



Town of
Northumberland
Office of Selectmen
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**Town of Northumberland
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes – Draft
Date: **Monday, December 11, 2023**
Place: **Town Meeting Room – 10 Station Square****

Board members present: J. Tierney, B. Caron, Jim Weagle - Remote
Others present: Tammy Letson, Norm Cotter, Pete Marshall, Al Rossetto, Sean Durkin, Judy Fox, Glenn Cassady, Reggie Charron, Kathy Frechette, Andre Basseur, Melinda Kennett, John Richard, Angella Richard, William Daisey, Rebecca St Cyr – Minute Taker

1. Chairman Opens the Public Hearing:

B. Caron opened the Public Hearing at 6:01 pm

2. Discussion of Acceptance of Unanticipated Funds:

T. Letson said the Public Hearing notice was posted in the newspaper; we posted the meeting. The original agenda didn't go out with the Public Hearing on it. The agenda was revised and posted with the Public Hearing. For transparency Tammy recommended tabling approval until the next meeting.

1) We have the Highway Block Grant - \$14,315.81, which is above and beyond our normal Highway Block grant money. There are no limitations other than the typical limitations that it needs to be used as any other Highway Block grant would be used.

2) We are about to receive some additional Bridge Aid money, they haven't posted a list yet, but it's approximately \$15,000 for additional Bridge Aid money. For the money we received previously was to use the funds towards replacement of the culvert on Herman Savage. At the moment there is not an expiration date for either of the 2 pots of money.

3) Highway Safety grant - \$27,400 – the Board accepted the grant this is the acceptance of the funds.

4) The Body Camera grant - \$15,033. We have now applied to a similar grant for dash board cam's.

There were on public comments.

3. Table of Public Hearing:

Motion to table until the next meeting on Dec. 18, 2023 by: J. Tierney, 2nd by: J. Weagle - All in favor 3-0

Roll Call: J. Tierney – Yes; B. Caron – Yes; J. Weagle - Yes

4. Chairman Opens the meeting:

B. Caron Opened the meeting at 6:06 pm

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5. Acceptance of Minutes:

Motion to approve the Nov 20, 2023 minutes by: J. Tierney
2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0
Roll Call: J. Tierney – Yes; B. Caron – Yes; J. Weagle – Yes

6. Department Head Business:

Highway – Glenn Cassady, Town Road Agent

- We were plagued with several breakdowns –
 - 3 - Solenoid issues with 3 vehicles. 1 – in the Back Hoe, 1 - in Randy’s transmission; we fixed it ourselves. The air compressor stopped working.
 - There was another issue with the back hoe last week with some electronic codes. All emissions, it was due to too much carbon. They want us to run it at full rpm’s.
 - The air ride cab on the freight liner had to be changed.
 - The bobcat (a 2012) lost its fan cooling hydraulic motor. We couldn’t get parts, sent it out to a hydraulic place in Littleton. They got a seal in it, and they hope it lasts. WE wanted a new motor, but there are none to be had. It could be 2-4 months to replace it. We researched it online; there are no machines to be had; unless we bought a new one or leased one, but the mileage is limited. The company in Littleton called with a seal so it’s back up and running. It’s holding so far.
- We did some housecleaning on the budget.
- We hauled 16 loads of gravel for Reggie and took loads of gravel and stone out to Page Hill to store until mud season.
- The Overhead Door company will be here Thursday and Friday to replace the doors. We built curtain frames and bought tarps at OSJL and them put up to keep some of the wind and air out. Will be doing this towards the end of the week.
- We are cold patching with the thaw and freezing weather that we’ve had.
- We had 3 call ins last week due to storms.
- Helped the Water Dept with the Ross Valve.

Bill Caron mentioned his Dad might have some spare parts if needed. Glenn said the repairs haven’t been high dollar amounts. The EGR cooler could be \$3,000.

