

TOWN OF TEMPLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
APRIL 7, 2016  
MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

Board members present: George Willard, Ken Caisse, Gail Cromwell

Call to order by Willard at 6:30 p.m.

Cromwell stated that she would be recording the meeting on her personal recorder. Willard stated that he would also be recording the meeting and that the Administrative Assistant would be recording.

Resignations: Willard stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss resignations. Willard informed the public that Betsy Perry had submitted a resignation letter on March 30, 2016. Willard did not have the resignation letter available, but asked Perry if she would like to speak. Perry stated that the resignation date she had given was April 7, 2016, but Willard had asked her if she would put the resignation on hold for 30 days. Perry informed the public that she had agreed to the 30 days in order to help the Town come to a resolution. Perry read a prepared statement. Cromwell said that she had no objection to what Perry had said, but as Perry is an employee, not an elected official, by law the Board would need to go into non-public session to discuss this resignation. Cromwell also stated that the Board should discuss the Deputy Town Clerk resignation in non-public session as this position is not elected. Allan Pickman had a point of order and said that the RSAs allowed the subject person to have the discussion in an open meeting if that person wanted an open meeting. Both Perry and Whitcomb stated they wished to have the discussion in an open meeting.

Willard made a statement before continuing about people trying to form an oligarchy. J. Kieley asked if Willard's statement was directed at him. Willard said not necessarily. J. Kieley spoke about an email that he wrote to friends that Willard had copied and put on the chairs. J. Kieley stated that every person has a right to an opinion and a right to express that opinion and that some people took exception to what happened at the 3/29/16 meeting. Short discussion about the 3/29/16 BOS meeting. Willard stated that this meeting had been called to try and resolve the issues raised on 3/29/16. Ken Caisse had requested that the resignations be put on hold for 30 days. Willard had requested that the resignations be revoked. Willard has agreed to Caisse's suggestion, and said that he and Caisse have not accepted the resignations at this point. Willard has asked Drouin, Kelley, Whitcomb, and Perry to give the BOS some written advice on how to resolve this crisis and retain their services. Willard informed everyone that he expected everyone to be civil and courteous at all times and that he would not allow any personal attacks. Willard then opened the floor to Drouin, Perry, and Whitcomb. Kelley was out of town and could not attend this meeting.

Drouin said that everyone in the audience is her boss because she is elected. Whitcomb was appointed by Drouin, but Kelley was elected by the voters. It would seem to her that after all these years of serving the public if all of them resigned something is wrong. Tried to point out the issues on 3/29/16 and it has been belittled by people. All of them are replaceable. Drouin gave a recent example of what the office personnel had been dealing with. Drouin informed the public that at the beginning of the week she opened emails to find one about vital records. Drouin said that it seemed to accuse the office of messing up the town report and stated that a letter of apology had to go out. Drouin continued saying there was no question in the email. If a question had been asked she would have explained. Instead of conversation there seems to be accusations. Drouin's offer is to come in on Tuesdays for the rest of the month and see what is happening and

TOWN OF TEMPLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
APRIL 7, 2016  
MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

what is changing. Drouin said she expected to retire from this position and expressed thanks for the support she has been given. Drouin ended by saying that people don't realize what has been happening. There needs to be mutual respect.

Perry said she told Drouin to speak from her heart, and she thinks Drouin did. The office tried to pull together some suggestions but they are not finalized yet. Willard has asked her to put her resignation on hold and she had told him she would work at least one more week. The Planning Board has requested that she remain as the Planning Board Clerk and minute taker and she has agreed to do so and thanked the P.B. for their support.

Whitcomb said that she is in a different situation from the others. Whitcomb is standing down from Deputy Town Clerk, she is remaining as the Tax Collector. Whitcomb said she is not as directly affected to the things in the office as the others and she wished she had "come out of her corner sooner". She said that none of the positions will be filled easily, there is a lot to learn and she refuses to take on Town Clerk, she cannot do both jobs. She also does not want to do the Deputy Town Clerk from now until the next election. Whitcomb felt some resolution could come by everyone treating and speaking to each other respectfully.

Willard asked Drouin, Whitcomb, and Perry if they would be willing to stay 30 days and try to resolve the issues. Drouin said she will work Tuesdays. Perry said yes, and Whitcomb said yes. Willard then opened the floor to the public, stating the he expected civility, and brevity and no personal attacks. Willard asked people to identify themselves and give their addresses.

