First Selectman Joseph Mazza called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Present: Board Members: Joseph Mazza, Charles Havrda, Cynthia Cartier, Veronica Wallace and Gary MacElhiney

Town Officials: Clerk Traci Brinkman, Probate Judge Joel Helander and Town Engineer Jim Portley

1. Discuss and take possible action to:

   a) Rescind motion approved at the June 25, 2009 Board of Selectmen meeting regarding the combined Madison/Guilford Probate Court.

   b) Approve new motion to have the combined Madison/Guilford Probate Court.

Mr. Mazza said the board originally wanted the court to be in Guilford because it would be easier for citizens, but they didn’t realize the extent of the renovations they would have to do to town hall. In the end the actual cost would have been $25,000 for each town.

In January Madison First Selectman McPherson said he felt they had more room in Madison so they looked at a space on the bottom floor of the Old Memorial Town Hall. Mr. Mazza said it is a wide open room that would have to be partitioned and it has a large vault. The renovations would cost $50,000 because the vault would need to be fitted with an HVAC system. Mr. Portley and Mr. Neydorff looked at the space and came to a tentative agreement to present this solution to each board and Guilford would provide the manpower while Madison provided the cost of materials. He added that the cost for Guilford would have been about $5,000 to help pay for an outside contractor for the HVAC.

Mr. Mazza said since that time Madison decided to look for space upstairs, which houses the Historical Society and there is a room for the Land Trust. There are two meeting rooms, the same size vault as downstairs and another smaller room. The new proposal is to use the back portion of the building. He added that there would be some renovation work downstairs and Guilford would provide the labor to move the Historical Society downstairs, but nothing would need to be done with the vault. Mr. Mazza said Mr. Helander is agreeable to this.
Ms. Wallace asked if they would have the same staff, two clerks for each town and one judge.

Mr. Mazza said he believes that is the plan initially, he would think they might be able to reduce that overtime, but the towns do not pay for the salary anyway. He added that the cost would be about $10,000 at the most for each town for the renovations downstairs to accommodate the historical Society.

Mr. Mazza said they have to tell the court administrator what the name will be and it was decided to be the Madison/Guilford Probate Court.

Mr. MacElhiney asked if the costs are going to be split 50/50 even though Guilford is larger than Madison.

Mr. Mazza said he assumes it would be 50/50 similar to the Transfer Station. He was talking to Sheila and the cost for this would not hit the general fund. There is a fund with Town Clerk fees that does not go into the General Fund and that could be used to get the court up and running. He added that there might be some state money, but he is not counting on that.

Mr. Mazza said during the budget preparation, Mr. Helander wanted to bring all this up, but he didn’t want to confuse people because it is not being paid with general funds. He added that the current Probate Court in Madison is larger than Guilford’s, but the vault is not big enough therefore they needed to find a different space.

Mr. Helander said the Madison location is great and while he was looking to have the court in Guilford he didn’t want to refuse this location, because it is ideal with regard to space. His only concern is that it is understood that the board’s approval is for the space upstairs that has been discussed with Madison officials. He added that he would hate for the location to change again and the space be reduced.

Ms. Cartier asked how many people use the Probate Court a year in Guilford.

Mr. Helander said they have about 500-700 a year in Guilford alone.

Mr. Mazza asked about the accounting mechanics of the court.

Mr. Helander said under the reform bill the Probate Courts would not be managing their own business. Right now the courts collect the fees and pay their own payroll and expenses, then quarterly they forward funds to the state. He added that there is a lot of bookkeeping, but after the consolidation everything will be centralized at the state level.

Mr. Helander said whoever is elected is free to phase in clerks. He added
that they can have 2.4 clerks based on a 40 hour work week so it is a total of 96 hours. Mr. Helander said most clerks do not want to work 40 hours a week so each judge can phase in any number of clerk’s to cover those hours. He added that the combined court will be open 5 days a week.

Mr. Portley said he had a discussion with the Building Official in Madison and if Madison can come up with the cash then Guilford can do the labor outfitting the building. He added that they have not come up with an estimate for the renovations downstairs, however, Mr. Neydorff outfitted the original space when he was working with a private contractor.

Mr. MacElhiney asked Mr. Helander if he thought there could be future consolidations.

Mr. Helander said he cannot foresee another consolidation, but it would not surprise him if in 15-20 years it got rolled into the Superior Court System. He added that they are lucky they got combined with just Madison because their court will be the fourth smallest district serving only 42,000 people.

Motion: Upon a motion made by Ms. Cartier and seconded by Ms. Havrda, the board voted unanimously to rescind the previous motion approved at the June 25, 2009 Board of Selectmen meeting regarding the combined Madison/Guilford Probate Court being located in Madison.

Vote:  In Favor: Mazza, Havrda, Cartier, Wallace and MacElhiney
Opposed: None
Abstaining: None

Motion: Upon a motion made by Ms. Cartier and seconded by Mr. Havrda, the board voted unanimously to have the combined Madison/Guilford Probate Court located in Madison and to officially name it the Madison/Guilford Probate Court.

Vote:  In Favor: Mazza, Havrda, Cartier, Wallace and MacElhiney
Opposed: None
Abstaining: None

2. Consider and take possible action declaring April 2, 2010 as Autism Awareness Day in the Town of Guilford.

Motion: Upon a motion made by Ms. Wallace and seconded by Ms. Cartier, the board voted unanimously to approve the proclamation declaring April 2, 2010 as Autism Awareness Day in the Town of Guilford.

Vote:  In Favor: Mazza, Havrda, Cartier, Wallace and MacElhiney
Opposed: None
Motion: Upon a motion made by Ms. Wallace and seconded by Ms. Cartier, the board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 a.m.

Vote: In Favor: Mazza, Havrda, Cartier, Wallace and MacElhiney
Opposed: None
Abstaining: None

Respectfully submitted,

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Traci K. Brinkman
Clerk
Board of Selectmen