



NORTHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of July 25, 2023

Present: Selectman Jason Durgin, Selectman Mark Hubbell, and Selectman Ross Cunningham

Town Staff Present: Town Administrator Ken Robichaud, DPW Director Justin Bernier, Police Chief Mike Hutchinson, Police Lt. Jesse Colby, and Code Enforcement Officer Russ Wheeler.

Others Present: Scott Haskins, Ken Tomlins, Christina Cann, Brian Callnan and Helen Hardenbergh.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by everyone present.

Presentation by Brian Callnan CEO of (CPCNH) Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire.

Mr. Callnan spoke to the Selectmen about establishing a Community Power Agreement with the Town Residents. He also detailed the process that is involved in doing so. It would be an opt-in program, so if a resident already had a 3rd party electricity provider they would have to wait until that contract is finished then they could opt in, to the new program. The Town would have to establish an Energy Committee that would start the process and continue it at which point they would create an Electric Aggregation Plan. Once that is done then the committee would bring the finished product to the Selectmen and then there would be 2 public hearings after that it would be put up for a vote at the March Town Meeting. This is a not-for-profit organization which each Town would have a say in the operation. Currently there are more than 33 municipal towns and cities as well as counties that make up the Coalition. The more members there are the more buying power there is for aggregating KWH.

Sel. Cunningham/Hubbell motioned to move forward with Community Power Coalition and to adopt a Joint Powers Agreement, all in favor, motion passed.

Public Input

Scott Haskins- asked about if there is a contract with Community Power

Administration

T/A Robichaud wanted to discuss Building Permit Market Rates and asked Code Enforcement Officer Russ Wheeler to speak to the Selectmen on this topic. Mr. Wheeler discussed the rates of neighboring towns, and that Northfield was among the lowest rate. Wheeler asked if we could adjust the rates according to the Market. The Selectmen agreed to his request and are as follows. New Construction is \$300.00 plus .10 per sq. ft. Interior/exterior renovation from \$25.00 to \$50.00. An addition from \$25.00 to \$50.00 + .10 sq. ft. New accessory structure, plumbing, electrical all from \$25.00 to \$50.00 and demolition remains at \$25.00.

Cunningham/Hubbell motioned to approve the new building permit rates as presented and to keep demolition at the current rate. All in favor, motion passed.

Administrator Robichaud presented policies that were reviewed at the last meeting and just needed signatures from the Board. The policy's from last meeting were ACH Payments, Code of Ethics, Disposal of Surplus, Police Special Detail. 2 new policies were presented Selectmen guidelines and procedures, and the Cash Management Policy. The Cash Management policy had some changes recommended by the Administrator as they were outdated or changes to the way we do business.

Sel. Hubbell/Cunningham motioned to accept and agreed with the changes to the policies, all in favor, motion passed, and the policies were signed by the Selectmen.

Robichaud brought forward a 1-year extension to the Breezeline Franchise Agreement in that the Town can continue negotiating.

Selectmen Cunningham/Hubbell motioned to extend the Breezeline agreement for 1 year, all in favor, motion passed.

Police Department

Chief Hutchinson informed the Selectboard that he has finally received the SWAT invoice and would like to pay it, but it was not put in the budget.

Sel. Cunningham/Hubbell motioned to approve the payment for SWAT in the amount of \$3,000.00, all in favor, motion passed.

Chief Hutchinson requested that the Selectmen put together a building committee as the Police Department has outlived its useful life of 40 years, and it is no longer conducive to his department as the department has changed over the years. Also, the basement is used as a training area, gym area, locker rooms, evidence room, armory, utilities room and server room. There is only one exit from the basement and the floors are wet and there is moisture in the air. The women's locker room is a makeshift room with no privacy for them. There is no storage space, the department lacks training rooms, and the server and electric room is in the same room as the plumbing room that holds a 100-gallon sewer pump. The Booking room has no cells and detainees are handcuffed to a rail on a bench. There is little office space and no area for witness interviews they are conducted in someone's office. The Town Safety Committee recently did an inspection and found many issues, as well as the Tilton-Northfield Fire Department found violations as well when they walked through the police station. Hutchinson also exclaimed "how are we expected to attract and retain police officers if we do not have adequate space for them to work.

