MINUTES

SELECT BOARD MEETING **August 19, 2024**
TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM **6:30 PM**

ATTENDEES:

Select board members: Leon Rideout, Shane Beattie, Kathy-Jean Lavoie
Others in Attendance: Charity Baker, Michael Nadeau, Department Heads, Members of the Public, Zack D Video

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES:

Water/Sewer Supervisor Timmy Bilodeau reported they have been changing the chlorine tanks at the lagoons. It was going to be a winter project however it needed to be done sooner. They have been working on the service line and also on the permit application for the discharge into the Connecticut River.

Police Chief Jon Woodworth reported their year-to-date calls for service is 4,285 and since the last meeting 739. Last year for the July to August time period they had 487 calls for service. Motor vehicle stops year-to-date 1,830, since last meeting 307 and this time period last year was 139. Motor vehicle accidents year-to-date is 62, 7 since the last meeting and 9 for this time period last year. Arrests year-to-date is 101, since last meeting there were 8 and this time period last year there were 5.

Two arrests were made in the street sign vandalism, one pled guilty and the other is awaiting arraignment. The "live" finger printing machine is now set up and there will be a $10 charge for the service.

Andre Brasseur at NHDOT reported that Route 135 is now open all the way to Littleton.

Fire Chief Randy Flynn reported they had 219 patient contacts since last month's meeting, 84 911 calls and 135 transfers. Last year during the same time period they the responded to 190 total, 66 911 calls and 124 transfers. Year-to-date they have done 483 911 calls and 850 transfers. Year-to-date at this point last year they did 417 911 calls and 833 transfers.

They put on 22,000 miles last month. All fire trucks are in good working order and the ladder truck is back and working well. The mechanic has started inspecting the department's vehicles.

Col. Town – Eli was unable to attend as he was coaching soccer. Town Manager Cyr read his report. They have 205 kids registered for soccer. Safe Haven wrapped up last Friday and they are prepping for their afterschool program. They have started planning the Halloween Carnival and window painting with a tentative date of October of 18th for the Carnival and October 28th for window painting. They are also working on having some events this fall at the library.

Librarian Barbara Robarts reported the soffit repair is ongoing and the repair was bit more involved than initially thought. She received confirmation from school that a bus will be going to the library every day after school. She is still getting complaints about the crosswalk that was eliminated by the library.

Reta Ayers asked if there will be any reimbursements for those that purchased pool passes and lessons where the pool has been closed due to mechanical issues for a majority of the summer. Town Manager Cyr stated, Eli is working with parents for reimbursement or credit toward next year's passes.

Peter Riviere asked if Eversource is going to cover any of the damage to the pool pump. It was reported they will be paying $5,000 however the other part that was in disrepair will be on the town.

APPOINTMENTS: Harrison Gates was not present at the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING: Proposed water/sewer rate change.

Town Manager Cyr made a presentation regarding the current state of our facility, background on the proposed rates and the billing process for backflow device testing for commercial/industrial buildings. Presentation attached.

Leo Rideout Jr. asked how many of the backflow devices have been tested since they have been put it. Water/Wastewater Supervisor Timmy Bilodeau explained all those backflow devices that are testable are tested.

Rick Bernier stated $8.00 per 1,000 is very high and he thought it was going to be a step process to increase the rates. Selectman Rideout explained the $8.00 is the amount that needs to be accomplished in order break even and to possibly collect a bit more to start making improvements to the infrastructure. Rick really feels it is asking too much of the people.

Rob Christie had a question about the figures that were put into the research, he believes it should be the audited figures not the budgeted figures that were used. He reviewed the numbers from the 2022 audit and it shows the departments are in the black. He also believes it is customary to bill in tiers and Lancaster only bills at 2 tiers and the first tier goes to 1,000,000 gallons used before there is a change in rate. He recommends adding more tiers and bump it up in each tier. The tiered system would encourage those users to conserve. He would like the board to go back and look at the actual figures. Lastly, Lancaster is criticized in the State for having one of the least expensive water systems because the town is lucky to have a gravity fed system and just because we are efficient, we shouldn't be penalized when it comes to getting grant funding.

