

## MINUTES

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
TOWN HALL**

**October 16, 2023  
6:30 PM**

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### **ATTENDEES:**

Selectman Leon Rideout      Selectman Shane Beattie  
Town Manager Benjamin Gaetjens-Oleson      Charity Baker      Michael Nadeau  
Department Heads      Members of the Public      Phlume Media      Caledonian-Record  
Selectman candidates – Erik Becker, Rob Christie, Charles Lafond, Kathy Jean Lavoie, Alan Savage

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Selectman Leon Rideout

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES:**

**Police Chief Jon Woodworth** reported that new officers Briana Henry and Kyle Trivero have started. The department responded to 336 calls for service, 10 arrests, 104 traffic stops, and 6 motor vehicle accidents in the last month. They will be assisting with Project Homebound on November 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Recreation Direction Eli Vincent** reported they wrapping up travel soccer in the next week. The past weekend they hosted their annual soccer tournament with a great turnout. They made \$2,200 in snack bar sales and \$2,200 in merchandise sales. Window painting will take place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and the Halloween Carnival on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Flag football has started and they are going right into the in-house basketball season. The playground is open thanks to Four Season Landscaping putting down the mulch.

**Transfer Station Supervisor Rusty Scott** mentioned the last bit of summer stuff is being done. He spent last week with Tricia Frenette discussing the budget. They will be sending out a load of tires and another load of glass. The knotweed spraying was pretty successful and will plan to do it again next year and hopefully that will eliminate it.

**Fire Chief Randy Flynn** reported they responded to 12 fire calls, 117 transfers, and 78 911 calls. The Parade of Lights went well and thanked the police department and town manager for handling traffic control. He also mentioned he was told the two van ambulances that were supposed to be here this month will not be here until December now. He gave a mileage update for each of the ambulances. The newest truck which is used for 911 calls has 3,000 miles. Van A4 has 257,000, Van A6 has 207,000, Box A5 (which they are hoping to replace next year) has 210,000 miles and A7 has 146,000 which is the next newest van.

Randy also reported a new floor was installed upstairs at the fire station and a lot of other renovations. He is hoping to install new windows upstairs as well.

**Librarian Barbara Robarts** mentioned they finally had success in getting a daily afterschool bus from the elementary school. The window sills have been repaired by Commonwealth Construction and they will be giving the Trustees a quote on replacing some trim. Barbara also reported the

Trustees are working on updating their policies and just completed their new meeting room policy and will post on their website when it is finalized.

**APPOINT SELECT BOARD MEMBER:**

Candidates – Erik Becker, Rob Christie, Charles Lafond, Kathy Jean Lavoie and Alan Savage.

Leon mentioned it would be good to have each candidate speak before a selection was made. Ben mentioned he spoke with the town attorney and he recommended a few questions that could be asked of the candidates. If they are going to ask a question, they all are to answer the same question.

Leon asked “Why do you want to be a Lancaster Selectboard member?” and each candidate was given time to respond.

Shane then asked “What is Lancaster’s greatest asset?” and each candidate was given time to respond.

Leon asked the final question and asked “What would your goal be as Selectman in the timeframe from now until the next election when the seat is open?” and each candidate was given time to respond.

Leon thanked all the candidates for stepping up and putting their name in.

Shane and Leon had a private discussion regarding who they will appoint as the new board member.

Leon mentioned before they vote for the new candidate, he encouraged everyone that came out and showed an interest to consider volunteering on other boards in the town.

Shane also thanked all the candidates and mentioned it is a tough decision.

**Motion made by Shane and seconded by Leon to appoint Kathy Jean Lavoie as member of the Board of Selectmen to fill vacant position. All in favor. Motion carried.**

Kathy Jean resigned from Budget Committee and the Conservation Commission.

Town Clerk Charity Baker swore Kathy Jean Lavoie in as the new Select Board member.

Ben mentioned it would be a good time to appoint a representative to those boards that Troy served on which were the Planning Board and Conservation Commission.

**Motion made by Leon and seconded by Shane to appoint Kathy Jean as the board of selectmen representative to the Planning Board and alternate representative to the Conservation Commission. All in favor. Motion carried.**

**APPOINTMENTS:**

**North Country Home Health & Hospice’s** Ren Anderson and Kim Force were present to discuss their agencies mission and services they provide. Presentation attached. Ren also shared a few stories of their volunteers helping the families in the area.

Kathy Jean asked if the needs assessment was done in 2022 and when will it be done again. Ren mentioned it is done every 2 years.

**North Country Broadband Buildout Project presentation by Consolidated Communications and Spectrum** – Ben introduced Carol Miller who has been working with the Northern Forest Center and the Broadband buildout committee to provided better broadband to the town and the committee has solicited proposals from telecommunication companies and they received two proposals, one from Consolidated Communications and one from Spectrum to provide greater internet, broadband, fiber internet to unserved addresses within Lancaster.

