



**TOWN COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 17, 2009**

Michael Bowie, Chair At Large 2009  
Gina Mason, Vice Chair District 1 2010  
Fern Larochele, Jr., At Large 2010  
Roger Cote, At Large 2011  
Janet Henry, District 1 2009  
Dale Crafts, District 2 2010  
Norma Wells, District 2 2009

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE TO THE FLAG. The Chairman, Michael Bowie, called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance to the flag at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL. Members present were Councilors Wells, Bowie, Mason, Larochele, and Cote. Councilor Crafts was excused due to illness. Councilor Henry was absent, unexcused. Also present were Stephen Eldridge, Town Manager; Cathy Ricker, Finance Director; Sean Galipeau, Fire Chief; David Brooks, Police Chief, and approximately thirty-five citizens in the audience.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

Victualer's License-Topsubs, LLC (Subway)

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing. There were no comments. The Chairman closed the Public Hearing.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**VOTE (2009-30)** Councilor Wells, seconded by Councilor Larochele moved to approve a Victualer's License for Topsubs, LLC (Subway) and the minutes of the January 20, 2009 meeting. **Order passed - Vote 5-0.**

**COUNCIL ORDERS, RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES**

PROPERTY & CASUALTY BID REVIEW

**VOTE (2009-31)** Councilor Wells, seconded by Councilor Cote, moved to accept the bid for property and casualty insurance made by Champoux/Rogers at \$83,328.00. **Order passed - Vote 5-0.**

Mr. Eldridge explained that the insurance quotes from the three companies that the Council was asked to consider included coverage for the Water and Sewer Departments, too. Councilor Wells asked about the uninsured motorist amounts; Mr. Eldridge replied that the State limits the amount that can be covered. Councilor Larochele asked about the Boiler and Machinery line differences, but Mr. Eldridge did not think that the town would need the higher coverage. Councilor Bowie asked about the "dam excluded" note listed under miscellaneous. Mr. Eldridge stated that none of the insurance companies would include the dam by the Farwell Mill.

SET PUBLIC HEARING DATES FOR BOND  
AND ADOPT ORDER FOR PUBLIC NOTICE

**VOTE (2009-32)** Councilor Mason, seconded by Councilor Cote, moved to set the Public Hearing dates of Feb. 28, 2009 at 9 a.m. and March 3, 2009 at 6 p.m. to discuss potential school and municipal bonds. **Order passed - Vote 5-0.**

Mr. Eldridge proposed two public hearing dates of Feb. 28 at 9 a.m. and March 3 at 6 p.m. before the Town Council meeting. Mr. Eldridge proposed holding the public hearings at Lisbon Community School. Mr. Bowie explained that there are two bonds proposed, one for the municipality and the other for the schools. The bonds would provide matching funds for the Upland Road construction project, estimated at around \$400,000.00; matching funds for the Lisbon Trails construction project, estimated at \$260,000.00; providing for purchase of Public Works equipment at an estimate of \$315,000.00; and to do a structural analysis of the Lisbon High School at an estimated value of \$500,000.00.

#### FUEL BIDS

**VOTE (2009-33)** Councilor Cote, seconded by Councilor Bowie moved to accept the bid from Dead River, using Option A(see attached), for fuel. **Order passed - Vote 5-0.**

Mr. Eldridge explained that Lisbon, like many other towns, had asked fuel companies to submit bids on fuel that the town could lock into. The fuel bids include heating oil, diesel, and kerosene from Dead River and Downeast Energy. Councilor Wells asked which of the two Mr. Eldridge recommended. Mr. Eldridge explained the details of the bids. The Downeast Energy bid required the Town to buy fuel at a fixed price and to lock in to a quantity of fuel. The Dead River bid gave only prices and did not give much more information. Mr. Eldridge recommended Downeast Energy, partly because it is a local company and for their low prices.

