

**Town of Northumberland
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
Date: Tuesday, January 16th, 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 present: Sam Oakes, Jim Gibson, Winston Hawes, Julie Boisselle, Min Kennett, Joseph Kennett, Nancy Merrow, Al Rossetto, Ted Burns and Club Member, Norm Cotter, Pete Marshall, Robin Irving, Dennis Croteau, Dereck Croteau, Rebecca St. Cyr – Recorder

1. Chairman opens the meeting:

J. Weagle opened the meeting at 6:00 pm

2. Acceptance of Minutes:

Motion to accept the January 2, 2018 minutes by: M. Phillips
2nd by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

3. Selectmen Business:

a. Department Head Business: Ambulance/Police Depts.

Jim Gibson – EMS Chiefs Report – 01/16/2018

1. 2018 we have had 30 calls to date.
2 transfer accepted, 3 transfers declined YTD
2. 2017 there were 30 calls for the same time period.
3 transfers accepted, 2 transfers declined YTD
3. We are currently even with last year's numbers (30). To date we had to deny (3 transfers) because of inadequate personnel/unavailable resources.
4. We closed out 2017 with 650 calls. We accepted 69 transfers in 2017 also.
5. Comstar report: due to the end of the year closing and holidays, the Comstar report will be out next week. No closing numbers to report for 2017 and no received billing for 2018 also. *Received an email, the report will be in on Friday.*

Gibson said they (Comstar) hold off submitting invoices until deductibles are met. Looking at the way things are trending, we may have a shortfall in revenue (\$20,000 - \$40,000) this year due to Medicaid not being extended and low reimbursement rates from the Affordable Health Care.

6. Stark and Bloomfield EMS coverage contracts are ready to be signed for 2018.
7. Any thoughts on getting a building committee meeting going and starting to plan out a building design for future use. *Gibson asked if we can get a committee together to start working on this, M. Phillips has suggested getting this started also.*

Chief Pelletier – Police Department

Dec 1, 2017 – present -

Several criminal investigations, 2 arrests, 3 accidents, he didn't have the statistics for MV stops available.

He was to check in with DOT to see if they have a list of people on call after hours. Chief Pelletier said the DOT office does have a list and the process is in place. M. Phillips said we talked about ordering magnets and/or using other processes to inform people who and where to call. J. Weagle has sent out for a quote, but hasn't received it back yet.

J. Weagle will follow up with Tammy at the DOT office to be sure the phone numbers are up to date.

- b. Discussion/setting of Public Hearing for 2018 Budget/Warrant
The last day for petitioned warrant articles is Feb 6th, we have a 10-day period for the hearings. February 12th and February 14th (if needed) works for the Board. M. Phillips thinks we need another work session to catch up on the numbers; is it possible this week on Thursday? R. Irving said she is asking for a Public Hearing, she is asking for the 29th or 30th. Maybe the budget work session can be combined with the Public Hearing. The Public Hearing will be scheduled for the January 29 at 6:00 pm. The School budget hearing is on February 13th.
- c. Review/discussion/decision of Town Report Bids received
 1. Smith & Town Printers – for 600 copies, \$1,728
 2. Liebel Printing - \$2,515

Motion to accept the bid from Smith & Town by: M. Phillips
2nd by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

A reminder will be sent to Department Heads to get their reports in.

- d. Set public hearing for acceptance of unanticipated funds from DES for Reservoir Road - January 29, 2018 at 6:00 pm.
- e. Discussion/decision of sewer rate and billing frequency

Sewer – proposing a \$.25 increase, which is what we planned to do for the Feds in the first quarter - 2018. The increase is on the Sewer only. The current rates: Sewer - \$7.00; Water – \$5.25.

M. Phillips discussed the spreadsheets from R. Irving. She worked with the University of SC on the spread sheets regarding rate structuring. Based on the information, Irving said if we just increase by \$.25 each year, we are never going to get where we need to be. At \$.25 per year, the percentage gets lower and lower. She looked at a 10-year block, we would need to make up \$3.00 per year. She discussed looking at what the fixed costs are; then look at fixed income and then look at increasing the rates. To make up for our operating budget, we need to add \$3.67 per year for 10 years. Nationally we are very low; State wide we are lower but comparable to smaller towns who are facing the same issues.

Al Rossetto – the water infrastructure is owned by the Town, the subset of the residents in Town use it and the rest of us just pay for it with no benefits. \$3.00 per year sounds like a lot of money. It makes sense to look at other options so that those that don't use it don't have to subsidize it. R. Irving said one of the options she has considered is solar. Peterborough put up solar panels that run their entire system. She has been talking with the Community Development Finance Authority about doing that. Bob Chapman is willing to have them put on his land; Irving further discussed. They are restructuring under the current administration to make it a loan; she is trying to get it in under a grant.

