



NORTHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of October 15, 2019

Present: Chairman Wayne Crowley, Sel. Brown (via phone), Sel. Haskins

Also Present: Dr. Tracey Hutton, Town Administrator, Police Chief John Raffaelly

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Chairman Crowley.

- **Public Input**

There were no members of the public wishing to speak at this time.

- **Report from Tilton Northfield Fire District on Telecommunications Tower**

Chief Michael Sitar presented the Board an update on the progress of the development of a telecommunications tower at the Park Street station. A plan was distributed to the Board with the location of the proposed lease site for the tower. This site is approximately 50 feet x 80 feet and is located on the far rear left of the parcel, near the current training trailers. The Chief explained that the proposed tower will be 195 feet tall and construction may begin at the beginning of next summer. As a commercial use the tower will require Planning Board Site Plan approval.

Currently the lease would generate \$17,500/year in revenue for the district with a 2½% annual escalator. Additional revenue will be generated by additional tower tenants. The Fire Commissioners may present a warrant article at Town Meeting to place the revenue generated by the Tower in a building reserve account. The tower itself will be a taxable asset for the Town Northfield.

- **Police Department**

- **Department Updates**

Chief Raffaelly reported that staffing is a continued issue for the Department.

- **Public Works Department**

- **Department Update**

DPW Director Buteau was not present as the meeting. Chairman Crowley briefed the Board on the progress of the Sandogardy Pond Road paving. HEB Engineering provided an estimate of possible escalation costs if the wearing course pavement is not laid down until 2020. This is estimation only; escalation is based on the current price of crude oil, which is unpredictable.

Chairman Crowley has spoken to Hiltz Construction and Mr. Buteau; he found that they also prefer to complete the paving next year. There is risk involved in placing wearing course pavement when it is colder out. In addition, the Rail Road culvert drainage project cannot be constructed, except in the January/February time frame due to Rail Road restrictions.

Sel. Brown agrees with the professionals and prefers we hold off on final pavement till warmer weather next year. He stated that it should be done right to avoid costs later. Sel. Haskins concurs the expense of paying escalation will be potentially less than a fix if the wearing course if it does not adhere correctly to bottom course.

- **Administration**

- **Wage and Classification Study**

Dr. Hutton presented a new short list of comparison communities. This list is comprised of the 10 communities above and below Northfield when the whole state is sorted by the value of the tax commitment. Chairman Crowley recommended using Haverhill, Henniker, Charlestown, New Ipswich, Tilton, and Belmont to collect data on wages and job descriptions. Dr. Hutton suggested adding Pittsfield and Sanbornton; the Board agreed. For the next meeting, Dr. Hutton will do her best to collect as much data as she can from these communities.

- **Employee Health Insurance**

Dr. Hutton presented a new informational document on HSAs she had just received from NEEBCo this week. She has heard positive feedback from some employees and to date no employees have approached her with concerns. Dr. Hutton is still waiting for the NEEBCo plan costs for 2020.

- **Review minutes of the meeting of October 8, 2019**

Crowley/Brown moved to accept the minutes of October 8, 2019, as presented. **Motion passed by unanimous vote.**

- **Department Update**

The Suspense List was reviewed. The Board asked about the situation with the ADA ramps and the Police Station and Town Hall. Dr. Hutton said both have been repaired, but need to be replaced in the next budget year.

Chairman Crowley inquired about the progress of the Open Space Plan. Dr. Hutton responded that she is working on the text changes while LRPC works on the mapping. She will provide a draft to the Board as soon as those edits are in, possibly by the end of the week.

- **Public Hearings**

Chairman Crowley opened the public hearings at 6pm.

- **Building Permit Fee Schedule**

Chairman Crowley explained that the fee schedule is proposed to be amended to add a Renewal category for Building Permits. This renewal is proposed to be \$50 and must be applied for prior to expiration of the original permit. Currently an applicant must reapply from the beginning with a whole new fee. Mr. French inquired what the process would be to repeal the Zoning Ordinance. Chairman Crowley explained that Zoning was adopted by Town Meeting in the 1970s and a Town Meeting would be required for repeal.

Mr. Bragdon began a discussion of “substantial completion” as it relates to expiration of permits.

Chairman Crowley explained that is what is in existence today. Mr. Bragdon suggested that the first renewal should be automatic.

Chairman Crowley explained that no final decision was being made this evening. Input was being accepted from the public and the Board will take time to digest the comments and make a decision in the coming weeks.

