

**TOWN OF NEW HAMPTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OFFICE, NEW HAMPTON, NH 03256**

Thursday, November 21, 2024

MEMBERS

Present were Mr. Drake, Mr. Shaw and Mr. Harvey.

PRESENT:

OTHERS PRESENT:

Town Administrator Mr. Davenport, Scott Provencal, Richard Morse, and Ronald Howe.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Drake called the meeting of the Board to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES:

- Mr. Shaw made a motion, seconded by Mr. Harvey to approve the 11/7/24 minutes as amended. Vote was unanimous.
- Mr. Drake made a motion, seconded by Mr. Harvey to approve the minutes of 11/14/24 as written. Vote was unanimous.
- Both sets of sealed non-public [(a) & (l)] minutes of 11/14/24 were held.

WORK SESSION:

The Board reviewed/signed manifests, invoices, requisitions, purchase orders and leave request forms.

The following Building Permits were signed by the Land Use Administrator:

1. Storageshed LLC; 920 Old Bristol Rd; Map R15, Lot 28; wall & roof replacement.
2. Richard Rooney & Janice Paul; 552 Coolidge Woods Rd; Map R14, Lot 11B; complete deck, add entry and screened porch.
3. Gerard Yanovitch; 850 Straits Rd; Map R6, Lot 16; add dormer.
4. Troup Family Trust; 620 Coolidge Woods Rd; Map R1, Lot 28C; 32'x30' post/truss structure.

The following Occupancy Permit was signed by the Land Use Administrator:

1. Riley & Charles Brooks; 300 Main St; Map R4, Lot 4W

The Board signed the following Intent to Cut Wood:

1. Jeremy Hiltz Revocable Trust; Pinnacle Hill Rd; Map R4, Lot 90

OPEN ITEMS

1. Tax Deeded Land – no update
2. Fees – Public Hearing scheduled for 11/26/24 at 6:00 PM.
3. Timber Harvest – no update
4. Personnel Policy – no update
5. #17 Main St. property – Mr. Davenport advised that 12/13/24 is the last date for the estate to remove any property from the home.
6. 911#'s – no update
7. Grants – Mr. Davenport said the grant for the cruiser can now be processed and once the funds are obtained the cruiser can be purchased, confirming this cruiser does not change the warrant article request for 2025.
8. Carter Mountain Rd unregistered vehicles – no update
9. Town House – no update

10. Drake Road – no update
11. Job Postings – no update
12. Town Roads – no update
13. Dr. Childs Rd discontinuance – no update
14. NHS PILOT – No update
15. Grant status of culvert replacement – No update
16. Fish Hatchery project – Mr. Davenport advised Fish & Game anticipates coming in to meet with the Board, along with their contractor, in Dec.
17. Coolidge Woods Rd erosion – no update
18. Dry Hydrants – no update

APPOINTMENTS:

6:30 PM

New Hampton School

New Hampton School Head of School Joe Williams, Director of Finance & Operations Kathleen Howe and Facilities Director Peter Lamb were present.

Mr. Drake advised that the Board thought there was agreement with NHS to clear the sidewalk by the elementary school. He said when it was presented to the taxpayers at Deliberative Session, some residents had asked what the Town was getting in return for the discontinuance, and they were told it would be NHS maintaining that sidewalk during winter months. Mr. Drake said he had wanted an MOU in place prior to putting that discontinuance on the warrant, and wished the article had been written in such a way to allow the Selectmen to transfer the road, contingent upon some type of agreement. Mr. Drake said it will now require Public Works to use personnel to maintain the sidewalk after finishing their plowing routes. He confirmed the school is currently plowing the sidewalks in the vicinity of NHS, and asked how the liability was different in that area, compared to the area near the elementary school. Mr. Williams said the school expressed concern with maintaining the elementary school sidewalks when discussion took place initially and that the school has plowed Dr. Childs Road even though it wasn't their road. Mr. Williams said he didn't realize that the Selectmen wanted an MOU prior to the article being placed on the warrant. Mr. Shaw said the Board had a letter from Mr. Williams that stated NHS would maintain the sidewalk. Mr. Williams said they had offered purchase of equipment to perform the sidewalk clearing. Mr. Drake advised that Dr. Childs Road now belongs to the school.

He said the Board is also concerned with the ongoing purchase of properties, which are then removed from taxation, which concerns them as they are looking out for the interest of the taxpayers. He said the taxpayers are also carrying the burden of paying for school age children attending the NASD schools, but whom live at NHS. Mr. Williams said he recognizes this issue but doesn't feel they should be penalized for homes they purchased many years ago. Mr. Shaw said there are other private schools that help the towns they're located in – in some way. He said he's been speaking with the legislature about the antiquated way in which private schools are getting substantial tax breaks.

