

**4 +Town of  
NorthumberlandBoard of  
Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes (Draft)  
Date: Monday, December 20, 2021  
Place: Town Meeting Room – 10 Station Square  
Time: 6:00 P.M.**

**\*During the meeting wearing of masks is strongly encouraged for all individuals\***

**Select Board Members Present:** James Weagle, Keith Bronson, Bill Caron  
**Others Present:** James Gibson, Norm R. Cotter, Al Rossetto, Kathy Frechette, Peter Pelletier

1. **Chairman opens the meeting:** Jim opens the meeting and asks for a motion to approve minutes from December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.
2. **Acceptance of Minutes:** Norm Cotter interrupts motion and asks why there were no comments recorded on his questions, aren't all meetings recorded?  
Jim replies to Norm that the meetings are recorded and sent to the transcriber.  
Norm asks does the transcriber feather or does the Select Board?  
Jim: she does.  
Norm: want my questions in the minutes.  
Keith: she does that to me too.  
Norm asks if the recording is gone? That's crazy, come to the meetings, want this on record.  
Bill asks if the vote was recorded.  
Norm replies yes. I read minutes and nothing that I said or asked was put into the minutes.  
Jim asks for motion to amend the meeting minutes.  
Norm: what happens if the recording is erased?  
Bill: they will be on next minutes.  
Jim: Norm let Becky know and she can check.  
Norm: I'm not going to tell Becky what I say in the minutes, the recorder is supposed to.  
Jim: the minutes are a summary.  
Norm: Discussion of septic doesn't have to be in? Wrong, should be in the minutes.  
Jim asks for motion to amend minutes of December 6<sup>th</sup> to include Norm's questions and comments on the septic rate.  
Norm: my question is, how does she determine what is recorded and what is not?  
Jim: Becky does same thing, votes have to be in the minutes, up to the recorder on how much discussion is included. Some discussions are hard to hear or very

long.

Norm: I was the only one speaking.

Bill makes motion to amend the Dec 6<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes about septic dumpage rate to include discussion by Norm Cotter regarding the tax on property and the septic system, seems like double taxation. Concern on paying property tax on system as well as tax on septic dumpage. Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

Norm: Thank you.

AMENDMENT TO MINUTES: Norm Cotter comments that he is hearing about all of the water the Town has saved but not how much the Town has saved by doing all of the improvements. If so much money is saved by not having to purify it should not go up that much.

Reggie tells Norm the information is in the Town Budget Report

So instead of getting the septic cleaned every few years will wait until it is full.

Reggie agrees, and explains that the Town has not made budget in years.

Bill said that both water and sewer should be self-sustaining.

Keith mentions that there used to be a fund to subsidize water/sewer but it has run out.

Norm asks if there is any idea on how to charge individual landowners to pump their septic tanks.

Reggie says \$125 or 12 cents per gallon septic addition. This extra goes to the Town to help pay for cleaning.

Norm asks if this will be \$125 each time?

Reggie replies "yes".

Norm: this is an awful jump in taxes, sewer bill for individuals retired on fixed incomes.

Reggie: need to prepare for what's coming down the pike for the lagoons and improving Cumberland Street. No one likes this.

Norm: Lot of people are on a fixed income.

Bill: That is because there is no industry.

Reggie: and we have the room. Lagoons won't handle any out of town septic to be trucked in. It will be a flat rate of \$125 per 1,000 gallons.

Norm: there are a lot of people with 275 gallon tanks, will they be charged the same?

Bill: there has been no hauling fee in Groveton, free for residents.

Reggie: 12 cents per gallon, new.

Al: paying by the gallon instead of per 1000 is only fair.

Reggie: rate to be 12 cents per gallon.

Al: it will cost me more money but charging per gallon is more fair.

Norm asks if this is \$12 per gallon?

Keith says no.

### **3. Selectmen Business:**

a. Department Head Business: Ambulance and Police

James Gibson – answered 540 calls down 6 from last year.

Comstar collected as of Dec 13<sup>th</sup>, \$152,735.17.