Ben explained that the board needs to make a decision at this meeting as to which vendor will contract with the committee in order for them to submit the funding applications which are due Friday. He expressed a vote needed to be made at this meeting if Lancaster is going to participate in the buildout.

Carol Miller reviewed the process the committee has gone through over the last year to get to this step in the process.

Kathy Jean asked when the grant decision will be made and announced. Carol mentioned they have not given a decision date however most grants are usually decided within six weeks from the application deadline.

She also asked if Lancaster is not funded in this round will there be other rounds of funding in the future? Carol said their will be other rounds however the next round will not be until next year around the same time.

Shane asked how Lancaster got skip in the last round. Carol feels it was not intentional and that Lancaster was not in as bad shape as other communities. Ben explained Lancaster was not as under served as others.

John from Spectrum/Charter Communications went over what they do with regards to broadband and reviewed his presentation which illustrates locations the buildout will include. Presentation attached. They have identified 52 locations and are asking the State to fund 30 of the 52 locations and they will fund the remaining 22.

Kathy Jean asked how the 52 locations were chosen. John stated those are the locations that are unserved. John mentioned if the town knows of any other locations that are not happy with their broadband service available to them, Spectrum would be happy to look into those as well.

John mentioned this project is at no cost to the town. The state funding will cover 75% of the unserved and the other 25% they will cover.

Kathy Jean asked what happens if the funding doesn’t come through. John stated they will apply again next round. John also mentioned the new build with be fiber.

Rob Christie asked who is on the Lancaster Broadband committee. It was stated that Robin Irving, Darrel Bodnar, Rob Scott, Doug Shearer, and Tyler Rancourt. It was explained that committee is not a town committee.

Sarah from Consolidated reviewed her presentation which includes a map of those areas that are under and unserved in the community. The map indicates 927 locations that are under/unserved which have been identified by the FCC.

Kathy Jean asked if the grant required a certain percentage for Consolidated’s contribution. Sarah stated the grant requires a 25% match. Kathy Jean also asked if their portion would still be done if the grant was not funded. Sara mentioned they would probably make a capital plan as some point however it probably wouldn’t encompass the entire wire center.

Shane asked why is there such a difference in locations to be included in the buildout. Consolidated is stating 927 locations and Spectrum has 52 total. John stated Spectrum is already throughout town and have 1800 existing passes, so they will just be building out to the unserved areas that are left.

Ben asked if for some reason there is overruns with the project costs who is responsible to cover the overrun. Sarah mentioned the overrun would be on Consolidated. There is no expectation of any funds coming from the town. John also stated that would be the same with Spectrum.

Kathy Jean asked John how many towns they have done a buildout for. He mentioned this is brand new program and will be their first time and they have not applied for any other towns. Sarah mentioned Consolidated participated in the previous grant round and received fairly sizable award.

Ben asked who owns the infrastructure at the end of the project. If the project is funded at the end of the project the vendor would have ownership of the infrastructure.

The town will be the co-signer however the funds will go to the vendor. Sarah explained the purpose for the co-signer is acknowledgment that a discussion occurred between the vendor and the community that this project is taking place.

Kathy Jean read the Consolidated’s proposal summary’s proposed language: “Consolidated Communications has reached out to the town about a potential partnership for a Broadband Matching Grant Initiative (BMGI) Application. The BMGI program is a \$25 million state program that is offering grants to towns and providers across the state to get highspeed internet to unserved parts of town. Consolidated would like to include Lancaster as part of their application. Their application would cover 927 Lancaster addresses with their Fidium Fiber internet service, offering speeds of up to 2 gigabits per second. All of this would be done at no cost to the town. The only thing Consolidated needs from the town is a vote from the selectboard say they support Consolidated’s application and a copy of the meeting minutes reflecting that vote. The deadline for the program is October 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Motion made by Kathy Jean and seconded by Shane to support Fidium/Consolidated Communications in applying for the grant funding for the fiber internet buildout project.**

Leon mentioned he was disappointed the information was not provided to them sooner so they could have time to review it prior to needing a vote.

**Kathy Jean and Shane voted – Yes and Leon voted – No. Motion carried.**

**REVIEW OF MINUTES:** September 27, 2023 public & non-public and October 2, 2023.

**Motion made by Shane and seconded by Leon to accept the September 27, 2023, meeting minutes. Kathy Jean abstained. Shane and Leon voted – Yes. Motion carried.**

**Motion made by Shane and seconded by Leon to accept the September 27, 2023, non-public meeting minutes. Kathy Jean abstained. Shane and Leon voted – Yes. Motion carried.**

**Motion made by Shane and seconded by Leon to accept the October 2, 2023, meeting minutes. Kathy Jean abstained. Shane and Leon voted – Yes. Motion carried.**

**SIGN VARIOUS PAPERWORK:** Intent to cut for Sandra Yunghans, 58 Garland Road was signed.

Sharon Kopp was present to discuss the 3-phase power installation to the LRH building at 55 Main Street. They found out on Friday that the installation will also have to include a transformer. Ben felt a discussion needed to happen with the board because the transformer will take up roughly one parking area.

