

MINUTES

SPECIAL SELECTMEN'S MEETING

DECEMBER 20, 2006

A special meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 9:30 a.m., by First Selectman, Kevin J. Kopetz. Also present were William F. Mitchell and Janet M. McCarty.

The Board met to discuss a 3-year Arbitration award between the North Haven Board of Education and the North Haven Education Association. Following State Statutes, the process resulted in an arbitrated settlement, with general wage increases that would affect 39% of the teachers of: 3%, 2.25% and 2.75%. The remaining 61% of the teachers would receive wage and step increases totaling: 4.5%, 3.25% and 4.9%. The panel awarded the Education Association's "last best offer" of salary increases for year 1 and year 3, while awarding the Town's "last best offer" of year 2. The Education Association asked for a new benefit of a family dental plan. The plan was valued at 1% and was rejected by the panel. Prior to arbitration, the Education Association agreed to increase its share of the premium costs of health insurance and to reduce the average cost of step movement.

As the Town's legislative body is the Board of Selectmen for towns with a Town Meeting government, the Board may reject the contract within twenty-five days of receipt, which occurred on November 28, 2006. Mr. Kopetz explained that the 3-year contract averages 3.63% in new costs. The Board expressed frustrations that the Town's wealth, fund balance and other factors are used against the taxpayers, when bonding companies are requiring increased fund balances. Mr. Kopetz complimented North Haven's hard working and dedicated teachers, and Ms. McCarty added that they are not overpaid when compared to those in other municipalities. Mr. Mitchell remarked that the total increase of the contract is slightly more than a cost-of-living adjustment, and a new panel could award a contract requiring even higher increases.

After much consideration, Mr. Kopetz asked the Board as to whether to reject the arbitrated award, using language set forth by State Statute. The Selectmen agreed that given the contract average and the risks associated with pursuing a second arbitration, the award should stand and not be rejected. Voted: Kopetz-no, Mitchell-no McCarty-no

Before adjournment, as she was absent at the last meeting, Ms. McCarty added her wishes to the North Haven community for safe and healthy holidays, There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Mitchell moved for adjournment at 10:10 a.m. Voted: Kopetz-yes, Mitchell-yes, McCarty-yes