Covid 19 is widespread and there have been some deaths in our Town.

NH EMR is give a free online class and weekend class in Bethlehem for those interested in becoming an EMR.

Ambulance A1 was down with wiring problems, a switch was replaced with no cost to the Town.

Town contracts with an increase to \$25/capita from \$20/per capita have been sent out. Increase of approx. \$42,575 of income. Some contracts have been returned.

James brings up another outstanding item. He has a substantial amount of vacation time left because there is very limited personnel. He asks if he can schedule 2 weeks of this year into next year for a scheduled medical appointment in February. He has tried to take time but is usually called in.

Bill not sure on previous procedure and realizes it has been a very bad year.

Discussion on James's time accrued, how to approach this situation, why the pay out was stopped, if payout was on the books it would have to be paid out.

Keith: if we do this for you we have to do for everyone.

Discussion of when the books close for the year.

Jim tells James that if you have the 2 weeks booked for next February then going forward if vacation not used, it will be lost.

Norm: brings up that people know their seniority and should schedule the time off so they don't leave vacation time.

James: Could schedule but with no personnel to cover, the town and residents will suffer.

Discussion of the lack of employees and how James was hoping that with the free course they would get more interest in EMT work. Kids today not interested. Other employees in other departments have the same problem – if time scheduled now, if more time needed, to be taken from next year's time. So Select Board agrees on giving James the extra 2 week into the next year to use for medical purpose.

Anything else for James. None.

Captain Pelletier reports: does not have the numbers in front of him as he was downstate on an investigation and attending the physical testing of recruits. But, there have been 12 new serious investigations started, 4 arrests, 2 fugitive, no crashes.

Last week had to close for a couple of days because of 4 Covid exposures. Michelle and Officer Basta (??) disinfected the Station and reopened on Wednesday which was very busy. People are slowly trickling back to work.

Keith asks Capt. Pelletier if anyone has had recurring bouts of Covid?

Capt. Pelletier replies that no one who had it this time has had recurring.

Keith asks if everyone is vaccinated?

Jim: You can't ask that!

Keith reports that he is hearing that the Police cars are running all of the time.

Capt. Pelletier replies that they are not running all of the time but in the winter it is important to run more than usual because of all the electronics in the vehicle and that Narcan has to be kept at a certain temperature.

Keith agrees that because of the equipment you don't want to go out and hear "click".

Capt. Pelletier replies that has happened before, some trickling of power even though all is shut off.

Keith: good to know about the Narcan temperature need. What's going on with the full time officers.

Capt. Pelletier: Officer Mattson has left for a job at the school.

Jim: but he is still part time?

Capt. Pelletier: Yes he is and we are looking at candidates now. There may be another officer leaving, but not before end of the year. Getting grants for 2 extra openings. Working with Stratford to make more money. No new hires until after the first of the year.

b. Cash Summary Report month ending November 2021

Jim gives the cash summary: Beginning balance: \$1,530,176.92

Additional income: \$1,420,699.02

Expenses: \$1,266,965.98

Ending balance: \$1,682,959.96 unreconciled

c. Follow up discussion on mask protocol for municipal locations

Bill brings up that this is prompted by an email from Aaron which states that in all municipal building where people are not all vaccinated or a 6' distance can be maintained, masks must be worn. When in vehicles with others, masks must be worn.

Bill argues that in his opinion, only his opinion, wear a mask if you want, don't wear a mask if you don't want and take responsibility for your life. I have neighbors who got the vaccination and still got Covid.

Keith feels that Town employees need to wear masks.

Some discussion of the 6 foot stipulation.

Keith: from now on we wear masks at all Select Board meetings, the Police Dept., and all municipal buildings. If the public has to wear the masks we should

Jim: fine with municipal buildings but not with personal vehicles.

Keith: employees in buildings have probably had Covid or not by now.

More discussion on mask mandate.

Norm says you can't make someone wear a mask.

Keith: can mandate mask wearing.

Bill: you can't tell me what to do

Keith: can mandate.

Jim: personal no, business, yes.

