

FRANCONIA NOTCH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
JUNE 22, 2011

Place: Woodsville Guaranty Board Room

Called to order at 10:03 a.m. by President Frank Grima

Present: Frank Grima, Steve Allen, Greg Keeler, Marion Rexford, Jean Sauls, Annie Salter, Todd Aldrich, Bill McFarlane, Maxine Aldrich, Bob Tortorice, and Executive Director, Barbara Ashley

Absent: Orlo Coots, Carleen Quinn

President Grima called a special meeting to discuss with the board a letter received from the Selectboard of the Town of Easton stating that because the Franconia Chamber did not take a stance against the "Northern Pass" which they consider a business issue, that the Town will not be paying the support funds of \$400.00 this year.

President Grima has studied the by-laws of the Chamber and relayed to the board that there is not a specific by-law pertaining to political stances in place but the current policy of the Franconia Chamber is that "no stances will be taken regarding any political or politically charged issues by the Chamber."

President Grima stated the current mission of Franconia Notch Chamber of Commerce:

1. To concentrate in one body, the unity, energy and interests of the business community.
2. To encourage all legitimate business and enterprise
3. To disseminate through the press and other venues, information relative to the advantages of Franconia, Easton, and Sugar Hill as a field for recreational activities and a place of residence.

President Grima stated that many opportunities have been available in the community regarding dissemination of information pertaining to the "Northern Pass" and that different businesses have different stances on the issue. While we understand the town of Easton's discontent with the "Northern Pass", we do not believe that this is an issue that the Chamber should be taking a stance on as it does not conform with the objective and mission of the Chamber as stated in our bylaws. Any stances taken on any political or politically charged issue would then have to be taken into consideration for a stance on all similar issues that come before the board. With this said, President Grima opened the meeting for discussion.

Various discussion ensued on the purpose and intent of the Chamber. It was noted that should we wish to change our current policy regarding political stances that we would be setting a new precedent and could very well be taking away from the very purpose of the Chamber to promote tourism and give support to our chamber members in the marketing of our communities. It was also noted that if this was to

happen that monies could be deferred from marketing to fight against political issues which is not the purpose of the Chamber.

Item: Maxine Aldrich made a motion to adhere to the longstanding Chamber of Commerce policy of not taking a stance on controversial political or politically charged issues. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bill McFarlane. All voted unanimously.

Item: Steve Allen then made a motion for the Chamber to address the issue of the "Northern Pass". There was no second so therefore the motion was a dead issue.

Item: Bob Tortorice made a motion to grant authorization to President Frank Grima to respond to Mr. O'Brien and the Easton board of Selectman. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bill McFarlane. Unanimous vote.

This letter is to contain minutes of this meeting, a copy of Mr. O'Brien's letter, the mission of our Chamber and its current policy regarding all political or politically charged issues. The fact that the letter was signed by all three select board members designates that it is indeed a "political issue". The businesses of Easton have received much support from the Chamber functions and feels that non-support from the Town of Easton based on a stance from the Chamber is not an appropriate position.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

Respectfully

Marion Rexford,  
Secretary