Councilor Wells asked about the amount of fuel Lisbon would be required to purchase. Mr. Eldridge said the amount is based on how much fuel the town has used in the last three years and said that the money would not have to be paid up front.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### A. RON POTVIN-COUNTY CHARTER COMMISSION

Councilor Bowie noted that Mr. Potvin could not attend the meeting because he was called in to an Auburn council meeting. The County Charter Commission is looking for support from the Town Council either as a group or individually. Mr. Eldridge asked if Mr. Potvin represents the County Commissioners. Councilor Bowie said no, that they are asking the Council to sign a petition to present to the County Commissioners to put together a County Charter. Councilor Cote asked if the Council would be able to share and review the charter and make changes. Councilor Bowie said yes and that although the group is not official and is informal at this point, the County Commissioners could present a charter to the people for a vote.

**A straw vote was taken with Councilors Bowie, Mason, and Larochelle voting in favor of a County Charter. Councilor Wells said she would like more information before making a decision. Councilor Bowie said he would tell Mr. Potvin that there are Council members who are in favor and he will ask Mr. Potvin if he has a petition for them to sign.**

#### B. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Ricker reported after mailing tax bills at the end of January, collected \$588,000.00 so far. She noted that in Expenditures, Winter Roads is officially in the red. Ms. Ricker said that she had looked

at the snow expenditure overdraft for the past three years, and since \$36,000.00 more was budgeted this year, things should work out.

Councilor Bowie asked if the Town received FEMA money for the snowstorm this past December yet. Fire Chief Galipeau remarked that the application deadline was last week and the application was completed. Review of the paperwork by FEMA happened only recently and the amount applied for was \$35,000.00 for snowplowing.

Looking at Revenue, Ms. Ricker reported that Excise tax is down \$46,000.00 from last year. The three biggest months for collecting Excise Tax are April, May, and June. Looking at 2005, 2006, and 2007, Excise Tax collection was relatively flat. The total Excise Tax collected this year will be less than previously, but it will have to come down to the very last day actually to see by how much.

State Revenue Sharing is down about \$10,000.00 over last year. The budget was flat for that from the previous year. Councilor Bowie asked if the State Revenue Sharing was down due to timing or because our share is actually less. Ms. Ricker responded that several different factors were involved in the State's calculations, which are based on the previous month. The State may change that mix of factors, because of their own budget shortfalls. Lisbon should squeak by this year, but that may change in July. Mr. Eldridge remarked that the State has said there will be a 10% decrease in Revenue Sharing next year. Ms. Ricker said the Stimulus package is another unknown factor.

### C. POLICE DEPARTMENT REVIEW

Chief Brooks passed out a handout from the Maine Department of Public Safety titled *Crime in Maine 2007* to the Council and the audience before beginning his remarks. He said his report would be in two parts, the first part being his entry in the Town's annual report. Reading from that report, Chief Brooks said that in 2008 the Police Department exceeded 10,000 calls for service, as it had for the past five years. The Lisbon Police Department is very proactive and addresses law enforcement issues 24/7 and 365. Chief Brooks said that he repeated and updated the format of the 2007 report because of the intentional misleading information that circulated this past year by some citizens regarding staffing levels of the Police Department.

Chief Brooks read an excerpt from the August 15, 2008 *Lisbon Reporter*, as follows: "Don't be dazzled by Brooks' 'Calls for Service' graphs, many of which are probably wrong numbers, because they mean nothing and don't be fooled by the numbers he creates himself." He went on to say: for the *Lisbon Reporter*: this is for you.

Last year the number of full time Police officers decreased from 16 to 15. The Town maintained the same level of 16 since 2001; however, Town budget issues caused the Town Council to cut the number of positions to 15. In 2007, the ratio of police officers to population was 1.69, as shown in the handout. The State of Maine ratio is 1.89 (1.89 officers per 1000 population).

*Crime in Maine 2007* reflects the reports of 113 Police Departments in Maine. There are 113 municipal Police Departments in Maine. Lisbon ranked the 23<sup>rd</sup> municipality in Maine, meaning there are only 22 larger municipalities in Maine. Chief Brooks stressed that ranking shows that Lisbon is not the tiny, backwoods community that some people try to portray us as. Statewide the police officer per 1000 population ratio stood at 1.89, while in Lisbon the ratio was only 1.69 police officers per 1000 population. At 1.69, Lisbon ranked 53<sup>rd</sup> in the State for the police officer/population ratio. Chief Brooks emphasized that while Lisbon ranks 23<sup>rd</sup> in community size, it ranks only 53<sup>rd</sup> in Police Department size. In 2008 because of the cutback to 15 officers, that ratio dropped to 1.58 and so Lisbon ranks as 61<sup>st</sup> in the State out of 113 departments.