Honey Hastings, Mt. View Rd., stated that she had a concern and asked if the BOS had consulted with Town Counsel. Hastings questioned whether the people who had resigned could perform the duties of the office. Hastings asked if there could be legal complications. Hastings also stated that it is not her understanding that the BOS has to vote to accept resignations, elected officials are not under the BOS's control.

Mary Beth Avayzian, Twillingate Rd., said that she had the same question, had the Board spoken to Town Counsel. Thought the BOS needed to consult with Town Counsel.

Robert Wills, Hill Rd., spoke about the Church hiring a professional facilitator to help with problems there. Suggested, as a positive step, to have a facilitator/mediator work with the BOS and office staff.

Connie Rinaldo, Colburn Rd., asked why a mediator hadn't been tried yet. Willard stated he didn't think we had gotten to that point yet.

Connie Kieley, Holt Lane, stated that she was offended by the way Willard opened the meeting. She thought it was divisiveness and that she found it offensive. Not sure what Willard was talking about. When you start paying taxes and living in a town you have a right to vote. Cromwell was elected by a clear majority, whereas something said to Drouin she found offensive. Kieley said that everyone needed mediation.

TOWN OF TEMPLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
APRIL 7, 2016  
MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

Tamora Andrews, Colburn Rd., asked if there was a grievance process and an HR person that could be spoken to. Willard said that he didn't think Temple has one.

Mary Beth Avayzian suggested implementing a grievance process moving forward, but she didn't know if Willard was looking for a resolution or a rant session.

Peter Allen, Colburn Rd., asked if the BOS was going to address the issue of legality of the status of the resignations. Allen also asked if it is the case that these resignations are legally binding was the BOS going make applications available for people to apply for the positions. Willard stated that two of the Board members have not accepted the resignations yet. Allen stated that his understanding is that the BOS does not have the right to question the resignations. Willard stated as a Select Board they would check into the legalities.

Paul Jordan, Colburn Rd., spoke about the RSA 669:7 allowing the Select Board to hold the resignations if these people agree to stay for a period of time.

Wayne Edwards, General Miller Hwy., said he was late coming in on this, but there are a bunch of employees who are resigning that have been with this town for a number of years and there has never been this conflict before. He's looking at this as a problem and the problem needs to be addressed. Willard stated that the problem was addressed at the March 29 meeting, tonight is to bring forward suggestions to come to a resolution.

Ken Sullivan, Stonegate Farm Rd., asked for a re-statement of the problem and asked how did we get to this point? Willard stated that the office staff feel they are working in a hostile environment within the town offices and that this was discussed at the March 29 meeting.

Cromwell responded to Drouin's earlier statement. Cromwell explained that after town meeting she had two different people ask her about the death reports in the town report. Cromwell was told that the death report should be "Mrs. Somebody" instead of "Mr. Somebody". Cromwell felt she needed to ask whether this was a mistake, because if it was a mistake Cromwell told Willard the Board might need to take some action and write "Mr. (blank)" an apology. Cromwell read the attachment to an email response from the Administrative Assistant, regarding the death report which stated that the name is correct and the second name is not in the report because the person passed away out of state. Cromwell said that one thing she noticed was that there was no error, and she informed the two people who had asked her that the person had passed away out of state and therefore was not included. Cromwell wanted to know if Drouin was offended that she had asked about the death record information. Drouin read Cromwell's original email regarding this issue and stated that there was no question asked, it just implied that an error had been made and that Willard needed to apologize. Drouin stated that she cannot cross over information from DMV and Vital Records and that she did check on this information by contacting the Secretary of State. Drouin said that this is another example of the office never getting the benefit of the doubt, all she wants is mutual respect and she did take offense at the way this information was presented. Cromwell asked why the Board of Selectmen had not been asked if there

TOWN OF TEMPLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
APRIL 7, 2016  
MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

was a question on whether or not to put the information into the town report. Drouin stated that she contacted the Secretary of State's office and that is who she is supposed to contact if there is a question about vital records. Cromwell stated that the Board of Selectmen has nothing to do with over-seeing the jobs of other elected officials. Jeanne Whitcomb said that problems arise when someone goes to the Board of Selectmen instead of addressing questions to the position that handles whatever the question about first, for example a vital records question which should go to the Town Clerk. Ken Sullivan stated that people should not be bickering about details at this meeting. This problem is greater than one event but still doesn't know what the problem is. Willard suggested that Sullivan meet with a Board member.