Selectman Rideout explained that the revenue and expenditure budgets have to be balanced. It is hard to use actual figures. He feels the tiered system may not work. The rate change is on usage. He pushed hard to keep the base rate the same. He also stated we may be criticized but at this time we are not charging our users enough to qualify for some grant funding.

Racheal Stuart wanted to say there is no great answer on this issue. We either have to sacrifice the infrastructure which affects the community as a whole or ask some people to pay what they feel comfortable with. There's just no great answer and she appreciates how much work has been put in to figure out the least, worst solution.

Reta Ayers, Treasurer of Page Hill Mobile Home Park Coop asked what the rate change is going to do to them. She expressed the park already pays a large amount now and it is going to really affect them.

Ken Bushaw doesn't think water rates should go up. He stated he has been trying for 25 years to get a new water line to his house so his water is not yellow or brown. He has been complaining about his line and nothing has been done.

Scott Forbes is concerned the new rate is going to very hard on them. Just one of their properties is going to be about $16,000 more a year. They don't have a way to add the cost onto anything else. He feels $8 is a steep increase all at once and it should be done as a step process.

Teri Anderson commented that she understands that things needed to be updated. She also wanted to say that at every town meeting the town is always buying a lot big items and she feels as a resident she is paying, paying and paying.

John Ayers, Vice President of the Page Hill Mobile Home Park Coop is concerned that the lot rent will need to go from $290.00 a month to probably $400-$450 a month. He hopes it doesn't have to come to a huge rent increase and feels it will become more of a burden to the town.

Rob Christie asked what happens after the hearing tonight, will the board vote on the rate change. Selectman Rideout stated technically the board can take a vote tonight however, they are going to take the comments from tonight and see where changes may be able to be made.

Peter Riviere asked the board why $8, is there a level they have to reach. Selectman Rideout explained the process the board went through to come up with the $8.00.

Rick Bernier stated the water/sewer has not been in the red in the past so why does it have to increase to $8. Selectman Lavoie explained it is not an expense issue. The budgets have to force balance so not to affect the tax rate. There was much discussion as to how the water/sewer budgets are prepared and balanced in relationship to the tax rate setting.

Leon made a point of order that they have gotten off topic.

Tricia asked if there is a way in the budget process to make it so everyone pays and not just water/sewer users. She asked if some of the burden can be put off onto the tax payers.

Peter Riviere asked, what is the harm in making the increase a step process. There was much discussion regarding a step process and the general consensus of the public is they would like to see a step process for the increase.

Ray Dubreuil asked if there is a meter out east that can tell how much water is coming into town. Timmy Bilodeau said there are several meters around town. Ray asked if the water flushed from the hydrants are subtracted from the usage. It was explained that water is not metered. The usage is charged on the water that goes through the residential and commercial meters not the meters Timmy monitors.

There were no other comments.

Selectman Rideout closed the public hearing at 7:35 p.m. No action was be taken. The board is going to take all the information given at the hearing and discuss it more at the next work session.

REVIEW MINUTES: August 5, 2024

Selectman Lavoie mentioned the amount for the backflow device testing was for $70 not $75 as noted in the work session minutes.

Motion made by Selectman Lavoie and seconded by Selectman Beattie to accept the August 5, 2024, work session minutes with the correction of the backflow device testing fee to $70 not $75. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion made by Selectman Lavoie and seconded by Selectman Beattie to accept the August 5, 2024, regular meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion made by Selectman Lavoie and seconded by Selectman Beattie to accept the August 5, 2024, non-public session minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.

