



NORTHFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of August 8th, 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, and Police Lt. Jesse Colby.

Others Present: Scott Haskins, Ken Tomlins, Christina Cann, and Jason Gerhard.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by everyone present.

Public Input

None

Administration

T/A Robichaud presented the July Department Head reports for the Selectmen to review. Selectman Cunningham asked about the house on Shaker Road being demolished and if the T/A had any information on this event. Robichaud explained that he received a call from DPW Director Justin Bernier that there was a large amount of smoke on Shaker Road and flames were very high. He stated that he called the Fire Department, and they were in route. When I arrived on scene, the owner of the property had demolished his house and was burning the remains in a 10- foot by 10-foot hole. The owner did not have a permit in his name. The Building Inspector will follow up with the owner once he returns to the state.

Administrator Robichaud brought to the Selectmen for their approval a review by the Towns risk management provider Primex with some of their recommendations. It was mostly liability changes from Primex, and the 3 Department Heads got together and worked on a plan to attract and retain employees, as the Town has only 2 employees with over 5 years of longevity, every other employee has less than 5 years working with the Town. Selectman Hubbell had a concern with a redlined paragraph in the manual and asked for some clarification. The Administrator said that it may be due to moving that into another section of the manual, but that he would reach out to Primex and get that clarified. Another discussion was on what the Department Heads had presented to the Selectmen Paid Time Off (PTO) time. Prior to December 2020, employees received 120 days of vacation and sick time, as well as personal time. A prior board reduced it to 80 days for any new hire hired after 1/1/2021. The T/A just wanted to bring that back to possibly attract staff, Selectman Hubbell did not like that suggestion of getting more than 200 hours PTO time for employees. He stated that Forbes magazine stated that the average employee takes 17 days of vacation a year which is 136 hours. He is comfortable with the 160 hours. Chief Hutchinson discussed having a cap on earning PTO which could be around 400 hours or maybe 350 hours. Selectmen Hubbell continued to push for the 160 hours and 80 hours for new hires, Hutchinson stated that we need to attract and retain staff other towns around us offer more time. Hutchinson and Hubbell continued to go back and forth with the discussion. Selectman Cunningham stated that we are talking about our staff so let's try and be aware of that, and to say that we are a steppingstone for other agencies is not what we should be doing. Cunningham stated that he is ready to move forward with a motion for this proposal but, suggested that we set a cap for PTO and have it for the next meeting, Selectman Durgin stated that he too was ready to move it forward and will wait until next meeting.

Robichaud brought forward a change to the Parking Ordinance as well as the Building Permit Ordinance. He stated that he added the no parking on either side from the bridge on Cross Mill Road to Stonehenge Road. The other changes for the Building Permit is that he removed some language that is no longer applicable to date. **Cunningham/Hubbell motioned to approve and accept the two Ordinances presented as amended, all in favor, motion passes.**

Police Department

Chief Hutchinson presented the updated job descriptions to the Selectmen for their review and approval. Because of the volume of the updated job descriptions, the Selectmen will review these for approval at a later date.

Department of Public Works

Director Bernier brought up a document for joining Mutual Aid for DPW with the State and other Towns. In case of a disaster a Town may request aid from the Mutual Aid agency. The sending Town(s) will keep track of expenses and will send the receiving Town an invoice with all of the expenses. With the type of storms, we have had lately, this will be very helpful now and in the future.

Sel. Cunningham/Hubbell motioned to join the Mutual Aid, all in favor, motion passes.

New Business

Curbside Trash Contract was handed out to the Selectmen with a discussion on the RFP for a new bid to be put out in late October, as the current contract expires on March 31st 2024.

There is a parking issue on Scribner Road that the resident is parking on the edge of the roadway and their property and they are located on a sharp corner. The next-door neighbor above the resident has been having an issue with leaving their driveway as they cannot see oncoming traffic and have had several instances where they have been almost struck by vehicles coming around the corner. The DPW Director would like no parking signs posted, but the Selectmen have asked if the Police could talk with them first. If they do not change that we can come back and look at this again.

Judy Tilton, Director of the Compass Classic School that has just purchased the old Union Sanborn School, addressed the Selectmen about a grant that she is hoping to submit that will help with the schools energy efficiency and help with the installation of LED lighting as well as other energy improvements at the school. Sel. Cunningham/Durgin motioned to sign the letter in support of Compass Classical Schools grant, all In favor, motion passed

Selectman Cunningham spoke about the Committee he is on the Formulary Funding Committee and would like to provide the information that he has gathered from the meetings to be made public and available from the Town Administrators Office if anyone would like to review the documents.

Unfinished Business

Capital Improvements Committee has had some interest and the names will be appointed at a future meeting. Road Condition Work Session is scheduled for Friday August 18th at 9 am.

Building Committee and Energy Committee are still waiting on volunteers.

C&D Transfer Station- meeting scheduled.

Community Power- waiting on an agreement

Other Business-

Police Officers working the fairs as security- Chief Hutchinson brought up an issue with when officers work fair details they are working for the Town in which the fair is located under a mutual aid agreement. There still is some confusion on who will be responsible for the officers workers compensation. The Chief will bring it back up again when he gets more information.

Public Input

Scott Haskins- is looking to have further discussions on the Town of Northfield taking on the Towns solid waste by purchasing a trash truck and doing it ourselves.

Jason Gerhard- would like to have the costs of converting the transfer station over to take solid waste as well as the cost of solid waste removal in the future.

Christina Cann- would like to know when the bath house will reopen at Sandogardy Pond.

Ken Tomlins- who takes care of the grass removal on the sidewalks from exit 19 to Summer Street.

Review Minutes

Cunningham/Hubbell motioned to accept the minutes of July 25, 2023 as presented, all in favor, motioned passed.

Chairman Durgin recessed the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Chairman Durgin called the meeting back to order at 6:36 pm.

Non-Public Session

Sel. Durgin made a motion at 6:36 pm to go into nonpublic session under NH RSA 91a; 3-II, (A)(C)(L) 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 7:15 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 Durgin – Yes, and Selectman Hubbell -Yes. Motion passed by a 3-0 roll call vote and the minutes are hereby sealed.

Other Business

Selectman Cunningham had to leave the meeting at 7:11 pm

Chairman Durgin adjourned the meeting at 7:18 pm.

Minutes recorded by Town Administrator Ken Robichaud

Minutes approved August 22, 2023