Chief Brooks next spoke about Crime Rates and Clearance Rates in Maine using the graph from the *Crime in Maine 2007* handout. The graphs show rates over ten years for Maine, Androscoggin

County, and for the Town of Lisbon. The New England ratio of police officers to population is 2.2, nationally the rate is 2.4, and Lisbon currently is 1.5. Chief Brooks, referring to the caution advised in the publication, said that a community's locale is also a factor in determining the number of police officer needed for a town. He noted that Route 196 is one of the busiest in the State, and that Lisbon has Lewiston on one side and the Brunswick area on the other. With the addition of the turnpike access in Sabattus, Rt. 9 is experiencing a much higher volume of traffic as well. Chief Brooks said these factors are indicators of the degree and types of crime and traffic related issues that have to be addressed by the Police Department.

The crime rate for Lisbon in 2007 was 17.63, of which figure the Police Department is proud. The Police Department works hard to keep it at that rate. Chief Brooks reiterated that intentional misinformation broadcast from factions within town claim Lisbon has no crime. Lisbon ranks 46<sup>th</sup> in crime rate out of 113 municipalities in Maine, showing, Chief Brooks said, that we do have crime in Lisbon. Chief Brooks is also proud of the Police Department's standing in cleared crimes, ranking 19<sup>th</sup> in the State in 2007, the latest year available for statistics. Chief Brooks gave kudos to the Lisbon Police Department for keeping Lisbon a safe community.

In the past few years, the Police Department has pursued and continues to pursue grant money. In 2008, the Police Department received six grants from the Maine Bureau of Highway Safety, five of which totaled \$16,875.00 for overtime. OUI, speed, and seatbelt enforcement continues. A \$5,575.00 grant went towards a public awareness announcement. This public service announcement was in conjunction with the SADD chapter at the high school. Healthy Androscoggin awarded \$1,325.00 to supplement the PSAs. The Police Department also received other grants directed towards youth. These grants and fundraising have raised \$74,000.00. In 2007, the Police Department passed the one million dollar mark in grants and awards from outside agencies for the Town of Lisbon over the past ten years.

In 2008, the Police Department held its first Citizen's Police Academy, which gave the public a hands-on insight into police work. Another program will start next week with the number enrolled increasing from 12 last year to 22 enrolled this year. A volunteer program began in 2008. This Citizen Outreach Program or "COP" targeted help for the elderly of Lisbon. The coordinator is Tom Stanton, SR. Mr. Stanton was a reserve officer in Lisbon for over thirty years. These activities show that the Lisbon Police Department is dedicated to serving the community and go well beyond the traditional roles of the police, Chief Brooks explained. Chief Brooks closed the reading of his annual report by thanking the community for its support.

Chief Brooks ended the first part of his remarks by asking if the Council or the audience had any questions. Referring to the *Crimes in Maine 2007* handout, Councilor Mason asked if all Police Departments were required to report to it and Chief Brooks said yes. Answering other questions, Chief Brooks said that the crimes reported are "indexed" crimes, which include murder, rape, and robberies and thefts, not small crimes.

Councilor Larochelle commented that the crime rate over the past ten years may be explained by recessionary factors and that we might see a rise again give the economy. Chief Brooks agreed that the economy will affect the crime rate statewide and he said the resources would not be available to fight it, given the present mentality. He said in the past Lisbon has had a higher clearance rate, or rate of solved crimes, than the rest of Androscoggin County and the State due to having resources to solve those crimes.

Conrad Davis of Lisbon Road asked for clarification on the handout as to the meaning of ranking 61<sup>st</sup> in the State for officer/population. Chief Brooks verified that this meant 60 other municipalities in Maine had a higher officer/population ratio out of 113 municipalities. He said all of this information is available online going back many years.

Chief Brooks said again that he brought all of these statistics up because of the intentional misinformation put out to the citizens for quite a few months. Reading from the July 29, 2008 meeting minutes of the *Lisbon Concerned Citizens*, he read about an encounter between "one of the Lisbon Concerned Citizen members and the Yarmouth Chief of Police at the Yarmouth Clam Festival the previous weekend. The Town of Yarmouth has a police force totaling 12 officers, with no detectives. The Town of Lisbon has 21 police officers and three detectives." (Chief Brooks pointed out that Lisbon has 15 officers, not 24.) "This is in a town that has no crime. And Yarmouth's Police Chief said the Town of Lisbon is being sodomized and the whole state knows it."