Sean Durkin – Page Hill Rd. Lancaster maintains part of it, he asked if we work with them on grading, etc. He asked if there are separate contracts; Glenn said we have tried to coordinate the grading with them. Tammy said their road agent said they would be interested in continuing up the road but doesn’t know how much to charge us. She has spoken with the Town Manager, and he’s left it with the Road Agents. Sean thought it might be more reasonable if it’s the whole road. J. Tierney said it’s a question of the charge. We don’t want to pay Lancaster a profit when we can hire our own. They have their own grader. Discussion continued re: hiring it out vs. hiring Lancaster. B. Caron said the contractor that we use for the back side of river might charge us more if they don’t do Page Hill also. Sean reminded that you would need to find out what it is.

Water/Sewer – Reggie Charron, Supervisor

- Averaging 225 for daily demand on Town; that the best it’s been for a while. Water is expensive.
- We utilized Randy and Glenn for a day on the Ross Valve dismantle at the water plant. It was a suppression valve to help with the hammering in Town. The headache is gone, everything is cleaned up, it’s all electronic and done by the variable speed drives. It was approx.. \$14,000. He has remote access to operate them now. J. Tierney asked if it’s the Prima America hammering? Reggie said when the pumps come on and off if you didn’t have a suppression valve – w/o variable speeds it would cause hammering. Reggie said with the variable speed drives it’s smooth. The Project did get finished. He can run and

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- see the plant from wherever he is on his phone. It's really nice. The other 2 will have theirs tomorrow. We've come a long way; the system has no parts that we can't get. The new technology has a 10 year life span. It will be easier but will need upgrades in the future. Fitch Engineering did a good job and thank you to Randy and Glenn.
- Working hard on the LCRR inventory due October 2024 – we are going to have to get pictures of everyone's lines in their basements. We are working on it, but it's taking some time. We don't have any lead pipes; we have some galvanized and they are making that a big deal. The hill project will eliminate a lot of the problems. There is a 3" galvanized line off Paper St., which he's working on.
 - There have been a few shut off's for winter, people are staying here longer. We are charging for this service.
 - Monitoring meters for high usages because in the winter things change.
 - Did his budget clean up and spent the money where we needed to for man hole covers. He sent the Board an email regarding paving the State, Dist. #1 wants to do. We need to look into that.
 - Bought some meters, he got enough for the final stage of the meter replacements - 74 and had 96. We will be set up for next year. Trying to do all that we can due to the W/S project on the hill. It's going to be expensive.
 - Hill Project – we met with USDA, Cathy Conway, everything is on schedule they are working on the final design. Steve met with Tammy and Reggie and went over the new design. WE are trying to save where we can. We need to deal with the RR on a permit. Tammy said Cathy reached out after the meeting; there are a few houses where they can't find where the lines are. Some of the homeowners will be receiving a call from Horizons. Reggie said they will need him for that as well.
 - We will be reading meters again in early January and will be asking homeowners (that can) to take a picture of their lines and email it.

Sewer

- NH DES Operations Division came up. There is a new code of ethics for waste water operators, they are taking very seriously. In the end he received 2 reports from them today and everything was fine. We have a backup operator - Keith who is a class 1 operator. They told us that we needed a class 2. They downgraded us to class 1. T. Letson will email the reports to the Board for their review. They tell us we need 3 people to run the plants. It's good information; we are far ahead of a lot of Towns. The licensee's aren't there any longer and now they are enforcing it.
- Bad News – to clean the lagoons, it will be \$5-\$6 million. Reggie further discussed. In the spring we are going to go out and profile the ponds to see how much time is left on them.

S. Durkin commented that Reggie and Glenn are doing a great job. Regarding the RR are you looking for some type of approval to tear the tracks up and go through or can you bore underneath? Reggie said the existing line runs parallel to the track from Cumberland St. back into Town. We are missing a manhole somewhere, which he thinks is in the building. They want to run the sewer line from Cumberland St. down – with the amount of ledge up there it needs to be in that area. Tammy said it's close to the tracks, we will be in their right of way, we won't go under them. In some areas it's a very narrow space to work on. Reggie said if we stay with the same line we should be ok.

