

**MINUTES OF HAVERHILL SELECTBOARD WORK SESSION**  
**Monday, October 7, 2013**  
**Draft Subject to Review, Correction and Approval at Following Meeting**

**Board Members Present:** Wayne Fortier, Rick Ladd, Tom Friel, Lynn Wheeler and Robert Roudebush.

**Town Manager:** Glenn English

**Administrative Assistant/Finance Officer:** Jo Lacaillade

**Selectboard Clerk:** Karen Hyde

**Members of the Public Present:** Ed Ballam – Journal Opinion

**Work Session:**

- **Discussion of Education and Housing Issues:** Rick Ladd wanted to thank the Journal Opinion for reporting the data and the facts the way it was presented. He believes that they need to look at the situation which exists in the community. They need to find a way to work cooperatively with the School Board to look at the issue of single-family homes being split up into 13 or 14 different apartments and the burden this is having on the infrastructure, in terms of our town police, fire, and general assistance and how that is impacting the schools and the hospital as well. The median household income is significantly below the state average. There is a high instance in the White Mountain Region of poverty and a high incidence in Town. He asks: Is there something we can do to make sure that we are maintaining our tax base and able to maintain an infrastructure which we need to make sure that we are using our money effectively? There is no building code ordinance, but there are other things that can be done. TM English provided Rick with information dealing with statutory directions that the Board could go in. Rick has made some copies himself and there are a lot of different directions and he is not advocating any one of these directions. The first option is the housing authority, which is set by statute. The second is the real estate option. The third is mixed use, which is a form of zoning. The fourth is the building permit/building code ordinance option. This was tried in 2005 and there were problems. Other than the \$25 building permit fee, there is no other fee schedule. The question Rick had was pursuant to RSA 674:51, the Haverhill Town Meeting hereby adopts by reference a State of New Hampshire Building Code, as may be updated or revised; Did they have the option if they are going into something like this to adopt portions of the State Building Code or do they have to adopt the whole thing? TM English wasn't sure. There is no State Building Code; they have adopted the International Building Code. People have told TM English that they wouldn't vote for this because they couldn't understand the code. That is why Rick was asking if they could take portions of the Code that were applicable to their needs. Rick stated that the way they should go is to look at the Building Permit process and the Building Code in terms of selecting portions of the Code that are relevant to the Town and the Town's needs. TM English stated that enforcement is the issue. They can't rely on the fire chiefs to be the enforcing agency of the building code. He said that if you are going to have rules and regulations, but you don't have competent inspection and don't follow it, it's counterproductive. There would also be a budget cost as someone would have to be paid. A lot of towns that have building codes hire a contractor part-time. The problem is enforcement; it needs to be fair and equitable with no political considerations and that is tough to do. TM English suggested that if he were drafting the Building Code today, he would not put in the piece about the fire chiefs; let the fire chiefs do Life Safety and Fire Code and let the Town Building Code Inspector do the inspections. Chairman Fortier stated that he was having a hard time making the link between multiple-family dwellings and the people who reside in them and the schools. His questions: What are they really

accomplishing in benefit of the Town? How are we attending to the impact this is making to the Town? Rick stated that we want people to be living in safe, sanitary housing. If there is an absentee landowner who doesn't care about the conditions that people are living in, they will have a higher transiency rate and that impact the schools significantly. He thought that if you asked educators if the situation has changed in Haverhill over the last ten years, he thought that they would say that it has. His top priority is to make sure that things are sanitary, healthy and safe. And if they are not, as a community, they will be paying more in general assistance and services such as police and fire. There is a higher instance of need from municipal services and he is all for supporting that. TM English talked about work-force housing. Towns zone it out and towns around us have zoned it out. There will not be this kind of housing in towns around us. Haverhill has more than their share, in his opinion. Not that we shouldn't have a share, but we have more than our share because we are absorbing, because of our housing, the folks who can't live in Bath, Benton, or Piermont because the housing is not there. Robert Roudebush asked what work-force housing referred to. TM English stated it was the working poor. Robert Roudebush stated that he has known for several years that this town is a welfare magnet; he did some research and talked with folks years ago. Rick Ladd stated that it has actually increased. If the cost of doing business on the education side is an indication, the services there are increasing in areas of remediation and special services. TM English stated that if you look at the percentages of the work-force housing in the towns around us, Haverhill is way above the percentages. Therefore, the other towns have a lower tax rate. Chairman Fortier stated that if the Board was going to tackle the problem of safe housing, he agrees that the building permit or building code ordinance would be in order. He appreciated the amount of work Rick has put into this, but he really needs to study the information more. Rick stated that the Board needed to be very careful on how they addressed this. He feels that they have a responsibility, as the governing board of this Town, to ensure that their people are in safe housing and that they are in sanitary housing. The general assistance budget has climbed up and up. They need to look at this issue as a community and if the situation is to be corrected by going after the schools, you're not going to do it. It has to be done as a total community. This discussion will continue at the next Selectboard meeting on October 21, 2013. Robert Roudebush made the motion to come out of the Work Session; seconded by Tom Friel and carried unanimously.

Work session ended at 8:30 PM

Minutes transcribed by Karen Hyde