Chief Brooks asked Councilor Cote about this encounter, and Mr. Cote said he was the one who had the conversation with the Yarmouth Police Chief. Chief Mike Morrell responded to Chief Brooks in a letter thanking him for informing him of what the *Lisbon Concerned Citizens* reported. Chief Morrell said, in fact, he was approached at the Yarmouth Clam Festival by a Lisbon resident and was engaged in a very brief conversation with him. He said the man tried to compare the towns of Yarmouth and Lisbon with regard to the number of officers employed in the Police Departments and the various positions they hold. Although conversations like this are not uncommon, Chief Morrell wrote, it quickly became apparent that the man was trying to draw him (Chief Morrell) into giving a negative opinion about the number of police officers in Lisbon. Chief Morrell told him that each community is unique with diverse challenges and requirements, which necessitate the number of officers needed to meet its needs. He also suggested that Lisbon's immediate proximity to the large city of Lewiston added to the criteria for needing the larger number of officers than Yarmouth. Chief Morrell assured Chief Brooks that in no manner did he speak negatively about the Town of Lisbon or its law enforcement community. Chief Morrell further stated that he believed this man was obviously searching for disparaging remarks to foster his cause and when none was forthcoming, he deliberately chose to misconstrue my response to his leading questions. He said that he initially was infuriated by these remarks, particularly the term "sodomized", which borders on the ridiculous and crosses the line into the utterly preposterous. Chief Morrell went on to say that he gave Chief Brooks his permission to use his remarks in the letter and that he regretted any adverse consequences from this malicious report.

Chief Brooks continued, saying that he would begin Part 2 of his report, with another reading from the Lisbon Reporter dated Sept. 6, 2008. The reading explained why the *Lisbon Reporter* started, mostly due to their concern with the formation of the Town Council in 2006. The *Lisbon Reporter* was formed, they said to become "an avenue for what is actually going on when your backs are turned. We have dedicated hours and hours of our time researching and collecting data relevant to our cause. Unlike the Town of Lisbon, we want to share it with the community so you can come to your own conclusions. Lisbon Community, please understand, that in order to do this right we must proceed carefully. We are asking that you support us in our efforts to rid our community of the filth that are using our money to benefit themselves. We have a great community with great people who deserve better than this. Don't be fearful; the truth will set you free. Signed, Roger Cote and Todd Comber.

At Chief Brooks' request, Mr. Eldridge read a letter from Brian McMaster of the Attorney General's office dated Dec. 8, 2008 regarding the Lisbon Police Department and drug enforcement. The letter stated that Chief Brooks had requested that the Attorney General's office examine public allegations that the Chief and other police officers overlooked illegal drug trafficking in town in order to share in the profits of the traffickers. The letter stated, while the allegations were serious, there was no credible evidence to support the allegations or that even slightly suggests warranting any further investigation. The review included interviews with the people who made the claims about the Police Department, as well as the people at whom the statements were directed, and people who overheard the statements. They found the statements were little more than conjecture and idle talk by persons who could offer nothing of credence to support the allegations. The enquiry is closed and no further action anticipated.

Chief Brooks said the investigation concluded in Nov. 2008 and he had waited for three months to hear an apology from the persons who made the allegations. No apology was forthcoming. He

conferred with the Attorney General's office, the MMA lead civil liability council of the Maine Municipal Association, Lisbon Town attorney Roger Therriault, and with his own personal attorney. All of them told him that he had a right to make public portions of this report as he sees fit. Under state law an investigation by the State Attorney's office is confidential, however, Chief Brooks said, in this case this investigation was also an investigation of the Personnel and members of his Department. Therefore, Chief Brooks decided to share the investigation with the public so that they could come to their own conclusions as to what is going on in this town.

