

MINUTES

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN HALL**

**February 20, 2024
6:30 PM**

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 6:30 p.m. by Selectman Leon Rideout

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES:

Fire Chief Randy Flynn reported they responded to 125 transfer and 77 911 calls in January and in January 2023 they responded to 93 transfers and 51 911 calls. The fire department responded to half dozen calls. The radio was installed in the new ambulance and it needs to be stocked with all the supplies and equipment and then it will need to be inspected by the State.

Randy mentioned often times the fire department is called out for mutual aid when other towns didn't even respond and he feels in those instances they are responding as a primary department and not for mutual aid. Ben would like the board to keep on their radar the possibility that a letter may need to be sent to the other communities' boards to discuss the situation.

Police Chief Jon Woodworth reported they responded to 439 calls for service and of those there were 126 motor vehicle stops, 22 arrests and 7 motor vehicle accidents. Wednesday, February 21st is the next coffee with a cop at McDonalds.

Kathy-Jean asked if everyone is on board with the Stebbins Hill addressing situation and if there is an ETA when it will all be put in force. Ben mentioned he is going to get a list of addresses that need to be provided to Grafton County dispatch and he also spoke with Highway Foreman Tim Brown about adding signage at the top of Buffalo Road to identify which addresses are in which direction.

Librarian Barbara Robarts reported a bus is coming from the elementary school every day after school. The LED bulbs are being changed out and should be done in the next month or so. The better part of the cost of the bulbs is being paid for by Eversource as part of their grant program.

Recreation Director Eli Vincent was unable to attend as he was at a program he is obligated to. Ben reported on his behalf that their youth basketball is wrapping up and they are gearing up for the father/daughter and mother/son dances.

APPOINTMENTS: Erica & Ryan Canales regarding assessment review

Erica asked if the board was happy with the responses they provided to their questions from the last meeting.

Leon mentioned he was not able to find much on what classifies a bedroom in the State of NH. He did mention he looked up the original listing and it did state that there was a possible 3rd

bedroom. Erica stated it was listed in the notes it was not listed as an actual bedroom. She shared what she found in her research of what constitutes a bedroom.

Kathy-Jean thanked them for all the information and wanted to summarize, she believes they are asking for 2 things. The first thing is they are asking the board to override a process that everyone else goes through which is to go to the assessor and he then makes a recommendation to the board and they then make a decision and the second thing is they are asking the board to make a decision on what constitutes a bedroom when there is an absence of a definition in the State. Kathy-Jean stated she is uncomfortable making either of those decisions.

It is Kathy-Jean's understanding the assessor was going to take all the information provided to him so far and wait until March 1st in case the Canales' wanted to provide any further information, review it and then make a recommendation. Leon stated he would like to wait until they get a recommendation from Jason, the assessor.

Erica is concerned they are going to be ignored. Shane reassured her that they are not going to be ignored and encouraged them to allow the assessor to go to their home and collect his data. She stated they are coming to board because the assessor has screwed up since the beginning and it should be corrected.

Shane mentioned he has run into assessing issues in the past and ended up going to Concord and he feels that may be where they may have to go.

PUBLIC HEARING: Acceptance of Unanticipated Monies over \$10,000.00 – To accept a State of NH Conservation “Moose Plate” grant in the amount of \$30,000.00 to assist in the funding of the Lancaster Elementary School Floodplain Restoration Project along the Connecticut River.

Leon opened the hearing to the public for comment. Ben mentioned the Conservation Commission also has two other applications for funding they are waiting responses for. There were no questions or comments from the public.

Motion made by Kathy-Jean and seconded by Shane to accept the unanticipated monies from the State of NH Conservation “Moose Plate” grant in the amount of \$30,000.00 and to authorize Town Manager Benjamin Gaetjens-Oleson to sign any and all paperwork pertaining to the grant. All in favor. Motion carried.

REVIEW OF MINUTES: February 5, 2024

Motion made by Kathy-Jean and seconded by Shane to accept the February 5, 2024 meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.

SIGN VARIOUS PAPERWORK:

Ambulance contracts for Guildhall, Jefferson, and Lunenburg – Kathy-Jean asked Randy if it was possible to generate a report of uncollected receivables for 2023 for each of the communities and Randy stated it was possible and would get that information.

It was mentioned the last time they increased rates it was on a staggered schedule over 3 years with one year off which is 2024. The board will discuss possible increases again next year.

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Motion made by Shane and seconded by Kathy-Jean to accept the contracts for ambulance service to Guildhall, Jefferson, and Lunenburg. All in favor. Motion carried.

