

Town of Northumberland
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes (Draft)
Date: Monday, January 3, 2022
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, Chair, Keith Bronson, William Caron via phone.

Others Present: Pete Marshall, Norm Cotter, Mairead Durkin, Sean Durkin, Al Rossetto, Glenn Cassady, Terri Charron, Reggie Charron, Melinda Kennett, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Nicolas Sanchez-Koora or Rosa?????, Gina Mangiotino????

- 1. Chairman opens the meeting:** Jim opens the meeting at 6pm looking for a motion to accept minutes.
- 2. Acceptance of Minutes: Corrections as noted to 12/20/21 meeting**
Chief Pelletier is not Captain Pelletier and is to be referenced as Chief Pelletier in future. Reggie Charron noted as not the cause on the 4 Guillette Street abatement, it was a town billing error.

Min tells Reggie the Guillette Street person called her today.

Norm Cotter inquires on whether the minutes got changed and how he can get a copy as he does have internet.

Jim asks how that is normally handled.

Min says that he can stop by the Town Office or the Select Board should have extra copies at the meeting.

Keith: there is a lot of stuff not right, it's like the Transcriber puts their interpretation, not what is actually said.

Bill make motion to approve minutes with corrections, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

3. Selectmen Business:

- a. Department Head Business: Highway and Water/Sewer Depts.

Glenn Cassady, Road Agent gives report: A fast month, responded to small annoying storms, meaning ice, treated blacktop and dirt roads 14 times, sometimes twice a day.

Used 64 tons of salt so far and 110 yards of sand on the dirt roads, still below average use.

Good note: salt shed is completed. Siding done. Week ago had the 60'x100' loft sprayed with blown in insulation, makes a BIG difference.

During the day the crew has been taking care of roadside stockpiles, so no overtime.

Worked with the Beautification Committee to help with decorations.

Minor maintenance repair on plow equipment, nothing major, no major breakdowns.

Crew worked on leach field.

Reggie: leach field is completed.

One housekeeping note with Select Board on earned time. Planning to use time but with Covid occurrences was not possible. Don't want to lose the 24 hours, know that Becky resets the clock, first of the year. Could I use it soon?

Reggie: Keith is doing the same thing.

Jim: as long as it is scheduled and used before March Town Meeting it is ok. This year was hard.

Reggie: No problem. Want to schedule Wednesday afternoons for several weeks to attend ski program with relative, will turn in proposal.

Jim asks if the dump body was ordered.

Keith: haven't gotten a proposal yet, haven't got anything.

Bill: we voted at the last meeting to go with lowest bid.

Keith: there is one that hasn't even come in yet.

Glenn: 3 have come in, the 4th called me and will have in tomorrow.

Jim: we gave until Dec 24th to get bid in or we would go with the lowest of the 3 bids.

Keith: Actually if you look at my notes you decided that, I wanted to get done what was in front of us, but you wanted to wait for the 4th, and the 4th one isn't here yet, so how are you going to make a decision?

Jim: we said by a certain date we were going to go with the lowest bid.

Glenn: how did you guys decide on how this would be funded?

Bill: wait a minute, wait a minute. Who is this guy on the phone and where's the company from. Is it a NH company?

Glenn: No a VT company, 3 of these bids are from VT, one is from NH.

Bill: one of these 3 was the lowest bid out of Londonderry NH?

Jim: think so.

Glenn: called Randy this morning, got a phone call at 5pm and was told that because of the holidays and Covid, hard to get done. Was asked if we definitely needed a 16' or can use a 15 1/2', the extra 1/2 foot is an odd length. So I called Randy and he told me that the reason the bids are coming in at 16' is that one bidder had a customer renege and had a 16' dump body in stock. Asked Randy if that is why the bidder said the frame needed to be extended, he said yes. We can go with a 15 1/2 foot dump and not make extension modifications, probably have to take some off. Want to know if you guys want to wait for 4th bid or not? You guys will want to get a quote locked in because prices can fluctuate, so do you want to wait a couple more days? My question is how are you going to fund this, is it going to be in next year's budget or from year end funds?

Jim: Out of the equipment line.

Glenn: Paul's??

Jim: No, equipment fund.

Glenn: Ok, I don't even know what's in that fund have not looked at it in a long time.

Bill: Paul has \$7,000 or \$8,000 we could use.