Mr. Harvey said the sidewalk that needs maintenance is from the Fish Hatchery to the New Hampton Elementary School, at roughly 1,200 feet. He explained that snow needs removal from the sidewalk, and taken to another location, as it cannot just be placed onto the properties it abuts. Mr. Williams

said they will take over the care of this portion of the sidewalk, based on the statements he had made in the letter discussed, and to discuss some agreement to ensure NHS is not held responsible for any damage, etc. Mr. Williams said there are things the school offers the Town which they don't get credit for (ie. maintaining sidewalks at NHS, plowing Dr. Childs Rd and taking over Gordon Nash Library which the Town had been appropriating money for over the years). Mr. Drake said NHS had previously discussed possibly helping with fire engine repairs, with public safety being a concern, and the need for a new fire engine and police cruiser. Mr. Shaw suggested NHS consider paying the NASD tuition for students living on their campus and to discuss more recent property acquisitions. Mr. Williams said his board could discuss options but will want to ensure the protection of the school's finances.

7:00 PM
Fire Chief Cathy – 2025
Budget

Chief Cathy was present. The board recognized that the increase to wages in the department was due to the full-time firefighters now part of the budget for a full year. Chief Cathy advised he will want to discuss repair/replacement costs relocated from the Repair/Replacement Expendable Trust Fund on a warrant article, coming back into his operating budget. He said he limited his requests due to the added full-time employees and the new fire engine. He is proposing \$200,000 from the trust fund and to bond the remainder, for which payments can come out of the ambulance revenue fund. Mr. Drake asked if there were any other vehicles that need replacement soon, and Chief Cathy advised a new ambulance is planned for 2030. Chief Cathy provided information on fire engine lease/purchase rates, projected 10-year municipal bond rates, and use of money from the Fire Dept Special Revenue Fund and the impact to that fund. The plan makes some assumptions that the Special Revenue Fund will remain somewhat flat, but will be proposing some ambulance rate increases to put New Hampton more in line with other towns. Chief Cathy said he has AFG grant requests proposed for 2025 but does not think they will be awarded, or would be for a lesser amount. Chief Cathy said his spreadsheet does not include any money coming from any fund - towards the deposit on the fire engine. He recommended the Town put \$200,000 each year into the Capital Equipment & Vehicle Expendable Trust Fund with the CIP recommending it should be closer to \$400,000/year in the future, as this would prevent having to ask voters for a costly vehicle or piece of equipment.

The Board said they had not yet considered the warrant article for adding \$200,000. It was the consensus of the board that a bond was preferred over lease/purchase plan, so Mr. Davenport was asked to contact legal counsel on a bond.

Chief Cathy provided the Board with his recommended fire engine and discussed its features. Chief Cathy was asked to provide pricing for a similar engine from other manufacturers for comparison purposes at Deliberative, and detailed specifications on the truck.

Other warrant articles proposed would be the AFG Grant and bond payment on the PSB. Warrant article for the PSB roof will be needed in 2025-26. Mr. Provencal said having the warranty information on the engine may be helpful at Deliberative.

Relative to Engine 1, Chief Cathy said it is running, had the pump test, but

needs a few repairs as a result. It should be done by 11/25. The repair cost should be close to the initial quote and the invoice needs to arrive ASAP so its payment can come from ARPA monies.

7:30 PM
Town Clerk/Tax
Collector Ms. Schofield
– 2025 Budget

Ms. Schofield was present who said she had no further updates but asked the Board if they had any questions. The Board had no questions to note and Ms. Schofield left.

Mr. Drake confirmed with Mr. Davenport that if 5% (COLA) wage increases were given it would increase the budget by \$46,104. The Board reviewed a spreadsheet which showed health insurance increases and COLA increases, so the Board could see the proposed impact to the tax rate for each. Mr. Drake asked what the deadline date is for the Board decisions and Mr. Davenport said - right away. Mr. Shaw said once everything they've agreed to is entered into a spreadsheet to see the overall tax rate, the Board could consider any additions or if they needed to trim the budget. Mr. Harvey said he would like to see more money for the roads in town.

The Board discussed the proposed Warrant Articles:

- Partial payment for PSB
- AFG grant
- Bond for purchase of fire engine
- Authorize Selectmen to sell property on Tax Map R13, Lot 9.
- Retain 134 acres to hold onto indefinitely, until rescinded, language that had not been added when the voters approved this as conservation land. This came up when it was reviewed by legal. This would include 1.3 acres, Tax Map R8, Lot 1U, for which the Conservation Commission has agreed to pay the unpaid taxes on, which would be merged with the larger lot.

