

TOWN OF ALLENSTOWN  
Select Board  
16 School Street  
Allenstown, New Hampshire 03275

Minutes of Regular Meeting  
April 18, 2011

**Call to Order.**

The Allenstown Select Board Meeting for April 18, 2011 was called to order by the Chair at 6:00 o'clock p.m.

**Roll Call.**

Present on the Board: Jason Tardiff, Jeff Gryval, and Sandra McKenney.

**Others Present.**

Residents of Allenstown: Dylan Soule-Lambert, Katherine Soule-Lambert, Lee Cheney, and Michelle Fraser.

Others Allenstown Officials: Ron Pelisier, Road Agent; Carol Merrill, Budget Committee; Richard B. Merrill, Sr., Planning Board; Larry Anderson, Budget Committee/Trustee of Trust Funds; and David Coolidge, Budget Committee.

Other Public Officials: Jon Richardson, State Representative/Budget Committee.

Allenstown Staff: Paul Apple, Town Administrator; Robert Martin, AFD Fire Chief; Shaun Mulholland, Chief of Police; Robyn Cushing, AFD, Aaron Lambert, AFD, Chris Breton, AFD, Eric Lambert, AFD, Jeffrey Gardner, AFD, Victor Martin, AFD, Simon Fraser, AFD; and Keith Lambert, AFD.

**Citizens' Comments.**

The Chair called for citizens' comments. David Coolidge raised a concern about the lack of painted lines and the resulting safety issue on Deerfield Road. There was some discussion amongst the Residents, Chief Martin and Chief Mulholland, with questions as to who is responsible for lining the roads. The main concern was that someone was going to have a fatal accident if the problem wasn't addressed.

**Discuss Tri-Town Ambulance.**

Mr. Apple updated the Select Board by first reviewing that the Town of Pembroke and Tri-Town Ambulance had met with Allenstown Representatives in December 2010 to discuss what the future of the Ambulance service would

look like. A number of options had been offered to the Town with a request to get back to them after review with Allenstown's preferences, and this had been tabled until after elections and appointments were complete. At this point, he said it was time to make some decisions and respond.

Mrs. McKenney spoke up as a member of the Tri-Town Committee to inform the Board about her meeting with Tri-Town on Thursday, April 14. She said they are more than willing to meet with both Allenstown and Pembroke to figure out the next steps. She also offered her preference that all members of the Select Board be present at that meeting so to simplify the question and answer process. Mr. Gryval expressed concern, saying that although the basis of the December meeting (which he had attended as a then-member of the Tri-Town Committee) had been about how Allenstown might move on beyond Tri-Town, he wasn't sure he felt ready to go that route as yet. He said he felt they had provided fantastic service to Allenstown residents for over 30 years, and wanted to ensure that there would be no negotiations going on with Pembroke behind Tri-Town's backs, so to speak. He added that although he saw the reasoning behind seeking to provide more and improved services to residents, he didn't want to send any mixed messages to Tri-Town or Pembroke that Allenstown is looking to "do away" with Tri-Town.

Mr. Apple offered his recommendation regarding who should attend the proposed meeting that Mrs. McKenney spoke of; pointing out that policy development is better made in small groups and then brought forward to the decision makers to review and ask questions. The point was made that the general message coming from Tri-Town in December had been that they felt it may be time for Allenstown to "do something different", but Mrs. McKenney explained that their view seemed to have changed as of this recent meeting, possibly because one of their board members' tenure expires at the end of this month, and possibly because their financial situation had improved. There was some further discussion about who would attend the next meeting, with Mr. Gryval expressing that he thought one representative from each of the three entities would suffice, and Mr. Tardiff agreed this would likely be the best approach to the next step in the process.

At this point, the discussion was opened up to the public. Michelle Fraser expressed concern over the possibility of negative impacts should Tri-Town, being a business like any other, end up folding due to the economy after Allenstown goes forth with continuing with them. She wondered if Allenstown's Fire Department was prepared to cover emergency calls in the event that they are busy with other calls and cannot respond to a 911 call, as has happened in the past. Mr. Apple explained that the Fire Chief had been working to create a plan for just such an event, and had presented a multitude of his findings to the Select Board over the past several months. Mr. Gryval spoke up to let her know that despite rumors, Tri-Town was not on the brink of a shutdown. Further, he said that Tri-Town was exploring the staffing of a second ambulance.

