



Town of
Northumberland
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**Town of Northumberland
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes - Draft
Date: Monday, August 21, 2023
Place: Town Meeting Room – 10 Station Square
Time: 6:00 P.M.**

Board Members Present: Bill Caron, Jim Tierney, Jim Weagle
Others: Tammy Letson, Jeffrey St Cyr, Norm Cotter, Al Rossetto, Pete Marshall, Sean Durkin, Judy Fox, Jim Gibson, Bill Daisey, Ann Corthell, Eric Brown, Peter Pelletier, Andre Brasseur, Amanda Anderson, Ryan Shannon, Owen Leighton, Melinda Kennett, Kathy Frechette, Michael Sullivan, Al Beland

1. Chairman opens the meeting:

B. Caron opened the meeting at 6:00 pm

2. Acceptance of Minutes:

Motion to approve the Aug 7th minutes, by: J. Weagle
2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 3-0

Motion to approve the Aug 9th minutes by: J. Tierney,
2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

Motion to approve the Aug 16th minutes by: J. Weagle,
2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 3-0

3. Department Head Business: Ambulance and Police Depts.

J. Gibson – Ambulance Director - EMS Chiefs Report – 08/21/23

1. 2023 as of this printing, we have had 300 calls to date.
Add 3 more calls for a total of 303.
2. 2022 at this time we were at 318 calls.
3. Comstar report as of 08/16/2023, \$126,157.17. This does not include contracts or direct payments.
4. A1 and A3 ambulances are due for State vehicle inspection in September.
There is a jingling exhaust hanger on one and the other one needs tires, which we've already looked at, Noyes was the cheapest.
5. Medicare and Medicaid licensing has all been updated and approved. The State of New Hampshire and Vermont EMS licenses are in the process of renewal for December as well

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as our MRH agreement with Weeks hospital for unit operations as well as PIFT and Surgical Chric approval.

6. Still doing ongoing data collections for the Medicare ground ambulance data collection process due in 2024.

R. Shannon asked why \$440,000 was spent last year and only \$190,000 was taken in. J. Gibson explained the reimbursement rates; all the insurance companies are regulating as government insurance, and they are mimicking Medicare and Medicaid rates. Which are not the best to be reimbursed for. We can bill for what we want, but we won't get that, we will only get what the insurance says we will get. Ryan asked what could be done. Jim G. explained that transfers are still an emergency medical thing, so if we charge \$1,200, we get \$1,200. But picking up someone up off the street, we only get \$280 – \$500. He said that Medicare is looking at this, we have banded with the National Ambulance Assoc. in a complaint about the rates. We are collecting data to submit to Medicare to show them their reimbursement rates don't work. The time frame is a 5-year process, ours is March of 2024; by 2026 they hope to come up with readjusted rates.

We are trying to do things to eliminate some of the costs, bulk buying with other communities, etc. We used to make money, but since the AHC came in, it's changed. Jim said we are trying to work out a budget to help so that Groveton isn't carrying the weight, the other towns will need to start kicking more in. They must pay for the readiness of us to be there for them. We are getting the rates that we're asking for. Tammy said it depended on the section of the budget, admin vs capital vs operating services when determining the amount, the other towns pay. Tammy said we can only bill insurance when a patient is taken to the hospital. If they respond to a call and don't transport, we don't get paid. Jim said we are looking at having a surcharge for these calls.

R. Shannon asked how many employees are on the ambulance. Jim said right now there are 15; we have 3 paramedics, which are needed for transfers. A lot of the transfers are from 7:00 pm – 3:00 am to out of state facilities, ME, MA, NY.

S. Durkin commented that he pays a lot for health insurance; why is it unfeasible to bill the patient for the extra. J. Gibson said 97% of our patients are Medicare/Medicaid; we can't bill the Medicare/Medicaid pts for the balance. If they have private (commercial) insurance that bill, they will call and negotiate the payment, if we don't accept it, they will usually pay it. Patients are encouraged to contact their insurance company. T. Letson commented just like you see with hospital and doctor bills through any explanation of benefits you receive, amounts are written off. It's the same for us. When Jim puts in a bill for \$1200, doesn't mean that's what the insurance company will allow. We are not allowed to balance bill the patients.