The Board agreed that ARPA money should go to either the security cameras and/or a trailer for hauling. Mr. Davenport reminded the Board it could be used for Engine 1 repairs if the quoted cost remains the same.

Possible Warrant Articles:

- New highway truck with the consensus being to purchase a F550 instead of a larger truck.
- Relative to a new Bobcat, the Board agreed this wasn't needed at this time, based on Public Works Director Mr. Cote's recommendation.
- Police cruiser - paid for by taxation, then to skip the following 3 years. The Board agreed to consider this.
- Add money to building maintenance fund, as the Town Office needs work, as does the Town House.

Mr. Drake asked about the tree removal that went to bid and Mr. Davenport said that company is working with Mr. Cote and anticipate their removal in Dec. The Board reminded Mr. Davenport that Mr. Cote was supposed to review the bid proposal and make a recommendation to the Selectmen and a PO needs to be submitted.

Mr. Drake said that Mr. Davenport had said the COLA increase proposed

would be an increase of \$46,104 on the budget, but there was another place where it said the increase would be \$64,000+ and asked for clarification on the number. Mr. Davenport to investigate.

Relative to cameras proposed by Police Chief Tyrrell, Mr. Davenport said he has not discussed the options and prices, but would do that.

Mr. Harvey asked what the status of the grant for the culvert was and Mr. Davenport said he would find out.

The Board agreed to look at a 5% increase for wages in the budget spreadsheet, for their next budget discussion.

Board reviewed the General Government, Health, Animal Control, Culture and Recreation, Conservation Commission budget lines. The commission is looking for additional money to create an Open Space Master Plan, with the Board agreeing to level fund this, though Mr. Davenport will ask Commission Chair Mr. Pollock if he wants to meet with the Board to discuss further.

It was the consensus of the Board to determine a lump sum amount for each department, based on the 5% COLA proposed, to be distributed to each department head so they could consider individual increases instead.

Mr. Drake said Code Enforcement needs to be discussed as Mr. Pollock may be retiring soon. Mr. Davenport suggested New Hampton could share a code enforcement officer, with other towns. He asked Mr. Davenport to draft a change to the 2025 budget that considers this position at a rate comparative to a part-time Code Enforcement person, for the Board to consider.

**ACTION &
DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

(cont.)

- Newfound Area School District Payment Request – Mr. Davenport said he met with NASD who will not meet their NHDRA deadline to get the tax rate set. Mr. Drake advised that the October invoice due to the NASD from the Town is \$373,039. Most district towns do not want to pay the district until the school rate is set, but legal counsel advises that the invoices must be paid per State statute. The school district has stated they don't have the ability to obtain a TAN.
- Board reviewed a grant request for Highway Safety Speed Equipment for the PD. Mr. Davenport said he believes this is a 75/25 match, with the Town's cost likely coming from the Reimbursable Grants fund. Mr. Shaw made a motion, seconded by Mr. Harvey to approve the request, with the Town's match to come from the Reimbursable Grants Expendable Trust Fund. Vote was unanimous.
- Breezeline Franchise Agreement: Mr. Davenport asked how many years the Town wants to enter into agreement for. Mr. Shaw requested to see the agreement and wants to ensure that Breezeline removes all equipment, as part of the agreement, once any agreement ends. He also wants to ensure the agreement allows for residents to use another company for internet if they want. The Board agreed to 10 years.
- Board signed an enforcement letter for Stacy Paquette; 85 Colony Lane; Map R16, Lot 10-3, for a deck constructed within the setback distance to a property line.
- FYI – DPW Water Quality Test

- FYI – NHVP Water Line Notice

New Business after Agenda was posted:

- FYI –Memo from the Town Clerk/ Tax Collector that tax deed letters went out for 19 properties.
- Board reviewed draft Employee Evaluation Worksheets and agreed to the revisions.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Mr. Davenport asked the Board if the Town Office could close for Christmas Eve if the employees have PTO time to cover the hours, as historically there are almost no phone calls or visits to either office. The Board agreed.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Mr. Morse thanked the Board for their handling of NASD's delay with the tax rate setting and that it is unfortunate that the towns must incur unanticipated costs as a result of obtaining a TAN.
- Mr. Howe asked why the tree on the common is not being taken down as he sees it as a hazard. Mr. Harvey said the tree is in good shape.
- Chief Cathy advised that Dec. 1st is the tree lighting and Nov. 30th is the date to install the lights.
- Mr. Provencal asked what the follow-up would be with NHS and Mr. Shaw said they can discuss the next steps.
- Mr. Provencal suggested that the NASD Superintendent should come meet with the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:09 PM, Mr. Drake made a motion, seconded by Mr. Shaw to adjourn the meeting. Vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Vose