MINUTES

SELECT BOARD MEETING **September 16, 2024**
TOWN HALL UPSTAIRS **6:30 PM**

ATTENDEES:

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

Others in Attendance: 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:

Fire Chief Randy Flynn reported for the month of August this year they responded to 61 911 calls 139 transfers. Year-to-date for 2024 is 544 911 calls and 989 transfers. Last year for the month of August they responded to 84 911 calls and 137 transfers. Year-to-date last year through August was 501 911 calls and 970 transfers which is pretty consistent with this year's numbers.

He also reported they put on 15,000 miles for the month. He gave the individual breakdown of each ambulance. The fire trucks were serviced, there were a few leaky valves that were repaired. The tanker will be going down to North Country Ford's body shop at the end of the month to repair the damage from an incident at the fire at 700 Main Street.

The Fire Prevention Parade is October 11th. Chief Flynn thanked Town Manager Cyr for getting out the press release.

Selectman Lavoie asked why A4 had no miles on it this past month. Chief Flynn mentioned it has some issues that are not worth putting money into, so it is being used for local stuff only and it is parked in between other ambulances and is not easy to get out. Selectman Rideout explained it is basically a standby ambulance. Chief Flynn mentioned its replacement ambulance is coming in January so it not necessary to put money into it.

Police Chief Jon Woodworth reported they had 566 calls for service and last year for the same time frame there were 414. Year-to-date for 2024, 4,837 and last year 3,668.

They have done 215 traffic stops this year and 105 last year for the same time frame. Year-to-date for 2024, 1,962 and 1,251 last year.

There have been 13 arrests and for the same time frame last year there were 7. Year-to-date for 2024, 122 and 100 last year.

10 motor vehicle collisions and for the same time frame last year there were 12. Year-to-date for 2024, 64 and 56 last year.

They have received complaints about bikes, etc. on the sidewalks which they will be enforcing.

Lt. Matthews is scheduled to attend a 2-day K-9 conference September 25-26. Ofc. Walker is currently in ARIDE (Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement) training.

There is a Career Expo at the fairgrounds tomorrow, September 17th and they will be present.

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Chief Woodworth also reported they have been awarded around $21,000 to purchase a speed trailer for the town. It is a full grant with no match required.

Peter Riviere feels enforcement is lax when it comes to speeding. He believes there is no concern for the speed limit in the town. He would like to see more people getting stopped and fined. Chief Woodworth stated he does not feel it is lax, the officers are out there stopping them and it shows in the increase number of stops over last year.

Librarian Barbara Robarts reported the soffit repair is complete. It came in at the figure that was requested from the capital reserve fund even though they found several other things requiring repairs in the process. They are still hoping to upgrade to the LED lighting in the upper part of the library and to have it done by the end of the year. The trustees are working on the budget and at this point without the health insurance figures they are coming in close to being level funded.

APPOINTMENTS:

Conservation Commission Chair Sam Mayne was present to discuss the ARM fund and the ability of returning those funds. He mentioned that at the last Conservation Commission meeting the commission voted to turn down the ARM fund money. There were contingencies in the offer letter that were not in the application which also included added expenses that they were not made aware of until getting the offer letter. Since the offer letter, he has had several meetings with DES and the Army Corps to figure out if they can come to an agreement on what the scope of work would look like and how it is going to get funded. In the process of meeting with them, the commission also put in a couple other grant applications because they knew the ARM fund was not going to cover all the costs of the project. They ended up having some success but not as much as they wanted. He feels the ARM grant is only covering the requirements that come along with it and working with DES and the Army Corps has been burdensome in terms of communication. With all of that in mind, he feels they should not accept the funds because they're not going to cover any of the project that was initially planned, it is just going to cover the requirements that accepting the funds bring.

Sam asked what the boards concerns are with returning the funds. Selectman Rideout stated the first concern is if they turn it back, they are not likely to give it to us again but going through this process has been a learning experience.