SIGN VARIOUS PAPERWORK: Current use application for Brad Griswold, Tax Map R17, Lot 45 was signed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Dow Fund – Town Manager Cyr made a presentation regarding the Dow Fund (attached). The presentation gave history of the fund and explained the stipulations in the Will regarding unused interest income and that if not used in three consecutive years, the money then needs to go into separate fund for the purpose of assisting the Town's needy. The Trustees of the Trust Funds have confirmed with a CPA from the NH Department of Justice that there is $13, 083.83 of unused income from 2013-2021 which should be deposited into a fund named specifically for its intended purpose: welfare. Town Manager Cyr's recommendation is to create a fund titled "Income from James L Dow Trust Expendable Fund for Charity."

Town Manager Cyr also made recommendations for the use of the interest income in the coming year for the purpose of planting trees. She is reaching out for quotes related to the rental of tree space for planting a donated Blue Spruce from the Silver Cricket tree farm this fall to be planted in Cross Park. As of June 30th, there was $1,700.42 available to spend on planting. Selectman Lavoie asked if the $1,700.42 would be used this year. Cyr mentioned she would like to contract with Brochu Nursery to purchase the trees with this fund to be picked up in the spring.

Motion made by Selectman Beattie and seconded by Selectman Lavoie to create a new fund titled "Income from James L. Dow Trust Expendable Fund for Charity." All in favor. Motion carried.

Trail work in the Town Forest update – Jessica read her report regarding the Trail project (attached). The Lancaster Conservation Commission will have trail work continue as a "project" of the Conservation Commission. They approved a motion to appoint a new member, Mike Webster, as their representative, and Racheal Stuart as the project lead. She reported the details of the planned work.

Police Dept Mini Splits bid opening – The town received one bid submitted by Steven Pennock dba Still Chillin'. The bid is a total of $20,500 which includes installation. The quote talks about possible rebates. Town Manger Cyr referenced a 2002 warrant article with regards to the police capital reserve fund where the Board of Selectmen were voted as authorized agents to expend from the police capital reserve fund. Alan Savage asked if the oil burner was deemed unrepairable after the flood. Chief Woodworth stated there was not an issue with the furnace and the mini split is to assist with cooling the building. Selectman Beattie explained the intent is not to be used for heat. Mr. Savage stated if it is for cooling then an air conditioner should be purchased not another heat

source. Adam Adair asked how big the unit is being installed. It was reported that it will be 42,000 BTU unit.

Racheal Stuart asked if there has been an energy audit done on the town's buildings. She feels it would best to have an energy audit on the town's buildings to make sure the appropriate equipment is being installed.

Selectman Lavoie recused herself as she is related to the bidder.

Motion made by Selectman Beattie and seconded by Selectman Rideout to accept the bid submitted by Still Chillin' in the amount of $20,500 to install a mini splits system in the police department. Selectman Lavoie recused herself. Selectman Rideout and Selectman Beattie voted yes. Motion carried.

Assign authorized official for the NBRC Storage Tank Installation grant.

Motion by Selectman Beattie and seconded by Selectman Lavoie to appoint Town Manager Jessica Cyr as the authorized official for the NBRC Storage Tank Installation grant. All in favor. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Appoint Health Officer – The Board has discussed the need to appoint a health officer.

Motion made Selectman Beattie and seconded by Selectman Lavoie to appoint Fire Chief Randy Flynn as the health officer. All in favor. Motion carried.

Storm update – Town Manager Cyr mentioned Route 135 is now open all the way to Littleton.

She also mentioned the town has been working with EPA's Emergency Watershed Protection to get some funding for our water infrastructure. There was an initial permit to do the work quickly and they will reauthorize the emergency permit when the funding is secure with the EPA. The work will be this fall.

Impending Deed/Waivers – The board reviewed each property and discussed whether a deed waiver would be signed. The board agreed to sign deed waivers for all but three properties.

Motion by Selectman Beattie and seconded by Selectman Lavoie to sign all applicable deed waivers discussed. All in favor. Motion carried.

The board signed all applicable deed waivers.

