

**MINUTES
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Friday, October 13, 2023**

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Janet Wall (JW), Mark Avery (MA), Tim Burt (TB)
OTHERS: Eric Fiegenbaum (EF), Deb Ahlstrom (DA), Jay Moriarty (JM), AJ Hartford,
and Jeannette Fones

CORRESPONDANCE

- None

SIGN: payroll, burial lot licenses (2) for Falk and Keith

MINUTES: TB moved and MA moved to approve the minutes of 9/11, 9/29 and 10/6 as amended.
Motion passed.

GUESTS:

AJ Hartford came before the Selectmen to discuss extending the current snow contract to include through the 2026-27 season. The current contract ends after the 2024-25 season. He suggested that a reference to his supplying material should be removed, as he does not supply any materials. The town buys the sand and salt. He may not be on site during the entire season, but is lining up three employees and he would return quickly if there was an issue. If this new contract was agreed to he would follow through on his intention to purchase a third truck (used). His costs, like all those in the construction field, had seen large increases on both equipment and labor. He has in the past year made some repair and maintenance investments. On his offer to *obtain* a third truck, the contract wording might offer 90 days for him to comply. The investments in equipment and manpower should improve his services. He had a question about the termination clause on the part of the town, which was explained as a necessity to deal with the remote possibility that the town meeting does not appropriate the necessary funds. It was noted that the first year contained a substantial increase in costs (29 percent). He was open to a counter proposal that would limit future increases to 2 percent. His plans include his company's ability to fulfill the contract. The Selectmen acknowledged that a timely response is necessary. It was noted that the town had been methodically making improvements to roads and drainage, and not just paving over issues.

After Hartford left, the Selectmen went on to discuss the contract increases, the value of extending the contract with regard to how the town accomplishes snow removal into the future, and difficulty in finding contractors. JM noted the need for the town to have a building and salt storage area if another contractor was not local. He also noted that Hartford had always come through for the town and was extending his business plan to offer the extension in the contract. Further discussion would be held at the next meeting.

Police Chief Joe McGann came before the Selectmen to discuss his budget and capital improvements. He was asking for an increase in the Chief's wage and also discussed the uncertainty of gas costs, an increase in the budget to cover the cleaning of uniforms, and the possibility of finding a common solution to the cleaning of town buildings. He offered that the town's decision on a cost of living raise would be acceptable for his officers. He is requesting that the clerical staff wage go to \$25/hour. He has had some recent patrol officer hires, but is below historical and desired levels. Other budget lines were discussed. He has ordered a new cruiser as planned in the capital reserve, but the autoworkers strike and supply chain issues has made that timing and final costs difficult to predict. He is looking into replacing the department's service weapons and making improvements to radio communications. Vests will

need replacing. He will be appointing Steve Lee as the Deputy Chief. He reported that the Mutuallink project, at the elementary school, to make security camera video available to specific first responders in an emergency situation has a few more kinks to be worked out.

NEW BUSINESS

- DA reviewed the Wentworth Family Trust Grant requests which include some additional chairs at the library and curtains in the older part of town hall. MA moved and TB seconded a motion to recommend the chairs and curtain (historical rods) proposals to the grant trustees. Motion passed. Future considerations for grant funding may include electrical work in the old town hall entrance area, replacements of some tables, and upgrades to the flooring in the town hall kitchen and bathrooms.
- DA noted that she had filed the MS-434, an updated revenues report. She noted this item along with other state reports and inputs would go toward setting the tax rate.
- DA provided an overview of revenues and appropriations available in a spreadsheet format that allows for different scenarios. She passed along the long term narratives from some departments.
- There was a short review of the Capital Improvement Plan. MA moved and TB seconded a motion to forward the CIP on to the Planning Board for review.

OLD BUSINESS

- Deferred

BOARD UPDATES

- Deferred

OTHER:

- Strafford Regional Planning Commission has an interest in speaking with the Selectmen on having a preliminary study on the redesign of the Route 4 - Madbury Road - Town Hall intersection. EF will coordinate a time for a meeting in November.
- EF will post all available approved meeting minutes from this Selectboard.
- EF will respond to the Library's invitation for Selectmen to attend the celebration of the Librarian's, Susan Sinnott, award for Librarian of the Year.
- It was suggested that the capital reserve for IT equipment could be used to purchase a new voting machine in the future.
- Several agenda items were deferred until Monday night's meeting, which will include a visit from the Town Clerk/Tax Collector.
- The Selectmen's meeting scheduled for Friday, October 20, is canceled.

Meeting ended at 12:00pm.

Submitted by: *Eric Fitzgerald*

Approved: 10-27-2023

On approved minutes, proof changes are noted through italics for additions and strikethroughs for deletions.