Non mutual aid contract for Guildhall – Randy mentioned the contract should be reviewed next year and it is billed as a flat rate.

Randy mentioned the fire department is allowed to charge for services if they respond to a call in Guildhall. The \$4,000.00 is a flat fee to guarantee response.

Motion made by Shane and seconded by Kathy-Jean to accept a non-mutual aid contract for fire services to Guildhall, VT. All in favor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Colonel Town Players entryway work – Ben mentioned it is the 50th anniversary of the Colonel Town Players and they would like to display some of their framed play bills and other items in the front lobby. He also mentioned the board may want to look into applying for some joint funding to do some renovations of the lobby area. Kathy-Jean asked if the display was going to be temporary for their 50th year or permanent. Ben mentioned they are thinking it will be more permanent. Leon mentioned they need to be aware the town is not responsible for any missing or damaged property and a memorandum should be created. The board was in favor of the Players having a display in the lobby as long as a memorandum of understanding is signed.

Narcan in the town office – Ben mentioned a public health agency in the area asked if the town office could be a place where Narcan can be picked up if someone needed it. Police Chief Woodworth mentioned he doesn't feel that people will come to the town office looking for it. Safety Committee chair Robin Irving remembers having a discussion at a safety committee meeting whether to have a Narcan dispenser in the office. She mentioned they were going to discuss and bring recommendations to the board however it didn't move forward. Fire Chief Flynn mentioned the ambulance has a leave behind program and if they respond to a call, they leave a kit. Leon mentioned maybe it would be better to see if businesses in the community would participate where it can be more readily available in those types of situations. Ben mentioned if the board feels it is a better plan for them to get it out to the businesses in the community, then he will make that recommendation to the health agency and they can make those connections.

Energy Committee resignations – Lee Ann Potter and David Fuller have submitted resignations from the Energy Committee which will leave Teri Anderson, Rob Christie and Select board representative Ben Gaetjens-Oleson. Ben also mentioned that the board also appointed Lee Ann as the CPCNH town representative and she has not resigned from that. Kathy-Jean asked if CPCNH is aware she has resigned from the Energy committee and Ben stated he is not certain those things are necessarily linked. There was much discussion as to whether or not Lee Ann needs to be on the committee in order to serve as the town's representative to CPCNH.

Shane asked Lee Ann if she wanted to reconsider being a member of the committee. Kathy-Jean asked if she would be comfortable rejoining the committee where she mentioned feeling bullied in her resignation letter. Lee Ann explained at the last meeting it they were told as a committee that they

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could only apply power aggregation to residential customers which is not in accordance with the RSA. She stated RSA 53-E specifically states that they cannot discriminate against any class of rate payer, and she does not want to be put in a position where she is being instructed to do something that was not allowed by the RSAs.

Lee Ann rescinded her resignation from the Energy committee and the board agreed with her decision. She will continue as an Energy committee member.

Kathy-Jean reviewed the motion at the November 6, 2023 meeting and it did not include granting Lee Ann the power to sign on behalf of the Select board. Rob Christie mentioned it may be something they want to consider. Lee Ann mentioned even if something needs to be signed, she will bring it to the board first anyway. Lee Ann did explain that sometimes there are some real time decisions that need to be made. Ben mentioned that everything so far that has been sent and signed by Lee Ann has been approved by the Select board.

Lee Ann mentioned the plan is at the PUC and there is no requirement for the Select board to review that plan before it goes to the PUC, it only needs to be created by the energy committee. The energy committee went the extra step and had the Select board formally approve it before it went to the PUC.

Rob urges that a better communication system between the board and the committee be resolved and also the membership issue be addressed.

Kathy-Jean asked if the letter in the board's packet dated January 23rd went to the PUC. (attached) Ben stated it did not. Lee Ann mentioned the letter had to be on Town letterhead with her signature. She mentioned Ben stated he was uncomfortable signing it and she was not. Rob asked if that was the letter to the PUC responding to Rachel Stuart's letter and Lee Ann stated it was.

The board discussed David Fuller's resignation letter. Kathy-Jean spoke with David at a past energy committee meeting and he mentioned then that he was not giving the time he felt was necessary and felt he should resign. Shane also spoke to him in the past week and David expressed the same.

Motion made by Shane and seconded by Kathy-Jean to accept David Fuller's resignation from the Energy committee. All in favor. Motion carried.

Leon would like a letter be sent to Dave thanking him for his service.

Planning board resignations – Lee Ann Potter & Ericka Canales. Both were present at the meeting. The board asked if either would like to reconsider and both declined.