Capt. Pelletier: Maybe use the CDC guidelines that 6' or more, no mask, 3' or

less, use mask. This room is ok because of 6' distance. Don't want to step in just trying to help and simplify by using CDC guidelines.

Keith: and you just had 4 cases last week.

Bill: maybe they got them from car stops.

Keith: how can you tell? Should have a mask mandate.

Kathy Frechette: you can't.

Keith wants to make a motion.

Norm Cotter: what's the purpose of the plexiglass?

Jim: there are still openings

Keith: still close contact

Norm: other public places do not have a mask mandate

Al: Seniors are very vulnerable and should be protected.

Norm: don't agree.

Jim asks for motion. Keith makes motion to have mask mandate, Jim seconds, Bill – nay. Vote is 2 to 1 for a mask mandate.

- d. Vote to accept \$1,000 from PNGTS (Portland National Gas Trans) for Public Safety Bldg. as unanticipated funds received.

Bill makes motion to accept, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

- e. Review/discussion/decision of hunting on town land permit application – to hunt at night for Coyotes.

Norm asks who this is.

Jim: Stiles

Keith wants to know what part of town land?

Norm wants to know if it is in town?

Jim: Potter Farm

Norm: there is town owned property there?

Keith asks if he has to notice abutters.

Jim: just the town, he does every year.

Kathy Frechette: have to be at least 300 feet from a house.

Jim asks for motion, Keith makes motion, Jim seconds, Keith nay. Vote passes 2-1.

Keith comments that this is not wise, someone shooting at night. Had someone doing it at 10:30pm, 3 shots. What were they doing? Jacking deer, shooting spouse?

Al: both are illegal

- f. Follow up discussion of lease – 10 Station Sq

Much discussion that this is the same lease agreement except for the \$100 increase.

Keith is not voting in.

Bill and Keith both disagree on the lease as they are not doing anything.

Discussion of what is not being done by the landlords and the liability the town will be under. Town employees are making repairs and that is wrong. Lack of roof over the stairs is the biggest issue. Suggestion of resubmitting wanting the repairs in and out done by the landlords and must have the roof over the stairs done.

Keith: put in for building at Town Meeting.

Jim says everyone getting off track.

Bill and Keith both agree that the property owner should be responsible for putting roof over the stairs, taking care of the building. Plowing is brought up but there is very little parking space owned by the property owner and shoveling.

Bill: won't sign until the contract is amended to cover building care costs, roof over stairs.

Jim to rewrite contract and send out.

Keith: send revised lease and see what they say.

Lively discussion by the Select Board and Al Rossetto.

g. Dump body quotes.

Jim: 3 received

Bill: 4<sup>th</sup> one being worked on.

Jim reads quotes: 1. \$36,950 2. \$29,725 3. \$32,750

Al asks how big of a dump

Maybe a 10 yard. To go onto the old tanker, has low miles.

Norm comments that it won't be hauling much.

Kathy Frechette asks if it is new.

Jim: response is new, used are not available

Kathy: any warranty?

Jim: go with lowest unless 4<sup>th</sup> comes in lower.

Discussion on where the dump body is and will town have to pay a tax? Probably not, most likely exempt.

Keith: was there a time limit to get bids in?

Jim and Bill: No.

Keith: then decide tonight and keep in NH

Norm asks where the other bid from.

Bill replies that Glen said he had a 4<sup>th</sup> bid. A short discussion of options available and needed.

Keith wants to know if they are voting tonight or not.

Jim: going with lowest bid.

Bill: waiting for 4<sup>th</sup> bid.

Jim comments that he does not think the 4<sup>th</sup> bid will come in lower.

Norm: how do you know?

Jim: let's say they have next 2 days to submit.

Bill: by the 24<sup>th</sup>

Keith: rather see it now.

Bill makes motion to take lowest NH bid and wait for 4<sup>th</sup> bid until Dec 24<sup>th</sup>, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

- h. New hire for office cleaning by Vershire. Keith makes motion to hire Vershire, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

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

- a. Abatement – 4 Goulet St – Based on estimated reads old line never abandoned, asking for \$214.20 water and \$285.60 in sewer. Reggie agrees mistake on his part.

