



## NORTHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of August 22, 2023

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

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

Sel. Durgin opened the meeting at 4:30 pm. and immediately recessed the meeting to enter into a non-meeting with legal council in the downstairs meeting room.

Sel. Durgin reopened the public meeting at 4:56 pm.

### **Public Input**

None

Sel. Durgin announced that Brian Wickens has received the Employee of the Quarter award for his outstanding work as the Town's mechanic. A certificate of appreciation was given along with a gift card.

### **Administration**

ATA Giovannucci discussed with the Board the changes to the Paid Time Off schedule as it reflects the changes discussed in prior Board meetings.

Sel. Hubbell found issues with giving employees a 300-hour cap which would be reached after 29 years of service. Board discussed further and agreed to lower the cap to 250 hours.

**Cunningham/Durgin** moved to accept the changes to Article 5.3 of the employee handbook with the adjustment of a 250 hour cap instead of 300. **Motion Passed.**

Board agreed that they will continue to review the handbook each year and as issues arise.

ATA Giovannucci presented the Board with a request to upgrade the accounting software. She explained that the software precedes her employment which is now over 15 years and is an old DOS base program, which cannot meet a lot of needs being requested today. ATA Giovannucci gave the Board 4 option to upgrade to.

Sel. Hubbell expressed concern with spending \$36 thousand to convert the software, he stated that he feels companies take advantage of municipalities by jacking up the price. Sel. Hubbell added that he feels we can get a general software and that it does not have to be municipal exclusive, and we can possibly pay for an outside service to do payroll. He added that he also feels that this should be a warrant article.

ATA Giovannucci stated that there is reporting that we must do as a municipality that a general software will not have available. She also added that there is room in the budget, and it will come out of the bottom line as they did in the past to purchase a cruiser, loader, radios, etc. ATA Giovannucci explained how the software will benefit all department and employees.

**Cunningham/Hubbell** moved to table the discussion to allow ATA Giovannucci to gather additional information. **Motion Passed.**

### **Police Department**

Chief Hutchinson apologized for his passion last week, he gets very passionate about his staff and improving his department and feels he may have gotten out of hand.

Chief Hutchinson explained that they have signed up with First Responders Grant to help them with two smaller grants right now and they will be looking at a few other grants moving forward. The only issue they will keep an eye on is if a grant requires town funding.

Chief Hutchinson stated that the department would like to give their old portable radios to the Public Works Department. He confirmed that he spoke to Director Bernier that they will be able to utilize them and agreed to remove any channels pertaining to police and fire.

Sel. Hubbell asked how old the radios are, Chief Hutchinson stated they are very old analog radios. Director Bernier added that they only have two radios right now.

**Cunningham/Hubbell** moved to approve the transfer of portable radios from Police to Public Works. **Motion Passed.**

Chief Hutchinson presented an outline of a federal grant the Belknap County Sheriffs office received to help establish and move forward the IMC Central Hub. He added that we should see a decrease of about \$2,026.17. Chief Hutchinson stated that he spoke to Jon at Cybertron who only had a couple concerns being the firewall, based on the requirements it's okay for now, but we might need to replace it next year. The other concern is that it may slow down the internet speed, but in the worst case, we would have to get a service upgrade.

### **Public Works Department**

Director Bernier presented a spreadsheet outlining the roads that need repair with the conditions based on the meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and feels it's ready to be sent out for quotes. He stated that he added Turnpike Rd to the list. Sel. Cunningham asked that he send it to Mrs. Giovannucci to post on the website.

### **New Business**

ATA Giovannucci informed the Board that the Parks Commission feels we are ready to open the Pines Park. She added that we would need to keep tape around the pavilion and where we are constructing the announcing booth.

**Cunningham/Hubbell** moved to approve the reopening of Pines Park as presented. **Motion Passed.**

ATA Giovannucci stated that the Parks Commission is working with Dragonfly Events and hosting a craft show at Surette Park. She added that they are holding the insurance and the Parks Commission will benefit from the 50/50, raffles, and selling food, plus they have donated \$200 to start with. ATA Giovannucci asked that the board waive the \$750 deposit, as the Parks Commission will be there and can be sure everything is cleaned up.

