



NORTHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of November 7, 2023

Present: Selectman Jason Durgin, Selectman Ross Cunningham

Town Staff Present: Interim Town Administrator Stephanie Giovannucci, Public Works Director Justin Bernier, Police Chief Mike Hutchinson, and Police Lt. Jesse Colby.

Sel. Durgin reopened the public meeting at 4:00 pm.

2024 Proposed Budget Review

Board reviewed the updated changes to the proposed budget and agreed to level fund Youth Assistance, increase the overtime for Public Works to \$30,000, increase the part-time wages in PW to \$5,000 and tool rental to \$10,000.

ITA Giovannucci confirmed that the curbside trash collection bid requests are not due until November 30th.

ITA Giovannucci requested that the Administrative Assistant position be moved up to April and be full-time instead of part-time. Board agreed to keep it at July, but make it a full-time position.

Board reviewed the projected balance for 2023, and additional expenses to be proposed by the Public Works for a vehicle lift and Police Departments for tasers, guns and 4 computers, additionally it was discussed to pay off one of the leases. ITA Giovannucci stated that she was concerned about cash flow because of the tax rate not being released yet. Board agreed to put this in a warrant article.

Sel. Cunningham informed the Board that the CIP Committee will be looking at opening a Trust Fund for buildings and possibly merging other CIP funds into one.

After review of the budget, Board agreed to wait until the next meeting to fully approved so all Selectmen are here.

Public Input

None

Administration

ITA Giovannucci informed the Board about the delay in the tax rate, stating that NH Department of Revenue will not release the rate until the Water District has had their public hearing on Nov. 28th. Giovannucci expressed frustration because the Water District has no bearing on our tax rate. She added that she will continue fighting with them as a delay in the tax rate to 2024 will be a hardship on the tax payers.

Police Department

Chief Hutchinson stated that he is waiting on quotes for tasers, guns and computers and will bring this to the Board next meeting.

Chief Hutchinson informed the Board that the new cruiser has been received and is on the road.

Chief Hutchinson introduced our newly hired and sworn in Patrolman Ryan Smith.

Board reviewed the Police Department monthly report, with no additional questions.

Public Works Department

Director Bernier requested approval to sell the Ford Taurus 2013 and 2012 and to transfer the Car 15 from the Police Dept to Public Works. Board approved to put the vehicles for sale with a sealed bid and a minimum of \$2500.

Director Bernier informed the Board that we do not have the 6-Wheeler yet and will see if we can push the payment out until next month when we take ownership. Director Bernier stated that at Town Meeting it was approved to expend \$48,000, but the first payment is \$57,096.42, leaving \$9,096.42 to come from the Budget.

Cunningham/Durgin moved to approve the expenditure of \$9,096.42 out of the budget on the condition that we have the truck in possession. **Motion Passed.**

Board reviewed the monthly report for Public Works. Sel. Cunningham asked about accepting construction and demo waste at the Transfer Station. Director Bernier stated that we have looked into it, but it would not be cost effective at this time as C&D would have to go to Casella at \$155 a ton, the household collection is allowed at Wheelabrator at \$85 a ton, so between renting another dumpster and the tonnage cost we wouldn't break even.

New Business

Chief Hutchinson inquired about having one meeting a month during the day and one in the evening, where any major items to come before the Board to be dealt with the evening meetings as not a lot of residents come to the meetings. Board agreed to consider it.

Sel. Durgin stated that we received an email regarding the beaver dams at Sandogardy Pond as they are flooding their property. He added that the Town has been dealing with this for years, and we've been looking at alternatives. Director Bernier stated that we've been trapping beavers at Keasor Rd, Bean Hill Rd, Eptam, and Sandogardy Pond, we've spent about \$2,000 trapping over the last three years. Most of the dams we cannot get to because we do not have the equipment, and we've found that even when we destroy the ones we get to, they are rebuilt the next day. He added that there are multiple dams at Sandogardy Pond, and some are on private property beyond the bridge. Director Bernier added that we caught two beavers this week and that because these are an act of nature, we cannot be held liable for other people's properties, but we continue to do what we can. We've looked into beaver baffles, that allows beavers to dam up, but also allows the water to flow, but again we can't get to them and you're looking upwards of \$10k for each one. ITA Giovannucci added that we've also had requests that we live trap, and that becomes more expensive and when we checked with DES at the time there was no place to release them. Sel. Cunningham asked ITA Giovannucci to respond to the citizen who emailed.

Unfinished Business

Sel. Durgin confirmed that we are still working on the issue at the Hodgdon Rd cemetery as the property owner next door will not let us on their property with heavy equipment. ITA Giovannucci is going to reach out to a few large tree companies that can climb and hopefully crane the logs over to the street. Director Bernier stated that we could shut down Hodgdon Rd while work is being done.

Other Business

None

Public Input

Helen Hardenburg agrees that the delay in taxes is going to be a hardship to the tax payers and asked if we could do an estimated tax bill based on last years rate. Sel. Durgin stated that the first bill is the estimated bill, the December bill is the final bill. ITA Giovannucci stated only the Commissioners of DRA can set the rate, and we'd end up having to send out two billings, if that's even legal.

Review Minutes

Cunningham/Durgin moved to approve the minutes of October 17, 2023. **Motion Passed.**

Sel. Durgin recessed the meeting at 5:12pm.

Sel. Durgin reopened the meeting at 5:16pm

Non-Public Session

Durgin/Cunningham moved to go into Non-Public Session at 5:16 pm under NH RSA 91a;3-11 (A). Roll Call Vote – Sel. Cunningham – Yes, Sel. Durgin – Yes. **Motion Passed.**

Durgin reconvened the public session at 6:38pm.

Durgin/Cunningham moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session because divulgence of the information likely would adversely affect the reputation of any person other than a member of the board or render the proposed action of the board ineffective. Roll call vote, Sel. Cunningham – Yes, Sel. Durgin - Yes. **Motion Passed minutes are hereby sealed.**

There being no other business, Sel. Durgin adjourned the meeting at 6:39 pm

Minutes approved November 21, 2023