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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
June 1, 2011
Meeting Room A**

Present: Philip J. Miller, First Selectman
Norman M. Needleman, Selectman
Joel B. Marzi, Selectman

Philip Miller called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion was made by Philip Miller to approve the Agenda with removal of Item 6B Park and Recreation Commission Capital Projects. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion was made by Philip Miller to approve the May 18, 2011 Meeting Minutes with the correction that the meeting was opened in Meeting Room A and reconvened to a larger room to accommodate the crowd. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

Motion was made by Philip Miller to approve the May 19, 2011 Special Meeting Minutes. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

Communications and Correspondence: None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Suzie Beckman reported from the 4th of July committee, that the parade would be Monday the 4th. They would be stepping off at 10 a.m. The parade route is from the piano factory, right on Ivory, left on Comstock, left on Main Street to the green. It is rain or shine.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

FISH (Friends In Service Here, Inc.)

Mr. Henry May reported on FISH which gives residents who live in Essex, Deep River, and Chester rides to medical appointments. They currently have 46 drivers. In 2010 they gave 766 rides. This year through May, they are serving 28% more people than a year ago. It averages 10 rides per person. Most people have no other transportation, so they use this service. This service has a \$7,500 budget each year. Currently they do not need money, but some day they may. The drivers themselves contribute their time and funds. It is a great service. Drivers are well known and friends of friends. Most drivers will assist people into the medical facility as well. Mr. May stated that the drivers find this a very rewarding service. This program started over 40 years ago. Mr. May stated that unfortunately this service cannot take people with wheel chairs because they cannot accommodate them but walkers are ok.

Mr. Marzi stated this is great volunteer work.

Park and Recreation Commission Capital Projects – removed from agenda

OLD BUSINESS

Pension Plans

Ellen Whaley on the Retirement Committee and Deputy Treasurer Kelly Sterner came to present the Town of Essex Retirement Plan. The committee requests they submit this plan to the selectmen for their approval and the committee would like to have this plan in place by July 1, 2011.

Ms. Whaley stated that components and amendments of the plan can be voted on in the future, rather than to re-open the whole plan for any changes that need to be made in the future.

Mr. Needleman asked how often the plan needs to be changed. Ms. Whaley stated that no changes had been made in over 10 years but the retirement committee will review annually going forward.

Mr. Miller stated that he is ready to endorse the Town of Essex pension plan.

Mr. Needleman stated that along with the revision of these plans, there are procedures for administering the plans for the regular town employees, the fire department, and the police. Ms. Whaley stated that Deputy Treasurer Kelly Sterner will be the person to go for forms for the retirement plans.

Ms. Whaley recommended placing recurring questions on the town web site so others can go there first to see if the question has been asked.

Mr. Marzi inquired if there was an annual letter going to employees. Ms. Whaley stated that it is not required in the plan and there would be a cost associated with doing that service.

Motion was made by Philip Miller to accept the Town of Essex Retirement Plan. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

Police Retirement Plan

Ms. Whaley reported that the police pension plan was reformatted and nothing much changed, it was just standardized. Nothing changed in collective bargaining. In Section 4.4 subsection F there needs to be a date. Ms. Whaley stated that the selectmen should set up a public hearing and a town meeting and place both plans on the web site. Ms. Whaley also stated that the preamble is no longer part of the contract. Ms. Whaley recognized Kelly Sterner for all her hard work on these plans.

Motion was made by Philip Miller to set a public hearing on Monday June 13th at 7:30 p.m. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

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Motion was made by Philip Miller to set a Special Town Meeting on Wednesday June 15th at 8:00 p.m. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

Parking Ordinance

Mr. Lee Thompson from the Economic Development Commission reported on parking issues in and around the Town of Essex. He suggested that on Main Street there are 22 residents and that they should get parking stickers/permit. That would leave 140 spaces for the entire town. He suggested the rest be open parking. Mr. Thompson stated that we are losing business due to the lack of parking spaces. Many cars are parked long term.

Another problem is that when Pratt Street floods we lose parking spaces.

Mr. Miller stated that we currently have an ordinance in place that is not being enforced. Mr. Thompson stated that we can do what Fairfield has done, hire a parking authority at \$13 an hour and all the parking ticket revenue would go to the town.

Mr. Needleman stated that he would like for all residences get parking passes and he stated that a lot of communication needs to occur with the residents downtown and to make sure this is publicized. Mr. Needleman suggested having an official study done on the issues and how the town would want to do an enforcement plan.

Mr. Thompson suggested that the parking enforcement primarily be during the 7 months of the year from April through October from 9 am to 6 pm. He suggested that the town could hire a part time employee whose salary could be paid from the fines.

Mr. Marzi stated that he would like see a cost analysis on this suggestion.

NEW BUSINESS

Appointments and Resignations Boards and Commissions

Motion was made by Philip Miller to appoint Leigh Rankin to the position of alternate member of the Sanitary Waste Commission. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

Motion was made by Philip Miller to appoint Leigh Rankin to the position of alternate member of the Water Pollution Control Authority. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

Waiver of the Permit Fees – Small Cities Grant

Motion was made by Philip Miller to waive the building permit fees for the Small Cities Grant project at Essex Court. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

Mack Lane

Fire Marshal Keith Nolin reported that on Mack Lane there was a large turning cul-de-sac in front of 30 Mack Lane which has been taken and turned into front lawn and parking

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spaces. There appears to be over 100 feet of area that has been converted. This section of road was a cul-de-sac with large trees in the center section. The trees and paving have been removed and replaced by lawn. The removal of the road could have negative impact on fire department response and positioning of apparatus in the event of fire. In 1955 deeds this property was referred to as the pentway and it is supposed to be a town road.

The Selectmen will have the Town's Attorney look into this section of road to determine if it is town property and to determine appropriate action to restoring the property to its original paved condition.

Sinking Fund Request – Essex Tree Committee

Motion was made by Philip Miller to recommend to the Board of Finance to appropriate a sum not to exceed \$1,300.00 for the purpose of additional plantings. Said sum to be taken from the Essex Tree Committee Sinking Fund. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

Public Comment: None

SELECTMEN GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Small Town Economic Assistance Program – STEAP Grant

Mr. Miller reported that the towns of Essex, Deep River, and Chester teaming up with one other to obtain a grant to acquire a Trolley Bus to serve the three towns. The application is due on June 23rd and will be for approximately \$271,000. The trolley will be wheel chair accessible, ADA compliant, with a bio–diesel engine. It will be called the Tri-Town Trolley. Every third trip will go to Deep River. The grant will include 5 bus shelters, a parking lot, and signage, and storage, etc. The ride will be fee based and it would provide jobs. Seniors may be able to ride for free. The application also put in contingency for 3 years to include drivers and labor.

Mr. Needleman stated that the Retirement Committee usually includes the fire chief and although he has submitted his resignation, the Selectmen would like to have Mr. Fazzino continue on the retirement board. Mr. Needleman stated that Ms. Whaley and Ms. Sterner have been vigorously working on getting these two pension plans completed by June 30th and he thanked them for their hard work.

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:58 a.m. Philip Miller seconded the motion. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria Lucarelli