



NORTHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of November 2nd, 2021

Present: Selectman Kevin Waldron and Selectman Mark Hubbell.

Town Staff Present: Town Administrator Ken Robichaud, Police Chief John Raffaelly, and DPW Director, Justin Bernier.

Also Present: Ken Tomlins, Jason Durgin, Kristen Vaughn, Carl Bartlett, Bob Keith, Gary Andrews, Donna Vandercleet, and Christine Damaris.

Selectmen Waldron opened the Selectmen's Work Session at 5:00 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The Finance Director updated the Selectmen on the Town's position financially. Ms. Giovannucci told the Selectmen that last year at this time the tax rate was looking like it would be a .73 cent increase per thousand, in the tax rate. After all the financial documents were submitted to the NH Department of Revenue (DRA) a different picture was painted. Only a .32 cent increase in the Tax rate was likely. The Town's tax rate for 2020 was 7.11 per thousand and 2021 is estimated to be 7.43 per thousand. The existing fund balance for the town is approximately \$300,000.00 and DRA estimates that the Town should retain at the minimum \$425,000.00. The Selectmen last year offset the increase in taxes by using approx. \$350,000.00 of fund balance. The Town Administrator stated that the higher fund balance you have the less borrowing you will need to do. Having a healthy fund balance means you have a more fluid cash flow. Also less borrowing of Tax Anticipation Note or (TAN) means less in finance charges. In 2020 the Town had a TAN of over \$750,000.00 with \$12,000.00 in interest charges. In 2021 we had a TAN of \$250,000.00 for a shorter span of time and only paid \$500.00 in interest. Selectmen Waldron stated that he understands a fund balance but that the money belongs to the people. The Administrator agreed but stated we should hold back from offsetting this year's low tax rate as next year we have our 5 year revaluation and we know that housing values right now are through the roof and we should look to offset that rate next year. The Selectmen after pondering the statement agreed that maybe next year would be better to offset those rates.

Waldron/Hubbell motioned to accept the tax rate of \$7.43 as the Town's tax rate for 2021 and to not use any fund balance to offset the rate this year. All in favor, motioned passed.

Police Department Update

The Police Chief informed the Selectmen that the new Cruiser has been ordered as well as the emergency equipment for that cruiser.

The Police Department overhead garage doors have been having issues and the overhead door company was there on Monday to fix the issue. The Chief will be getting prices for new overhead doors as these are over 25 years old and are beginning to fail.

Public Works Department Update

Director Bernier presented to the Selectmen a plan for road repairs/upgrades for 2022. Selectmen Hubbell met with the Director last Friday and reviewed some roads that really need attention. The roads that were discussed were Union Rd, Keaser Rd, Turnpike, Silver, Megan, and Sarah Lanes. The repairs that were discussed were from installing some drainage on some roads, to grinding and repaving. The Selectmen discussed these road repairs in great detail. They instructed Director Bernier to get better budget numbers as the town needs to invest more dollars for repairs of our road infrastructure. There were many residents in attendance at this meeting from the Silver, Megan and Sarah Lanes communities. Some spoke in the public input portion of these minutes.

Director Bernier also stated that he would like to finish Shaker Road drainage to Knowles Pond Road as well as continue the drainage on Twin Bridge Road. Director Bernier stated that to help offset some of the cost for road repair the DPW could do some drainage and culvert work to save costs. He also would like to rent equipment to help speed up the work so they could do more work in less time.

The Selectmen spoke briefly to Shaw road and the small section that is dirt. The consensus of the Selectmen was that the road is narrow in that area, and contains ledge rock which they may have to blast it out of the road to widen it which will be costly so this is probably why it was never completed.

The Loader came up for discussion by Selectman Hubbell in his visit to the DPW on Friday he said that the loader may appear to not be very safe. The cab is rusted through at the base and that some of the wires from inside the cab are hanging outside of the cab. They discussed the hours on that machine as being high hours. He would like to pursue pricing on either a good used machine or a new one. The Selectmen after discussion asked Director Bernier to get some pricing for future consideration.

The Selectmen mentioned that they will need to reevaluate the vehicles that the Town currently has and schedule a replacement plan for these vehicles.

Director Bernier noted that the State of NH will not be repairing the Granite Street R/R crossing next Wednesday as previously stated. The State claims that they do not have a scope of work for this project or any other railroad crossing rehabilitation project.