Glenn: He said he did not want to part with it.

Bill: Yes, but he said he was fine with it as long as he can keep \$10,000 for possible compactor or cannister repairs. The rest would have to come out of the Capital Reserve Fund for Equipment.

Jim: pretty sure that's where we looked and we were fine.

Glenn: originally that Capital Reserve Fund was for water and sewer.

Bill: well the truck is going to be used for highway too.

Reggie: where did the extra money from the ARPA funds go?

Keith: went into water and sewer.

Bill: I'm with Jim on this, let's wait for the 4th bid.

Glenn: I will give them until the end of the week.

Keith: Jefferson has a stainless steel dump body out for bid, \$500 minimum.

Glenn: how many cubic yards?

Keith: don't know, didn't call.

Bill: if lowest bid does not have to be extended, may come in at \$28,000.

Jim: let's wait.

Keith: yes

Glenn and Keith to check out Jefferson dump body.

Glenn: the bidders don't want to wait until March Town Meeting to get voted on because they cannot hold their price.

Further discussion on bidders, waiting to see what last bid brings, maybe calling other bidders back for requote on smaller dump body and checking on Jefferson dump body.

Jim asks if there is any more for Glenn. No.

Reggie: Norm Cotter do you have any more questions? I have the answers on septic rate.

Norm: I'll listen to them.

Reggie: we all pay taxes, and you found out the value of your septic system. We all pay to treat our waste. In the past, residents were not paying for their septic. You are on Town water, I took another family's same water use as you, just the Town water. I took 2 ½ years of data which I have here tonight, they paid sewer on top of that, it was double what you paid for water every 3 months. So the point of this Norm, just so you understand, if you were on Town water and sewer you would be paying upwards of \$1300 more over the last 2 ½ years. How often do you clean your tank?

Norm: every 2 years.

Reggie: if it is a 1,000 or 1,250 gallon tank that is like \$120 to \$150, that's all you pay, that's all you'll ever pay. Your savings for not being on

Town sewer is roughly \$1,100 in the last 2 years.

Norm: what you're leaving out Reggie is that my property with my sewer is valued more.

Reggie: and that's to your advantage because if you didn't have a septic you wouldn't have a house there, that's your value, that's yours.

????: where does installation cost come into that?

Reggie: I don't know.

????: because that offsets that number.

Reggie: increased value.

????: increased taxes as well.

Reggie: correct, but also the benefit of when you go to sell. If you put up a new garage, that increases taxes but it is an improvement to your property. Norm, we are all dealing with this, Lancaster is 10 cents per gallon but they are very careful about what they take, they have the same system as I have, Berlin is 10 cents per gallon, they can live off that stuff, they'll take all they can get. Littleton is 12 cents per gallon but hasn't been able to take anything in 3 years because of the new brewery. They don't see taking anything in the near future. That's why we are where we are at Norm.

Reggie explains the difference between a lagoon system and an oxidation system. Oxidation gets rid of their sludge every day, a lagoon system just keeps adding to it and eventually has to be cleaned. If we need to clean within the next 10 years it will cost us well over 1 1/2 million dollars.

????: are there additives to the lagoon to help break down everything?

Reggie: No, that is a fallacy, I've been working in this field for 30 years.

????: I disagree with you.

Reggie: you can disagree with me all you want, I know the science, for every pound of waste there is 1 1/2 pounds of sludge.

Further discussion by Reggie and ???? on Biocap for septic tanks.

Reggie: that's different from municipalities. Municipalities cannot use additives, bugs eat it up. The largest expense is aeration to add constant air to the bugs who eat it up. When the lagoons were last pumped in 2007, Sewer Dept had to borrow from the Water Dept. about \$800,000 and are still paying it back. That is why the budgets are messed up, the prices are going up, everyone will pay whether they are on or off the system.

Norm: what I don't like Reggie, is when you tell me what Lancaster is paying, I don't care what they are paying, I care about Northumberland.

Reggie: exactly, but I heard you say others were paying less. Your price may not change, the haulers are making out. They charging the same no matter what. You may not even see a change but I can't speak on this. Spoke to Joel White the other day and he commended us for not raising prices before now. Every town has been doing this and now everyone will be dealing with PFAs, not sure where it will go now but it will cost a lot of money. Getting back, for years \$15,000 was put into a fund, for the last 6 or 7 years no money has gone into that fund because it was needed

elsewhere. I've had arguments with previous Select Board members who felt we could get by and wanted more paving. It was done, but at a point, \$100,000 could be put into lagoon cleaning and we still won't be close to what we would need in 10 years. So with that said, we are all going to pay big in the end. We are going to have a raise at the beginning of the year, not sure what the rate will be, have talked about a \$1.