Selectman Lavoie asked what funds have been expended to date and by what sources. The grant funds that have been specifically granted to the town, the Moose Plate grant for $30,000 and the Mitigation Enhancement Fund (MEF) for $26,000. There are some other funds, the US Wildlife Service and the CRC Partnership funds. She asked if the $30,000 from the Moose Plate grant had been expended and he stated a chunk of it had been. They do have some left and have until 2026 to spend it. Lavoie asked if it is contingent on completing the tasks that were in the ARM application and is there any overlap so that they would not be meeting the Moose Plate grant requirements if they walk away from the ARM fund. Sam stated, not at all. He stated they are going to hit all of the requirements of the Moose Plate grant and it looks like they will be able to use the Mitigation Enhancement fund to do a lot of additional work in conjunction with the Moose Plate grant. He mentioned they have not expended anything from the Mitigation Enhancement fund. Lavoie wanted to confirm that the town is not at any risk with other funders if they walk away from the ARM fund grant. Sam stated, there are no requirements getting covered by the

ARM grant that are going toward the other funders. Lavoie also asked where the school district and the elementary school land on this. Sam mentioned, he was trying to finalize things with the town before going to the school. The only thing that the ARM fund would require and not get done was the permanent legal protection which the school didn't particularly want to do right from the start. Lavoie reviewed other details of the project with Sam. He explained he and the engineer have been trying to find a way to fund everything and not turn down the grant and the conclusion is it's not going to be able to be done. They can't fund what they want to do and are not on the hook. Selectman Rideout asked if the school district would be interested in funding any of the project on their own and Sam stated "no".

Sam mentioned, he does not share the concern that the town will not be able to get funding from them in the future if it is turned down because they've never actually had a grant contract, it was an offer contingent on them figuring out the other details and they never could come to an agreement on the other details. It may actually be that he didn't really know the town's process and may have jumped the gun on getting the board's approval to accept the funds before the offer was made.

Selectman Lavoie asked when they needed an answer by and Sam mentioned there isn't a hard deadline as there is not signed contract. She also asked what they gave for a reason why the requirements were not established up front or that we weren't aware of upfront. He mentioned the DES person administering the program as been upfront that she is new and his take is, they are requirements passed on by the Army Corps that she may have or maybe he interpreted what she was saying incorrectly and assumed there was more flexibility than there may have been.

Selectman Beattie recommended to Sam moving forward on other projects it will be good to get an engineering firm that has done those types of projects and that have worked with DES and the Army Corps and knows the pitfalls. He mentioned that anyone that has done work on the Connecticut River automatically gets an archeological requirement and it's unfortunate that we didn't get all of that together to see if it was even feasible to do it.

The board discussed what they need to do to rescind the acceptance of the ARM funds. The board agreed to put in on the next agenda and asked Town Manager Cyr if she would look into whether it needs to be a public hearing.

REVIEW OF MINUTES: September 3, 2024 – Work session, regular & non-public

Motion made by Selectman Beattie and seconded by Selectmen Lavoie to accept the September 3, 2024, work session minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion made by Selectman Beattie and seconded by Selectman Lavoie to accept the September 3, 2024, regular meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion made by Selectman Beattie and seconded by Selectman Lavoie to accept the September 3, 2024, non-public session minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.

SIGN VARIOUS PAPERWORK: No paperwork requiring signatures.

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NEW BUSINESS:

Underground Storage Tank: The Town's veeder-root reported a malfunctioning sensor which required a minor service call from Tanner Hill Milling & Construction. Dave Landy from Tanner Hill advised placing jersey barriers in front of one side of the highway tanks as well as building a berm out of cold patch to divert water from the tank. The tanks are being inspected monthly by town staff but there are deficiencies in a communication from the state as recently as February 14, 2024. Town Manger Cyr reached out to Stonecipher & Clark Environmental Solutions to ask questions about tank removal and funding. Jennifer Stonecipher explained that the State of New Hampshire received settlement funds to resolve litigation related to MtBE contamination but that its important to apply for these settlement dollars to have the funds earmarked before they run out. Cyr will be filling out an MtBE Settlement Fund Assistance application to start the process, however completing an application does not bind the town but it does determine the project's eligibility for funding. Cyr stated this was just informational at this time and no action is required.