Administration Update

The Town Administrator asked the Selectmen for input with the Town Hall parking plan. The Selectmen would like the cement Jersey barrier removed and replaced with bollards. The Administrator in his research found that they offer many different sizes of bollards from 4.5 inch diameter to 7.5 inch diameter. The Selectmen suggested that at least a 6 inch diameter bollard should be used. The new plan will allow another handicapped parking spot in front of the Town Hall entrance. This should keep vehicles from hitting the building. The Administrator said that he will come next week with a purchase order for them to sign.

The Administrator received another quote for the downstairs project from Rowell's. It is twice the cost of the first quote.

Consolidated Communications has removed all of their equipment from the old utility pole on Bay Hill Road and has installed it on the new pole. Drainage work on Bay Hill Road will begin there next week.

The Administrator reported that the new LED crosswalk signs are in and will be installed by the DPW as soon as possible.

The Administrator gave the Selectmen an updated contract from George Sansoucy utilities assessor PE. The Selectmen signed the new proposal at a reduced cost for the next 5 years.

Administrator Robichaud informed the Selectmen that the 2022 Budget is almost completed. The Administrator stated that it will be turned over to them at next week's meeting and at this point there is little to no increase so far.

The Pines Park Committee is meeting on Thursday November 11th at 5pm, this is the first meeting of the Committee and is open to the public here at Town Hall.

Administrator Robichaud informed the Selectmen that he had met with the Franklin City Manager and the Executive Director for The Mill City Kayak Park. Mr. Robichaud learned that the Kayak Park brings a van with trailer to the Cross Mill Road area by the River approx. 4 times a day and unloads the passengers and kayaks and then returns to Franklin. They spend approx. 10 minutes unloading. The Kayak Park also keeps the Cross Mill Road area clean by picking up trash, weed whacking the area and other area cleanup duties. The Selectmen are concerned that this activity might tax Town resources in the future. Administrator Robichaud stated that he will keep open communication with this entity now and in the future so that this does not occur.

The Town Administrator reviewed with the Selectmen the Code Enforcement Officers monthly report for October.

Public Input

Robert Keith- Lives in the area of Sara Lane and the previous Boards of Selectmen have neglected this area for some time and he is happy and appreciative that this Board of Selectmen is looking at revitalizing the roads in this area. He just wants to make sure that the positive momentum continues and that the roads continue to stay asphalt.

Gary Andrews- He too appreciates the review of these roads. They were constructed in 1998 and it's been 20 years since they have received any attention. The road conditions are horrible in this area, would like the Selectmen to have a road expert look at the condition of the roads in this area.

Robert Keith- readdresses the Selectmen and pleads with them to not set these area roads aside. If they put this work off again and a new Board of Selectmen comes on they may forget this area again.

Donna Vandercleet- addressed the Selectmen as she too lives in the Silver Road area and in the spring she walks on the pavement and it is spongy due to water underneath the asphalt.

Christine Damaris- Resides on Silver Road and when it rains it tends to wash out the side of the road which makes it a safety issue for cars driving at night.

Kristin Vaughn- Addresses the Selectmen that they should fill the empty seat with a Third person. Jason Durgin has volunteered to be the Third Selectman. Also, she asked if Pines Park will reopen now that all of the piles have been removed. Spoke to the State of NH revenue share for 2021.

Selectman Waldron/Hubbell motioned to approve the minutes of October 26th 2021, as corrected. All in favor, motion passed.

Other Business:

Next Week's Meeting will be at 5pm.

Chairman Waldron recessed the Selectmen's meeting at 7:16pm.

Chairman Waldron reconvened the Selectmen's meeting at 7:25pm

Sel. Waldron made a motion at 7:30pm to go into nonpublic session under NH RSA 91a; 3-II, (C) seconded by Sel. Hubbell. Roll call vote–Selectman Hubbell–Yes and Selectman Waldron- Yes.

Waldron/Hubbell moved to reconvene the public session at 8:30 pm. Roll Call Vote, Selectman Hubbell- Yes and Selectman Waldron-Yes, Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Waldron/Hubbell 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 Hubbell –Yes and Selectman Waldron-Yes. Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote and the minutes are hereby sealed.

Other Business:

With no further business to come before the Board of Selectmen this Meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Minutes Recorded by Town Administrator-Ken Robichaud

Minutes voted, accepted and approved on November 9th, 2021.