- **Appropriation of Unanticipated Funds**

Chairman Crowley gave the audience background information on the unanticipated funds. When the state budget was approved through HB4, there was a provision for additive municipal and school aid funding. This funding will be received for the next 2 years. The Town must accept the funds and for the current fiscal year either apply it to tax rate reduction or spend it on a lawful project. Next years the funds must be included as revenue to assist with lowering the tax rate. At this time, Chairman Crowley explained, the Board does not have a specific project or recommendation, but if it is to be used for the tax rate, its decision must be soon since it has to be reported on the Department of Revenue forms that are filed by the Finance Officer.

Ms. Ferreira inquired if the funds were extra state funds. Representative Hill suspects that the funds are a result of the changes to the federal tax laws. It was commented that all funds are coming from the citizens at some point.

Chairman Crowley was asked about potential projects, he responded that there are road projects that could be done that were deferred as a result of the Shaker Road emergency bridge project. An example of a project deferred is the drainage work that was to be performed on the remainder of Shaker Road.

Mr. Constant commented that it makes sense to fund road work with these funds; while Representative Hill favors using the funds to help the tax rate. Chairman Crowley commented that the funds would amount to about \$.25 on the tax rate.

Ms. Ferreira asked for clarification on the budget and Town Meeting process. Chairman Crowley explained that the funds will be factored in as revenue in the coming tax year. Mr. Blaisdell inquired if the Shaker Road expenditure was scheduled. Chairman Crowley responded that it was not. Mr. Blaisdell then suggested the unanticipated funds be used to maintain the CIP schedule that was set back due to that expenditure. Ms. Locantore agreed with Mr. Blaisdell.

Chairman Crowley asserted that the road infrastructure is the most important asset the Town has. He also added that it is more fiscal prudent to put the funds towards this infrastructure than to temporarily fund a reoccurring expense. He concluded that a decision will likely be made next week at the regular scheduled Selectmen's Meeting.

○ **Noise Nuisance Bylaw**

Chairman Crowley explained that Chief Raffaelli requested the Board examine the issue of noise nuisances; the reason being that there is no regulation to turn to when complaints are received. The Selectmen then worked on the regulation with staff. Highlights of the regulation include:

- Restrictions from 11pm to 6am – 7 days a week.
 - Fireworks and cannons
 - Electronics
 - Construction activities
- Exemptions for:
 - Snow blowers
 - Emergency vehicles
 - Agriculture (except forestry and logging)

There was a question whether the problem is Town wide or in a particular area. It was confirmed that this is a Town wide problem. It was also questioned whether there was a particular noise prompting the examination of a regulation. It was noted that there is not one particular noise causing the bulk of the complaints.

Ms. Ferreira inquired how many noise complaints there are in a year as a proportion of total police calls. Chief Raffaelli commented that there are many calls and there was a comment from the public that some have stopped calling in their complaints as there is nothing that can be done, at this time.

Ms. Tedford commented that vehicle noise is also a problem. It was noted that the regulation of excessive vehicle noise is not time dependent. While Representative Hill is sympathetic to those who have noisy neighbors, it is not the occasional noise that is causing the problem. Mr. Bragdon feels that perhaps the language is too ambiguous and leaves too much to interpretation. Mr. Taylor agreed and thought the regulation could be tailored to the type of complaints being received.

Chief Raffaelli feels that the proposed language is not unreasonable. There was discussion by the public of respect and being a good neighbor. To which the Chief responded that with no regulations in place so people just don't care. Mr. Bragdon, while has confidence in the current Police Department's ability to implement these regulations, the situation may change. Sel. Haskins noted that the regulations need to be tight because some people will try and subvert the rules. He feels the regulations should be implemented and if tweaks are needed, they can be made in the future.

Mr. Blaisdell made two points; the first that not everyone is a good neighbor and the Police Department needs to have the ability to make judgement calls, the second there is no enforceability now and the Police Department need to have the ability to exercise discretion. This includes the opportunity to give a warning.

Ms. Keyser, who owns a bar, understands that her establishment has neighbors and she has no issue with the 11pm to 6am time frame that is in the proposed regulations. Mr. Bragdon clarified that not all of the prohibitions are time dependent, such as some of the motor vehicle limitations. Chairman Crowley confirmed that this is correct. It was suggested that a broad definition of motor vehicle be added.

- **Non-Public - RSA 91A-3 II (e)**

Crowley/Haskins moved to enter into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A3II (e) at 7:12 pm. **Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.**

Also Present: Dr. Tracey Hutton, Town Administrator

Crowley/Haskins moved to reconvene the public session at 7:29 pm. **Motion passed by unanimous vote.**

Crowley/Brown moved to seal the non-public session minutes. **Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.**

- **Adjournment**

The next meeting is at 5:00 pm on the 22nd of October.

There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Dr. Tracey E. Hutton

Minutes approved October 29, 2019