A. Anderson – we need a Paramedic; does it make sense to have an incentive to take these transfers? J. Gibson said the cost would go up and we need a place for Paramedics to stay. We've investigated having an apartment or getting them a room at the Down Home Motel but with all the costs, we wouldn't make any money.

E. Brown asked if we get reimbursed for the medication that might be administered if we don't transfer? We do not.

Chief Pelletier

- Since July 17th, we answered 550 calls for service of that 283 were MV stops. YTD – we have 805 MV stops; YTD total calls 2516.
- Since July 17, we have made 15 arrests and opened several new investigations.

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- We are welcoming Officer Emelia Campbell, she spent 7 years with the Washington, DC Capitol Police. She has relocated to NH to be closer to family. We are delighted to have her on board she seems like a well-qualified candidate with a lot of drive and ambition.
- Friday night there was a lot of activity, Officer Brian Jenkins made an MV stop that lead to solid info that there were drugs at 2 residences in town. It resulted in 2 search warrants – for 2 different houses. There was a close relationship between the houses, and we had a fair amount of information that there was a fair quantity of evidence. We had to try to get them as close to simultaneously as possible. We reached out to Lancaster and Whitefield, who were not available. But Colebrook sent an officer down. We hit the first place and they got to the second. We didn't make any arrests at the time, sometimes it's preferable to document and come back with an indictment.
- Indictments – last month the Coos County grand jury had 14 cases brought up, 12 of them were from Groveton. Our investigations are going very well; those kinds of results are made possible by proactive officers like Brian Jenkins, James Dagesse, and the expertise of Bill Daisey. We are not just sitting around; we are doing the best we can to get them off the street.
- We are in the process of getting quotes for the cruiser and outfitting it.
- Judy and Michael Fox stepped up last year for crossing guard work, but we are still looking for others as alternates, or replacements as needed. Amanda – we have a hard time getting crossing guards, we get what we pay for!! Why not offer incentives?

Al Beland said back years ago we used to have a officer on duty as a crossing guard and to connect with the kids, etc. Peter said we are glad to do crossings and don't want to leave them unmanned. The Town is a little busier than it was back then. We do need to get into the schools; Chief Tippitts watched a generation of kids doing the crossings. Somone also suggested that we stop at the Rec Center. We need to bring up the community policing game.

Al said they also used to go door to door after hours checking businesses. We do check businesses but not necessarily rattling the doors. We do have a protocol for doing that.

Ryan Shannon – how many Employees? Peter said 4 full-time certified officers, plus him. We have 7 part-time certified officers. We try to get them in as often as possible. Emelia will help us improve our hours and coverage. When practical he wants to set up on-call. Ryan asked if the schedule could be staggered. Peter said when the school year starts, they will be starting at 7:00. There is some overlap during the day, he's been coming in later in the morning and working later in the evening. We have some staggering in coverage.

Amanda – full time is 40 hrs./week. Peter said they are working the schedule, he finds himself working with Officer Ball, right now Officer Campbell is working with him. Eventually, she will have her own shift. Normally, Officer Ball comes in early, Amanda asked if it's realistic to have someone doing the crossing in the am. Peter said we can probably do something, there are 3 of them; the top priority is the elementary school.

- K. Frechette discussed a couple of issues. The stop sign on Cumberland, if there are big trucks parked at the business on the corner she can't see. Sometimes there is one parked on Bearce St., she feels they just need to be made aware.
- J. Fox- at the high school is there a way to keep parents out of the No Parking zone. They are parking there at 2:15 – 2:20 and the kids don't come out until 2:40. Pelletier said dropping off or picking up is ok, but not parking, he will get the day shift to watch it. It's a safety issue as well.