Bill asks if they are asking for water or sewer.

Jim: both, Reggie validates.

Bill makes motion to approve, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

- b. Intent to Cut – Map 206, Lot 001 – 100 acre cut. Bill makes motion to approve, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.
- c. Building Permit Application – 114 Hillside Ave – Al speaks of some confusion of \$5000 limit, but feels they are doing a very good job. Keith makes motion to approve, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0.
- d. Running Water Application(s)

Done yearly for Northumberland School, Egan on Wheames Drive, Groveton Fire Station. Bill makes motion to approve, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0

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

- a. Discussion/decision of ice rink proposal – K. Brown not present.

Kathy Frechette says she must be sick as she was not at school either. She's a teacher. Reggie would not want to risk causing a problem by cracking a hydrant.

Selectmen table until next meeting.

- b. Follow up discussion on Septage rates to haulers-Norm Cotter

Jim: Cindy Perkins did get back to us with improvements include septic site work, lot clearing, well, not a flat rate.

Norm in agreement with that definition, but cannot tell the actual dollar amount. He is paying for his septic tank.

Keith: and your well

Norm: Hard to tell what the amount is based on.

Al: tax on lot, assessment includes improvements made, not the building, water, septic, etc. Yes, we are all paying for Brooklyn Street, don't want to pay for the 12 cents per gallon but there are and will be issues with the lagoons and other costs coming down the pike. As Reggie says, we need to put money aside now or will be hit hard later.

Bill does not like it either.

Norm asks why everyone else's rates aren't going up? Why is it only the septic tank owners?

Selectmen unanimously announce that everyone else's will be going up too. Had to do this one first as have to let septic haulers know the rate for the coming year. Water and Sewer rates will be rising as well.

Norm feels that 12 cents per gallon is very high. Other towns are less. How did Reggie arrive at this figure?

Keith: he's the expert

Jim: agrees he is the expert.

Norm: I'm on a fixed income and this comes as a shock.

Al: How many times do you pump?

Norm: That's got nothing to do with it.

Al: YES it does!

Norm: NO it don't!

Jim: I pay every 3 months, not every few years. Just trying to make everything come into line.

Norm: awful raise on us.

Bill: if we don't plan on how to cover future higher expenses in testing, upkeep and repair, keeping the lagoons working now the Municipal Rate will go up and we will still be in the same boat.

Jim: just trying to make it more profitable to cover these expenses.

Al: everything is going up, hang on.

Norm: I bet you're going to hear about it when the next sewer bill comes out.

Al and Norm debate the costs involved.

Bottom line, start paying more now in nickels and dimes or pay a lot later with no buffer.

Norm asks if going to stay at 12 cents per gallon.

Jim: yes, have to get the septic haulers.

Al and Norm continue with lively discussion.

- c. Announcement – Holiday Schedule – Town Offices to be closed December 24<sup>th</sup> for Christmas, reopening December 27<sup>th</sup> @ 8am.

Town Offices to be closed December 31<sup>st</sup>, reopening January 3, 2022 @ 8am

- d. Next budget work session – open to all – January 11 at 11am – 19 Main St.
- e. Groveton Precinct Commissioners Monthly Meeting at 6pm on January 11, 2022

Motion by Keith to go into Non-Pub, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0 by roll call.

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

- a. Resident Matter

Motion to come out of Non-Pub by Bill, seconded by Keith, all in favor, 3-0.

## **7. Adjournment:** Motion to be made on abatement. Bill makes motion to abate total amount including interest, seconded by Keith, all in favor, 3-0.

Bill makes motion to adjourn at 7:50pm, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.



Respectfully submitted,

Pam Kathan  
Northumberland Select Board Minute Taker

Next meeting January 3, 2022

Minutes approved by Northumberland Select Board Members on \_\_\_\_\_

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Weagle  
Northumberland Select Board Chairman

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
William Caron  
Northumberland Select Board Member

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keith Bronson  
Northumberland Select Board Member