

**Town of Northumberland  
Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
Date: Monday, February 5th, 2018  
Place: Selectmen Meeting Room – 10 Station Square  
Time: 6:00 P.M.  
Draft Copy**

Board Members present: Michael Phillips, Jim Weagle, Chris Wheelock  
Others: Glenn Cassady, Nancy Mellow, Julie Boisselle, Al Rossetto, Melinda Kennett, Norm Cotter, Jim Gibson, Sam Oakes, Joseph Kennett, Rebecca St. Cyr – Recorder

**1. Chairman opens the meeting:**

J. Weagle opened the meeting at 6:00 pm

**2. Acceptance of Minutes:**

Motion to approve the January 16, 2018 minutes by: M. Phillips  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

**3. Selectmen Business:**

- a. Department Head Business: Highway and Water/Sewer  
Glenn Cassady – Highway

Cassady said he will be looking closer at the 2018 budget with the new software. The overtime, we were in approx. 15 times in January, due to the weather. In January we used 3 loads - 95 tons of salt, used 1 load to date in Feb. \$8,800 is the January cost. Sand – used 18 loads, 150 yards.

Started cold patching, some stayed, and some has blown back out of the holes. We used 1/2 ton, which cost \$370.

Randy Potter is working on the 2006, he found 2 leaves broke in the rear springs. We will be getting rid of it, so he only replaced the leaves.

Wood – we've used approx. 6 cords in the last 7 weeks. The new boiler – the last delivery of oil was only 44 gallons, which is a big improvement.

Today, the sander stopped working. The feeder chain broke, it split the gear in the gear box, sheared the keyway; it ruined the shaft and gear. The cost to repair is \$1800 - \$2000, Cassady is hoping the parts are delivered this week.

We have had a parking issue in the municipal parking lot, there are 5 or 6 tenants that live in the area. Becky Craggy is working with the Chief, he will be getting the plate #'s and a copy of the parking ordinance will be sent to them.

Cassady asked about the position appointments, J. Weagle said it's done after Town Meeting.

M. Phillips – Becky Craggy hasn't had a chance to look at the overtime, so we are going with what we have. We want to make sure that the winter policy we have is clear. There was a call out at 1:30 am, due to a resident not being able to get up the hill. When Cassidy got in there was 6" of heavy wet snow, but Tom Covell had been down through, so the individual could get home. It took him longer to get it cleaned up then going out for less snow.

M. Phillips - We set a salt budget of \$20,000, last year but the expense rose to approx. \$29,000. Cassidy said the price has dropped and he's comfortable with the #'s at this time.

N. Cotter asked about the plowing; J. Weagle explained that we are having an issue with the crew getting called out for 1" of snow, so we are giving Cassidy the option to decide when they need to go out. Cassidy further discussed.

Announcement of EPA Recognition Award received for Operation/Maintenance  
J. Weagle – the W/S team received an award for Operation Maintenance.  
Reggie Charron went down to the award ceremony. Weagle read a note of congratulations from Barry and Dennis Normandeau to Reggie Charron.

#### Reggie Charron – W/S

A resident had someone come in to help her due to a problem with the washing machine. They broke the shut off valve. She was out of water for a couple of days. She was great to work with and understood the problem. It had to be dug up to repair; the frost was approx. 2 - 4 ft down.

The bridge – we are making it through, but when the line was connected to the line on Reservoir Rd. we pressure tested it, there was a pump that was gone, and we found a very slight leak in the line. It's been fixed and will pressure test it tomorrow. They know that we are anxious to get this done. We are trying to do the best we can working with the tax payers. 99.9% are good, some are not. Paul Cranes crew had a 55-gal drum of water that needed to be dumped or it would freeze, it was dumped in our right of way, but there was an individual that complained. When they were digging to find the leak, they had to dig up the line, the individual complained about the noise because he works nights and was trying to sleep.

Keith and Winston have been busy changing out the meters. We ordered more this week. Charron put the Semon report together; all the work that has been done is phenomenal. For example - the pumps on Brooklyn St. were running 24 hrs/day and now are running less than 1 hr/day (each). Charron is happy with all the improvements that have been done.

The pipe that runs under the bridge is weeping and is creating a pillar of ice underneath the bridge. Charron is watching it closely. When the line is shutdown it will be drained.