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4. Requested Agenda Matters:

5. Town Administrator Business:

- a. Review/discussion/decision of Annual Road Toll Requests:
B. Caron read the Road Toll requests from the High School as shown below.
1. Groveton Athletics/Fall Sports (Kelley Brown) – Church St. Saturday, 09/02/23 - 8:00 am – 2:00 pm. Rain date Sunday, 09/03/23 @ noon.
 2. Senior Class (Michelle Larcomb/Susan Garabedian) – Church St. Saturday, 09/23/23 - 8:00 am – 2:00 pm, rain date Saturday, 10/14/23.
 3. National Honor Society (Michelle Larcomb/Tamera Murray) – Church St. Saturday, 10/07/23 - 8:00 am – 2:00 pm, rain date Sunday, 10/08/23 @ noon.
 4. Student Council (Michelle Larcomb/Kelley Brown) – Church St. Saturday, 05/25/24 – 8:00 am – 2:00 pm, rain date Sunday 05/26/24 @ noon.
- J. Weagle said to remind them that need to be down the road from the fire station and not right in front of it.

Motion to approve the 4 Road Tolls as requested by: J. Weagle
2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 3-0

- b. Other Business – T. Letson said we discussed previously that she would go to the Guildhall Selectmen meeting for the backflow device for the water system. She was told that she needs to be on the Water Commission Agenda instead, which is scheduled for later this week. Our Lawyers had advised to not send them a letter until after the meeting.

Ampersand PILT agreement – They requested a small change, there is a section where it says the Selectmen can take action, they asked if we could add in – acting reasonably. Otherwise, they were fine with it. Please stop in to sign sometime this week.

R. Shannon asked when was the last time we got audited? T. Letson said we get audited yearly, usually in the summer and it's finished during the fall. The State doesn't do them for the Town as a whole, only for some departments. It's an independent company, Plodzik & Sanderson, that does the financial audit for the Town as well as the School.

6. Applications/Permits and Warrants:

- a. Building Permit Applications (5)
1. Map 229, Lot 025 - Jerry Monahan – Assembly of shed on a gravel pad, and new steps. Fee has been paid.
Motion to approve by: J. Tierney
2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0
 2. Map 222, Lot 002 - Bilc, Gabrielle, Down Home Motel, 129 Lancaster Rd, replace roof – Remodel 5 units. Fee has been paid.
Motion to approve by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 3-0
 3. Map 107, Lot 163 – Keith Young, 21 Eames St., 10 x 16 shed on a slab. Fee has been paid.

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Motion to approve by: J. Tierney, 2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

4. Map 227, Lot 007 – Styles, Daegan & Marlene, new siding, 3 windows and new garage door.

Motion to approve by: J. Tierney, 2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

5. Map 104, Lot 096 – Bilc, Gaberielles, 49 Hillside Ave – hook up utilities' W/S - Reggie is good with it.

Motion to approve by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 3-0

- b. Parade Permit Application – Homecoming – 09/22/23 – 19:00 (7:00 pm).

Motion to approve by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 3-0

7. ****Public Comment:**

1. A. Anderson asked what we are doing with the bridge; have we done any grants that have been applied for; it looks awful. T. Letson said we have a grant that is still active, but we are low on the list because we don't have funds to meet the match, which is hundreds of thousands of dollars to do it right. We do have a gentleman that's new to Town, who is putting together some additional grant packages. He's working with a couple of other residents to try and get funding to update it. Tammy has recently been approached by another resident who would like to hold fundraisers to come up with any match, so it doesn't have to come from the taxpayers. J. Tierney said there are different types; 1) is it open to vehicular traffic, which doesn't include snow mobiles and ATV's; 2) is it open to pedestrian traffic, then snow mobile and ATV's may not use it. Because there is lead paint on it, it must be protected when removed; we also must protect the river. J. Weagle said the last time we investigated it; it was \$1.2 million. S. Durkin asked what the \$1.2 million was for. J. Weagle said it was for tenting – Sean is lead certified and feels that is a lot.

