

## **COUNCIL MEETING MARCH 19, 1996**

PRESENT: Sel. Robert Fay, Sel. Dennis Abbott, Dianne Holden, David Benton, Andrea LeFevbre, Kevin Theriault, Bob Gobeil, Don Holden, Wes Leighton, Dean Waterhouse, Dana Blackburn, Jim Cooper, Millard Genthner, John Hewes, Ginny Hewes, Chauncey Gerry, Alan Dyer, Debby Dyer, Judy Fay, Fred Fay, Larry Jacobsen, Roland Denby, Len VanGaasbeek, Greg Nickerson, Bertha McAloon.

Sel. Fay opened up Council Meeting to tell those present that this meeting would be to talk about town meeting, why such a low turnout of voters for officials and referendum, are people satisfied with the way the town is run etc. Wes Leighton felt that last year the RV Ordinance brought out a lot of people to town meeting, when only two people had showed up for the public hearing. Sel. Fay added out of 3,500 registered voters why only 900 vote, why don't people care or are we doing something right. Len Van Gaasbeek stated that when everyone feels things are running all right with no controversy, no one comes out. Sel. Abbott feels town is content where and how things are going. Len added that there are no concern citizens groups out there and town meeting is still the way to run the town. Sel. Abbott added that last year was the largest voter turnout, with 1982 next. Sel. Fay feels people are more aggressive to get elected to a position. Ginny Hewes is disappointed that people don't exercise their right to vote and told the Board don't knock it, going well and they will know when it is not going well. Wes stated that last year he met people who didn't know what was on the warrant and feels a newsletter days before and not just a few days as with the town report to town meeting to review the warrant and explain the articles out. Sel. Fay added that telephone calls were done after town meeting to get voters out and still people didn't come out. Judy Fay added that last year there was a 3 way race for Road Commissioner, 2 way race for Board of Selectmen, more contested races which brought more people out to vote. Sel. Fay agreed that maybe a good idea would be to send out a newsletter with the town report. Sel. Abbott added that everyone is sent a town report and most don't even make it out of the post offices. Why mail, have available in the stores and at town meeting and send out a newsletter instead 20 days prior explaining. Discussed sending out a survey. Len told the Board that LAC had a 30% return on sending out ballots with a newsletter. Chauncey Gerry added that if the candidates hadn't called people after town meeting, the vote would have been lower. Judy added that several people she talked to didn't know town meeting was being held, why not put it in the Smart Shopper. She called Economy Drug and they put it on their sign. Maybe the other stores will do the same next time. Sel. Abbott added that there were several candidates advertisements in the Smart Shopper for several weeks with the date of town meeting. Fred Fay feels that people have had their fill of politics over the past months. Jim Copper told the Board that if they are not doing something right, they will know about it. Wes added that he was pleased that town meeting was in March and more people need to know what is going on. Had no idea what was going on until town meeting day. Sel. Fay added that years ago, the town report was dropped off at each house. Wes told the Board that in the newsletter the Board could put in a questionnaire to get feed back.

