

**HYDE PARK SELECTBOARD
MEETING MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
December 22, 2011**

Members Present: Rick (Jim) Heath (RH), Chairman; Vice-Chair; Brian Jones (BJ); David Gagnier (DG) and Mike Dubie (MD)
Members Absent: and Roger Audet (RA)
Others Present: Ron Rodjenski, Town Administrator; Andrew Martin from News and Citizen; Green Mountain Access Ch 15 videotaped this meeting

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RH called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

1. Welcome and public comment. No public comment.
2. FY13 Town Budget – Hyde Park Fire Department – Chief Ed Webster reviewed the department's budget which is increased by \$1,450 after three years of level funding. The increase was primarily due to electricity costs that had been under-budgeted. Brian Jones suggested that the town go out to annual bid for all heating fuel used by all facilities; town garage, both fire departments and the library. Motion by MD to accept the budget of \$50,000 from the HP Fire Department. Seconded by BJ. Voting: 3 in favor, 0 against. Motion passed.
David Gagnier appeared at this point.
3. FY13 NEMS – David Gagnier expressed his concern for the amount of money spent on E-911 addressing and asked why it seems that emergency responders sometimes still have a hard time finding locations during an emergency. DG provided examples of delayed response by fire and rescue. He said he was recently told that failure to properly post the 911 number within view from the road could be a reason. Duncan Hastings offered that each responding vehicle should have had a paper map in the vehicle and NEMS should have GPS units inside each vehicle. DG will continue to review this issue with emergency services.
4. FY13 Sheriff's Department Budget and Services – Joint Three Town Meeting

Appearing for special discussion:

State Representative Linda Martin

Johnson Selectboard: Kathy Black; Margo Warden; Eric Osgood

Wolcott Selectboard: Bessie Martin

Eric Osgood opened the discussion and handed out a discussion points agenda with the 11/10/11 LCSD budget and then provided background for the reason for this joint meeting of the town boards; costs and services related to LCSD. One example Eric provided was a potentially costly event in which LCSD responded to an animal complaint and if LCSD had to take any corrective measures those costs would have been the responsibility of Johnson taxpayers. Recently, Johnson officials asked that the LCSD contract be amended to remove the requirement that LCSD officers take action in animal cruelty cases so any response to those situations would need to be taken by the State Police, deferring associated costs to the State instead of the Town. Sheriff Marcoux responded to that proposal by suggesting that all

three patrol towns agree on one contract to define the role of LCSD. Subsequent to that incident, Hyde Park and Johnson Selectboard chairs met and agreed to bring together the three towns to review the animal cruelty cost risk, the proposed FY13 budget increase and the overall need to evaluate patrol services provided by LCSD. Both chairs felt that due to timing, the FY13 budget proposal would not be impacted by these discussions but in future years, the towns could evaluate the pros and cons on the various types of patrol services that municipalities may want to consider. Those options included individually or jointly creating a municipal police department, continuing with or amending the LCSD patrol contract, contracting with the State Police or LCSD on a speed enforcement only contract, or contracting with another area police department. Duncan Hastings and Ron Rodjenski met with Sheriff Roger Marcoux recently and Roger had agreed to improve communications to the towns and the towns should bring issues to his desk as they arise. Duncan asked LCSD about adding a code enforcement officer position to LCSD and Roger stated it would add about \$80,000 per year since his current 6 position force can not add a significant amount of new duties or services. Duncan offered that basic services, such as speed control, were not a high priority to LCSD but it is in the forefront for towns. Jim Heath offered that the towns should be looking out 5 or 10 years, possibly through a new police committee, and not continue to move toward adding detective positions. Jim offered that the towns need more speed patrol, safety patrols and controlled costs because residents have asked for these services and costs, in Johnson for example, have tripled in a little over 10 years. Jim Heath offered that LCSD should consider no patrol hours between 2 am and 6 am to pay for the \$80,000 code enforcement position. Bessie Martin from Wolcott said her town has considered sharing time with the state police but she would recommend staying with LCSD because they are more prompt and just as professional. Bessie felt that LCSD does keep good track of finances. Rodjenski offered that both the LCSD and towns could continue to meet on specific services and try to gain a better understanding of associated costs. The boards wondered if salaries for the officers were spread out through the various revenue and expense budgets which support LCSD, such as the court, contract patrols, etc. and would mutual aid services, such as those provided at the Lowell Mountain wind project or neighboring towns that do not have police be reimbursed to LCSD to help lower contract towns' costs. Jim Heath asked if there was anyone present that thought the towns should be looking at another type of police agency now and he offered that the only way he personally would feel a need to look at other options is if Roger stopped working with the towns on these issues. Duncan offered that the NEMS contract could be a model to improve discussions with police services, in particular on the annual budget. Eric stated that if Wolcott said no to the FY13 budget then LCSD patrol service costs would need to be reduced but the services would still continue in Hyde Park and Johnson. Eric also advised that if either Hyde Park or Johnson said no then the service would stop as the other towns could not absorb the additional costs. Eric stated that the only full time patrol county police service is LCSD noting that because the Sheriff is paid by the State and the department's building is paid by the county the towns receive a good service for a reduced cost that is about \$250,000 less than other similar departments. Rodjenski reported that Roger responded to the goal of no increase in FY13 by saying that he had a number of years with no increase and he now needs to increase expenses. Jim Heath noted that the 4.58% increase in FY13 for patrol services seems ok with the condition that a committee be formed to look at a code enforcement officer, revenues and patrol costs along with the overall budgeting review with a report to the Selectboards before next year's proposal. Eric offered that volunteers to fill the positions of health officer, ordinance enforcement and animal complaint officer are hard to find but could be filled by one person in one full-time job in the county. Motion by DG to approve the LCSD contract at 4.58% increase for FY13 for voter approval. Seconded by BJ. Voting: 5 in favor, 0 against, motion passed.

Motion by Margo Warden to approve the LCSD contract with an increase of 4.58% from FY12 for voter approval at Town Meeting 2012. Seconded by Kathy Black. Voting: 3 in favor, 0 against, motion passed.

Jim Heath suggested that Roger Marcoux be informed that Hyde Park and Johnson are supportive of the 4.58% budget, and that the towns want to see improved communication and accountability. Duncan and Rodjenski will provide a written framework for a committee of three representatives, one from each town, to meet going forward. Eric will meet with Roger in the next few days to go over the discussions from this meeting. Jim Heath suggested that the process of evaluating police services should include the possibility that a new sheriff could be elected that does not want to provide patrol services.

5. FY13 Town Budget – North Hyde Park Fire Department budget. Roger Audet reported that insurance and fuel has gone up so they are asking for a small increase to keep up with those costs. MD asked about the size of the two buildings and why is the heating cost less than the HP Fire Department to which RA responded that NHP has a new furnace. Roger reported that Eden approved the budget for voter approval at Town Meeting as well as including an article for up to \$85,000 to support the purchase of a new or used fire truck to replace the existing truck which is over 20 years old. Motion by BJ to accept the NHP Fire Department budget. Seconded by MD. Voting: 5 in favor, 0 against, motion passed. Rodjenski noted that the article to approve the requested \$85,000 borrowing request would be reviewed by the board in January.
6. FY13 Budget - Overview of next steps in the budget process were provided by Rodjenski with final amounts coming to the Selectboard for approval at the Jan 12th board meeting.
7. Adjourn – MD motion to adjourn at 7:36 p.m. Seconded by DG. Motion approved.