T. Letson said she has been told the abutments also have some issues. Sean is willing to be on committee and offer his time to work on this. To get someone out here to give us an estimate. J. Tierney said to give him a call and he would get him the #'s of the others that are working on it.

A. Anderson asked if you have figured out how many grants have been applied for. R. Shannon asked Tammy if she could bring that number to the next meeting. She will take the time and do that.

2. Amanda asked about the handicap parking signs; J. Weagle said the municipal parking signs are up and he will investigate the rules for the handicap spot.
3. K. Frechette asked if we have a replacement for Becky Craggy yet. B. Caron said we have had some interviews but no decision yet.
4. A. Corthell commented it's been 7 years since the complaint was filed for clean-up on Old Village Rd. A complaint was filed, it's not just one residence – it's several. T. Letson said we sent out several letters to residents on that road. One has reached out and hopes to have his done by the end of September. Ann said if anyone needs help, we are willing to help them take stuff to the dump. It's an eyesore. Driving into Town once the leaves are gone it's the mess along Route 3 is the first thing you see. Ann said they talked about ticketing those that leave washers, dryers, etc. out by the road. It's not getting better, but worse. Tammy said there is one resident that we went to court with. The court favored the resident. The right of way that's blocked – there is a 40' storage unit there now. There was someone that was parking there and w/o a driveway that had no room to park.

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5. A. Beland – sidewalks what are we doing with them. In front of the grammar school is bad. J. Weagle said we got approved for sidewalk funding, but there have been issues. T. Letson said that Church St, Main St., and State to the high school was a grant that the taxpayers approved a few years ago. The TAP grant was approved, but it's not allowed to be spent until years out. Originally, it was supposed to be spent in 2026, then it was backed up to 2024. She recently heard that it was pushed out to 2026 again. She has a meeting on Thursday with the Engineers and DOT to find out why it's pushed back out until 2026. Glenn Cassidy has received some temporary quotes for a temporary fix. Al said Lancaster is cement. T. Letson said that's what we would like to do with the grant. Lancaster paid for most of their sidewalks with ARPA funds. Tammy said we put a small amount into the budget yearly that needs to be spent in that year. This year we put in \$30,000 and made it a non-lapsing fund for 5 years. They are discussing what to do and looking to use some of the money on Church, Main and State, but it's finding someone to do the work.

Amanda commented that walking with a stroller, I must walk in the road from the yellow building to the crosswalk near Al's Plumbing. What about the kids riding bikes through there? B. Caron said Church St. isn't a state road but is included in the TAP grant. He further explained the process with the grant. Amanda keeps seeing major issues, but we don't have funds to fix it. The water on hill, we don't have money for the sidewalks, the bridge. Where is all the money? B. Caron said the money is there waiting on the red tape. T. Letson said this is one of the down sides of going after grants – they have contingencies; sometimes they are costly and unrealistic in time spans. The Town voted at an annual meeting to do the sidewalks via this grant which may mean waiting until 2026. Amanda said it's obviously not working is anyone else embarrassed, it's embarrassing, where is our pride.

Eric commented - talking about the sidewalks, we have trucks why can't we fix it ourselves? Waiting 2 years so that someone gets hurt is ridiculous. Why can't the board make an emergency declaration to get this fixed?

Ryan pointed out it took 2 meetings to get a new cruiser. You mentioned that the money in the account needs to be spent within one year. Tammy said in the past yes, this year we did 5 years. B. Caron suggested at the last meeting that we dig it up and replace it with gravel. It doesn't match the ADA standards. J. Weagle said once we touch them – they need to be up to ADA requirements. Sean asked if you are allowed to do a percentage of the repairs without being ADA compliant. Discussion ensued about the ADA requirements.