Dave Martz, Rebeccah's Way, said he didn't think this meeting was the forum for the venting occurring and suggested mediation. Martz said that he thinks keeping people and getting them to talk is better than losing them.

Ron Pulos, West Rd., stated that everybody thinks they are right, people are not hearing or understanding what's being said to them. He thinks that the perception is that the office staff thinks the assumption is they've done something incorrect before they are approached asked about a question that is brought forward and they are asked about it. Pulos also suggested sitting down with someone who is really good at getting people to communicate with one another. Pulos said that this is sad to see and he knows the community is better than this.

Connie Kieley, Holt Ln., suggested that all participate in mediation if it occurs. Kieley said she sees a lot of issues and that the March 29 meeting revolved around Harling, her behavior, what Harling was doing right or wrong and Cromwell's ability to address issues with Harling. Kieley said especially Willard and Caisse because they don't understand what is really going on.

Will Wildes, Hill Rd., said that it comes down to treating people with respect. Wildes gave an example of the Volunteer Fire Department being told they should raise funds and fix the brush truck themselves when it was damaged at a brush fire in 2016, even though it was covered by insurance. Cromwell was not allowed to respond

Camilla Lockwood, Perkins Ln., stated that she supports the idea of mediation and offered the names of mediators.

Mary Beth Avayzian went back to the resignation issue and spoke about 669:19 which deals with Planning and Zoning, so that would not be the statute to look at. Avayzian then stated that there does not seem to be any statute or case law that addresses this issue. Willard said that the Board will contact town counsel.

Caisse asked Perry, Drouin, and Whitcomb if they would agree to put their resignations on hold for 30 days and agree to mediation. Caisse said he will speak to Kelley when she returns. Perry agreed to the 30 days and mediation. Drouin said she would work on Tuesdays for those 30 days and agreed to mediation. Whitcomb agreed to the 30 days and mediation. Ken Sullivan suggested a team building specialist as well as mediation.

TOWN OF TEMPLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
APRIL 7, 2016  
MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

Matt Cabana, Cutter Rd., said that what he is seeing is communication issues, he doesn't believe this venue is the place to fix that and he hopes that the issues can be worked out.

Honey Hastings said that she is a professional mediator and supports mediation. Lincoln Geiger, Memorial Hwy., said that there is something to learn from this and that you can only really learn from pain "through pain you can get stronger". Heidi Jordan said that she would like to review one point which is that employees and elected officials at the town office are not servants of the Board of Selectmen, they are there to support all of the residents. Gary Scholl, Memorial Hwy., agreed with mediation but long term a grievance policy needs to be established.

Connie Kieley said her understanding is that Harling's job is assistant to the Select Board. Kieley said her question is with the process. She has spoken to people who do have complaints, they are not going to put it in writing, the town is too small and making a complaint in writing is limiting people's ability to inform the Board that there are issues and can the Board find another way to make it accessible for people to make complaints.

Allan Pickman asked the Board if any of them saw this coming, did they have any idea that people were unhappy with the situation in the town offices. Willard said he did not know, Cromwell said she did not know, Caisse said he was aware and had tried to speak to Cromwell about the concerns. Ron Pulos said he was concerned and asked if the Board of Selectmen could operate as a team. He understands that there are differences, but he wants to make sure that the Board can move forward and communicate better. Cromwell said that one of the difficulties is that the Board has not been able to talk among themselves due to state law.

Move by Caisse to meet with Town Counsel and obtain clarification of all aspects of the issues, second by Willard and voted in the affirmative.

Move by Caisse to obtain a mediator as soon as possible, second by Willard and voted in the affirmative.

John Kieley made a comment that the Town is facing the greatest threat that it has ever had with the compressor station next to the school, a committee is working to defend the town against that and Kinder-Morgan would like nothing better than to have a divided town like New Ipswich was a year ago.

Other Business: Tim Fiske, Road Agent, informed the Board that he has been obtaining quotes for propane. Fiske asked the Board to authorize him to negotiate with Rymes for diesel fuel, heating oil and propane. Fiske stated that Energy North would allow Rymes to purchase the propane tank at the library. J. Kieley asked if Rymes would sell the propane tank to the town. Fiske said that is a possibility. Move by Cromwell to authorize Tim Fiske to negotiate with Rymes for diesel fuel, heating oil and propane, second by Caisse and voted in the affirmative.

Motion to adjourn at 7:55 pm by Caisse, second by Cromwell and voted in the affirmative.  
Minutes submitted by Debra Harling