Last fall, Mr. Eldridge called Chief Brooks into his office and asked him if he had heard the allegations that he and the Police Department were protecting drug dealers, notifying dealers of canine searches at the high school, selling drugs, and dealing drugs out the backdoor of the Police Department. Also, the allegations said Chief Brooks was skimming drug money profits. Chief Brooks said this was very tough to hear when he had devoted his entire life to law enforcement. He has been here thirty four years and this was the "crap" that came out from this little group.

Apparently, Chief Brooks reported, Mr. Eldridge received a call from the Superintendent last fall. The Superintendent told Mr. Eldridge that after a school committee meeting school committee member Janice Comber made the allegations Mr. Eldridge had just described. Two other committee members as well as Dr. Welsh overheard the conversation. After hearing this, Chief Brooks said he called the Attorney General's office "to investigate me." He wanted the whole Police Department investigated because these allegations made him sick.

In a subsequent conversation with Dr. Welsh, Chief Brooks told that she had heard the allegation that a Lisbon police officer was alerting high school students prior to drug searches. In addition, Dr. Welsh told him that Mrs. Comber had said that the police were using police radios to clear the way for drug dealers before those searches. Mrs. Comber's allegations also stated that Chief Brooks was skimming money off the profits from drug deals. Chief Brooks expressed outrage that Mrs. Comber sits on the Lisbon School Committee right now.

In an interview with School Committee member Deb Danuski, she reported hearing these allegations of the Police Department drug deals from Roger Cote. Mrs. Danuski said the most recent allegation came during a School Committee meeting in July. During a discussion of canine drug searches at the high school, Janice Comber said the searches would not be successful because Chief Brooks and one or two canine handlers which she identified, tip off those students involved with drugs at the school. Mrs. Comber also suggested that the police were selling drugs from the Police Department and that the Chief was getting a cut from what those sales.

Mrs. Danuski said the only negative comments she has heard about the Lisbon Police Department have come from the group known as the *Lisbon Concerned Citizens*. Mrs. Danuski said Mr. Cote and Mrs. Comber are part of that group and that she has no concern that the police are part of any illegal activity.

Ms. Prudy Grant also interviewed. Ms. Grant told the investigator that a man was alleging that the police are allowing drug dealers to go through town and the police are looking the other way. She declined to name that man, but said he was running against Charlie Smith for the position of Town Council. She said the man has confronted school board members at the end of their meetings and has made these allegations. Ms. Grant told the investigator she has no problems with the local Police Department.

In an interview with Janice Comber by the investigator, she said she has no official proof of the Lisbon police being involved with illegal drug activity. She said she had information of other corruption in the Police Department. Mrs. Comber had no information that the police are alerting students of canine drug searches, only that no drugs materialized during the searches. Chief Brooks said he would think parents would be happy that no drugs appeared, instead of thinking that the reason no drugs materialized is that the police are corrupt.

Mrs. Comber said others in town believe that the police are involved in illegal drug activity. Mrs. Comber identified only one person with information and that was Roger Cote. She said Mr. Cote had made a number of comments about the police allowing illegal drugs to go through town.

Next Chief Brooks reported on an interview with Roger Cote. The investigator asked Mr. Cote if he had any information about a police cover-up concerning illegal drug activity. Mr. Cote said he was willing to talk, however, he said whatever information he had was "hearsay and circumstantial." Mr. Cote said he did make comments about Chief Brooks skimming drug sale profits and again said his information was hearsay. Mr. Cote could not identify anyone who gave him this information but said it came from people in the "political arena." Mr. Cote told the investigator that teachers alerted students of drug searches.

Chief Brooks said transcriptions of the full interviews with these people were now in the hands of his attorney. Chief Brooks read from a second letter from Brian McMaster of the Attorney General's office addressed to Mr. Eldridge. In that follow-up letter, Mr. McMaster repeated that School Committee member Janice Comber had offered no credible information to support her claims. In fact, the letter says Mrs. Comber told the Attorney General investigator that the only basis for her assertions was that told to her by Roger Cote and her personal knowledge that the canine searches at the high school did not result in finding any illegal drugs. During Mr. Cote's interview, he said that his based his comments solely on hearsay and circumstantial information. The letter went on to say that Mr. Cote knows of a drug dealer in town who has not been arrested. Mr. Cote conceded that he had made statements to others that Chief Brooks is benefiting from the proceeds of illegal drug trafficking in town. He identified the source of his information as hearsay and that it came from people in town in the political arena. Mr. Cote was unable to provide names.

