

## MINUTES

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
TOWN HALL**

**November 20, 2023  
6:30 PM**

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### **ATTENDEES:**

**Select board members:** Leon Rideout, Shane Beattie, Kathy Jean Lavoie

**Others in Attendance:** Town Manager Benjamin Gaetjens-Oleson, Charity Baker, Michael Nadeau, Department Heads, Members of the Public, Phlume Media

The meeting was called to order at 6:29 p.m. by Selectman Leon Rideout.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES:**

**Fire/EMS report** – Randy was unable to attend so Ben gave his report. EMS had 210 calls for service last month. 62 911 calls and 148 transfers. They have been working short staffed however been able to keep up thanks to all the staff pitching in. The tanker went to Manchester for oil leaks around the rear seal. It will probably be out of service a week or two. Saturday they are sending the ladder truck to Gorham for Staff Sergeant Grone's memorial service.

**Col. Town** – Eli unable to attend as he was running a program at Col. Town.

**Library** – Barbara was unable to attend however wanted to let the board know the trustees are continuing to review their policies and the new meeting room policy is on their website.

**Police Chief Jon Woodworth** reported over the last month they had 454 calls for service. 98 were traffic stops, 12 were motor vehicle crashes and 18 were arrests. They recently conducted search warrants on two vehicles and seized suspected narcotics that will go to the lab for testing.

Officers Henry and Trivero are in uniform and working. They both passed their PT test and will be going to academy December 18<sup>th</sup> for their police standards test to get into the next Police Academy class which starts in January.

Letters to potential candidates will go out to those he has received resumes from in an attempt to fill the one open position. They are looking to do testing for those candidates on December 16h.

Project Homebound is over and was a huge success.

November 26<sup>th</sup> at the VFW there will a Stuff A Cruiser for Toys for Tots event.

Coffee with a Cop program will begin November 29<sup>th</sup> at 8 a.m. at the Granite Grind. The program will be once a month and the other businesses participating are the Polish Princess and McDonalds.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Acceptance of Unanticipated Monies over \$10,000.00 – To accept a grant from the US Economic Development Administration in the amount of \$750,000.00 to support funding for the installation of a water storage tank at the Town's Water Treatment Plant.

Ben mentioned it was to go along with the \$50,000 from NVRC gives \$800,000 so far and Robin is looking into other funding as well to assist with the project.

Leon opened the hearing for public comment.

Lee Ann Potter asked when will the money expire. Ben believes it is 2026. He didn't have the exact date on hand. Leon asked what is the project total. Ben mentioned when it was applied for

it was \$3,000,000, however he is hoping when it is put out to bid it will come in a little more competitive and some of the match work can be done on our own.

**Motion made by Kathy-Jean and seconded by to accept the unanticipated money from the US Economic Development Administration in the amount of \$750,000 to support funding for the installation of a water storage tank at the Town’s Water Treatment Plant and to authorize Town Manager Benjamin Gaetjens-Oleson to sign any and all paperwork regarding this funding. All in favor. Motion carried.**

Leon closed public hearing.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES:** November 6, 2023

**Motion made by Shane and seconded by Kathy-Jean to accept the November 6, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. All in favor. Motion carried.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Mt Orne Bridge** – Ben reported the night of November 9<sup>th</sup> into the morning of November 10<sup>th</sup> a truck drove through the Mt. Orne covered bridge causing significant damage. It is closed and the incident has been reported to Primex, the Town’s property/liability carrier. Ben asked the company that did the work on both bridges the last time for an estimate to do the repairs. He has also contacted Kevin Lufkin who provides the town’s security systems to set up some sort of camera system. Kevin thinks it may be difficult with no power or internet, however he is going to look into it for us. Ben has no idea what else can be done. Kathy-Jean mentioned she was out for a drive and took a look at Andover, Maine’s covered bridge, they have an eye beam structure in cement footings that is set back 20 feet from the bridge to stop large vehicles before they get to the bridge. Kathy-Jean is willing to work with NHDOT to find a solution that will work to help with future incidents. It was also mentioned that Vermont will have to be approached where we do not have jurisdiction over there with regards to a barrier being put up. Ben mentioned Chief Woodworth believes the vehicle came from the Vermont side due to the damage indications. The board discussed possible solutions. Kathy-Jean and Ben will work together to find a solution. Ben is going to reach out to Phil from NHDOT to set a time to meet.

**Lancaster Energy Committee Charter** – Ben mentioned the charter it is basically the committee’s scope of work. The Energy Committee approved it at their October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting and the select board needs to acknowledge that approval. One change suggested was to change “member of the select board” to “member of the select board or their designee.”

