

Submitted by:

TOWN OF PHIPPSBURG
SELECTMEN'S MEETING

Approved by Selectmen:

John M. Young
Administrator

MINUTES
January 10, 2007

Meeting convened at 6:00 p.m. with Selectman Douglass, Chair, Selectman Perkins, and Selectman Pye in attendance.

I. Review and Sign:

1. Accounts payable and payroll warrants.
2. Minutes from January 3rd.
3. Posted Roads Ordinance

All items reviewed and signed.

II. Meetings and Hearings:

1. Meet with the PACTV Committee for an annual update.

Bill Perkins, PCATV Committee Chair, stated that Selectman Pye had attended several of the Committee meetings and it was suggested that the Committee give an annual brief to the Selectmen. Mr. Perkins reported that the CATV Station had been on air for 8,760 hours over the last year and covered 156 events – 78 which were live broadcasts. They have the capacity to do live broadcasts from the Town Hall or School. The School Board is now being filmed and the Committee is planning to run cable to the School Library for a live feed. Their biggest problem is the lack of trained volunteers for filming. They constantly advertise and offer training, but when two events are going on at the same time (i.e. last nights School Board and Planning Board) they can usually only film one. They have run into a barrier with their plans to turn the second floor of the Totman Library into a studio. It would have to be handicapped accessible and the only way to do that would be to install an elevator which would be very expensive. They are now looking at ways to improve the big meeting room at the Town Hall and have the use of three grants to help with associated projects. They will come before the Selectmen with an improvement plan. He reported that Bunny Geisler, who was a charter member and important contributor, had resigned - therefore a position on the committee is open. He thanked her for her service and mentioned that her son was serving in Baghdad, Iraq and wished him well.

Tom Totman, Committee Member, stated his concern with the current proposed Federal legislation which would take the responsibility of Cable Franchise negotiations away from the communities and instead make it the responsibility of the State or Federal Government. He felt this would take local control away and the towns could possibly loose their franchise fees (Phippsburg gets and average of \$18,000 a year.) He further added that Congressman Michaud was in favor of the legislation and Congressman

Allen was opposed to it.

Bill Perkins added that this legislation may change now that the democrats have control of the House and Senate and that we need to keep an eye on it and try to keep local control over the franchise.

Selectman Douglass stated that this legislation could be compared to the deregulation of electricity. The government tried to make a competitive market and it came to whoever had the cable down. This may work for the Federal Government but it will hurt at the town level.

Tom Totman stated that according to Pat Scully Comcast and Time Warner may trade areas to make their territories more contiguous. As it stands now there are "little islands" of Comcast in the middle of Time Warner's areas.

Selectman Pye asked if the Town was set for next year to which Tom Totman replied that we have a contract, but it could change depending on what Congress decides. Bill Perkins added that the Town should be lobbying to maintain local control.

Selectman Douglass asked if the PCATV Committee has considered putting on a class through the Recreation Commission on video recording basics. Bill Perkins replied that they have worked with Joanne Wells, Chair of the Recreation Commission, twice. Tom Totman added that they held one training session and attendees wanted to move on after 45 minutes.

Mr. Totman stated that the Committee wants to make meeting room look better and used the installation of wall mounted cameras as an example. He also added that he is searching for a replacement for Ashley Thayer on the "Week in Review" show. He recommended having Bill Murray talk about the Popham 400th celebration, Jean Flink talk about School Consolidation, and perhaps the Selectman about other issues.

Selectman Douglass asked where some of the programs shown on Channel 3 come from – for example the "Brookings Report" and "Liberty News." Bill Perkins explained that the station policy is that any material sent, which conforms to PCATV guidelines, will be aired as long as it is sponsored by a Phippsburg Resident. He has had requests from different organizations and they have been told to get a Phippsburg sponsor and the program will be run. Tom Totman added that the committee has the right to decide what time the program will be run. Dick Wenzel added that the sponsors name must appear with the program.

Selectman Douglass reminded the Committee that they must have the authorization of the Selectmen to accept donations and also must insure that all of their meetings are advertised and open to the public. He has been putting this warning out to all the committees. Bill Perkins replied that all of their meetings are open to the public and that all taping of the governmental meetings are run in full length with no editing – the only thing that would stop that would be a technical problem. Tom Totman added that he always goes over the list of meetings during his talk show and encourages the public to attend them.

Selectman Perkins told the Committee not to worry about Comcast funding, just to keep doing what they do best. They are doing a good job and Tom Totman and Ashley Thayer are setting a fine example because Phippsburg folks can rely on their show. He encourages other folks to do shows also.

Selectman Pye asked if the Committee would be running cable to the Fire Department for live broadcasts of municipal meetings that sometimes take place. Bill Perkins replied that the Committee has not really discussed it.