A. Anderson asked Officer Daisey for his input. If he would want to deal with a call for 6-year-old child who is riding their bike to school and gets hit and killed because of the sidewalks. We want to put that risk out there. S. Durkin asked if we could find out what the ADA requirements are for sidewalks. J. Weagle will investigate it. Ryan asked if you could call over to Gorham and find out the cost of the tar. We are problem solvers and need to start working towards this. We rely on the Board to get this stuff done. It seems like we are pushing you into something that you don't want to talk about. T. Letson said it was discussed at the last meeting. Glenn told everyone that he is taking steps to call vendors; he's not getting them to come. They don't want to come out. Tammy will follow through and find out if we can put it in our trucks and do it ourselves.

The Board will try to have some answers at the next meeting. Glenn will also be at the next meeting for further discussion.

8. Announcements:

- a. Upcoming Labor Day Holiday – Town office closed on 9/4/23. Everyone have a safe and happy Labor Day.

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9. Next Board Meeting Date: Tuesday, September 5, 2023

****Public Comment cont.**

6. Michael Sullivan was here to find out what the concerns are with his property at 271 State St. T. Letson gave him the choice of meeting in a Non-Public Session or during this public session. He was ok to meet during the public session.

T. Letson said he was sent a Letter to clean up the property. For every letter he's received he has sent a reply. 271 State St. is across from the Dollar General, you can't see it from the road. B. Caron said numerous letters were sent to residents to clean up due to complaints from neighbors that it's devaluing their property. Some people have cleaned up their property and some haven't. Others have been taken to court by past Boards.

T. Letson gave the Board 3 pictures from 3 different years of the property to review. B. Caron asked if he's requesting the Board to turn a blind eye? Sullivan asked what the main concern is? Caron said it's esthetic to neighbors' properties. M. Sullivan said he sent a letter to the Board because he was willing to work with him. Instead, he received a cookie cutter letter. J. Weagle asked him why he doesn't just clean up the property. Sullivan said it takes time and money and a fence would buy him time. He does keep paying his taxes and water even though he doesn't use any water.

He wants to start with a fence at the roadside. B. Caron said a fence would help. Sullivan asked if it would help or take care of the situation, so he doesn't have to drive up here again. Sullivan said he inherited the property. He referred to the letter that was sent referring to 9 years and nothing had been done. He's done a lot. What is the main concern of it? Safety or aesthetics; a fence will take care of both. B. Caron and J. Tierney agreed with that. Sullivan requested that we send him a copy of the minutes. T. Letson said she has been told that someone is interested in the property but hasn't been able to connect with him. Sullivan said there is a number on the sign.

Amanda asked who gets a letter when it comes for the Board; B. Caron said it comes to the office, he had not seen the letter that M. Sullivan had. Sean said it was a boiler plate letter that was returned to him, what's up with that? Tammy said she will have to address the mail issue. Norm Cotter asked when something is mailed to the Town Office; it appears to him that someone is taking the mail and looking at it. T. Letson explained it comes into a department and that department sorts and distributes. She will follow through on it.

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

Motion to go into Non-Public Session by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 3-0
Roll call – J. Tierney – Yes, J. Weagle – Yes, B. Caron - Yes

Into Non-Public Session at 7:33 pm

Motion to come out of Non-Public session by: J. Weagle
2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 3-0

Out of Non-Public Session at 8:31 pm

Into Regular Session at 8:31 pm

Briefly reviewed Non-Public Session for sections to be sealed – there were none sealed.

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11. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by: J. Tierney, 2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

Regular meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca L St Cyr
Minute Taker

*Agenda is subject to change

**Deadline for Agenda items is 12:00 noon on the Friday before scheduled business meeting

(By vote of Board of Selectmen at 7/11/2005 meeting)

Minutes approved by Northumberland Select Board Members on _____

X _____
William Caron
Northumberland Select Board Chair

X _____
Jim Tierney
Northumberland Select Board Member

X _____
Jim Weagle
Northumberland Select Board Member