been in the works for many many months. Selectman Stuart added that there were only 2 trucks in the area available. She added that we are saving approx \$30,000 with this discount. 27.9%. George added that this figure is off the dealer cost. And we should try to take advantage of this engine costs vs. next year's engine cost.

Guy Young asked if it was true that the town is not required to accept the lowest bidder. Chairman O'Reilly answered yes. Guy went on to say that sometimes buying the cheapest is not necessarily the right purchase. Selectman Stuart stated that the Board is putting a lot of faith in the committee's recommendation. Selectman Iocovozzi says we should look at the slots of trucks to replace. He felt the committee members really weren't buyers.

Selectman Iocovozzi asked if the town has enough truck now to keep up. Lenny Thomas answered by saying; currently we have been able to keep up, but, with the new roads coming and considering the age of our current vehicles, he feels we do need a big truck now. Lenny stated that the Tonka is good for the cul-de-sacs. We did lose McIntyre twice due to weight as our trucks couldn't keep up. Selectman Iocovozzi says the Tonka should have gone in this deal as the replacement truck.

Selectman Iocovozzi stated that when the Town of Newington takes over the new roads a big truck won't be needed. He feels that the oldest truck should be replaced first with the purchase of a small truck. Then next year put it in the budget for consideration. He feels as if the town should wait a year to see if a truck purchase is even necessary. Lenny stated 3 trucks go out each storm.

Al Smith added that he feels that buying a small truck this year and then buying a big truck in 1 year or in 2 years would hurt the town and put a horrible burden on the town by buying a small one this year and next year come back to the people for a big truck. He says it was his opinion,

from a legal stand point it was perfectly acceptable to utilize the Cap Out Lay for a truck purchase, and utilize the Cap Reserve for out fitting of that truck. He says we should plan for the future now.

Chairman O'Reilly said as part of this process, he did go to the Budget Committee to get their opinion as to whether it was right to buy a larger truck now as - originally planned on was a smaller truck purchase with Cap Out Lay. They responded by saying if the current need shows a larger truck is necessary, then certainly the proper equipment should be purchased in the best interest of the town.

Guy Young said we will need to replace a small truck as out fleet grows older. We should plan for that even if we are adding to the fleet.

Selectman Iocovozzi said no one has a crystal ball to determine the needs of the town. No body knows. We could use a grader for certain areas or possibly privatize portions. Selectman Stuart says that's not a way to go but Selectman Iocovozzi thought it should be a consideration.

Selectman Stuart stated that the town of Greenland has done that and they spent \$200,000.00 or more by doing it that way. Selectman Iocovozzi stated that that's because Greenland has 67 miles of road to take care of.

Selectman Iocovozzi hoped the town would stick to the plan. We have 7 CDL license drivers. He referred to an insurance list and asked Lenny about it.

On an unrelated note: Selectman Stuart mention that she received a call from resident who needed help and Lenny was driving his trash truck and he stopped what he was doing and assisted this resident. Selectman Stuart just wanted to say kudos for that.

Chairman O'Reilly stated that there were 12 residents here tonight, and that we could probably have 12 different opinions on the matter. We could second guess and discuss and debate all night. This has been going on for months. We heard the committee report and took a vote. Jack said he is making the best decision he could and if people want to second guess, they can do so til the cows come home. Selectman Iocovozzi asked the committee if their recommendation to buy a new big truck was for this year or next? George and Len both felt their recommendation was to buy one now.

Selectman Iocovozzi stated his concerns were CDL licenses, weight on the road, Tonka is older now, and money. He does not want the town to use the Cap Reserve incase something major is needed to be replaced or repaired.

Dennis Hebert again questioned the need for a big truck now. Selectman Stuart explained that with the expansion onto Gosling coming, the taking over of Nimble Hill and Shattuck, it is important that the Industrial Corridor stay open and safe. If a large truck breaks down, the rest of the fleet could not even keep this side of Newington open.

Al Smith spoke of the Cap Out Lay line that states for the purpose of the purchase of a truck but did not stipulate 'replacement'. Al Smith felt the Board was within it's authority to utilize the Cap Out Lay as planned and the Cap Reserve as planned. We may not all agree with everything however, he personally felt the Selectmen satisfied the requirements necessary to show the tax

payers they did their research and made a conscious effort to make the decision they felt was best.

After further discussion, ***Selectman Stuart moved to approve the purchase of the plow truck from Liberty International, not to exceed the amount of \$58,284.00, and to fit up by H. Fairfield not to exceed \$54,300.00. Chairman O'Reilly seconded the motion.***

Selectman Iocovozzi still disagrees both with the committee's recommendation and the Boards' decision to spend this money.

Chairman O'Reilly said he wished we all had that crystal ball, unfortunately we don't but we just try to do our best.

The debate continued regarding size and need until the Chair had to call discussion closed as the issues were previously considered over the last several months. Road Agent Len Thomas ended by saying we should look at the vehicles at the fire station; the trucks and ambulance. It's not that they are used on a daily basis, but it is sure good to know they are there when the need arises.

On a Roll call vote 2-0, ***motion passed to approve the purchase of the plow truck from Liberty International, not to exceed the amount of \$58,284.00, and to fit up by H. Fairfield not to exceed \$54,300.00. with Selectman Iocovozzi voting against the motion.***

Motion to adjourn came from Selectman Stuart at 7:46pm with Selectman Iocovozzi seconding. Motion passed 3-0.

Respectively submitted,

***Beatrice Marconi
Administrative Assistant***