

Town of Northumberland

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes (Draft)

Date: Monday, March 15, 2021

Place: Town Meeting Room – 10 Station Square

Time: 6:00 P.M.

During the meeting "social distancing" will be practiced and wearing of masks is strongly encouraged

Select Board Members present: James Weagle, Bill Caron, Keith Bronson.

Others present: Becky Craggy, Nancy Merrow, James Gibson, Sam Oakes, Joseph Kennett, Melinda Kennett, Glenn Cassady, Al Rossetto, Sue Peel, PJ Pelletier, Robin L. Irving, Trevor Gibson

- 1. Chairman opens the meeting:** As acting Select Board Chair, James Weagle opens meeting and asks for motion to approve minutes from March 1st meeting.
- 2. Acceptance of Minutes:** Bill makes motion to accept minutes, Jim seconds, all in favor, 3-0.
- 3. Appointment of new Select Board Chair:** Bill makes motion to make Jim Weagle as Select Board Chairman. Keith seconds, all in favor, 2-0.
- 4. Selectmen Business:**

- a. Appointment of Chairman and Dept assignments

Discussion of assigning departments that were once held by Michael Phillips to Keith Bronson, those are Highway and Police. These will be his assignments for his 2-year term. Bill makes motion to keep department assignments the same, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

- b. Department Head Business: Ambulance/Police

James Gibson is first to speak: 2021 there have been 80 calls, down 29 calls from last year's 109.

Comstar as of March 12th is \$23,052.66 received to date.

Covid cases are declining. Northumberland has 3, Stratford has 2 and Stark 0.

Glenn expresses his wish to start with a clean slate and find out what the expectations of the Board are for the Ambulance service.

Keith: Please talk to folks in the department and tell them that saying that the Town is fractured on social media is very detrimental.

James tells Keith that he has already spoken to that person and that they are not a member of the Ambulance department.

Keith says that venting on social media makes him mad.

Bill: the Town has a future and the Ambulance has been here 50 years.

James: 51 years.

Bill: we need to get the building committee back together and see what can be done. We need input, would hate to go back on the 911 contracts. There is a good group of people to work with and let's keep it that way.

Bill thanks Jim for all of his hard work and says he should be on the Building Committee.

James thanks Bill and says there was a lot of false information given at the meeting, false numbers and a personal agenda brought forth.

James invites Bill and Jim to go with him on Wednesday to Week's to try and work out a plan.

Jim: we need to roll up our sleeves, go forward and try again.

James: this is an open door for anyone to see the real layout, for anyone to question and get the real answers and to see what's going on.

Robin: I'm stealing someone else's idea. The need to build the morale of the Ambulance crew is not as much on putting them under the Town with a basic operating budget, but to focus on teamwork.

Nancy Merrow: Sensing the unhappiness between Precinct and Ambulance we need a mediator.

Jim: this has been going on for years.

Bill: Regardless of differences we back each other when occasions arise. Have a vested interest in Groveton and want to see it grow, nip things in the bud so the Town can flourish for another 200 years. Increase team work and morale.

Sue Peel asks as a taxpayer for over 25 years, what is being done to access State and Federal funds for decontamination?

Jim: we are looking into grants but we are a town that is no longer below the dollar line to qualify. Still looking into anything the Town may qualify for.

Sue: the State has lots of Covid money for decontamination.

Robin: those funds are gone.

Jim: there are restrictions we have to work with. There is lots of money for private businesses, municipalities are another thing.

Bill brings up that there is no room as well.

Sue: understood, maybe do this in stages.

Bill: should reconvene the Building Committee and make choices going forward, but need a plan in order to get money.

Robin: Did look into the CARES money for decontamination but you need to own the real estate, not rent it. CARES is gone, but the Relief Act may have something to offer. There is money from the State, Dept of Justice, Homeland Security and FEMA, but Fire, Ambulance and Police must be in one building. Not available when separate so all departments have to be onboard to be in one building.

Jim asks if there is any more, being nothing more he invites Peter to speak.

Peter: Since last month we have had 280 calls for service. 91 motor vehicle stops, opened 8 new investigations, 2 arrests and 2 vehicle crashes.

Continuing with 4 hour training each month from last year grant for becoming recovery coaches. Officers are putting out their own money for food and lodging for those who need it, but we have a grant we can draw off for that. The recovery coaches can help with those who are victims of violence, drugs etc., and put them in programs that will better them.

Regarding Town Meeting, standards are still standards, mandates are still mandates and safety is still safety. Michelle and I have put our heads together to try and figure out what can be done. We would like to put down new floors that will help with decontamination, put in a separate bathroom for personnel only, a changing room without cameras for privacy protection. Plans to change the armory into a jail cell and other changes. This can be done with allotted funds and inhouse help.