Chief Brooks stated that he had twice served as Fire Chief for Lisbon and as interim Town Manager. He told of the stress for his family because of his devotion to the town. Chief Brooks communicated frequently with the Attorney General's office regarding this investigation. The Attorney General's office told him that it was their duty to look into the corruption of the Police Department, not the moral corruption of those who made the allegations.

Chief Brooks cited a Maine State Police report on Rt. 100 in Auburn. The Trooper had a conversation with Roger Cote. Mr. Cote told the Trooper that there was a problem with the Lisbon P.D. Mr. Cote told the Trooper that the Police Department was under investigation for \$500,000.00 in fraud. Mr. Cote told the Trooper that he worked for the town and dealt with financial matters and had reported it to the Attorney General's office. The Trooper put this conversation in his report. Upon hearing this, Chief Brooks called the Attorney General's office and they told him no such claim had been made.

Chief Brooks then addressed the Council that in his role as a Town Councilor, Mr. Cote had reported to the Attorney General's office that town officials had lied at an unemployment hearing on a former employee. However, since he based his information on hearsay, there was no investigation from the AG's office. Chief Brooks asked if the Town Manager or the Town Council was aware of any such complaint. Chief Brooks said by doing this, Councilor Cote crossed the line of civil liability and put the Town of Lisbon at risk for a liability for a potential lawsuit.

Councilor Cote and School Committee member Janice Comber have crossed the line for civil liability, Chief Brooks stated. Not only is his attorney reviewing these allegations, the Teamsters Union is also looking into it because of the naming of one other police officer. Chief Brooks requested that the Council remove Councilor Cote from office effective immediately as is their right under the Town Charter.

Chief Brooks said if this were a criminal trial, a jury would find Councilor Cote and Mrs. Comber guilty. However, he said, this is a civil matter and civil matters require only a preponderance of

evidence. He demanded if the Council did not remove him, then not to allow him to vote on Police Department matters. Chief Brooks said Councilor Cote was not fit for office and that the Town of Lisbon and the citizens of Lisbon deserve better.

At this point, Chief Brooks ended his remarks and members of the audience came to the podium to speak. Erlene Millett asked what had happened to this town and that she supported Chief Brooks. Bruce Coffin addressed his comments to Councilor Cote and asked him why he was smiling through this whole thing and asked him what was so funny? Councilor Cote said, "Just continue, I'll have my speech afterwards." Mr. Coffin told Councilor Cote that if he did not like this town you would not have spread all these things about it. He said, maybe you should resign. There was applause to this from the audience. Councilor Cote then asked Councilor Bowie if he could comment on that. Councilor Bowie said certainly.

Councilor Cote said: This fall when the elections came about for Council, I had no intentions of running for Council. However, I was pushed and prodded to run for Council. The only one thing that I did was I made an interview with the one of the local newspapers speaking out against the Lisbon Police Department and I felt it was way too large when we have towns like Standish that's only got a Sheriff's Department and they've got more people than Lisbon has. I just feel we are paying a little too much money. Obviously, the people of this community felt the same way I did because there was over 2,000, in fact there was almost 2,400 people that voted to put me in office and to remove a person that had been in there for fifteen years. So, in saying that, there is a lot of people, a lot more than what's in this room, that feels the same things I have said. We have seen actions. We have seen things and I will be getting into a lot more of these in the future. Most of this, in fact all of this stuff, was done way before I was ever elected, not after I was a Councilor and whatever I think, you know, very good performance tonight, David, very nice. I would be, you know, Hollywood bound.

Councilor Bowie interrupted at this point and told the audience they would get their chance to speak.

Councilor Cote continued: I feel I represent a lot more than just thirty or forty people. They have clearly told me the same things and that is the way I am going to continue. I knew something like this was going to be coming up, because when you start messing with budgets and that obviously I have a vote now, being on the Council. I knew that there'd be an attack to try to get me out before the vote came and I expected it and I think you've done a good job and ah, move on, and if you don't want me here, I'll leave. It matters not; it is just that 2,400 citizens of this community put me on here.