The Selectmen discussed the makeup of the Committee if they were to put one together. After discussion they agreed to have (7) seven members, with Department Heads commenting if requested by the Committee.

Sel. Cunningham/Hubbell motioned to establish a building committee for the purpose of researching and examining all possibilities for the possible construction of new town buildings. The committee must complete their work within (1) one year. All in favor, motion passed.

The Selectmen instructed the Town Administrator to put out a memo to the town residents who may be interested in this committee as well as the energy committee and the CIP committee.

Department of Public Works

Director Bernier brought up discussion on the Pay as you throw bags at the transfer station. He stated that the cost of the dumpster is going up and the Town is not recouping its full cost. It would be more convenient for residents if they were able to use any trash bag, instead of trying to get to the Town Hall or the DPW by certain hours. Bernier would like to raise the price to \$5.00 per bag for any size bag, the resident will not need any special stickers as they do currently. The Selectmen discussed the dumpster if it would be used more than it is currently being used. We don't know at this point; we can do a trial and see if we need a larger one or not.

Sel. Durgin/Cunningham motioned to do away with the purple bags and go to any size bag and to increase the cost to \$5.00 per bag. All were in favor, motion passed.

The Selectmen asked that Director Bernier get with the Town Administrator and come up with a date to switch everything over.

Bernier discussed the amnesty ticket program at the Transfer Station with the Selectmen. It is costing the Town more to do the amnesty tickets as prices have risen over the last few years. There was discussion on this as well as C&D construction debris coming back. The cost to get rid of C&D is about \$155.00 per ton, so we would have to come up with a fair system and one that does not make our employees down there referees. Bernier stated that he would look at prices and come back to the board at a later date.

New Business

Administrator Robichaud brought up that in June the Selectboard approved a new Transfer Station policy with a few minor changes, it appears that after the changes were made the policy did not come back for signatures then. He has it today and would like the selectboard to sign off on it tonight. The Selectmen signed the policy.

Unfinished Business

Selectman Cunningham brought up another policy that was discussed at the last meeting and we were waiting for The Police Chief and Selectmen Hubbell to get together and discuss the issue. That has occurred and Administrator Robichaud made the corrections, and it is ready for the Selectmen approval and signature.

Sel. Cunningham/Durgin motioned to approve 12.1 change in the employee handbook, all in favor, motion passed.

Administrator Robichaud will make the change in the employee manual.

Public Input

Helen Hardenberg- asked why the building committee can't be a part of the CIP Committee.

Ken Tomlins- Asked if some changes could occur now at the Police Station to make it better for the officers.

Scott Haskins-

Review Minutes

Hubbell/Cunningham motioned to accept the minutes of July 11th, 2023 as presented, all in favor, motioned passed.

Chairman Durgin recessed the meeting at 7:29 pm.

Chairman Durgin called the meeting back to order at 7:37 pm.

Non-Public Session

Sel. Durgin made a motion at 7:37 pm to go into nonpublic session under NH RSA 91a; 3-II, (A)(B)(C) seconded by Sel. Hubbell. Roll call vote–Selectman Cunningham–Yes, Selectman Hubbell- Yes. Selectman Durgin – Yes. Motion passed by a 3-0 vote.

Sel. Durgin/Hubbell motioned to reconvene the public session at 8:33 pm. Roll Call Vote, Selectman Cunningham-Yes, and Selectman Hubbell-Yes, Selectman Durgin – Yes. Motion passed by a 3-0 roll call vote.

Sel. Durgin/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 Cunningham–Yes, Selectman Durgin – Yes, and Selectman Hubbell -Yes. Motion passed by a 3-0 roll call vote and the minutes are hereby sealed.

Other Business

Chairman Durgin adjourned the meeting at 8:34 pm.

Minutes recorded by Town Administrator Ken Robichaud

Minutes approved August 8, 2023