Keith: yes we have had preliminary talks.

Reggie: just so you know you are not alone Norm.

????: So you're saying that the next time the lagoons have to be cleaned, that both those on and off the system will have to pay?

Reggie: yes

????: So those that have their own system will have to pay as well? Those that have their own septic should not have to pay.

Reggie: Before, almost all sewage was coming to Groveton because it was free, now not sure where it will go. Water used to be considered cheap, but is expensive now, no different than oil, gas, everything. Sewage is worse.

????: I don't have that problem, I have my own system.

Reggie: you're still dumping it somewhere.

????: Not necessarily.

Reggie: where's it going?

????: if you spend the money on enzymes, you don't need to have it pumped.

Reggie: talk to me when you don't have to pump.

More discussion on enzymes and how they have advanced, information availability.

Glenn: you can shoot for the revenues, but if they don't come?

Keith: what's the rate now?

Reggie: \$5.75

Glenn: people will have to absorb another charge if the revenues do not cover the budget.

????: People's choice to have Town water and sewer. If private, they have paid for it up front.

Reggie: Look at the bigger picture, whether you live in town or on the outskirts, you are still part of Northumberland. If Northumberland cannot get rid of the septic, taxes will jump. My point is, we all pay for the School, God bless the school.

????: You can't correlate the two together, totally different.

Reggie: No they're not different, assets to the Town.

Jim: Reggie let's get back to topic, not getting anywhere.

Min: Water is \$6 and Sewer is \$8 2020 rates.

Reggie: hopefully that answers your questions Norm.

Norm: thanks Reggie.

Reggie: 4th quarter readings will be done tomorrow. Kudos to the guys for dealing with this icy weather to get the readings done. The notice about wipes will be going out with this bill thanks to Min and Becky.

Min: all ready to stuff.

Reggie: still have to look at the rate increase, demand fees and impact fees. Just closed out 2021 and we dropped another 8 million gallons of water pumped over the last year. If the pool gets fixed we could be below 50 million gallons, that's historical. Wish we could sell more water but at least we know we are getting our leaks taken care of. Want to remind people that cold weather is here and to keep the heat on, and to keep an eye on things for freezing.

b. Review/signing of 2022 Ambulance Contracts

Jim: we have 5 contracts with the new rate, two in NH, Stark, North Stratford, three in VT, Maidstone, Brunswick and Bloomfield. Keith makes motion to sign the five ambulance contracts, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

c. 2022 Protocol for paying of COVID leave

Bill: the practice has been to pay when out, with CDC protocol it is 5 days, if you test negative you can go back to work.

Jim: we should go with CDC guidelines, they may change, we may have to revote.

Bill: after 5 days use vacation.

Glenn: these guidelines are for those vaccinated and boosted.

Keith: that's right, so after so if you are vaccinated and boosted and get sick within Town you get paid. I don't think you should get paid without showing proof of a positive test.

Bill: we've been paying employees right along up to 2 or 3 weeks.

Keith: I know that.

Bill: and we are still paying them.

Keith: I know.

Bill: I think it needs to be (in audible).

Keith: how do we even know they even had it? Did they bring a paper up to you and say here's my positive test?

Reggie: that's what my employee did.

Bill: they are supposed to bring a note into Becky that says they are cleared and can go back to work.

Keith: well I've only seen a couple.

Bill: That was from an email that Becky sent to departments that have had it.

Glenn: as employees we gratefully appreciate it, but if you talk to the State and the School District employees, they ended that awhile ago, months ago.

Keith: that's right because people say they have it without proof, they are staying home and going on vacation.

Glenn: we are small enough that we can show the proof. I don't have a problem with that.

Min: emailed to fellow Town Clerk/Tax Collectors, got an answer from two on their policy. Lancaster pays without affecting vacation or sick time with a positive test proof. Milan had 2 bouts, first time was paid, second time was paid by unemployment and if out more than 2 weeks, short term disability kicks in.