At this point Melinda Baker came to the podium. She said Councilor Cote's conduct embarrassed her. She said he represented her and her town in a slanderous way and in a disrespectful way to reporters against a decent man and a decent town and a good place to live. She told the Council they would not be doing the Town a service if they did not do something to remove Councilor Cote from office.

Chief Brooks commented on the 2,400 voters Councilor Cote mentioned, saying that some of those were in the audience tonight and doubted that they would have voted for him had they heard tonight's presentation.

Next at the podium was Lisa Ward who agreed with Ms. Baker's remarks and said she felt stunned by these disclosures. She asked Councilor Cote if he would do the right thing and step down tonight. She said right now he did not appear to feel any remorse for the awful things he had done. She said she saw the same things Mr. Coffin saw, the smirking and grinning and feeling no remorse and feeling self-satisfied. She said he should be ashamed of himself and that he had acted like a gossipy little girl. She asked him to think about what he had done, that he had not just hurt Chief Brooks and the Council, but that he had hurt the entire town. Ms. Baker said she was ashamed of

him, as were most of the people who were there and most of the people that she knows who hear of what happened tonight would be ashamed of him, too. She said she did not think we should rely on the Council alone to do the right thing. She said that Councilor Cote should do the right thing and remove himself from the Council.

Kathaleen Bailey addressed Councilor Cote by saying she was a Town employee and a citizen of Lisbon. She said she was a good Christian woman who was proud of the Town. In the past, she has tried to get the *Lisbon Reporter* to change its ways to give a more positive slant to the town. She said what was presented in the *Lisbon Reporter* was bringing down the Town and the Town employees. She said it would have been fine if it had been the facts, but they were not. Mrs. Bailey felt that Councilor Cote was on a personal vendetta, not to help the Town of Lisbon. She said she had prayed for Councilor Cote and Mr. Comber, but she felt God would take His revenge.

Richard Main said innuendo, baseless accusation, and statements made out of anger really do not have any place in the public arena. He urged the Town Council to take action either immediately or in a special Council meeting. He encouraged the Council to refer to the Charter on how to proceed. He said all his dealings with Chief Brooks have been aboveboard. He expressed grief for Chief Brooks in having to address this issue publicly and he regretted the emotional upheaval caused by the baseless accusations aimed at him.

Conrad Davis spoke about being a business owner in Lisbon and having lived in Lisbon all his life and knowing many of the people involved personally. He said this issue needed addressing, so the town can move on, because it will hurt business. Mr. Davis stressed his concern for the potential business owner considering Lisbon who could read the *Lisbon Reporter* online and then decide from that not to do business in Lisbon.

Randy Jones told that he had lived in Lisbon for 59 years and the accusations against Chief Brooks appalled him. He applauded Chief Brooks and the Police Department for all their hard work. Larry McClure, owner of Aubuchon Hardware, also expressed his disgust and thanked Chief Brooks for his hard work. Mr. McClure told Councilor Cote that he had known him for 38 years and this made him sick. In all his travels over the State doing business, he had never heard a negative comment about Chief Brooks.

Councilor Wells explained the Charter rules regarding removing a Councilor from office. She said it requires giving the Councilor notice and holding a public hearing. She recommended removing Councilor Cote from office pending a public hearing. Someone asked if he can remove himself, and Councilor Wells said yes, he could.

Chief Brooks read from the *Lisbon Reporter*, dated Aug. 25, 2008 "*Friends, fellow citizens, and taxpayers beware the town of Lisbon is no longer a democratic government. We are fast becoming a Fascist government, a Totalitarian regime with Chief of Police David Brooks as dictator. Just read the proposed changes to the Town Charter, it will scare you.*" Chief Brooks asked the Council if he had any part in writing the Town Charter, to which Councilor Bowie replied, no. Chief Brooks said we have a radical, anti-government activist group here. We know who one of their leaders is and we have asked the Council to relieve us of that problem.

Chief Brooks expressed his gratitude for the support shown from the audience. He said there were times when his own wife was afraid to live in her own home. He exclaimed that they caused it, that Councilor Cote caused it, to which Councilor Cote asked, "I caused it?"

Don Stein then spoke at the podium saying he had lived here for 66 years and asked Councilor Cote: when are you going to resign? Councilor Cote replied that probably after this meeting he would be told to resign, thank you.