Jim says that floors are ok, but, have to check with the landlords whether a bathroom can be put in without hiring bonded contractors.

Conversation continues that bonded contractors would up the price significantly. The lease expired and is now a month to month so not sure what can be done.

Keith asks if he can get a copy of the lease to review. Becky to supply.

More conversation on why outside safety concerns have not been addressed by the landlords if they are responsible for the outside. Why wouldn't the landlord want a new bathroom and improvements. These things need to be addressed immediately. There is documentation of issues being brought to the landlords before and nothing being done. Month to month is not a lease and we need to get one.

Jim gives the update for the salt shed as provided by Chris Wheelock of Perras Lumber. Items have been ordered, there is a price lock for the roof trusses. The CDX is ordered as are the KD studs, metal roofing and vinyl siding. More updates to come.

- c. Appointments - AVRRDD Rep, Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Assistant Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Road Agent

Need a motion to make Al Rossetto the AVRRDD rep and to have Keith as the secondary. Bill makes motion, Keith 2nds, all in favor, 3-0.

Motion to make Kirsten Parks a committee member on the Rec Dept. Bill makes motion, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

Motion to make Patrick Platt a committee member on the Rec Dept. Bill makes motion, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

Motion to renew Bryan Newton to the Conservation Committee. Bill makes motion, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

Motion to make Courtney Mclain the assistant Town Clerk/Tax Collector. Bill makes motion, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

Motion to make Glenn Cassady Road Agent. Bill makes motion, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

Robin relays that Mario is looking to fill the Planning Board vacancy.

Keith asks Glenn if he is going to be staying on.
Glenn is planning to.

- d. Tax Map Maintenance Agreement for 2021

Motion by Bill to sign agreement, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

- e. Property Assessment Contract for 2021

Motion by Bill to sign contract, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

- f. Discussion of Letter sent to Resident – Cumberland St

Jim explains letter to resident regarding house condition and debris in road.

Al speaks of the fact that the building is in very poor shape. Their building permit has expired. The Select Board issued a cease and desist, the work stopped but the mess continued. There is still activity. They are liable for a \$250 permit fee. The building will never meet codes. Not safe to add onto. The permit should be for demo only.

Jim agrees with Al.

Robin asks if there can be a formal code driven condemnation.

Jim answers that if we condemn the building we are obligated to house the occupants.

Keith knows the building and asks how many notices there have been.

Al answers one cease and desist and one by Terry Bedell.

Keith: 3 years since permit expired, can we give final notice?

Robin brings up that the owners property on Brooklyn St was sold and they left town.

Keith says to send the final notice.

Conversation ensues on Benoit property and it is time for the final notice.

Al says this should be for demo only. All agree. There is no water/sewer there and garbage may be collecting. There are open top 5 gallon pails of oil laying about. Health and DES issues. Need to assess the property, write a report and proceed. This to begin after the snow has melted.

Jim asks Becky if the PD had to go on the property.

Becky replies that was for something else.

Motion by Bill to allow Al to go onto 51 Cumberland after snow has gone and assess the property. Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

Al comments that his wife is a Trekkie and that he is relaying that the Board should "Make it so."

g. Authorization of PDIP transfers (2)

Motion by Bill to transfer \$7,550 from PDIP to Building Fund to pay Alan Clark. Seconded by Keith, all in favor, 3-0.

Motion by Bill to transfer \$2,200 from the short lived CRF back into the General fund. Seconded by Keith, all in favor, 3-0.

h. Abatement Request – Water/Sewer

Request by Charles Boclair of Village Motel for abatement of sewer.

Discussion of line breakage previously unknown. Can't abate anything beyond 1 year, Town responsibility also stops at the curb. More discussion on the complaints, there has been a previous abatement.

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

i. Letter requesting use of covered bridge for Easter Sunrise Service on April 4th by Groveton Methodist Church brought to Board by Elaine Gray.

Bill makes motion to approve use, Keith – discussion on liability. Jim says if sanctioned by Board it is covered by insurance.

Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

j. Munce's tank. Jim discusses working with Primex to see if they can help remedy this problem. Tank on Normandeau property currently. Tried to sell, now have to get rid of in cheapest cost to Town.

Glenn brings up that according to Mr. Blanchette there is a DES process to decommission the tank. That Ingerson and Beattie will pay for permit to transport but don't want to pay for decommissioning.

Further conversation on possibly Primex helping. The tank is a 5,000 gallon above ground one.

Robin brings up Brownfields funds and that they are still available, it fits criteria and will have it assessed.

The cost to get the decommission permit will be \$10,000 plus to get rid of it. If it leaks there will be a much bigger expense. This may also be a Shoreline protection issue.

5. Applications/Permits and Warrants:

a. Elderly Exemption Application

The couple does not qualify, have to deny.