Welfare Guidelines: Town Manager Cyr mentioned the Town has a duty to have updated welfare guidelines to guide the Welfare Director and she was unable to find recently adopted guidelines and if the town does not have updated guidelines RSA 165 could be violated. The guidelines speak about the application process, necessary documents, and provides an eligibility formula. There are acceptable allowances that are pulled from SNAP maximum monthly allotments and from HUD fair market rent standards for Coos County. So, it gives her specific dollars amounts when determining eligibility. The Town of Lancaster previously had a work program with conditions of employment that were initially drafted by former Town Manager McGee and are included as supplemental information but do not need official adoption by the Select Board for the work program however she is looking to board to adopt the guidelines for the 2024 rates and revisit the rates yearly.

Motion made by Selectman Lavoie and seconded by Selectman Beattie to adopt the 2024 welfare guidelines with rates and to revisit annually as presented. All in favor. Motion carried.

Purchasing & Procurement Policy revision: Town Manager Cyr mentioned at the last meeting it was discussed the need to add an emergency or a contingent stipulation in the event of extreme cases, there was also a minor typo that was corrected, and businesses located in the Lancaster area was further defined to include those within 50 miles of Lancaster.

Selectman Lavoie asked if the Select Board had a policy about purchasing even more locally than 50 miles when able and is 50 miles being added for services such as engineering and items/services we can't get closer with a preference to local/Town businesses.

Alan Savage mentioned when Mike Beattie was a selectman the cemetery was buying loam from someone in Whitefield and they made a vote stating they would by loam in Lancaster as there were several Lancaster residents that sold loam. It was the policy to do business in town if they can.

There was much discussion regarding buying local vs. lowest pricing.

Motion made by Selectman Lavoie and seconded by Selectman Beattie to approve the revised Purchasing & Procurement Policy as presented. All in favor. Motion carried.

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OLD BUSINESS:

Solar Net Metering update: Per Eversource: The Town of Lancaster executed an agreement in 2016 that selected a net metering tariff. At that time there may have been only one tariff available. In 2016, the Town authorized net metering checks to be submitted for an annual cash out over 600kwh as of the March statement. So, if we exceed 600kwh in production, we get a check. At this time, the town is unable to shift the excess solar production to cover other Town accounts due to the initial selection opted in the 2016 contract. If the Town receives an option to change the tariff, it will be brought to the Select Board's attention. The board mentioned if a new array is installed it will be great to see what is offered at that time.

Storm update: Land Use Coordinator and Town Manager Cyr attended an exploratory call with representative from NH HSEM and FEMA Region 1 on September 5th to review the impact survey. After the exploratory call they are completing a number of items in conjunction with each other. They will starting three distinct functions that they typically do separately.

- Recovery Scoping Meeting: First substantive meeting of the grant delivery process that should be conducted within 21 days after applicant assignment to Program Delivery Manager. An applicant's specific situation will be discussed in detail, including incident-related damage, emergency activities performed, related costs, and the plan for overall recovery.
- Damage Inventory: They are going to provide a spreadsheet of all emergency work performed on facilities, roads, and other infrastructure damaged by the disaster. This is the basis of public assistance projects. The applicant must work with the Program Delivery Manager to identify and report all disaster-related damage and emergency work activities to FEMA within 60 days of the Recovery Scoping Meeting.
- Site Inspection: Visit by FEMA staff to evaluate damaged infrastructure and collect information about the nature and dimensions of damage. Most damaged sites will require a physical inspection, which involves FEMA site inspector and the town.