Mr. Coolidge expressed concern over the effects that some of the proposals might have upon his already-high tax rate, citing the aforementioned acquisition of another ambulance by Tri-Town as one example. Mr. Gryval explained that this had been in the works for a long time now, with an overall effort to not affect the Taxpayers, regardless of the end result. He ensured all attendees that every single aspect of each possibility was being taken into consideration so as to best serve residents of the town.

The topic of conversation turned to a vehicle already in the possession of the Fire Department which could be used as a backup ambulance in the event that Tri-Town is unable to provide a timely response, and further, that every member of the Fire Department was in fact also certified as an EMT. This vehicle would need some work to be fit for such use but is 100% owned by the Town, therefore the cost of such work should be minimal.

Mr. Coolidge questioned the need for the added expense of a contract with an outside ambulance service seeing as a portion of his tax dollars are already paying for Allenstown to have a full-time Fire Department. Thereafter, a number of residents asked questions or responded at the same time and the Chair called for order.

Victor Martin asked if anyone had as yet investigated and recorded on paper the revenue Tri-Town generates and the revenue potential for Allenstown. Mr. Gryval replied that such things had in fact been explored and reported. With that, Mr. Martin explained that he felt the only way to quell the "back door politicking", nasty e-mails, and complaints that were circulating around town would be to make public these figures and statistics, possibly by posting the information on the town web site. Mr. Tardiff queried why the people who have these concerns and who are spreading uninformed rumors were not in attendance?

At this point, Mr. Apple interjected that all of these concerns were premature and not really at issue until there were actually some proposals on the table to consider. There were just a few more comments, mostly expressing concern that the entire town should be involved in making these decisions, but again it was pointed out that there needed to be specific proposals on the table before discussion of the finer points could take place. It was also reiterated by Mr. Gryval that there were several options under consideration, ensuring that when all is said and done, with everyone's input, the outcome would be whatever is determined to be the best option and give the best service for everyone in town.

### **Discuss Proposed Revised Solid Waste Ordinance and Recycling at Transfer Station.**

Mr. Apple explained that to create the revised ordinance (which needs to be in place by July 1, 2011), he had begun with the existing ordinance and made changes to allow the town to implement the recycling program that is required. He went on to say that since Ron Pelisier began the voluntary program of pulling approximately 10 tons of recyclables from the town's waste, the town had seen an average monthly savings of \$650.00 per month on disposable

waste tipping fees. He added that the shipping/disposal cost per ton decreases with recyclables separated out. Further, the market for recyclables themselves varies, with paper often being quite profitable and plastics less so.

According to past trends, this year the town is on track to produce 2,500 tons of garbage, but with the new ordinance, it should be realistic to reduce that number to 1,100 or 1,200 tons, offering a savings of about \$8,000.00 in shipping fees.

Outlining the plan he had discussed with Mr. Pelisier, Mr. Apple said it had a 3-pronged approach. Firstly, residents would go to the Transfer Station and separate their recyclables from their garbage into separate stations for each type of material. Secondly, they proposed consideration of a voluntary curbside recycling program wherein a truck circulates for collection one day per week, offering residents the opportunity to participate that way. The third part is the education aspect to inform residents about the new ordinance and to summarize the plan. Being as the cost to post this letter to every resident would be prohibitive at approximately \$1,200.00; he proposed that the Highway Department could instead deliver the letter and a copy of the recycling guidelines to each household as they did their rounds through town. Although this would take them some extra time, the cost of paying Highway Department employees for a few extra hours worked would be far more reasonable. In summation, Mr. Apple stated that with this approach, the town should see substantial waste hauling savings each year.

Mr. Pelisier added that eventually, they hoped to be able to use a more automated collection truck, or packer, rather than having two men riding through town on the back of the truck, as is the current practice.

The Select Board was generally familiar with the new proposal and all in agreement that it was a good direction in which to finally be going after the 2 years the Recycling Committee has logged working on it. In addition, it was noted that the Recycling Committee was putting together a presentation for the Select Board, and there was some question about when they may be able to do the presentation.

Mr. Coolidge expressed concern about the cost of having the collection truck travel through town an additional day per week, citing the additional wages it would entail and that last year the Highway Department had stated that the truck had only another 2-3 years life expectancy as it was. He used several surrounding towns as examples to make the point that Allentown would be the only town offering curbside pickup, a service that he felt was exorbitant for a town with 4,300 residents, the highest tax rate, and the lowest income per capita in the state. Mr. Gryval responded, pointing out that the cost of using the truck an additional day had been taken into consideration along with every other issue of cost and/or savings, not to mention that with residents participating in recycling, the use of the truck for regular trash collection would be decreased.