**Cunningham/Hubbell** moved to waive the \$750 deposit for the use of Surette Park for the event as stated. **Motion Passed.**

ATA Giovannucci informed the Board that her and Director Bernier had to participate in an inspection walk with the State of NH for both Arch Park and Glines Park. She added that the State has found some violations that we need to fix immediately. ATA Giovannucci added that both parks received a Federal Grant many years ago which does not expire, and we are required to meet the requirements of the deed.

ATA Giovannucci reviewed the violations and expected a few letter that will need to be sent by the Board to property owners who have encroached on Town property. Director Bernier informed the Board what has been corrected thus far and the other areas they are still working on.

### **Unfinished Business**

Sel. Durgin stated that the CIP committee is slowly coming together, he added that there have been a couple of interests for the Building Committee as well. ATA Giovannucci stated that she does not believe we've had any interest in the Energy Committee yet. Director Bernier stated he is waiting to hear back from Casella regarding accepting C&D at the Transfer Station.

### **Other Business**

Sel. Hubbell announced that we are entering into negotiations with Comcast to have them come into Northfield and that we will be holding a public hearing at our last meeting in September.

Chief Hutchinson stated that he has spoken to the owner on Scribner Rd, and they have moved their vehicles out of the right-of-way, he will continue to keep an eye on it.

Chief Hutchinson reviewed the special detail request for Deerfield Fair and Hopkinton Fair. He stated that Officer James Lavery would like to use his own 4-wheeler and that he contacted Primex who stated that as long as the Board is okay with it, he will be covered. If the 4-wheeler is deemed to be used in an unsafe manner, then Primex will not cover any liability.

**Cunningham/Durgin** moved to approve the use of the 4-wheeler and special detail for Deerfield Fair.

Sel. Hubbell asked who is responsible for the \$1,000 deductible if something happens. Chief Hutchinson explained that the Town would be just like it's a town vehicle.

Chief Hutchinson also added that the gas Officer Lavery would be using is free to the town and supplied by the fairgrounds. **Motion Passed.**

Lt. Colby informed the Board that he is waiting on a similar email from Primex. He added that Hopkinton Fair covers Workers Comp except in Use of Force circumstances it would need to be covered by the Town.

**Cunningham/Hubbell** moved to approve the special detail with the condition that it is approved through Primex. **Motion Passed.**

Sel. Hubbell asked Chief Hutchinson if we were planning on starting up the explorer program again. Chief Hutchinson stated they can start looking into it.

Sel. Cunningham stated that he is on the School Formula committee and that all the documentation is here at Town Hall if anyone wants to stop by and see it. He added that the current formula is a 70/30 split, and that the student population is not assessed until October 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Review Minutes**

**Cunningham/Hubbell** moved to approve the minutes of August 8, 2023. **Motion Passed.**

### **Public Input**

Ken Tomlin asked if the PTO time includes sick time and vacation time. It was confirmed that they are combined. He suggested separating them out, that way you only have to pay out the vacation time when someone leaves.

Scott Haskins asked the Board to consider a restriction of putting stakes in the ground at Pines Park when someone wants to rent it out for an event due to the irrigation system. Board agreed and asked that ATA Giovannucci add the restriction to the application.

Helen Hardenbergh stated that software is always going to be expensive and the longer you wait it becomes more expensive. She suggested looking at the software and comparing what will work for the town and what will be left out if you go with other options.

Chief Hutchinson asked if there's a timeline in getting the job descriptions finalized. Sel. Cunningham stated that we need to put it on the next agenda.

There being no further public input, Sel. Durgin recessed the meeting at 6:17 pm for a quick break.

Sel. Durgin called the meeting back to order at 6:23 pm

**Non-Public Session**

**Durgin/Hubbell** moved to go into Non-Public Session at 6:24 om under NH RSA 91a;3-11 (A), (C), (D). Roll Call Vote – Sel. Cunningham – Yes, Sel. Hubbell – Yes, Sel. Durgin – Yes. **Motion Passed.**

**Durgin** reconvened the public session at 7:17pm.

**Durgin/Hubbell** 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. Hubbell -Yes, Sel. Durgin - Yes. **Motion Passed minutes are hereby sealed.**

There being no other business, Sel. Durgin adjourned the meeting at 7:18 pm

**Minutes approved September 5, 2023**