



## NORTHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of November 17, 2020

**Present:** Selectman Kevin Waldron, Selectman Scott Haskins

**Also Present:** Town Administrator Ken Robichaud, Assistant Town Administrator Stephanie Giovannucci, Police Chief John Raffaely, and Code Enforcement Officer Jason Durgin.

**Excused:** Selectman Glen Brown

**Zoom Attendance:** Valarie Allen

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

Chairman Waldron led the pledge of allegiance.

- **Public Input:** None
- **Police Department**

The Chief updated the Selectmen on the cruiser that had been repaired and is now in service. The Chief thanked Hansers Auto Body for getting it repaired so quickly.

The Chief asked the Selectmen if they had any questions to the ACERT program that Detective Sargent, Jamie DeCormier discussed with the Selectmen at the November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. Chairman Waldron stated that Selectman Brown had questions and also he himself had some questions.

Selectman Waldron stated that if we enter into this program it seems that our officers will be spending more time on this program. The Chief stated that we are already doing some of this now for the Merrimack County Attorney's Office, and this will not take up any more of the officer's time. We are just referring the victim's family with children involved to an agency that has additional services and resources to help children who may have witnessed violent types of behaviors, in which case may need some type of counselling services. It would make sense for us to do this, as we are the ones already on scene, and all this is giving a family additional services provided by an outside agency. Once this is accomplished the PD is no longer involved.

The Selectmen discussed what agencies are involved and what the process is for getting this into the Standard Operating Procedures or (SOP). Discussion then turned to does the Chief institute departmental policy on his own or do the Selectmen approve each Departmental Policy? It was discovered that the Town Hall has an outdated SOP manual; the Police Department has an updated policy book at the PD. Discussion continued on who approves Departmental Operating Policies. Selectman Haskins stated that he was okay with this policy. Selectman Waldron stated that he was okay with it as well. It was decided that the Chief was to move forward and the Selectmen would look into how this should proceed in the future.

The Chief asked the Selectmen if he could change another policy and have the Administrative Assistant (AA) at the Police Department report to the Lieutenant as well as Himself. Currently the AA reports to the Chief only, but if the Chief is on vacation it would only make sense that she report to the Lieutenant. The Selectmen discussed if they have to vote on this change as well. The Assistant Town Administrator (AT/A) asked if this is a policy change or a Job Description change. The Chief answered; job description. The AT/A answered then yes, the BOS must vote on it. Selectman Waldron made a motion to change the job description for the AA at the police department to include that the AA works and reports to the Lieutenant and the Chief, seconded by Selectman Haskins, **all in favor, motion passed.**

The Chief reported to the Selectmen that the Emergency Management Center (EMC) project grant was submitted and we received the grant. The AT/A stated that we received the grant which is \$4,000.00 and she has reached out to the consultant and is waiting to hear back from her. Selectman Haskins stated that he was at a meeting at the Pines Center and they are currently looking to upgrade the WI-FI strength there, as it is currently inadequate to handle more than 3 laptops at any one time, as the WI-FI is weak. So we can look forward to that helping the EMC.

The Chief is requesting this year to purchase 2 new surface pro mobile laptops with internal mobile cards built into the laptop. These new laptops are for his and the Lieutenants cruisers, they currently have older models that have an external mobile wireless card and with all the bumping and turning they have become loose in the socket, which end up losing the connection, this kicks it out of the IMC system and they have to stop and log back in. This occurs 7-8 times a day. The Chief will reissue the older ones to other functions within the department, which are not patrol vehicles. All other patrol vehicles have an internal mobile card in the laptops which work very well. The Selectmen authorized this and signed the request.

- **Administration**

The AT/A presented to the Selectmen the 2020 tax rate from DRA. 2019 the tax rate was \$27.34 per thousand. 2020 tax rate from DRA is at \$25.80, per thousand. The Towns fund balance policy created by the Selectmen is to have at least 5% minimum to 10% maximum of budget expenditures. The town voted in March at the Town Meeting to utilize \$230,000.00 of our fund balance to offset taxes for 2020. There was discussion on the overall tax rate of \$25.80, and the town tax rate of \$7.55, which would be a \$.93 cent increase in the town's tax rate from 2019, but the overall tax rate is lower than 2019, because of the State Education Tax and the School Tax Rates fell.

Selectman Waldron stated that he would like to see it come down more. Selectman Waldron stated that he would like to use another \$150,000.00 from the fund balance, due to the potential abatement overlay that may not come in 2021. So he would like to reduce the abatement overlay to \$100,000.00, and use another \$50,000.00 from fund balance making the total tax rate \$25.36. This is a reduction of \$1.13 which the town only tax rate will be \$7.11, for a total increase of \$0.49 cents to the tax rate for 2020. Selectman Waldron made the motion to approve the tax rate at \$25.36 overall, seconded by Selectman Haskins, **all in favor, motion passed.**

The T/A presented the Selectmen with an updated PTO policy and how we will implement PTO after 1/1/2021. The T/A suggested that we change the proposed accruing of PTO from an hourly accruing rate to; twice per year an employee will receive one half of their PTO time according to their years of service. All current PTO will be bought back from the employee by the town on the last payroll in December. On January 1<sup>st</sup> each employee according to their years of service, will receive in their PTO bank, one half of the allotted time. On July 1<sup>st</sup> the employee will receive the second half of their allotted PTO time and all PTO time will expire on December 31<sup>st</sup> of that year. This is a use it or lose it program. This will encourage employees to use their time accordingly. Employees will no longer be able to max out their time. The Selectmen wanted to ensure that this method can be accomplished and wanted to see it in the policy, so we will discuss and finalize next week. The Selectmen also want to make sure that all employees are notified in advance of this occurring.