C. Wheelock said that Lancaster has solar panels; possibly we could put them down on the meadow by the lagoons. Phillips – our W/S rates are paying 71% of the budget for the W/S Dept. R. Irving said based on the 2016 #'s on the affordability graph, yes 29% is being paid beyond the rates. Phillips - every tax payer contributes to the payment of bonds, we are now down for a reserve payment (as a condition of the bonds) do those 2 items make up the 29%? Irving and the Board discussed said what isn't paid for out of the W/S account the bond payments, reserves, etc. C. Wheelock – 71% is paying for W/S – if we get to the point where everyone is paying their own. The more we increase the budget, the more the rates go up. There is a portion of the voters that might vote yes. W. Hawes said Al pays a portion through the assessment of his well and septic system – Min Kennett filters the money into the W/S accounts.

Rossetto feels we are missing the depreciation number; the system is depreciating yearly, and the tax payers pay for the repairs through bonds, etc. We just finished step 1 of 7 phases, when it was first approached there was \$25,000,000 series within the 7 phases. If we go through all those steps, we could have \$30,000,000 - \$40,000,000 in infrastructure repairs. It seems the increases should be more aggressive.

M. Phillips doesn't see a transfer of funds from the General Fund into the W/S accounts. M. Kennett takes all the money brought in and prepares a PDIP. These are questions for Becky Craggy. The Enterprise account maybe where the funds are transferred to. J. Weagle said we wanted to wait and see what would

happen with the mill, that's why we decided on \$.25 for Sewer. The Board reviewed the \$ impact of the increase.

Phillips suggested increasing the Sewer by \$.50 (\$7.50); and \$.25 (\$5.50) on the Water – per billing cycle. The average annual increase would be approx. \$48.00

Demand fees - Industrial is \$75.00 – J. Weagle feels it should be \$100.00 per qtr. There are approx. 6 units charged on the mill property. All the demand fees could be increased.

C. Wheelock discussed the billing frequency; he talked with R. Charron and he recommended leaving it at 4 times/year. We are starting to get the system under control reading the meters 4 times per year. Not everyone prepares and budgets, those that do will have to come up with a big check twice/year and those that don't set it up the way they want (with limitations). M. Phillips discussed the idea of billing 2/year; he hasn't seen a number for the cost per billing. Lancaster, Whitefield, Littleton – bill 2/year. M. Kennett said bigger towns that bill quarterly have the money and manpower to handle.

W. Hawes reviewed the history with reading the meters; in those days there was a huge deficit between the water and sewer; one of the tools that got us to where we are today is being out there, reading the meters, tightening the system, etc. He feels the trade off on the billing 2 vs 4 times per year is not worthy of what we save by. We are trading out the old meters with new ones, when completely in place, we can read it as many times as needed. Quarterly is recommended, as it gives us the opportunity to find issues that exist. It could be 3 years before the whole Town is done. In 2007 when we started reading meters; people were happy to get a quarterly bill, it was easy for them to cover. Phillips said we could encourage residents to come in and pay monthly. Further discussed the numbers and comparing quarterly.

N. Merrow said as a customer, she likes the quarterly bill; looking at some of the elder customers – it's hard for them to cover it. She knows what is used quarterly, if there is a spike it can be caught before there is a bigger problem. M. Kennett said we would save on postage and supplies by going to 2/year, quarterly presents a manpower issue. The frequency of billing can be looked at again, it would be a change. C. Wheelock would like to know what the costs savings are, which includes the manpower hours. All costs should be added into it, before a decision is made on the billing frequency.

Motion to increase the Water rate \$.25 (\$5.50);
Sewer rate by \$.50 (\$7.50) by: M. Phillips
2nd by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

The demand fee will be discussed further at another time.

- f. Review/discussion/decision of letters received from appointed officials

Each of the following have submitted a letter of interest.

Samantha Canton – Rec. Committee; Nicole McMann - Rec. Committee, Gloria Brisson - Planning Board; Elaine Gray - Alternate – Planning Board; Joseph Kennett – Zoning Board, Brian Newton – Conservation Commission.

Motion to accept/appoint as shown above by: M. Phillips
2nd by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

- g. Cash Summary Report - Dec. 2017 – M. Phillips – not reconciled. Beginning balance - \$1,568,000; Revenues - \$961,000; Expenses - payroll, etc. – \$1,103,000 (includes school payment of \$150,000 and grants); Ending balance - \$1,424,000. Since then, we paid off the TAN; there are still some 2nd issue taxes coming in. We can anticipate getting back into the TAN later this year.

