

*Includes two sets of minutes, one for 9:00 a.m. and one for 3:30 p.m.*

## GILFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MINUTES

November 20, 2006

Town Hall

9:00 a.m.

The Board of Selectmen convened in a special session with Town employees on Monday, November 20, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. at the Gilford Town Hall, 47 Cherry Valley Road, Gilford, NH. Selectmen present were Chairman Dennis J. Doten, Alice H. Boucher and Connie Grant. Also present were Town Administrator Evans E. Juris, Assistant Town Administrator Debra Shackett and Administrative Secretary Sandra J. Bailey.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - The Selectmen recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Doten opened the meeting and provided a brief explanation of why the meeting was scheduled. He also stated that, historically, the Budget Committee has not been comfortable with the COLA. Considering this and several other factors, the Board decided to eliminate the COLA in favor of a 5% PBI. He further stated that the decision was not an easy one to make.

Selectman Boucher pointed out that the Board of Selectmen works for the taxpayers and must take their concerns into consideration, as well as those of Town employees. Selectman Boucher also stated that employee input is valuable to the Board.

Chairman Doten reiterated the Board's previously stated position that they are comfortable with supporting and defending employee benefits, including health insurance. Selectman Grant hopes that employees will recognize that the Board is open minded enough to consider various options when presented to them. Town Administrator Juris again apologized to employees for not advising them of the decision prior to the Budget Committee meeting.

Cindy Cassavaugh suggested an alternative way to reward PBI scores would be a dollar value, rather than a percentage value. Chairman Doten replied that this could be considered. Further discussion ensued and Selectman Boucher reiterated the Board's previously stated position that they support the Town employees' health benefits package. Chairman Doten added that with the average yearly cost of health benefits at approximately \$16,000, the 4% maximum increase for 2007 will make much less impact than the 12% that was originally proposed.

Chairman Doten stated that the Board of Selectmen has the responsibility to weigh the needs of the taxpayers, Budget Committee members and Town employees. Firefighter Dominic DeCarli stated that he was offended at a recent remark from a Budget Committee member, who referenced "B-" employees. He also asked about the proposed "deceleration" plan. Chairman Doten addressed his concerns and pointed

out that, unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation out there.

Don Girard asked the Board if their recent COLA decision was reactive or pro-active. Chairman Doten explained that it has been difficult for the Board to defend the COLA policy. Brief discussion then ensued on the matter of union vs. non-union employees. Chairman Doten did emphasize that it is the Board of Selectmen who set policy, not the Budget Committee. Don Girard further inquired about a "back-up" plan if the Budget Committee still makes large cuts. Selectman Boucher stated that at the Deliberative Session, there would still be an opportunity to restore any funds. Selectman Grant also stated that the Budget Committee recognizes the quality of Gilford employees.

More discussion ensued on the School District budget and the savings to the Town of Gilford taxpayers by eliminating the COLA. Dustin Muzzey suggested that it might be beneficial for taxpayers to see the impact of cuts that have been made prior to the Budget Committee review. He also briefly discussed public vs. private sector employment. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett stated that members of the Budget Committee perceive themselves as being members of the private sector.

Kari Dami inquired about employees who are at the top of their pay range. Town Administrator Juris stated that a lump sum payment is still possible for those employees. Concern was expressed with the lump sum payment being "unattainable" because it is only available to exceptional employees.

Rick Andrews suggested that the Board of Selectmen plan ahead for next year in reviewing health benefits, so that the employees will have an opportunity for input.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra J. Bailey  
Administrative Secretary

GILFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MINUTES  
November 20, 2006  
Town Hall  
3:30 p.m.

The Board of Selectmen convened in a special session with Town employees on Monday, November 20, 2006 at 3:30 p.m. at the Gilford Town Hall, 47 Cherry Valley Road, Gilford, NH. Selectmen present were Chairman Dennis J. Doten, Alice H. Boucher and Connie Grant. Also present were Town Administrator Evans E. Juris,

Assistant Town Administrator Debra Shackett and Administrative Secretary Sandra J. Bailey.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - The Selectmen recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Doten made a brief statement regarding changes to the COLA policy. He also apologized for not being able to advise employees about this change prior to the Budget Committee meeting last Tuesday. He further stated that the Budget Committee has been unhappy with the COLA for some time and it made sense to eliminate the COLA and raise the PBI to 5%.

Cathy Reitz asked what would preclude the Budget Committee from making further cuts next year. Chairman Doten replied that there is no guarantee regarding further cuts. Alice Boucher added that the Board was placed in a very difficult position making the decision on the COLA, but they must also answer to taxpayers. She also stated that since the Board made the change in the COLA policy last week, she has received positive feedback from members of the public.

Selectman Boucher advised employees that the Board will not be touching the employees' benefit package this year and when they do consider changes, they will seek employee input.

Stephanie Verdile-Philibotte told the Board that she sympathized with their position, but wishes that the employees had an opportunity for a forum prior to the COLA change. She also thought that the Board was going to defend the COLA policy for employees. More discussion ensued on health insurance benefits in the public sector vs. private sector.

Selectman Grant stated that the Board of Selectmen could stand behind and support the PBI, unlike the COLA. She further stated that with the caliber of Gilford employees, the PBI would not have great impact. Selectman Grant was disappointed in the manner in which the decision was made available to the Budget Committee, prior to advising employees. She also does not think that public sector and private sector employees should be compared.

Firefighter Chuck Campbell stated that the two letters from the Board were confusing. The first letter indicated support and the second one eliminated the COLA. Selectman Grant strongly feels that logic will prevail when it is time for voters to make decisions. Chairman Doten also pointed out that it was the Board's intent to protect employees and create a good situation, compared to the possibility of what may lie ahead for them.

Brief discussion ensued on the 10% limit that is set for making any increases on the Budget Committee's recommendations. Selectman Doten stated that the COLA change satisfied the Budget Committee and appeared to be the least detrimental to employees. He reiterated that the Board is looking out for employees.

Chuck Campbell expressed further concern with health benefits, since he is constantly exposed to illness. Chairman Doten assured him that the Board is constantly monitoring health benefits and looks for ways to least impact employees.

Stephanie Verdile-Philibotte asked about the steps on the pay scale. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett advised her that with the PBI, the steps are not relevant and most employees fall between steps. More discussion ensued on the matter of periodically adjusting pay scales.

Fire Chief Jim Hayes expressed concern with recruitment activities if the pay scales were not evaluated. He also stated that the lump sum payment for employees at the top of their pay scale is not likely since it is basically unattainable. He feels that this does not provide incentive for these employees.

Chuck Campbell also pointed out the difference in services offered in the Towns used in the recent Budget Committee wage comparison. He feels it is important to compare services since Gilford offers services at the paramedic level and many other towns do not. He urged the Board not to accept the wage comparison at face value. Selectman Grant assured employees that the Board is not using the wage comparison done by the Budget Committee. Chairman Doten stated that his is comfortable with Gilford's salary ranges.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra J. Bailey  
Administrative Secretary