

**MINUTES
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Friday, November 03, 2023**

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Janet Wall (JW), Mark Avery (MA), Tim Burt (TB)
OTHERS: Eric Fiegenbaum (EF), Deb Ahlstrom (DA), and from the Library/Trustees of the Library, Noreen Gaetjens, Susan Sinnott, Marie O'Neill, Georgeann Murphy, and Betsy Renshaw

CORRESPONDANCE

- A letter from HealthTrust showed an increase in insurance rates (15.6%).
- Notices from Primex showed increases in Property and Liability (9%) and Workers Compensation (10%) to the cap increases proposed in their agreement. There was no increase in Unemployment Compensation.

MINUTES: MA moved and TB seconded the approval of the minutes from October 25 as amended. Motion passed. MA moved and TB seconded the approval of the minutes from October 27 as presented. Motion passed.

GUEST: Library Director, Susan Sinnott, explained the budget request. She indicated that the library was behind in keeping up with researched wage rates and the increases in the budget reflect the intention to address the issue. They had done a competitive wage comparison of surrounding communities, where many offer full time employment with benefits. It was suggested that library wages should also reach parity with other town employees. Besides lending books, patrons expect programming and that takes talented staffing. Many of the other items in the budget are out of their control, such as annual fees and subscriptions. DA explained how town building electricity rates were budgeted and that the income from the solar array came into the town as general revenue. The Selectman may make overall adjustments based on expected electric rate increases. There was an inquiry about the library hiring a person to weed flowerbeds at \$30/hr. It was explained that the job was temporary and the Friends were donating the cost to the library. The Selectmen discussed hiring authority in general. It was agreed not to close the library building capital reserve until a resolution is found for a "overheating" utility room that contains sensitive electronic components for the internet, fire alarm and security.

NEW BUSINESS

- EF explained about a road closed sign on Long Hill Rd, where the road is actually a Class VI road. He will research the history of the road and return for the Selectmen's approval to remove the sign apparently erected by a property owner.

OLD BUSINESS

- EF noted the preliminary plans for the Freshet Road Bridge were available for review. Bidding might be advertised in late 2025 with construction in the summer of 2026.

BOARD UPDATES

- TB reported that LandCare had met all the conditions precedents and could start on subsequent items and the approved plan.
A lot line adjustment was approved after receiving a concurring approval in Durham. The Planning Board continues to express interest in addressing short term rentals.

OTHER:

- DA explained a \$5 fee per car registration as a optional revenue source approved by the Department of Revenue Administration.
- A request for support from the Oyster River Parents and Preschoolers to provide books to preschoolers was passed on to the Library
- There was a brief discussion in preparation for the public hearing on the Public Works Exploratory Committee Report.

Meeting ended at 9:45am.

Submitted by: *Eric Figueira*

Approved: *11-10-2023*

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