Inspectors of the Election – Town Clerk Charity Baker mentioned that every 2 years in a State election year, Inspectors of the Election need to be appointed. She presented the board with appointments for two republican and two democratic inspectors to be appointed.

Motion made by Selectman Lavoie and seconded by Selectman Beattie to appoint Judi Donnelly, Tanya Batchelder, Janet Jacques-Mason and Linda Upham-Bornstein as Inspectors of the Election for a 2-year term to end July 31, 2026. All in favor. Motion carried.

SELECT BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:

Selectman Beattie mentioned, now that Route 135 is open the highway crew can get to Buffalo Road to complete the repair work.

Selectman Lavoie reported that knotweed spraying will take place for 3 days the week of August 26. They will get everyone from last year and several rights-of way. There is already a wait list for 2025.

She also mentioned she noticed the no parking signs have come down along Centennial Park and wasn't sure when it was decided to take them down. Selectman Rideout mentioned where it was discussed not to enforce "no parking" during certain events it was probably not necessary to have them. The board agreed the signs should be discussed again before next summer.

Teri Anderson asked if the court house parking lot is for court house use only or if some of it is municipal parking. Selectman Rideout mentioned it is the court house parking lot however he has never seen anyone turned away from parking there.

Selectman Rideout had nothing to report at this time.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT: Town Manager Cyr reported over the last couple weeks she has had three welfare conversations, non were approved but they may circle back.

They are moving forward with having a structural assessment for the highway building. Per the town's purchasing policy, projects between $1,000 and $5,000 requires only town manager approval. HEB Engineers has submitted a bid for $4,500 for a structural assessment.

She also reported that she and Selectman Beattie met with Deb Yeager, Community Liaison with New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management and they will be having a web EOC training this fall and she provided them with lots of resources moving forward.

The town received formal approval with Homeland Security and Emergency Management for the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan after the select board signed it last meeting and now the 2016 Emergency Operations plan is due for updating and they spoke with a consultant to find out what updating the Emergency Operation plan entails. They will be working towards an emergency management performance grant with HSM to fund the work.

INFORMATION: Information provided in the packet for the boards review.

- Wetlands Statutory Permit-by-Notification for proposed vegetation work by GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc./Eversource
- ZBA meeting notice – August 28, 2024 @ 6:30 p.m.
- NH Liquor Commission Notice to Municipalities for Traveling Tavern, LLC, Brian Matson for Caterer off-site liquor license.
- Land Use Permits.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Rob Christie reported, as the airport representative, there is $300,000 to $500,000 in contracts still on hold because of a dispute between the State and the contractor. They have scheduled an air show for the last week or two in June 2025.

He also reported, as the Connecticut River Joint Commission representative, the commission received two pesticide permits that they were asked to comment on, one of which is at the Lancaster Elementary School. In the course of looking at it, he noticed that the $3,000 or $4,000 pesticide contract was signed by Sam Mayne, the Conservation Commission chair, he expressed his concern on whether he was able to sign contracts for the town. The other permit is for the State to do pesticide control at all the bridges along the State roads.

Two other matters he wanted to mention were alteration of terrain permits. The commission has spent a fair amount of time discussing what is going to happen at Moore Dam with Eversource building a new substation and the second permit is A B Excavating to extend their operations. That application has been kicked back to them to provide more information on the effects on the wetlands.

Lastly, he wanted them to know he is now the chairperson of the Riverbend sub-committee of the Connecticut River Joint Commission. He also mentioned the town is entitled to two representatives on the commission if they know of anyone that would be interested.

Selectman Lavoie asked if there is something happening with rental cars at the airport. Rob stated, the airport has reached out to a car rental vendor in Colebrook and now they are renting to those flying into the airport.

Alan mentioned the shelter at the Community Camps needs a load of gravel underneath it.

Motion made by Selectman Beattie and seconded by Selectman Lavoie to adjourn. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Charity M. Baker

Board of Selectmen Date: _____

_____
Leon Rideout

_____
Shane Beattie

_____
Kathy-Jean Lavoie