A. Rossetto reviewed the Actual and Anticipated Revenues (page 14) in the Town Report, the line for the School – Reimbursed is empty. J. Weagle said the payment has gone down and further reviewed. C. Wheelock said as explained a couple meetings ago, per Tammy Letson, the last payment is (June) from the Town to the school, then the cleanup starts. C. Wheelock will share the email from Tammy with whoever wants to know.

- h. Annual Snowmobile Trail Permission – Groveton Trailblazers – none of the Groveton Trailblazers were here. J. Weagle said typically we approve for 1 year. and then re-visit.

Motion to continue the Annual – this motion wasn't moved.

Before proceeding - N. Merrow asked if there was an issue with the pipe under the bridge. C. Wheelock discussed, there is a crack in the pipe; there are ideas for fixing, but there are costs associated with them. P&R Excavating is working on Reservoir Road. As of today, they are approx. ½ way; it should be finished up by the end of next week. That will discontinue the need to use the pipe under the bridge. Whether it breaks, or we repair – it would need to be shut down. Discussion ensued regarding the situation with the pipe.

The Bobcat is no longer going over it due to the vibrations. If we need to do an emergency fix, we could do a wet tap and go up the hill to the old reservoir. Currently the snowmobiles are still using it. C. Wheelock said the bridge is in rough shape underneath.

Ted Burns, Trail Administrator of North Country ATV Club has been asked to come to the Select Board for support to request additional street access. They would like a letter a support for use from the pool to the moose crossing sign beyond the Armstrong-Charron funeral home. Basically 120 yards for access to MOM's. It's all within a reduced speed zone, which is safer and more logistic. Every year the State is sending him to get permission for using the Route 3 Bridge – they have gotten a letter of support from the Board 3 times, Burns further discussed.

Motion that we grant the extension on Route 3 to MOM's as

requested by: C. Wheelock, 2nd by: M. Phillips, All in Favor 3-0

C. Wheelock has always understood that the State didn't want the ATV's on the Route 3 bridge and further discussed. J. Weagle said the State DOT told us they didn't want that bridge used because it's a dangerous intersection. We countered with the snow machines crossing Route 3. Ted Burns said the last time he spoke with Phil, he wanted to close this access on October 31 because the Trails Bureau said the trails close October 31. Burns said the trail system in No. Stratford doesn't close, except during mud season. Our biggest event is the ATV poker run at the end of the month.

J. Boisselle asked if the streets in Berlin are all city or State? J. Weagle discussed. C. Wheelock asked if any of the trails run over the Trailblazers trails. Burns said we have permission from the land owners to travel on the trails. The Trails Bureau pulled the plug on the Route 3 crossing. State trails close on 10/31, we are not on State trails.

It's in the Town's ordinance that the trails close on 10/31. Wheelock asked if we can issue them a temporary special event permit. J. Weagle suggested checking with Counsel. J. Boisselle said a Public Hearing to change the ordinance could be scheduled for next week to vote and then they would have it for the weekend after. T. Burns said this would probably just be a letter of support to the State and further discussed

Motion to send a letter of support for use of the Route 3
Bridge by: C. Wheelock
2nd by: J. Weagle, 2 in Favor, 1 Against

A. Rossetto said if you open the ordinance that means we have ATV's year-round. Page Hill is not part of the North Country ATV trail system. That club closes in the winter. Weagle said we can check with Counsel. The Public Hearing will be scheduled for January 24th.

Motion to schedule a Public Hearing for January 24th to revise the ordinance by: C. Wheelock, 2nd by: J. Weagle, 2 in Favor, 1 Against

Motion to do a special event permit for Jan 26th, 27th & 28th for ATV access on Main St., Station Square & Mechanic St., by: C. Wheelock
2nd by: J. Weagle, 2 in Favor, 1 Against

Discussion ensued regarding exactly what they need for access on Jan 26, 27, & 28th.

4. Applications/Permits and Warrants:

- a. Meeting Room Use Application -
Go Solar New England – 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm 2/8/18; 3/6/18 and 4/5/18. The fee is \$25.00 per meeting.