- b. Discussion of water/sewer rate – follow up – the quarterly demand fees –  
Water - Residential – \$20.00; Commercial - \$50.00; Industrial - \$75.00  
Sewer – Residential - \$20.00; Commercial - \$50.00; Industrial - \$75.00
- c. Discussion Solar Exemption (MP) – M. Phillips was asked by residents on Thompson Rd. if the Town would consider passing a Solar Exemption. As subsequent step, he is asking the Board to consider putting it on the Warrant. Phillips read a proposed warrant (based on a sample warrant on the DRA website) with a cap of \$10,000. He would like to give the voters a chance to consider it. In following up with LGC, this is for person’s owing real property (meaning they get a tax bill), equipped with a solar energy system as defined in RSA 7261. The key words are: a system which provides electricity for a building by the use of solar panels. It’s for off-grid situations.

C. Wheelock expressed his concern. He spoke with residents that have put in systems, for an average home the cost is approx. \$25,000; they are given a \$10,000 0% interest loan, once it’s installed they get \$2500 from Eversource; (which is no longer) when they file their income taxes, they get 30% back. Wheelock further discussed the costs and loan process. It ends up being approx. \$80.00/month payment on a \$15,000 loan. The tax payers and electrical users are already paying 40% for them to put the system in. Phillips would like to see it discussed and voted on at Town Meeting.

Discussion ensued re: building credits through the electricity being generated and using the credits in the winter or as needed. Phillips feels the language supports those that pay more for their power. A. Rossetto thought the RSA covered systems like his, heaters – he agrees with Chris but will take the credit. The Board agreed to put it in the Warrant.

- d. Discussion detailing CRF spending intent in Warrant Articles (MP) - the current budget represents a \$174,440 increase over last years budget, which is a possible \$1.56 tax impact. We have looked for ways to make cuts, J. Weagle said it will probably stay where it is because we are in a re-val year and we stream lining things that should have been done before, updating software to make things easier. Phillips wrote up an analysis of the Police budget, but he hasn’t heard back from the Chief yet. Phillips reviewed the manning and changes that might be made. Phillips doesn’t have a proposal for cuts.

J. Weagle said we are now a 1 check Town; we are steam lining some of the banking functions regarding direct deposit for employees.

Phillips said we have several items in the warrant – new police cruiser, new truck for W/S and plans at the Transfer Station. We have often written the warrants where we request funds to put into the CRF’s. There are 4 CRF’s – 1) Paving/Highway - \$75,000; 2) Police Cruiser Fund - \$15,000; 3) Public Works Equipment Fund - \$25,000; 4) Municipal Building Fund - \$15,000. We have also written warrants that say we have permission to expend funds for items. Phillips wants to tell people that we are doing this, but it’s like

double approving. The Warrant Article would list the 4 CRF's all in one article J. Tierney suggested asking Tammy – M. Phillips said she is on board with this.

What it used to be, was raising all the money at once for an item. The CRF is specifically for an item. C. Wheelock explained we put money into these funds yearly. We ask for the money and then we ask if we can spend it, but we already have permission to expend the funds. We are trying to clean up the warrant. If the voters don't want us to buy a new cruiser (for example) then they don't approve the money. M. Phillips further discussed CRF's.

N. Merrow commented if the money isn't there, then you can't buy a cruiser.

- e. Discussion re Calculation of Running Water Program – R. Charron said we have an individual that was upset because he wasn't getting a refund. (He has a pool) – R. Charron further discussed the calculation. Charron is looking at getting rid of the issue. We are looking at doing something different with this resident, he is on a dead-end street and has a meter pit. It is an engineering problem because of ledge. We have been changing the one that we can, in his case we are looking at doing that. Currently there are 4 on the RWP.
- f. Complete discussion, motion on Snowmobile Trail Permission from previous meeting.

Motion to sign the permission by M. Phillips  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

C. Wheelock asked if it should have an open end so we are not approving it yearly; J. Weagle said we have had it set up that way just in case anything comes up. N. Merrow asked about the snow machine/atv's getting to the Down Home Hotel; further discussed where the trail goes.

- g. Discussion of interest in District Representatives for AVRRDD - Primary and alternate. A. Rossetto is still interested, M. Phillips is an alternate. We need a 2<sup>nd</sup> alternate, if anyone is interested, let Becky Craggy know at the Town Office.
- h. Discussion of elected Auditor article on Warrant – M. Phillips - we are required to hire outside auditors. Kim Deblois was doing it, we can take it off the ballot next year; it will be a write in for this year.

Motion to eliminate the Auditor article for 2019 by: C. Wheelock  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: M. Phillips, All in Favor 3-0

- i. Discussion salary, benefits, hours for elected officials – M. Phillips – we have learned that we cannot meet in Non-Public session with an elected official to discuss salary and benefits. The elected official's salary is included in the operating budget. One of the Towns elected positions is the Town Clerk/Tax

Collector, which is salaried. The lawyers advise if any of the elected positions are up for a raise it should be a separate article in the Warrant.