Further discussion between the Board and the Public mostly revolved around compliance issues and how recycling would be enforced, as well as some of the

different recycling options that had been considered by the committee. The Select Board took a few minutes to review the revised ordinance and ask any questions they had about the language used and what classes of roads would receive pickup service, as well as the effect of inclement weather on the pickup routes and the hours of placement for collection.

Once all changes were discussed and everyone was satisfied with the content of the document, it was decided to table Select Board approval of the revised ordinance until May 2, pending the addition of the agreed-upon changes to the text and the presentation by the Recycling Committee.

Mr. Pelissier asked about FEMA funds from 2010 which he thought were available for Road repairs but Mr. Apple said were in fact no longer available as they were lost if not used. This led to some discussion about which roads in town were slated for repairs and the encumbrance of funds for said work, as well as the resurfacing of parking space.

#### **Discuss Direction to Department Heads for 2012 Budget.**

Mr. Apple presented the next Agenda item, mentioning that the topic of giving direction to Department Heads had been requested by the Select Board in preparation for planning next year's budget. Mr. Gryval spoke up to say that he had been the main proponent of the idea, hoping to move budget planners to look not only at the year they are working on, but farther ahead; to ask themselves where we as a whole want to be and how to best get there. The theory behind his concept was to inspire the Department Heads to create their plans with the 'big picture' in mind, and for the Select Board to give them some vision for the future, offering direction beyond a short "No, go back and make it 5% less". Further, he pointed out that he did not think the budget should control the policy; in fact his thought was that the policy should control the budget. He offered that if everyone keeps the future in mind and does their job reasonably, using common sense and prudence as well as maintaining an economical frame of mind, the end result should be a workable and fair budget.

Next, Mr. Apple reported the first recommendation of the Department Heads when they had their first meeting, that being for all departments to forego across-the-board salary increases. He said he had asked them to develop a list of priorities as they each begin looking over their budgets. He added that there were some concerns raised over fixed costs and naturally occurring increases within some departments' budgets due to retirement, insurance cost increases, and various other factors, thus making across-the-board instruction difficult. The result will likely be some reduction of services, unfortunately.

There is to be one department excepted from the recommendation regarding raises, that being the Highway Department as their overall rate of pay falls below that of the surrounding towns. Mr. Tardiff asked if other departments' pay scales had been investigated and compared to surrounding towns as was done with the Highway Department. Mr. Apple responded that the other departments were closer to the average for our area, mostly due to efforts made

several years ago to bring them up into a more competitive pay range, listing the Police Department and Town Hall employees as some who received increases. The Chair asked just how far below the surrounding towns was our Highway Department's pay, and Mr. Apple replied using a Commercial Driver as an example. He said that the standard rate for a Commercial Driver is \$13.50 per hour, yet Allenstown drivers make \$12.00 per hour. Mr. Pelisier interjected to add that he would like to be able to bring his workers up to the standard pay rate once they complete their probationary period.

Mr. Apple also said that at the meeting, the general consensus around the table was that they should each submit as thrifty a budget as they are able to create to the Select Board, including everything that they believe is necessary for their department, then review the numbers with the Select Board and make changes as necessary.

Mr. Gryval reasoned that if everyone took the approach he had just spoken about, that is planning with the future in mind, over the next several years the town should see fewer and fewer drastic measures as have had to be taken for the past several years. Rather than having a list of Warrant Articles to have to deal with at voting time, large purchases will have been anticipated and budgeted for. Rather than waiting until positions have to be eliminated, pay rates cut, or taxes raised sharply to recoup a loss, taxpayers will know what's headed their way as long as each department keeps thinking ahead and creating a plan for fulfilling foreseen needs. Finally, Mr. Gryval expressed the importance of prioritizing needs at every level and continuously asking, "Who needs what the most?" As an example, he talked about how he had spoken to Mr. Pelisier prior to voting this year and asked if he would drop the Highway Warrant Article in order to acquire a loader, and he had agreed that the raises were of a higher priority.

It was pointed out that communication with taxpayers needed some improvement. Mr. Gryval reasoned that keeping the public informed about upcoming priorities would reduce shock value and make things go smoother at budget time, meeting time, and voting time. He added that ideally, town government would gain the trust of residents. He also elaborated on his prior comment that the budget should not control the policy; the policy should control the budget. He gave an example using the subject of earlier comments from a resident who had said that offering curbside trash pickup was a service that he felt was very exorbitant for a town with 4,300 residents, the highest tax rate, and the lowest income per capita in the state. Mr. Gryval made the point that if many residents agree and would prefer to save a few tax dollars by bringing their trash to the Transfer Station themselves, then they should tell their Select Board they want the policy changed. Board members all agreed that the best way for them serve the town would be to effectively lead a well-informed Public.