Len told the Board that they should get a focus group of people who weren't at town meeting. Wes feels that 25% of the voters that come out to vote comes from the candidates. Sel. Abbott added that if the election of officers was held when the June Primary was, would have been a bigger turnout. Don Holden asked why would you elect four months before they take office, why not in May when SAD votes. Millard Genthner added that SAD is a 16 million dollar business and only 500 people vote on the budget. Sel. Fay told him that people feel that they don't have a voice. Millard told everyone that when one article gets turned down, then it can be discussed at the next vote which is an open meeting. There is a misconception that it doesn't do any good. Wes told Millard that he feels his vote don't count, it will get passed anyway. Dana told him that people feel they lost control of the budget of SAD and with town meeting, now there are city people and if the newsletter goes out it should let them know that they vote themselves on the budget not a representative. Millard feels it is a very poor excuse not to vote because their vote don't count. Sel. Fay ended the discussion on SAD and asked what could we do to do a better job. Jim told the Board that he maybe wrong, but he doesn't vote on the school budget because he feels it will pass any ways and let other people who have kids and school people run it and feels it is a good idea of a newsletter to let people know. Sel. Fay added have a pretty high tax rate, the Fire Dept. needs to modernize and a new assistant, how could we improve? Don suggested better communication. Len told everyone not to hold out hopes for a newsletter, people will either read it or toss it away. Larry added look at the SAD budget, the budget goes up and the book gets smaller. Judy suggested having a handout for new people in town explaining what the town structure is. Wes added have the newsletter at businesses to give out. Sel. Fay asked how does town government improve. Roland stated have the newsletter issued every quarter with dates committee meeting dates to give people an idea on how town functions. Sel. Abbott suggested having a plastic card printed on both sides with dates, times etc. of meetings, office hours, dump hours and have this available to give out. Dianne suggested a yearly calendar like MMA has. Sel. Abbott added that Hollis did their town report in newspaper form and sold ads to pay for it, could sell ads to pay for the calendar. Jack added people live here, but don't think about getting out to vote and participate. Len also added that now have both parents working and weekends are used to catch up. Some towns have town meeting at night spread over several nights. Sel. Fay stated new Selectmen's Assistant how does that person become more valuable to the town. Jim asked how will her job compare to Dwayne. Ginny asked what is she suppose to do. Sel Fay informed every one that she is the Selectmen's representative on a day to day basis for the public, difference between town manager, is she works directly to the Selectmen. Town Planner will work with Planning Board to stream line. Sel. Abbott added that over last 4-5 years needed a person to be an Assistant besides Town Planner, now almost 80% administration and 20% planning, and that could change. Had a Town Structure Committee, need a committee to continue to look at how town is structured and run. Wes feels that it is important to see about getting grants for the town. Sel. Fay added not sure if Dianne can write a grant, don't hire an assistant to write grants.

Sel. Abbott stated that she will need to get involved with FAME with businesses to get low interest loans, Will need to know the businesses. Most don't want to expose themselves to the town. If need grant writing will hire someone to do it. Dianne added that she will welcome people to stop by to talk to her. Don added need to also let people know and communicate on what is going on especially with business to let them know the town will help out. Sel. Abbott stated that people hate to see places where businesses have gone out all boarded up, feels send out wrong message. Don also added need to know what zoning does to effect business, does it need to be expanded to attract business, a good job for the planner. Sel. Abbott added there was a lot of talk on the comprehensive plan when it comes to zoning change the Planning Board got a different out come, probably some things in the plan can be enacted now. Len spoke of the deed restriction that no businesses are allowed in Lake Arrowhead now faxes, modems, the character of businesses have changed. Also suggested using electronic web sites with bulletin boards to teach how town meeting works. Sel. Abbott stated that Waterboro has the most general stores per capita and they survive. Don stated that with communication if written in a 1 to 3 paragraph people probably won't read it but if one sentence or paragraph they will read it. Tell what is needed to know in as few as words as possible, be brief and to the point. Sel. Abbott did report that the Selectmen had held round table discussions with area businesses. Ginny feels the Selectmen's Assistant office should be downstairs. Kevin reported that the Fire Dept. met with the Selectmen and a representative from SMTC trying to do a complete comprehensive plan for the dept. The plan will cost \$6,000. And will carry them into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Sel. Fay asked what does the Fire Dept. invision for the next 5 years and Kevin told him 2 full time rescue and 2 full time fire fighters with a centralize station located at the Taylor House. The dept. now allows 65 members. Sel. Fay asked how would you answer a question on protection at LAC. Kevin wanted to put a station down by the dam at one point. Len stated that there are 1616 houses in Waterboro. Kevin told everyone that with this plan, the representative from SMTC would travel the roads, talk to townspeople. Len feels that is would be money very well spent. Kevin added will get a bias opinion. Judy asked where is the town with 911. Kevin reported will have eventually believes that there is a committee meeting. David asked what would the two sub stations be and Kevin told him South and North, East and Center would be discontinued. Alan asked how the final decision will be made, by the Fire Dept., Selectmen or Townspeople. Sel. Abbott feels the relationship between the town and the fire dept. has greatly improved. Millard complained on the new booths, there was no privacy. Dianne reported that the curtains have not been used for two years, first time these portable booths were used did after receiving a complaint had the booths spread out to have more privacy. Judy asked who would be doing General Assistance. Sel. Fay stated that Sel. Monteith has been doing it will need to discuss it, probably Dianne will do it. Fred suggested maybe John would like to continue handling General Assistance.