

Suncook Valley Regional Town Association
Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: November 18, 2009

Minutes Prepared By: Bruce Dyke

In Attendance: Jim Barnard – Town of Barnstead - Selectman
Bob Blodgett – Town of Epsom - Selectman
Bruce Dyke – Chichester Town Organization Committee
Gordon Preston – Town of Barnstead - Selectman
Ed Vien – Town of Pittsfield - Selectman

Location: Chichester Grange Hall

Minutes Approved: February 18, 2010

- The meeting was called to order at 7:10 by Bruce Dyke
- The draft minutes of the September 17, 2009 meeting were reviewed and comments/changes were solicited. A motion was made by Ed Vien to accept the minutes as presented and seconded by Bob Blodgett. The minutes were approved by for attendees, with one abstaining.
- Bruce welcomed David Stack (Northwood's Town Administrator) to the meeting. Mr. Stack indicated that Northwood remains interested in joining the SVRTA despite a couple "false starts" from earlier in the year. Ed Vien asked if Northwood's BoS had formally voted to participate and David indicated that had not yet occurred. Bruce explained that although the SVRTA is an informal group, their practice to date has been to have participating town Selectboards vote before the SVRTA members would vote to accept another town into the group. David indicated that he'd address this with his BoS in advance of the next SVRTA meeting.
- Gordon Preston provided an update regarding his research into a possible bulk purchase arrangement for plow blade edges as discussed in earlier meetings. Gordon indicated that after initial data was collected from each town concerning types/requirements for blade edges, it became apparent there was more complexity involved in the process than first believed (it turns out that there are many more options than one would expect). Gordon, with the help of Barnstead's Road Agent will be contacting each town again for more specific requirements and a detailed matrix will be put together which can be used for future quote requests. Given the timing of this effort, it's likely this process will be of greater benefit for next winter.
- The group did a detailed review the (draft) consolidated responses from the recent Police Department Operations Survey. As part of that review, several additional (follow-up) questions concerning overtime policies, coverage

practices and requirements for officer's to live in-town were defined. Bruce will follow-up with each town's BoS with the additional questions in advance of the next SVRTA meeting. Overall, the group found the responses interesting and didn't see any major variances between each town. There was further discussion regarding comments added by Allenstown's Chief of Police, which pointed out the potential for variances or misinterpretation of the of the responses, which the group acknowledged and appreciated. Based on a prior discussion with Allenstown's Chief of Police during the September SVRTA meeting, during which the group learned that he had done a formal (college thesis) study concerning PD regionalization, it was suggested that Chief Mulholland be invited to give a presentation at a future SVRTA meeting on the topic. Any such presentation would be high-level and not attempt to define any specific consolidation plan, but could possible serve as a good starting point for an on-going dialogue on this topic between any interested towns within the SVRTA (this would be similar to a presentation given by Pittsfield's Fire Chief last year). Bruce will follow-up with Chief Mulholland to see if he has any interest in providing such a presentation. In addition, it was suggested that the Temple Police Dept. be contacted to see if they'd be willing to give a presentation on their consolidation with another town's PD.

- Gordon Preston asked the group if anyone had utilized labor resources from their respective county jail (prisoner work-release type program). Barnstead has made good use of such resources from the Strafford County Jail and has had good success. Recent use of those resources involve cutting and clearing cord wood from the tornado damage, which will be used by low-income residents.
- Each group member provided a bried summary of 2010 budget goals within their respective towns:
 - Barnstead – Flat budget
 - Chichester – Flat budget/no COLA
 - Epsom – Flat (most likely default) budget
 - Pittsfield – Level budget
 - Northwood – At least level budget, but possible reduced by \$400k, depending on 2010 revenue projections. No COLA
- Bruce indicated that he had been contacted by Ed Doherty, who represents Glacial Energy (an electric power supplier). Ed was referred to us from David Jodoin in Pembroke, who has been working with Ed on a possible utility contract. Ed indicated that Glacial may be able to offer a cooperative discount to the SVRTA towns, but would need to analyze power usage from each town. He was going to contact each town's administrator for the necessary information and follow-up with Bruce sometime in December. Depending on the potential opportunity, Ed may attend the next SVRTA meeting to present more information about Glacial's offerings.

- Jim Barnard provided the group with information concerning the Fire-Rescue Group Purchasing Program. Further details of that group can be found at www.firerescue-gpo.com
- Bruce told the group that he had participated in a panel discussion at the annual Local Government Center Conference earlier in the day. The panel discussion was specific to regionalization and was well attended and had a very good level of audience participation. As part of that discussion, an attendee from a seacoast town who attended a similar session last year indicated that she had put together an informal group comprised of Town Admins from area towns which has proven useful.
- Bruce indicated that he was going to contact the LGC to see if they had or could obtain a current list of all cooperative agreements that exist among NH based towns. Prior attempts to obtain such information from the NH Secretary of State's office yielded little information of value.
- The next meeting will be held Thursday, January 20th at 7pm. The location will be at the Strafford Town Hall.
- A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Gordon Preston and seconded by Ed Vien. The meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.