Conversation returned to the anticipation of reductions of services from many departments in response to limited funds. Mr. Apple made the tough point that everyone is trying to maintain the same level of service on less and less

money. Everyone readily agreed that cutting back on services is far preferable to cutting jobs from any department town wide.

The conversation was opened up to the Department Heads in attendance, and Mr. Pelisier commented about how much money the town could save if everyone did their part to participate in the recycling effort; he said it was just too much savings to lose by having a low participation ratio. Other Department Heads made various comments, but each ended up making the same point: Cuts were going to be necessary, and as everyone is already operating on a bare bones budget, they were unsure where to start. Mr. Apple spoke about the need for them to think creatively and not procrastinate when it comes to making the tough decisions, or in the end, they would be made for them, and nobody wants it to come to that.

A plan was agreed upon to give the Department Heads a couple of weeks to review their budgets and come up with some creative ideas about how to decrease their bottom line with minimal negative impact on taxpayers, then meet with Mr. Apple again to discuss what they'd come up with.

### **Abatements.**

Mr. Apple had several Abatement Requests for the Board's review and approval. After affixing their signatures where required, Mrs. McKenney made a Motion to approve the Abatement Request for 1 Sullivan Drive. Mr. Gryval seconded the Motion. A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Tardiff-Yes; Mr. Gryval-Yes; Mrs. McKenney-Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

Mrs. McKenney made a Motion to deny the Abatement Request for 48 Riverside Drive. Mr. Gryval seconded the Motion. A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Tardiff-Yes; Mr. Gryval-Yes; Mrs. McKenney-Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

Mrs. McKenney made a Motion to approve the Abatement Request for 9 Hamel Avenue. Mr. Gryval seconded the Motion. A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Tardiff-Yes; Mr. Gryval-Yes; Mrs. McKenney-Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

Mrs. McKenney made a Motion to approve the Abatement Request for 5 Bartlett Street. Mr. Gryval seconded the Motion. A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Tardiff-Yes; Mr. Gryval-Yes; Mrs. McKenney-Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

Mrs. McKenney made a Motion to approve the Abatement Request for 17 Valley Street. Mr. Gryval seconded the Motion. A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Tardiff-Yes; Mr. Gryval-Yes; Mrs. McKenney-Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

Mr. Apple had several Purchase Orders for review and approval, and the Board took a few moments to sign them.

**Meeting Minutes.**

The next paperwork business was to approve Meeting Minutes. Mr. Gryval made a Motion to accept the Minutes of February 28, 2011 as written. Mr. Tardiff seconded the Motion. A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Tardiff-Yes; Mr. Gryval-Yes; Mrs. McKenney-Abstained. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

After discussing 2-3 lines within the document, Mr. Gryval made a Motion to accept the Minutes of April 11, 2011 as written. Mrs. McKenney seconded the Motion. A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Tardiff-Yes; Mr. Gryval-Yes; Mrs. McKenney-Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

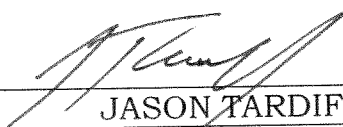

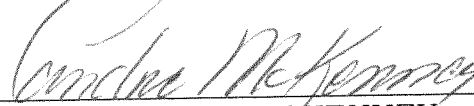
Mr. Gryval made a Motion to accept the Session I Non-Public Minutes of April 11, 2011 as written. Mrs. McKenney seconded the Motion. A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Tardiff-Yes; Mr. Gryval-Yes; Mrs. McKenney-Yes. The Chair declared the Motion passed.

**Adjournment.**

Mr. Gryval made a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 p.m. Mrs. McKenney seconded the Motion. A Roll Call Vote was taken: Mr. Tardiff-Yes; Mr. Gryval-Yes; Mrs. McKenney-Yes. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned.



**Signature Page.**

<b>Original Approval:</b>	
 JASON TARDIFF	5.2.11 DATE
 JEFF GRYVAL	5-2-11 DATE
 SANDRA MCKENNEY	05-02-11 DATE

<b>Amendment Approvals:</b>		
<b>Amendment Description:</b>		
	JASON TARDIFF	DATE
	JEFF GRYVAL	DATE
	SANDRA MCKENNEY	DATE