

**MINUTES  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
Monday, November 20, 2023**

**SELECTMEN PRESENT:** Janet Wall (JW), Mark Avery (MA), Tim Burt (TB)

**OTHERS:** Eric Fiegenbaum (EF), Deb Ahlstrom (DA), and Justin Corrow (JC)

**CORRESPONDANCE**

- A letter from Comcast about fee changes was noted.

**SIGN:** accounts payable check, town hall use by MIUCC

**GUEST:** Justin Corrow came before the Selectmen as the Building Inspector to discuss his budget and as the recent chair of the Recreation Commission on their budget.

He had no changes to the Building Inspector's budget. Minor adjustments were made within his budget lines. When asked about the building codes we use verses the State's use of the 2018 codes, he explained that previous Selectmen had stayed with the 2009 codes, but he was fine with going to the 2018 codes. He thought most of the changes would be for increased insulation for new buildings. MA moved and TB seconded a motion to follow the 2018 codes. Motion passed. Justin will work with EF to update the website about the new code requirement.

JC reported that the number of permits is pretty consistent and manageable, about 130 to 140 per year. He will work on reviewing the current town permit fee amounts, as they are lower than most surrounding towns and return with a recommendation. In general fees should cover his cost to review and inspect, and rest upon the property owner creating the issue, rather than spreading costs on all the residents. He has not felt a need to call in a specialist to help inspect, but knows that he can.

He was asked about and reported that things are now going well with the two new homes on Huckins Rd. Communication breakdowns between the engineer and builder were likely the cause of the need for corrections to the driveway culverts.

On the Recreation Commission he reported that the budget was fine. He hoped to do more maintenance work (weed control) on the fitness trail. He expressed some interest in purchasing an edger. They hope to offer some fitness and exercise programs in 2024. He expects to spend his budget next year. They are working on their plan to extend the fitness trail into the cemetery property by hugging the tree line and then going back into the woods. Some type of wet area crossing will be necessary. Chuck Goss may be able to assist on some of the work. The capital reserve allows accumulation of funds for the future trail. The Selectmen indicated an interest in seeing a plan come to fruition if money is being set aside for a purpose. Additional members on the commission would be appreciated. Perhaps volunteers could be found to assist with some of the trail maintenance needs.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- After a short discussion, MA moved and TB seconded a motion to appoint Chuck Goss as a member to the Recreation Commission until 2026. Motion passed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- There was a discussion on the Freshet Rd bridge over Johnson Creek plans from CMA Engineers and their recommendations, which include the most cost effective design, guardrails, full closure of the bridge during construction, and working on the environmental permit at the same time the final design is developed. TB moved and MA seconded a motion to accept and forward the CMA plans and recommendations on to the NH DOT for review. Motion passed.

- There was a review of the Public Works Exploratory Committee public hearing. There was one question about putting out a request for proposals for future snow removal contracts and one statement from the public. EF will work with MA on an RFP regarding a snow contract starting after the current one ends in 2027. MA commented on the need to address what model of public works the town might pursue and how might that get implemented. The possible models being: the current contractor model, a bridging contractor which could include some sort of town facility for staging and salt/sand storage, and the committee's recommendation for a full DPW department as the long range solution. Implementation tasks could include: keep looking for a contractor, establish a salt/sand storage facility on land owned by the town, and possibly hiring a consultant and or starting an implementation committee for guidance. As an hypothetical aside, Mike Wenrich from Brookline has indicated he might be willing to be a consultant. JW expressed an interest in having some time to consider things and prefers an incremental approach as she considers the impact on property taxes. TB indicated that there were a number of things coming at the town including the anticipated retirement of the road agent. The Selectmen would need to give some guidance to an implementation committee. A switch to a full DPW is a big step for the town and perhaps a hybrid model might work in the interim. JW brought up possible changes in providing policing services. It was agreed that there is a lot to consider and things are coming at the same time. Other items enumerated included fire services and possibly trash pickup. Movements toward a decision are needed. TB moved and MA seconded a motion to officially accept previously received final Public Works Exploratory Committee report thereby dissolving the committee. Motion passed. It was agreed to send a letter of appreciation to committee members, which MA has been working on. MA offered that we should at least continue to search for a snow contractor even though it may be a long shot. The town may not be ready for a full DPW, but we probably need to start working on some basic facility as it could facilitate finding a contractor, and to get there a site and building design that is expandable needs to be identified. An RFP should focus on performance, not necessarily dictating the equipment required.
- After some editing, MA moved and TB seconded the draft letter to the School Board supporting 911 enhancements to the Mutualink system after a review from Chief McGann. Motion passed. JW will speak with the Chief. School administration will be told a letter is on the way.
- After a review, TB moved and MA seconded sending a letter, as amended, to 54 Evans Rd regarding what appears to be numerous cars being parked on the property. Motion passed.
- To encourage the Planning Board to address the issue of tourist homes, TB proposed adding language that is similar to regulating agritourism. There was a review of the proposal with some suggestions involving septic loading, parking, and a subordinate use.
- EF provided research on the history of the Class VI portion of Long Hill Rd (1979 Town Meeting, Article 22) prior to the removal of some unauthorized road closed signs as agreed to by the Road Agent. A Class VI sign will also be placed at the correct beginning of the Class VI portion.
- EF reported on a proposal for a small land swap involving a conservation easement on Nute Rd. He recommended that the landowner contact the State as they may have an interest and knowledge on amending easements.
- EF will do some research to possibly support the updating of the criteria values for the town's elderly exemption.

**BOARD UPDATES**

- TB reported that the Planning Board is working on the master plan and the upcoming Housing Forum on December 6th. The board is also aware that there may be additional HOP grant funds that would involve implementation of an ordinance update and the town has expressed an interest should funds be made available.
- EF reported that Al Pratt from Portsmouth’s water department has indicated that there is a purchase and sale agreement for a conservation easement on Hayes and Nute roads. Funding is in place with perhaps a July 1 completion date. Portsmouth was confronted by an abutter when they did a monitoring of the Olson easement even though they had not trespassed. Next year they will try some noticing prior to the monitoring to see if things might go smoother. Portsmouth would like to come before the Selectmen to provide an update on various issues. They did not have any progress to report on an enforcement action for the Schwartz violation at 14 Huckins Rd.

**OTHER:**

- JW noted that the Recreation Committee might need reminding that the Selectmen have not shown an interest in naming bridges on town trails.
- On asking about any interest from Moharimet School custodians in cleaning town buildings, EF would need to provide some indication of wages. EF has a list of expected tasks. TB noted that there is some disparity in setting wages in town for similar tasks. MA indicated an interest in having a better understanding of the custodial lines in the budget. There was a question on how many hours are required for the cleaning of town hall.
- EF has reports of an odor on some evenings up on Freshet Rd. There is a suspicion that it might be the Turnkey landfill. JW reported that it occurs late in the evening *on Kelley Rd*. A Shaheen aide, *smelling the odor on Moss Ln*, has expressed an interest in looking into it. It appears the Turnkey smell is a regional issue that has been brought up at meetings.
- There was a short discussion on activity at the old Towle gravel pit on French Cross Road.

Meeting ended at 10:15pm.

Submitted by: *Eric Ferguson*

Approved: *1-15-2024*

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