M. Kennett said it came up in 2008 – J. Tierney worked on getting this corrected. LGC said it's part of the operating budget and doesn't have to be on the warrant. The previous Town Clerk was based on a 45-hour salary, M. Kennett further discussed, the salary can be set up in many ways; her salary has been based on 40 hours with anything over 40 as comp time.

C. Wheelock said we understand the difference is because she is elected and not appointed. Kennett said she didn't ask for a raise, she has comp time that she can't use, she just wants to be paid for the work that she does. When she asked about this in the budget, she was told it was all set and they were going to start paying her an extra 5 hours per week. She didn't receive it and asked J. Weagle about it. He said it does have to get voted on at Town Meeting.

The only benefit of her taking the comp time; gives Elaine Gray overtime. M. Phillips – it's confusing when you have hours and salary. Whether we use the language of 40 or 45 hrs - your current salary is \$44,200; if the salary goes up, it's a raise. He is aware that Kennett works more hours some weeks and gets things that the others don't because she is elected.

J. Boisselle asked if the previous Town Clerks salary was based on 45 hours, why was it changed? Kennett said it was changed before this Boards time. We had a Town Manager at the time and the Chairperson of the Select Board changed it. J. Weagle said he made a mistake with it; the Deputy agrees that it should be based on 45 hours. Boisselle feels it needs to go to Town Meeting. In her opinion – by giving her the salary based on 5 extra hours, she wouldn't consider it a raise, she would consider it paying what she works per hour.

C. Wheelock discussed the definition of salary; his salary is based on 50 hours, he typically works 55 – 60 hours and the salary doesn't change. If you have an appt – you go. His point is that you work when you need to, to get the work done. Paying 40 or 45 hours is irrelevant, the number is based on what we pay. If it goes to 45 hours, the comp time goes away.

M. Kennett said she doesn't punch a clock but does everything as the other employees do.

Wheelock said the options that we were given are:

1. We can submit a Warrant to include all the elected officials) – it's part of the operating budget but voted on separately so everyone knows where the money goes.
2. M. Kennett could put in a petitioned Warrant article for herself.

J. Tierney said once it's in the operating budget it can't be touched, part of the problem when talking about salaries for Min and others, they were hourly people that were put on salary to avoid overtime. The Town discovered you

can't do that. Min's position should never have been broken down into hours – it's salary. Min doesn't need anyone's permission to work an extra 5 hours per week. C. Wheelock asked if we need to put X number of dollars into the budget. M. Phillips said one of the lawyers said if there is a raise it should be part of the warrant – there is a distinction between a recurring salary and a raise. He reviewed other towns Town Clerk salaries; Lancaster - \$57,000; Campton - \$53,000; Bristol - \$58,000. There is some sensitivity regarding the difference in "hourly" rates of other employees. Another factor that was brought up – is a new RSA for 2017 that references overtime for salaried employees that make less than \$47,000. Phillips further discussed.

M. Kennett fills out a time slip, gets comp time and puts in for vacation just like everyone else. M. Phillips feels we need to talk about paying down the comp time and/or eliminating it.

N. Merrow agrees with C. Wheelock, when she was salaried, she was paid based on the job description. She got paid for what she did regardless of the hours worked. Maybe we need to review the position and set the salary based on that. Wheelock said the thing that changes this is, he could go in and negotiate but Min's position needs to be done in public. J. Weagle said we don't have any say over her department, the voters elect.

J. Boisselle asked Phillips to read the RSA – "Anyone making less than \$47,000 is entitled to overtime to get the job done. M. Phillips reviewed the business hours, some towns limit the hours. Min averages 43 hours per week; as a baseline the 43 hours would be an approx. \$48,000 salary. Discussed paying out some or all, of the comp time. C. Wheelock – when the salary increases – it needs to be in a warrant article (the lawyer made that very clear). If we choose to pay a portion of the comp time – that would need to be in there. These are things that we need to look at when we talk about this.

If she chooses not to run or retire – the \$48,000 could be too much for a new person. She doesn't want to get paid out for the comp time. M. Phillips said when an employee leaves, we are required to pay them; we stopped it with everyone else. J. Boisselle said roughly Min gets \$44,000 – if we decide to pay her for the comp time, would it add up to the \$3,500.

M Phillips said if the comp time is paid out, she would no longer get the comp time. J. Tierney commented that the main problem is – do you (the Board) want to put the warrant article in or have her put it in. The voters will take it from there. Phillips is willing to put it in. J. Tierney recommended a flat dollar amount that's divisible by 52.