Bill: I understand what Min is saying, the problem is there are those home tests that may not be accurate on a negative result. Unless you go to a doctor for proof for sure. What are you going to do, carry a home test result and show you are positive? CDC wants people to not go to the hospital unless you actually need medical care because hospitals are overwhelmed. In my opinion, you call and say you're Covid positive and the time starts there, 5 days later you can come back to work with proof of a negative test. If out any longer use vacation time. Other municipalities have stopped paying because the State is not paying for it.

Jim: I'm fine with a positive test result or a household positive test.

Min: Wouldn't you feel better with a positive test result? There is a drive thru test in Lancaster.

Glenn: free of charge, why pay \$26 to \$30 for the test?

Discussion of getting official test, showing positive or negative. Then you get your pay, otherwise you do not.

Jim: or immediate family household member gets a positive test, then you would have to quarantine for 5 days.

Min: Why? I've had my 3 shots, the CDC says if you've had 3 shots you can keep on trucking. My deputy had a family member with Covid, she had 3 shots and was fine. If she hadn't had her shots she would be home, and can't afford that.

Keith: didn't we say at the last meeting we were supposed to be wearing masks in all Town buildings and businesses? Right after that, we had one of our Police Dept. come into the Town building without a mask. At the last meeting was told you could not ask if vaccinated, but you can. Just want to state that, that's all.

Min: another thing, I didn't ask Becky about her department, but we all made copies of our vaccination cards and gave to Becky for our personnel files.

Keith: that wasn't you Min, you keep a good accounting of space and everything. It wasn't you, it was one of our Police officers who came into the door without a mask and that whole department had Covid rampage thru the whole department.

Min: yes you can ask. Everyone should give a copy of their vaccination card to Becky as she is the HR person.

Keith: I've had all of my shots.

Bill: shots or no shots, that's irrelevant, if you test positive out for 5 days, test negative you can come back to work. Know of people who have tested positive even though they had been vaccinated by Pfizer and Moderna. That's where I stand on it.

Keith: I would make a motion that if we are going to continue paying our employees for the rest of the year, we would request a positive test result, and a negative test result to return to work for full and part time employees.

Reggie: it doesn't matter, if you go into the Town office you wear a mask, people could die.

Jim: part time don't get paid.

Min: you need to specify because Keith just said part time and full time get paid.

Discussion of part time paid or not, who got paid by the government, need to decide across the board. If getting benefits you get paid, if not, you don't. Use the current CDC guidelines.

???: Need a negative test to return to work? Some people have long term symptoms and may never test negative. It is possible to test positive 2 to 3 weeks after. Negative result, the person may have the symptoms.

Jim makes a motion to pay employees with benefits from Town employment, with positive test results according to the current CDC guidelines, to be out with medical proof of result. Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

d. Annual Prepayment agreement for Tax Collector

This is so people can make prepayments on taxes if they want. Bill makes motion to approve, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

4. Public Matters To Be Addressed By The Board:

a. Upcoming Holiday Notice – Town Office will be closed January 17th in observance of Martin Luther King and Civil Rights Day.

Anything else to come before the Board?

Norm: I had my hand up for the last item.

Jim: Sorry Norm, did not see.

Norm: I'm confused, doesn't make sense to me, thought anyone could prepay taxes anytime, didn't think needed OK from Select Board. If I want to go in and pay \$20 towards taxes they can't not take it.

Min: it's a State law that we cannot take pre-payments unless I have the paper to say I can, have done it for years.

Bill asks what Norm asked.

Jim says he was questioning if it was a law.

Bill: oh yes.

Min explains that this piece of paper keeps the Auditors happy.

Jim: per RSA 41:35.

Jim asks for motion to go into Non-Pub.

Bill make motion to go into Non-Pub, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0. Jim asks for roll call. Bill yes, Keith yes, Jim yes.

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

Employee matters.

Camper discussion.

Office discussion

Jim asks for a motion to come out of Non-Pub. Keith makes a motion to come out of Non-Pub, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

6. Adjournment: Bill makes motion to adjourn at 7:03pm, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Kathan
Northumberland Select Board Minute Taker

Next meeting January 18th, 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

****The deadline for agenda items is noon on the Friday before the scheduled meeting. (Effective 7/11/05) by majority vote of the Board of Selectmen.***

*****The agenda is subject to change.***

******This institution is an equal opportunity provider, and employer.******