Kathy-Jean is very happy with their mission however she is concerned with the broadband section of the charter and if it should be part of the Energy Committee’s scope of work. Committee Chair Lee Ann Potter explained why the committee felt it should be included. Ben mentioned the committee discussed that broadband and acknowledge that it is not their main focus however it was a good idea to have a town committee help guide the broadband process. Kathy-Jean feels the charter is being structured around someone’s skill set and if we need a broadband committee then one should be set up. The scope of work should be focused on energy aggregation. There

was much discussion whether or not to include broadband as part of the energy committee’s scope of work.

**Motion made by Shane and seconded by Kathy-Jean to accept the Energy Committee Charter with the change adding “or designee”. Shane and Leon voted yes and Kathy-Jean no.**

Ben mentioned the joint power agreement will be signed and sent off to CPCNH. Public hearings of the Energy Committee have been set for December 7<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. and the 14<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Town Revaluation** – The assessor has been working diligently over the weekend to make any last-minute adjustments and should we see the numbers any day. Ben also mentioned the charitable properties information and that he sent the board members a spreadsheet that summarized that information. The applications are in a file in his office with the recommendations from the assessor to include any of those that the board should negotiate/renegotiate payment-in-lieu of tax (PILOT) agreements. He will pull those out and form a plan on who to contact and start setting up meetings with those organizations to get an agreement in place for 2024. The board signed the confirmation that they reviewed the tax-exempt property applications and will revisit each one to make PILOT agreements as needed.

**SELECT BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:**

Shane – Nothing to report at this time.

Kathy-Jean asked if Ben and the board are set to hold health officer interviews at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in December. Shane stated, where they will be hiring a fire chief next year, he thinks the board should wait on appointing a health officer until the new chief is hired as those duties could be included in their job description. There was much discussion regarding adding the health officer duties to the fire chief’s job description. Ben expressed concern with waiting almost a year before appointing a health officer unless the board is willing to do the inspections and answer health complaints. The board agreed to hold off on appointing a health officer until they discuss how the fire department will be structured under the new chief.

Shane asked when the board would like to start the search for a fire chief. Ben recalls the meeting Randy announced his retirement it was mentioned March/April. The board would like to see a month of overlap with Randy and the new chief so the new chief can become familiar with his personnel and the department’s structure. Ben feels the new chief should be someone who can do fire/code inspections and assist the land use department with those types of things. Also, he would like to take a look at staffing the EMS department with a manager. The board would like to start the search for a new fire chief sooner than later.

Leon asked if Ben would have enough time to put together a job description for the new fire chief along with an EMS manager job description to review/discuss at the December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ben mentioned that he, Kathy-Jean, Asst. Chief Mike Kopp and Randy met this past summer to discuss the succession of the chief’s position and Kathy-Jean drafted some job descriptions and he will pull those out to be reviewed with the board.

Ben will also reach out to the DHHS liaison and see if it is possible to appoint a temporary health officer.

Kathy-Jean appreciates the statistical reports the department heads provide however wonders if there is a way the they can provide a report that gives year-to-date statistics compared to previous years. She thinks it will be helpful see if their programs are growing and assist with the budget process. Leon mentioned he likes the snapshot of statistics and is not sure if adding the previous years will help much. Ben recommended Kathy-Jean ask the department heads at their next month’s meetings if a report like that could be generated.

Ben mentioned the department heads appreciate coming to the meetings and having interactions with the board.

Leon – Nothing to report at this time.

Ben mentioned the Town of Lunenburg has not paid their contract for EMS service for 2023. Shane recommended Ben write a letter that the board members will sign to send to Lunenburg. It was mentioned communications have been sent to the town and they have not responded back. Ben believes the payment was due November 1<sup>st</sup>. Ben is going to draft the letter and put a deadline for payment to be made.

**INFORMATION:**

Zoning Board meeting notice – November 29, 2023 @ 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be a work session regarding the recommended zoning ordinance amendments.

1<sup>st</sup> Amendment Audit – Ben mentioned the town office and police department had a 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment Audit on Tuesday, November 14th. Ben went over what occurs when a 1<sup>st</sup> amendment audit is performed by a citizen. He reported the town office staff and the police department responded appropriately and treated the person as they would any other citizen that comes into the building. The audit was successful.

NHDES Draft for State Permit to Operate – Ammonoosuc Asphalt, 653 Main Street

Land use permits were included for the boards review.

**PUBLIC INPUT** – Lee Ann Potter shared a brand of solar powered trail camera that could be mounted to the bridge to help with monitoring traffic and any other incidents that may occur there.

**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 \_\_\_\_\_  
Leon Rideout

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Shane Beattie

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Kathy-Jean Lavoie