Selectman Douglass said that when the taping first started people enjoyed seeing what went on in town. He requested that the Committee draft a plan for the meeting room and submit it to the Selectmen.

III. Unfinished Business

1. Recycling Center Tour

Selectman Douglass asked the Town Administrator to check with Pine Tree Waste for some possible dates for a visit to the recycling facility in Mass. He also asked to find out how many people could go.

IV. New Business

1. Review monthly Transfer Station report.

Selectman Perkins read the monthly report to the audience.

2. Volunteer Firefighter Insurance Program

Mike Young, Town Administrator, briefed the Selectman on a new MMA Disability Insurance program for Volunteer or Stipend Rescue Personnel and Firefighters. The cost would be \$52.48 per person with the Junior Firefighters and Auxiliary members being covered for limited benefits at no cost. He further explained that the Fire Chief, Jim Totman, was in favor of the program.

Selectmen agreed that it was a good program but decided to review the material over the next week and discuss the program with the Rescue Chief. Issue tabled until the next meeting.

3. Kennebec River Initiative.

The Selectmen reviewed information concerning this initiative and asked the Town Administrator to check with the Shellfish Commission, Conservation Commission and Land Trust to see if anyone on these Commissions/Trust would like to represent the town. The first meeting of the organization will be on January 23rd in Richmond. Selectman Pye stated that two goals of the Comprehensive Plan would be achieved by the Town's participation. Selectman Perkins stated that he would check with the Land Trust at their next meeting and Selectman Douglass commented that he would rather look at the Town Committees first. He added that all of the organizations who cover this area (Kennebec River Initiative, Casco Bay, New Meadows Watershed Project, Casco Bay Estuary Project, Androscoggin Soil and Water, Cooperative Extension Service) should be working together as one group.

4. Governor's proposal for school consolidation

The Town Administrator announced that the Phippsburg School Board had voted unanimously to request that the School Union 47 Board forward the Bath/School Union 47 Regionalization plan to the State for approval and that an implementation team be appointed to hold public hearings and bring the proposal to a vote in the towns. It was mentioned that the Bath School Board has already voted for approval of the plan. The Administrator added that State Senator Benoit was present at the School Board meeting to give them some information concerning Governor Baldacci's Plan to consolidate school systems in Maine - basically reducing the number of systems to 27. Under his plan the area from West Bath to Waldoboro would become one district. The Administrator provided copies of Governors proposed legislation and Senator Benoit's cover sheet.

Selectman Douglass stated that he felt that removing municipal boundaries for representation would be a problem and he did not agree with it. He agrees that a consolidation should be done, but the current plan has the same proposed setup that the towns have with the County Commissioners and we don't get good representation from the Commissioner that we have. It is his opinion that the plan should include one representative from each town and then three at-large seats. He also had a concern about the loss of local control. He added that the Governor should get his own house in order before looking at the towns. He applauds the efforts to regionalize to save waste – but doesn't like it coming from the top down. He reiterated that both the Governors Plan and the Bath/Union Regionalization Plans are just proposals at this time and he requested that the Town Administrator provide copies of both at the Town Office and on the Town's website.

Selectman Perkins stated that he had read the Regionalization report and attended the public hearing where there was not a lot of detail. He had also reviewed the Governor's consolidation plan and found it very sweeping.

Selectman Pye stated that he has also been following the articles in the Times Record and that the funding formula could be a concern.

5. Annual Town Meeting Schedule

The Town Administrator presented the May 2007 Town Meeting schedule to the Selectmen. Town elections will be held on May 7th and Town Meeting on May 8th and 9th.

6. County Memo on Budget Advisory Caucus

The Selectmen reviewed the memo and had no conflicts with the Caucus date.

V. Correspondence

1. Letter from Comcast concerning Channel 13-HD.

Selectman Douglass read the notice which stated that if negotiations fail Comcast will no longer offer Channel 13 in high definition.

2. Letter from CMP concerning tree work.

The letter advised the community that CMP would have a contractor trimming trees along power lines this spring and listed contact names and numbers if property owners had concerns.

3. Report from the Creative Economy Council

Selectman Pye will take the report home to review.

VI. Selectmen/Administrator Comments and Announcements

1. Selectman Announcements

Selectman Douglass mentioned that flu shots were still available.

2. Town Administrator Announcements

Mike Young announced: (1) College Goal Sunday on January 28th - people can get assistance on filling out FAFSA loan applications; (2) Purse Line Bait Expansion Hearing on January 17th; (3) Dates at the Town Office for Licensing Dogs; (4) Town Hall closure on Martin Luther King Day; (5) Assessing Workshop in lieu of a Selectmen's Meeting on Jan 17th; and (6) The recent mailing of the Pandemic flyer.

VII. Adjournment - Selectmen voted (3-0) to adjourn at 7:05 p.m.