Motion made by Shane and seconded by Kathy-Jean to accept Ericka Canales' resignation from the Planning board. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion made by Shane and seconded by Kathy-Jean to accept Lee Ann Potter's resignation from the Planning board. All in favor. Motion carried.

Town Manager resignation – Ben submitted letter of resignation effective March 29, 2024.

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Motion made by Shane and seconded Kathy-Jean to accept Benjamin Gaetjens-Oleson's resignation as Town Manager and Emergency Management Director effective March 29, 2024. All in favor. Motion carried.

Rob asked if Ben will continue as the representative to the several other organizations he has been appointed. Ben mentioned he is working with the board to see what they would like to do moving forward.

OLD BUSINESS:

Troy Merner 2nd request letter – Ben mentioned he recommends the board sign the 2nd request letter and Shane asked that it state in the letter that any response back should be sent to Board Chair Leon Rideout directly.

Power Aggregation warrant article – There has been discussion that the Community Power Aggregation warrant article was not passed along to the board as it was not included in the warrant that was presented at the public budget hearing. The energy committee would like the board to consider adding the Power Aggregation article to the warrant for town meeting. Leon asked if the committee is ready to present it to the voters. Energy committee vice chair Teri Anderson explained all the work that has been done. The PUC has submitted it which is a good sign that it will pass. The committee is confident the plan will be approved. The changes recommended by the Select board will be made and if the town approves it then it's just a matter of submitting the updates. She mentioned the committee has worked all this time creating it and believes they are ready.

Motion made by Shane and seconded by Kathy-Jean to accept the power aggregation article and for it to be added to the warrant for town meeting. All in favor. Motion carried.

SELECT BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:

Kathy-Jean mentioned the headache bars have been installed at the Mt. Orne Bridge and it looks good. Ben mentioned the signage has come in and he is going to ask Highway Foreman Tim Brown to get those up then the bridge can be opened.

Kathy-Jean asked Ben if he was able to reach out to Mike Lee from Weeks Hospital to begin discussing updating the PILOT agreement. Ben mentioned they have been playing phone tag and have not connected. Kathy-Jean confirmed she plans to participate in the meeting.

Motion made by Shane to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (c) - Personnel

Roll Call vote to enter non-public session

Shane Beattie – Yes

Kathy-Jean Lavoie – Yes

Leon Rideout – Yes

Entered non-public session at 7:57 p.m.

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Motion made by Shane and seconded by Kathy-Jean to exit non-public session.

Roll call vote to exit non-public session.

Shane Beattie – Yes

Kathy-Jean Lavoie – Yes

Leon Rideout – Yes

Exited non-public session at 8:50 p.m. and returned to public session.

Motion made by Shane and seconded by Kathy-Jean to seal the non-public session minutes indefinitely because it is determined that divulgence of this information would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board.

Roll call vote to seal the minutes.

Shane Beattie – Yes

Kathy-Jean Lavoie – Yes

Leon Rideout – Yes

No definitive action taken during non-public.

Ben mentioned the informal hearing recommendations need to be approved and signed. Each of the members have review the recommendations of the assessor.

Motion made by Kathy-Jean and seconded by Shane to accept the recommendations from Jason Call of Northtown Associates with regards to the informal assessment reviews. All in favor. Motion carried.

INFORMATION:

- In-house posting for Fire Chief
- In-house posting for Town Manager
- Letter from John Davidge regarding the Town Manager search
- NHDES Notice of Acceptance of Permit application
- NHDES letter of compliance for 130 Page Hill Road
- Land use permits
- Sign permits
- Zoning board notices of decision
- Planning board notice of decision

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Rob Christie applied for travel reimbursement for going to airport commission meetings and was denied, he would like to encourage the board to consider allowing those expenses be approved. He pointed out that there is \$9,000 throughout the budgets for travel expenses. He also mentioned

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if a person is paid mileage the town is not responsible if anything happens during their travel and if they are not then the town would be liable.

Rob also mentioned when it’s time for the Colonel Town report Eli is not present and it was his understanding Eli and his wife were hired as a team and if he is not able to attend to give a report then he feels she should be present to report to the board.

Lastly, in regards to the Canales’ assessment issue, Rob expressed his concern with the assessor not having assessing information reported on the MS1 by the September deadline and if the information was reported by deadline there would have been time to meet before tax bills were issued.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Board of Selectmen

Date: _____

Charity M. Baker

Leon Rideout

Shane Beattie

Kathy-Jean Lavoie