G. Cassady - the salary can be determined based on the qualifications. The salary actually gets set at Town Meeting. Discussion ensued regarding the warrant article, getting elected to the position, etc. M. Phillips said the way we are handling it in the current operation budget – the wage is there. If there is an increase, there will be a separate warrant article. J. Tierney said comp time

was eliminated and the Board said overtime would be paid. He suggested asking LGC if the RSA regarding overtime applies to Government employees.

Motion to put forward a warrant article raising the salary of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector to \$48,100 by: M. Phillips  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

J. Tierney said in the warrant article, you need to explain everything; the retirement, FICA, etc. to show what the total cost to the Town is. C. Wheelock – commented that if it's been wrong, we need to correct it.

J. Kennett asked if the comp time goes into the warrant. C. Wheelock said we may have to look at it closer, we want to be sure it's correct. J. Weagle explained the reason why we got rid of the comp time. J. Boisselle agrees with M. Phillips and feels M. Kennett should be paid for it.

- j. Discussion window estimate for GGB Facility – This is for the big windows at the Town office, we want to get them replaced with smaller ones, which will provide more privacy.
  1. Lionel Cloutier - \$4,670.00
  2. Brian Meunier - \$8,939.84

Motion to approve the bid from Lionel Cloutier by: M. Phillips,  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: C. Wheelock

This will come out of the operating budget because there are some bigger goals that we want to use the CRF for. J. Tierney reviewed.

All in Favor 3-0

M. Phillips reviewed what J. Tierney referred to, there is potential for a \$2.58 increase in Town tax rate in 2018. A \$3.44 increase in the school rate for 2018 if the School doesn't increase their budget. J. Tierney said the school does not have to give the money back; the State allowed them to put it in an unreserved fund, which can't be spent. The school gets 100% of its taxes; the Town does not. We are running approx. 35% - 40% of the taxes – we are shorted by 20% – 25%.

There is potential for a \$6.00 increase in the tax rate – it's an increase but not over where we were last year. We need to do a good job in March explaining that. We thought it was best to give back if we could.

- k. Discussion of engineering line for the water budget – M. Phillips said we have \$10,000 on the engineering line; with \$25,000 we can get an updated engineering prospective report so that we can pursue the Exxon money. The \$10,000 will remain; there will be an extra \$12,000 add in Water and \$13,000 for Sewer. Exxon will be starting the process in June. The Exxon money will only pay for the water side. J. Weagle doesn't have all the details to speak

more about it, but Robin Irving went into it conservatively. J. Tierney suggested finding out if it will cover the Sewer also, before Town Meeting.

M. Phillips said we heard from a person at the USDA that we can now spend the short-lived assets that they required us to set aside. He asked if we can utilize the CFR's that we have so that we could see what we are building up. J. Weagle thought we should hold off for a year, we have others that are telling us something different. The funds will be there – Tammy and Michelle agree that we should go with the CRF's.

#### **4. Applications/Permits and Warrants:**

- a. Meeting Room Use Applications (4)
  1. Birthday party – Rejean Bissonnette Feb 10, - \$25.00 fee.  
Motion to approve by: M. Phillips, 2<sup>nd</sup> by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0
  2. Coos County Law Enforcement - Jennifer L. - February 15, 2018  
Motion to approve by: M. Phillips, 2<sup>nd</sup> by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0
  2. Girl Scouts – Non-profit – Feb 24, 2018 – for the cookies  
Motion to approve by: M. Phillips, 2<sup>nd</sup> by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0
  3. Vendor Fair – March 31, 2018 – 10 am – 2 pm – Vendor Fair - \$25.00 fee  
Motion to approve by: M. Phillips, 2<sup>nd</sup> by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0
- b. Building Permit (1)
  1. Carl and Michelle Ladd, West St, interior renovations.  
Motion to approve by: M. Phillips, 2<sup>nd</sup> by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

#### **5. Public Matters To Be Addressed By The Board:**

- a. Holiday Announcement - Presidents Day – 2/19 – Town office is closed – the next regular Selectmen meeting will be on 2/20.
- b. Public Hearing Announcement for Budget/Warrant – 2/12 – if an extra day is needed – it will be on 2/14. The School budget hearing is on 2/13

#### **6. Non-Public Session: (Pursuant to RSA'S 91-A:3,II (a), (c) :**

Motion to go into Non-Public Session by: M. Phillips  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

Into Non-Public Session at 8:09 PM

Motion to adjourn the Non-Public session by: M. Phillips  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

Non-Public Session adjourned at 8:48 pm

Into Regular session at 8:48 pm a legal matter and

During Non-Public session the Board discussed legal matters and personnel matters.

**7. Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn by: M. Phillips  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm

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