Town Manager Cyr mentioned there were two bid requests posted to the website for the water transmission line and the water intake work and did not receive anything in response. So, at this time they are going to pause that work until she speaks with FEMA to understand funding for those projects.

Selectman Lavoie asked if it will be the same people coming up to do the inventory and measuring or if it is a completely different group. Cyr mentioned some of them will be the same.

SELECT BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:

Selectman Beattie had nothing to report.

Selectman Lavoie mentioned at the last work session she mentioned the board would be increasing the land use permits for the beginning of 2025 and thought that they had made a step increase decision at a past meeting and when she looked it up a decision was made at the November 6, 2023, meeting to go to $45 at the beginning of 2024 and $75 at the beginning of 2025.

Selectman Rideout mentioned there have been some recent posts on Facebook that residents in town would have realized savings if the Town had gone with the Community Energy Program at

Town meeting and he stated that is not true the Community Energy Program only affected the electric rates that is for kilowatt hour and the increase that is coming down the road is for transmission. There are three separate charges so there would have been no savings to any Town residents by going to the Community Power Program with concern to this price increase. He brought it up because he does not want the misinformation out there.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT:

Cyr sent letters to the commercial backflow preventer owners on September 9th letting them know that New England Backflow will be reaching out to them to schedule testing. Testing is anticipated to be conducted October 17 & 18.

She sent three bid notices out for waste disposal hauling. Bids are due by 4:00 p.m. on November 22, 2024.

She had one welfare case in the last couple of weeks.

There was discussion regarding public smoking at the last meeting and she'll be reporting out that information at the next meeting.

She met with the school board chair and there is a school funding program this evening which they were invited to but sent their declines. The school board meetings rotate throughout the school facilities. The October 10th meeting will be at the Lancaster Elementary School.

The Homecoming parade is scheduled for Thursday, September 19th at 6 p.m.

A North Country Outdoor Industry Career Expo will be held at the Lancaster Fairgrounds tomorrow and the police and fire departments will have representation.

She spent time with various department heads touring the Community Camps to understand the damage received to the bridge and to understand the facility. She is going to look back through meeting minutes to see if anything formally was discussed regarding the hall that is out there. She feels it deserves some attention and we shouldn't just let it sit there. She talked with Eli about getting quotes for their roof for the budgeting process. They are having soccer tournaments and basketball is fast approaching.

She reached out to previous warrant article petitioners to advise them of the process and deadline for 2025. Warrant article submissions, including any required signatures must be submitted by February 4, 2025.

NHDOE is reviewing our municipal solar grant application at the lagoons. They noted that our application carved out $9,925 for permitting which is not a covered expense. So, it will be deducted from the total grant requested amount, bringing the requested grant down to $129,018. In speaking with Melissa Elander, she explained that if/when the grant is awarded, Eversource determines the interconnection amount. She's seen ranges from $4k-$10k based on the fixed and variable costs associated with where the panels are installed.

Roxanne Ball will be retiring and moving to be closer to family. We thank her for her service and she will be missed.

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INFORMATION:

Leon quickly reviewed what was in the packet for information and left the board to review separately.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Lucy Wyman was present to speak to the board regarding trees. She started by saying thank you to the town crew, they have done a great job during the storm. She also wanted to put in a word for Abby Medina and feels he has done a terrific job for Colonel Town.

Lucy wanted to express her concern that she was not included in the discussions regarding the Dow Fund and how the funds would be used and that the funds should be dedicated to trees in town. She would like to be included in the conversations regarding planting trees. She would also like the board to include some of the public as well. She shared her thoughts and concerns with moving forward and would like to have input on where trees should go. She also feels the town needs an arborist. Ultimately, she would like to be included in the conversations.

Leon mentioned he does not have an issue with her being included in the conversation and an arborist that is not associated with the utility company has been consulted. Town Manager Cyr reviewed what work has been done to purchase trees and get them planted using the Dow Funds and also for budgeting next year.

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

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