



TOWN OF BERWICK MEETING MINUTES

Special Regional Meeting & Workshop with Towns of South Berwick, North Berwick & Lebanon

MINUTES

October 30, 2013

7:30 P.M.

Berwick Town Hall – Selectman’s Meeting Room

I. INTRODUCTIONS –

Berwick Town Manager Patrick Venne introduced himself and commenced the meeting with additional introductions. In attendance were:

Berwick Selectmen Robert Crichton, Bart Haley, Bryan O’Connor and Ed Ganiere;

Lebanon Selectmen Karen Gerrish and Ben Thompson;

North Berwick Manager Dwayne Morin and Selectmen Wendy Cowan and Paul Danforth; and

South Berwick Town Manager Perry Ellsworth along with Councilor Gerald MacPherson.

II. OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL COLLABORATION

a. Shared Services & Equipment Potential & Other Suggestions

Berwick Select Board Chair O’Connor indicated an interest in fostering a political atmosphere where the town managers of this region feel comfortable getting together to discuss ideas which can be brought back to their respective boards for consideration.

North Berwick Manager Morin indicated that municipal governments are cyclical in the issues they face, so that neighboring communities can learn from one another. He also expressed openness to shared services, but stated a particular interest in exploring shared purchases, specifically commodities like paper, oil, gas, gravel, pavement, etc. to take advantage of the discounts which often stem from bulk purchasing. He indicated it may be worthwhile to explore joint bidding.

South Berwick Manager Ellsworth indicated that it was important for the managers to discuss issues, but to ensure such discussions are fruitful authorization from governing bodies is essential. He referenced success stories already in existence including an Assessors' Agent South Berwick presently shares with North Berwick, and the Dispatch Center and Code Enforcement Officer it presently shares with Berwick. He further indicated that the presence of four transfer stations within an area he estimated to be 6 square miles may be worth looking at as an opportunity to collaborate. An idea was discussed related to closing down each transfer station one or more days a week and diverting customers to other towns to ensure greater efficiency of service.

North Berwick Manager Morin suggested comparing equipment purchases and needs to surrounding towns to make sure purchases are not duplicative. For instance, he indicated that one town may have a ladder truck for its Fire Department, meaning a neighboring town may not need to purchase a second one somewhat redundantly. The same could be true for excavators or other equipment, he suggested.

Councilor MacPherson of South Berwick indicated that State Representatives used to be invited to these regional workshops and he suggested this practice be resumed at future meetings. He added and emphasized that his full council is very much in favor of collaboration.

Berwick Selectman Crichton discussed with North Berwick Manager Morin and others the potential for extending natural gas through the various communities in attendance. Manager Morin indicated there is no natural gas in North Berwick because the capital expenditure necessary is cost prohibitive. A discussion ensued amongst those present about propane versus natural gas.

Manager Ellsworth spoke about the York County Manager's Association and its advocacy efforts on behalf of the region.

Selectman Haley referenced and briefly discussed the issue of funding retirement for school district employees which he described as an issue at the local level. A resultant suggestion was made that sending a letter with tax bills explaining where each portion of the bill stems from may be worthwhile.

Manager Ellsworth and Selectwoman Gerrish each spoke about the need for a regional approach to education, and Selectwoman Gerrish described what she termed an undiscovered gem of a vocational school in Lebanon—specifically the trade school owned and operated by a gentleman named Tim Bragdon (New England Community Craftsmen on Little River Road).

Manager Morin and North Berwick Selectmen discussed North Berwick's regular newsletter, "Eye on North Berwick." It was described as having an electronic and mail-based document distribution, with a price tag of approximately \$4,000 annually for this service to residents. Manager Ellsworth indicated South Berwick sends newsletter-like materials to residents with their tax bills to save money. A brief discussion ensued regarding email lists which residents can sign up for and receive automatic updates about important community events or news topics. More than one town in attendance indicated such a service is already being utilized by their community.

Manager Morin discussed economic development, traffic through the various towns based on interstate and trucking travel patterns, and the potential for combining committees like a Rec Committee, Arts

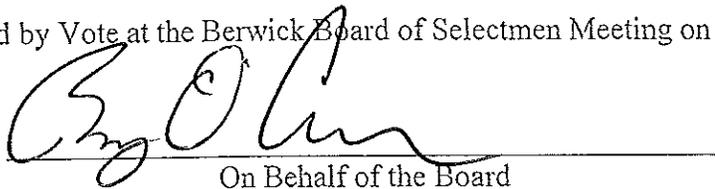
Committee, or festive events planning committee. He indicated that having a joint Christmas or holiday parade may be something worth looking into for future years. He also indicated that summer programs for local youth could potentially benefit from coordinating trips to places like Fun Town in a manner which would save money due to bulk purchases.

Following additional discussion on the items noted above those in attendance agreed to a tentative subsequent regional meeting workshop to be held in North Berwick sometime in mid-January 2014.

III. ADJOURMENT

The meeting adjourned.

Signed as Approved by Vote at the Berwick Board of Selectmen Meeting on November 19, 2013

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "E. J. O'Brien", is written over a horizontal line. Below the line, the text "On Behalf of the Board" is printed.

On Behalf of the Board