The T/A discussed with the Selectmen a quote for cleaning services for Town Hall and the Police Department. As the discussion progressed the T/A decided to not recommend this firm to the Selectmen as the costs for cleaning were higher again with this quote. The cost for the Town Hall was \$4,800.00, and the Police Department was listed at \$4,000.00 per year.

The T/A brought forth a quote for a card access system from AB Lock hoping to eliminate having too many keys and having a more controlled and computerized access to Town Hall. The system enables persons to enter the building via card access programmed by the Town and logs each activity onto computer software. The system records the date, time, who accessed the door and if there are any restrictions, which may restrict certain access to certain areas. Price installed is at \$2,122.00. This gives greater restrictive access control to whom and when someone comes into the building. The Selectmen had questions and the T/A will get those questions answered and report back next week. This quote is in response to our current provider not returning phone calls for issues, questions and service.

The T/A also had another quote to present to the Selectmen from AB Lock for upgrading the security system at Town Hall. Currently; the system has older cameras in place and this quote for \$8,665.80 will upgrade the cameras and motion sensors in the building. Also; this will add several more cameras to our system and upgrade the keypads and will also allow additional cameras to be added in the future if needed. The Selectmen asked a few questions and the T/A will get back to them at the next meeting. Again, this is in response to our current provider not returning our phone calls for issues, questions and service.

The T/A presented the Selectmen with a CIP request from. The form has not been used in the past and the T/A asked if the Selectmen would like to use the form going forward. The current amount for CIP is at \$20,000.00 and a useful life of 5 years. The form suggests \$5,000.00 and a useful life of 3 years. The Selectmen requested \$10,000.00 and a useful life of more than 5 years.

The T/A requested to purchase another TV monitor for the meeting room. He recommended a 65 inch screen and it be placed on the side wall with a full motion mount, in that the Selectmen could see more easily and clearly. The Selectmen authorized the project and the amount of \$700.00 to do the project.

- **Minutes Review**

**Waldron/Haskins** moved to approve the minutes of November 4th, 2020 as printed. Selectman Haskins suggested that we change the spelling of Hanzor's Auto Body to Hanser's Auto Body. **Motion Passed by unanimous vote.**

- **Non-Public Session**

Sel. Waldron made a motion at 7:19 pm to go into nonpublic session under NH RSA 91a 3-II, (c) seconded by Sel. Haskins, Roll call vote Selectman Haskins- Yes, Selectman Waldron- Yes.

**Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.**

Also present- T/A Ken Robichaud, Police Chief John Raffaelly, AT/A Stephanie Giovannucci and CEO Jason Durgin.

Waldron/Haskins moved to reconvene the public session at 8:33 pm. Roll Call Vote, Selectman Haskins –Yes, Selectman Waldron-Yes, **Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.**

Waldron/Haskins moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session because divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of the board, or render the

proposed action of the board ineffective. Roll call vote, Selectman Haskins-Yes, Selectman Waldron-Yes,  
**Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote and the minutes are sealed.**

- **Other Business**

The T/A asked if we were meeting next week because of Thanksgiving, the Selectmen stated yes were meeting on our regular day and time.

Selectman Haskins asked if we cannot mail out the Towns position on replacement of mailboxes hit by snow plows, right of ways, culverts and the landowner's responsibility and plowing of snow on town roads, then can the Town Clerk hand them out. Selectman Waldron stated that we can't force the Town Clerk to do this but the T/A could ask her to do it, we should put this information on the website and also in the Northfield Town News every month for the next 12 months.

Selectman Haskins asked if an invoice has been sent out to Diana Drive and on the water repair line and the T/A stated that he is working on it, but he needs more information from the DPW Director. The Selectmen gave the T/A ideas on getting prices.

The T/A requested that he be allowed to close Town Hall at 1pm on Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup> of November to allow staff time to travel for Thanksgiving. He received a request so he is just passing it on. The Town Clerk closes at 12:30 on Wednesday. The Selectmen gave him their okay to close early.

Selectman Waldron asked if we can look into an automated electronic time keeping system for next year. The T/A stated yes we can, it would be at a cost of \$1,295.00 to implement and \$295.00 year maintenance fee. Employees will punch in via a password and code. We will discuss this further next week.

Discussion ensued on a tracking system for all police vehicles for emergency tracking. If an officer is disabled while out on a call, we need to know where that officer is and where to send help if that officer can't call in to dispatch. We will discuss this in more detail in a future meeting.

There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.

**Minutes Recorded by T/A Ken Robichaud**

**Minutes Approved November 24, 2020**