Shane asked if the 3-phase is going to run over head why can’t the transformer go on the pole. It was explained to Sharon it cannot be on the pole and needs to be placed on the ground. Sharon was not sure why it couldn’t be on the pole.

Leon asked how many parking spaces were in that parking lot. Ben believes 15 or 20. The parking spaces that will be impacted will not be the ones in the middle of the parking lot it will be in spaces that are not even marked as spaces.

Alan feels Shane or someone that has some construction knowledge go over and discuss the project with Eversource.

Kathy Jean asked what kind of timeline they are under and Sharon mentioned it is a small timeline as the other business owners would like to get the area cleaned up as quick as possible.

Shane confirmed it will be underground from the transformer to their building.

Leon asked if they would be amending the easement.

**Motion made by Shane and seconded by Kathy Jean to amend the easement to also include a ground mounted transformer in the municipal parking lot behind the Parker J Noyes building. All in favor. Motion carried.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**USDA-RD Water/Wastewater grant application** – The grant is for the water tank project.

**Motion made by Kathy Jean and seconded by Shane to authorize the town to submit the USDA-RD Water/Wastewater grant application and for Robin to submit. All in favor. Motion carried.**

**WorkInvestNH-EMT – EMS provider training reimbursement grant.** The grant allowed for four individuals to become certified EMTs. Ben explained the stipulations of the grant and participation to receive the funds.

**Motion made by Kathy Jean and seconded by Shane to accept the \$7,853.98 from the WorkInvestNH grant. All in favor. Motion carried.**

**911 Street Address change** – regarding Buffalo and Stebbins Hill Roads.

Ben explained the concern with the unmaintained area of Stebbins Hill Road. Jason Call the contracted assessor for the town recently received a 911 address application and he is recommending renaming the section of Stebbins Hill Road to the left off the top Buffalo Road to the unmaintained area of Stebbins Hill Road. Recommendation from Jason call attached.

Leon already thought Buffalo Road extended to the right at the top. It was explained that Stebbins Hill Road extends straight through. There was discussion regarding the best way to handle renaming certain sections at the top of Buffalo Road. The board decided to hold off on renaming until they are able to take a ride out to look at the layout.

**Retirement announcement** – Ben read Randy’s retirement notice letter. Randy’s retirement date is set for September 30, 2024. This will give the board time to find a suitable replacement and have the new chief work with Randy for a few months before his retirement.

The board commended Randy on all he has done for both the Fire and EMS departments.

**Energy committee appointment** – David Fuller of the Rialto Theater submitted a letter of interest to become a member of the Energy Committee.

**Motion made by Shane and seconded by Kathy Jean to appoint David Fuller for 1-year term to the Energy Committee. All in favor. Motion carried.**

Ben mentioned the next Energy Committee meeting will be Thursday, October 19, 2023, at 5p.m.

Ben mentioned the draft 2024 budget meeting schedules were included in their packets for their review. He also mentioned the December 5<sup>th</sup> date is also the Special Election Primary and two of the board of selectmen members need to be in attendance at the primary.

Ben is also going to give a copy to the budget committee for review at their quarterly meeting tomorrow night.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Special Election – Ben mentioned he sent a letter to the Executive Council however he believes the notice of the election came at the same time they probably received the letter.

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS’ REPORTS:**

Shane met with Mr. Davidge on Saturday and worked some loose ends on the agreement.

Leon mentioned the meeting with Norwich Energy regarding the PILOT agreement is being delayed as their project has been delayed.

Kathy Jean – Nothing at this time.

**INFORMATION:**

- Land Use permit:
  - Brenda Stewart, 143 Stebbins Hill Road – Construct stick-built 26’x28’x12’ 2-bay garage on concrete slab, no hear, no w/s, electricity

Public comment – Rob mentioned the public budget hearing for the Mount Washington Regional Airport (MWRA) will be held tomorrow night at 6:30 at the terminal building.

Alan mentioned Mr. Davidge was going to trim the long hedge going to Peter Riviere’s house and he has not seen that done yet. Shane mentioned that is one of the things he is working on with him.

Lee Ann Potter mentioned in the draft charter of the Energy Committee they have worded to have oversight of the broadband in town and they are happy to step up and assume that function.

Rob is wondering how the informal committees are working in the town, for example, the broadband committee. He is wondering what status do those committees have. He feels that is a topic that should be addressed. Ben mentioned the Northern Forest Center has created several committees like the marketing committee which purchased the signs. Leon stated the broadband committee is not a town committee. There was discussion regarding committees created by the Northern Forest and how the town is involved.

**Motion made by Shane and seconded by Kathy Jean to adjourn. All in favor. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted, Board of Selectmen Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Charity M. Baker

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Troy Merner

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Leon Rideout

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Shane Beattie