Councilor Cote asked if he could speak. He said, one thing I would like to make very clear that probably a lot of you people do not know. Number one, I am amazed at the amount of attention that has been brought to a blog site. We were approached about some of the things we had written or somebody had written in there at one time and the person went to the FBI with it. The FBI clearly told us that anything that is in that is nothing but a blog site and it is people's opinions. I have not nor have I ever had the ability to post a thing on the *Lisbon Reporter*. I do not have any financial interest in the *Lisbon Reporter*. The only thing that I did, I associated with the *Lisbon Concerned Citizens* and if you need proof of that I can give you proof of that. That's the only thing I can tell you.

Richard Main said he was told that Councilor Cote was the editor of the *Lisbon Reporter* and that Councilor Cote determined what went in to the paper. Councilor Cote said he was part of the group that went over the information. Mr. Main asked that it be noted that there was only one person who stated he determined what went into the paper.

Chief Brooks addressed Councilor Cote saying that it was clear he had no credibility. Councilor Cote said he "was not going to argue with you, Sir." Councilor Cote said "and I probably won't be voting on your budget like you didn't want me to." Someone spoke up and asked Councilor Cote to resign right now, instead of dragging the Town into another meeting and another hearing. He asked that Councilor Cote "do the right thing and resign."

After the Town Manager's report, Councilor Bowie said it appeared there could be no immediate action regarding removing Councilor Cote, given the rules of the Charter. He said the public would be kept informed of whatever decisions are made.

Charles Baker addressed the Council and suggested suspending Councilor Cote. Councilor Larochelle noted that two Councilors were missing at the meeting. He said he preferred to make a decision with all the Council members present. Councilor Wells stated that based on their own rules, the Council could choose to suspend him at this time. Councilor Mason agreed with Councilor Larochelle to take no action until the other two Councilors could attend. She expressed her desire to move quickly on this matter with a public hearing so that people who voted for Councilor Cote could express their opinions also.

Councilor Bowie said the Council would meet again on Wednesday or Thursday, depending on Councilor availability.

Councilor Wells expressed concern that the meeting was to go into Executive Session with discussion on Police matters. She did not want Councilor Cote voting on Police matters. When asked if he would excuse himself from that Executive Session, Councilor Cote said he would not do that. Councilor Wells then recommended tabling the Executive Session.

Councilor Bowie agreed to move forward on the public hearing, but was concerned that illness and scheduling of the Council members might prevent delays. He recommended continuing the rest of the meeting. Councilor Wells suggested making that the appointments, but suspending the rest of the night's agenda. Councilors Mason and Larochelle agreed to this suggestion. No objections noted.

#### D. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Eldridge reported that they were working hard on the budget, trying to close the \$950,000.00 revenue shortage. He said the new website is looking very good. The Ordinance review received an update from Shoreland Rezoning, which includes corrections for the Comprehensive Plan. This Ordinance Review will be a long process.

## APPOINTMENTS

### BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD (ONE-DISTRICT 2) TERM EXPIRING 2010 APPOINT UNTIL DECEMBER 2009

**VOTE (2009-34)** Councilor Wells, seconded by Councilor Mason moved to appoint Richard Main to the Budget Advisory Board. **Order passed – Vote 5-0.**

Mr. Eldridge said two people asked to be on the Budget Advisory Board. Notification of the meeting went out to the two applicants, Mr. Main and Mr. Comber. Mr. Main was in the audience and Mr. Eldridge had not heard from Mr. Comber.

In making the motion to appoint Mr. Main, Councilor Wells cited the fact that Mr. Main had served on the Budget Advisory Board once before. Councilor Wells stated that Mr. Main had shown up twice for the appointment and that Mr. Comber had not appeared either time, and said Mr. Main had wonderful credentials.

### PLANNING BOARD (ONE-ALTERNATE MEMBER) TERM EXPIRING 2009

**VOTE (2009-35)** Councilor Mason, seconded by Councilor Wells moved to appoint Cheryl Haggerty to the 2009 term on the Planning Board. **Order passed – Vote 5-0.**

## ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Wells, seconded by Councilor Larochelle moved to adjourn at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Elizabeth French, Assistant Town Clerk

*These minutes are not verbatim. Cassette tapes are filed in the Town Clerk's Office.*