

**MINUTES
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Monday, October 16, 2023**

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

CORRESPONDANCE

- EF shared some emails where Portsmouth and DES responded to comments from a Jim Hewitt (assumed Portsmouth resident) about providing redundancy with Portsmouth's drinking water pipeline under the bay and plans to replace it.
- Durham noticed that they would be holding a lot line adjustment hearing on a parcel that was partly in Madbury, 117 Piscataqua Bridge Rd. The Madbury Planning Board had already given a conditional approval.

GUEST: Lisa Amarosa, Town Clerk and Tax Collector, came before the Selectmen to discuss her budget and plan for a new voting machine. She noted that there would be four elections in 2024, each of which came with expenses for programming the voting machine and meals for the election workers. While she did not see purchasing a new vote tabulating machine right away, it might be a good idea for the town to set aside some \$7,000 to purchase one through the capital reserve for IT equipment. She *is considering* sending the assistant town clerk to certification training. She might adjust personnel hours in her office to allow for more training opportunity. She noted that the town hall could use cleaning and maintenance.

NEW BUSINESS

- An overview of tax rate setting, overlay and fund balance was deferred.

OLD BUSINESS

- There was a discussion on the snow contract. EF noted that the snow contract had seen slight modifications to remove the word "materials" and include language that the contractor had a 90-day grace period to obtain a new truck. The contract now contained a \$50,000 increase in 2023-24 with a 2% increase each year after through 2026-27. There was a comment that the cost increase came with expectations for better services. An idea to include language that would give the town the option to purchase the third truck was set aside. The first year increase would require finding funding in 2023 budget, which was thought to be possible with some budget line item adjustments. It was noted that the road budget was slightly over budget, mostly due to a storm cleanup. DA gave a short overview of budgeting rules, fund balance and the contingency fund use. JW was concerned about the impact on the taxpayer. It was noted that snow removal was a required service to which there had been substantial inflationary costs. It was noted that the PWEC report placed an emphasis on extending the snow contract to allow for more time should the town move to develop a public works facility. TB moved and MA seconded a motion accept the revised contract. Motion passed. The contract was signed by the Selectmen.
- MA lead a discussion on the Public Works Exploratory Committee (PWEC) report based on a summary of the report and a decisions list that would be before the Selectmen. One of the recommendations was to extend the snow contract to allow for more time to implement any decision. The Selectmen were agreeable for MA and EF to work on an RFP to confirm the difficulty in finding snow removal contractors. There was consensus to hold a public hearing so the public could attend to ask questions and give comment. EF will work on scheduling the hearing and the members of the committee will be invited for Monday evening, November 6, 2023. He will ask SRPC to reschedule to November 20 on the topic of

the Rt. 155 - Madbury Road intersection. The approaches to address public work tasks include the current local contractor model, a town public works department, a nearby contractor which would likely need some type of town facility to use (staging area, salt shed) or pairing with another nearby town. A decision on the issue regarding a road agent and/or a DPW director may also be needed. The PWEC committee is not likely to be an DPW implementation committee. Exploring funding, whether bonding or capital reserve is also another issue, along with exploring whether tasks will be handled by a road agent or DPW director. If a facility is needed, then a search for a site would be necessary and may require some preliminary engineering. The Selectmen will need make a decision on the approach to provide public work services. The PWEC report needs to be accepted and the committee dissolved.

BOARD UPDATES

- EF reviewed recent water testing results for 5 town properties. Of note was high antimony at the cemetery and levels of arsenic just above the limit at the library and 9 Town Hall Rd. Treatment solutions for arsenic at the two building locations will be discussed later.
- EF reported that LandCare had gotten their driveway permit from NH DOT. TB noted that the Planning Board had given an extension to LandCare until February 2024.
- EF reported that the sizing and material of the culverts for the new properties on Huckins Road was an issue between the engineer, landowners and builder. The plans had not been passed down properly and smaller than required culverts had been installed. NH Fish and Game had requested and DES had permitted the larger size.
Also, the vote at the Planning Board for the waver for above ground utilities was valid because an abstention is not considered a negative vote.

OTHER:

- The Selectmen were agreeable to two more trials of the food truck for ORYA at Tibbetts Field
- There was a quick review of possible Select Notes topics for the Musings.
- EF reported that the school would be adjusting the school zone signs as a resident had pointed out that the times were incorrect.
- EF will be talking to custodian at the Moharimet School who has shown an interest in discussing cleaning town buildings.
- A private company offering community power for electricity will be told that the Selectmen were watching the market and not likely to make a decision at this time.
- EF reported that Glass Routes would be scheduling window glass replacements at the town hall shortly. It was noted that EF should be the contact for the contractor. If the trustee of the Wentworth Trust approves the curtain proposal for town hall, EF will be in touch with the contractor to arrange for the installation.
- EF will be getting a quote from Insurcomm on the vehicle damage to town hall.
- A security alarm switch has been replaced at the Library and a check of motion detectors at town hall was done.

Meeting ended at 10:00pm.

Submitted by: *Eric Fugentbaum* Approved: *10-27-2023*
On approved minutes, proof changes are noted through italics for additions and strikethroughs for deletions.