Motion to approve at \$25.00 per meeting by: M. Phillips
2nd by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

b. Intent to Cut

1. Map 256, Lot 22 – Lost Nation Rd. Steve Smith. J. Weagle reviewed the cut.
Motion to approve by: M. Phillips, 2nd by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

c. Current Use Application

1. Larry & Gail Guile – Lot 5 – 36 acres.
Motion to approve by: M. Phillips, 2nd by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

d. Abatement-Water (1)

1. Harold and Nancy Marshall - \$26.25
Motion to approve by: M. Phillips, 2nd by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

5. Public Matters To Be Addressed By The Board:

- a. A. Rossetto said the Planning Board narrowly passed sending a recommendation for a warrant article for Renewable Energy to the Select Board. If there is a "petitioned article put in, it could cost the Town money. The abatement would save him approx. \$50.00 per year on taxes. Because he had the money to put the system in, he would make more money if the Town approves the abatement. The net metering is profitable to those that can afford to put these systems in. If a petitioned warrant article is for 100% abatement, he would get his \$50.00 – those that spent \$40,000+ or commercial establishments would get the total evaluation of that asset (which is income producing) abated off the tax rolls, which could be detrimental to the Town. M. Phillips had suggested a warrant article that limited the abatement to a dollar value. Rossetto further discussed.
- b. A. Rossetto discussed email from Sharon Gauthier at AVR RD regarding problems at the recycling center. In the pictures, a plastic bag was mixed in with the cardboard, the recycling coming in is in pitiful condition. C. Wheelock said we would address it differently depending on what it was. To recycle cardboard, it needs to be very clean. C. Wheelock plans to talk to Glenn Cassady and Brian Hurlburt about the issue. Rossetto will double check with Sharon Gauthier and send an email to C. Wheelock. Rossetto said it makes us look bad and it could cause us problems in the future if AVR RD doesn't want our waste.

M. Phillips said there is a plan in the budget to cover the bays, put in sorting tables and have a part-time position on Saturday's. The problem is how it's dumped into the bins; we want to separate our trash the best that we can. Rossetto will let AVR RD know that we are doing what we can to work on it and feels they will work with us.

N. Cotter asked if we are giving them cardboard and they get money for it? C. Wheelock said ideally, we want it to be as clean as possible. Rossetto said we

save on tipping fees. J. Weagle said we get billed, which is reduced based on the recyclables that we give them.

W. Hawes explained the sorting, sales, fees, etc. We are a member community with AVRRD, if we wanted to get out, a notice is required and there are costs involved.

- c. N. Merrow – On the actual budget and expenses, for the Rec Department, does it include the insurance for the diving board? J. Weagle explained the warrant article was for the specific year. Merrow said it didn't read that way, the intent when the meeting was held, was that it would be for that year and it read that it would be paid for by anything but Town appropriations. Merrow said it's been indirectly appropriated and should not be paid by Town expenses. Phillips was not aware that it was being added into the budget. N. Merrow - It's frustrating when you know it's there, but they have gone against the warrant article. She would like to see it broke out and addressed with the Rec Dept.

Merrow asked about an expense of \$12,000 from Oct to Dec; the question was what was it for when the pool is closed. C. Wheelock will verify. R. Irving said there was some discussion internally about this and there was some flushing done on the system. The bill was for the water.

4. Dereck Croteau asked for permission to speak, the Board granted. He asked which contract are they are bidding on for the cemetery mowing. C. Wheelock said we didn't have the amount he quoted on the first bid budgeted, at this point we are not ready to say we will approve the quoted amount. The bid requested that the grass be kept at a reasonable height.

Croteau was the only bidder, the Board didn't think we could afford it. Through solicitation, we put it back out to bid. Dereck asked if he should submit a new bid and is it as needed? Wheelock said as needed can be interpreted differently. The 15 mowing's for what we were looking for wasn't enough last year. We want it to look good.

Dennis said what they just bid on was 22 mowing's and included the meeting house at \$20,800. The Board wasn't sure if the original bid is the same as the new one, the Cemetery Trustee's put the bid back out.

Discussion ensued regarding the mowing, # of times, etc. Someone has to determine when it's time to mow.

5. M. Kennett asked the Board if they are aware that the fax machine isn't working; the copier isn't working and it's waiting for repair. This probably shouldn't wait until after Town Meeting.

M. Kennett said today, the snow is falling on the handicap ramp; maybe we could consider an outside contractor to keep it cleaned.

M. Kennett commented that this is a revaluation year – Elaine Gray will be retiring before we have another one. Maybe getting someone trained would be helpful.

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

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

Into Non-Public Session at 8:23 pm

Motion to adjourn the Non-Public Session by: M. Phillips
2nd by: C. Wheelock, All in Favor 3-0

Non-Public Session adjourned at 9:09 pm

Into Regular Session at 9:09 pm

a. Discussed Personnel Matters during the Non-Public Session.

No further business was discussed.

7. Adjournment:

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 pm

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