Bill makes motion to deny Elderly Exemption credit, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

b. Non-Resident Transfer Station Permit Applications (8) All renewals

Steve and Elizabeth Collins

Rick and Jennifer Teberg

Lisa Chaffee, Jay Bedard, Jay Miller Haden owner Sally Haden

Guy Malock Trust

Newton Renewable Trust

Red Dam Conservatory/Pier Point Energy

John Piralto

Mark and Kelly Yell

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

c. Yield Tax Warrant (2)

d. Veterans Credit Application

A new application and it qualifies.

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

e. Surviving Spouse Veteran Credit Transfer

Bill makes motion to approve the Surviving Spouse Veteran Credit Transfer, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

6. Public Matters To Be Addressed By The Board:

a. Conservation Commission Meeting Cancellation & next meeting notice is for April 21st

b. Planning Board meeting Wednesday at 7pm

c. Robin: Transportation alternatives report is due this Friday and the application for the funding of the Covered Bridge Project. The Covered Bridge Project is 2 million dollars, asking for 1 million of available funds and the other million will have to go to the Town as a bond. Having another year gives the opportunity for other alternatives to a Town bond. Goal is to make the State aware that this is the project we want funding for. But because it is in the same pot as the sidewalks we may not get as we have not started sidewalks. Those will have to be finished before we can get funds for the covered bridge.

Discussion on lifting the bridge off the river to work on it. Less chance of lead pollution in river.

Robin lets the Selectmen know that next Friday is the deadline for a letter of interest for funding from the Northern Borders Regional Commission Grant. This would be money toward a Public Safety building, if that is brought up again. It is being awarded in late August and could be brought to the Town Meeting that \$350,000 has already been acquired for that project.

Robin goes on to explain that if given the chance she would have told people that the Public Safety Building was one part of a much more global project for the Town. Groveton would have had the first power purchase agreement with Quasar and that the by-product of the power plant was hydrogen which PNDTS and Eversource would use. This was so much bigger than just a building, it had many key players (Trans Canada, Eversource, Quasar, Northern Borders). Would have been a big investment in the Town.

Keith raises the fact that he did not hear about this. That people can't be left in the dark

about big projects like this and the importance of them. Somebody dropped the ball, poor planning.

Bill: No it was non-disclosure, we couldn't disclose until at the Town Meeting.

Much discussion continues between Robin, Keith, Bill, Jim, Becky, Nancy and Min and Roach. No information to the public. The politicians that showed up only went to one meeting. Poor planning. The core part of the Building Committee did not do their job in planning and presentation.

Funding for new mobile radios was coming from TransCanada. Last year I tried for a million dollars, they thought it was too much. They were bummed that we did not get the building but if we try again for the Public Safety Building we can ask for the same amount of money.

Robin brings up that Bond for the water and sewer. Lower income people are having trouble paying their water and sewer bills and that we need a rate committee to restructure the amounts paid. There is no huge industrial base that can take on the burden. She explains how the system should loop on certain streets to avoid brown water. Revolving funds are opening up in April, may be able to get a sewer refund of interest.

Keith brings up the Town meeting again. Wants to keep parties interested. Doesn't feel that anyone was against the building, just not sold on the building. Pamphlets failed.

Jim mentions that they did the pamphlets because they were successful in other towns. Min mentions she saw the pamphlet. Also posted in the newspaper, website and other venues.

Keith says the public has a short memory. Jim adds that unless the agenda has something of interest to the public, people do not show up, they need to relate to it.

More discussion: Something in people's mailboxes, the elderly are not online but get mail all the time, and some cannot get out to vote. Suggestions on how to help people get out to vote are mentioned, but overall just need to do a better job of informing.

Discussion of the rent of the building brought up by Roach Kennett. \$1400 per month. Computation of how much the building would affect tax rate was not presented properly, people did not understand. Bill felt he monopolized the meeting by having people ask questions first and will take the blame. All in all points were learned from that meeting. Need to get people out to vote and to understand.

Nancy asks Keith what his goals are for the next 2 years.

Keith answers with making the town streamlined, finish up loose ends, make progression but not blindly, clean up the town. His background is he is a retired boiler maker union member. Never had a fail and doesn't want to fail. Keep people interested. Like to work and move on things.

Nancy welcomes him aboard.

Keith thanks her.

Bill makes a motion to go into non-public at 7:53pm Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

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

- a. Resident Matters
- b. Personnel Matter

Motion to come out of Non-Pub at 9:21pm by Bill, seconded by Keith, all in favor, 3-0.

Motion to adjourn at 9:21pm by Bill, seconded by Keith, all in favor, 3-0.

Next meeting, April 5, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Kathan
Select Board Minute Taker

Minutes approved by Select Board Members on _____

X

James Weagle
Northumberland Select Board Chairman

X

Bill Caron
Northumberland Select Board Member

X

Keith Bronson
Northumberland Select Board Member