Sean – the property that Chapman owns. The Towns people paid a lot of money; is there going to be a tax fee to cover that expense? Reggie said right now we can't do that; we would be changing our policy. We haven't come up with a plan yet for a user fee program. Sean asked how many taps are on the property now? There are some extensions for areas that aren't developed. Reggie said there are 3 - 6" lines discussion continued regarding the lines. Durkin said the Town should come up with a plan. Plus, their property value is way under where it should be; Reggie and Tammy have talked about this – we don't see companies coming in. Durkin said the value is going to go up over time. Reggie discussed Q Hydrogen; they are not using any of our water; people don't realize how much water is coming into the

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property now. There's a 12" line coming from somewhere that he hasn't been able to trace. Durkin said something has to be done with that property – it can't just sit idle.

R. Charron said we have tax incentives for businesses to come in, to a point. We've all talked about it and agree that we need a committee to look at it. J. Tierney said it's the electricity, that's the hold up. Any of the Canadian companies that have come and looked and see what the Eversource prices are – they are not interested. Reggie said there is a hydrant on the outside of the gate that's hooked up to the river; we need to ask why aren't they producing energy yet. B. Caron said federal law says if you are an energy production facility, you are required to have armed security on site. He was told that they have to be trained and armed by April. Reggie further discussed. If they start making power, he feels businesses will come. T. Letson said the Planning Board will need to be involved as well.

7. Requested Agenda Matters:

- a. Al Rossetto – Assessment Matters – Al provided information on the current assessment process. He looked at residential; S. Durkin looked at commercial. We are trying to give the Board information about the current assessment process that doesn't make sense.

Al discussed his property card; he spoke with the assessors, specifically asking about extra fixtures listed under building adjustments. The assessor asked if he had any extra fixtures, he said no. His home has 3 full bathrooms. The property card shows 6 extra fixtures for \$3,000. However, under plumbing fixtures it shows the extra fixtures as 0. He spoke with John who was going to review and call him back. Al never received a call back.

He researched how to read a property card and line 57 "The total extra fixtures means the number of extra bathroom fixtures such as extra sinks or extra shower stalls. He doesn't have that, so why is he being charged? Under building adjustments, it shows flooring material at his house as \$2,304. He looked at other property cards, why is everyone not charged for flooring. He reviewed the description of his flooring. On different property cards, the flooring is shown as carpet / hardwood, but under building adjustments there is no charge for flooring. Why is he being charged for flooring when others are not?

Al also provided more information about registering a new car in Northumberland. Al reviewed the process at the Town office, he had questioned the amount. He was told the suggested retail amount at \$66,000. His purchase agreement is for \$50,880 including delivery. He was told the Town goes by Kelley Blue Book and it can't be changed. The total registration fees he paid were \$1,238.20. He looked on the Town website and the value did show as \$66,000, but the local fees at \$885 and not \$1083.00

There are 2 ways to look up the cost of a new registration. 1) It can be looked up by year, make and model; the system will allow you to put the price on the MV purchase agreement. Or by VIN #. By VIN # it only allows you to choose between a model Y - long range or model Y – long range FSD. He has a standard range, dual motor, Model Y, which isn't listed at all. The price on the registration currently is \$66,000 and \$50,880 which is \$15,120 difference. He is asking for the Select Board to reimburse him for the amount that he's been over charged on the new and renewal registrations. When you can go to the Town the web site and there are 2 – 3 different #'s, that you should be paying it seems a little odd.

We are not looking at abatements we are trying to give the Board information about the assessments that's just been completed doesn't make sense.

S. Durkin - We all agree that bringing business into Town is important. He thinks it will help the tax base and lower everyone's taxes. He asked if anyone looks at the assessments when they come out. T. Letson said it does go through the assessing clerk, she doesn't think she looks at them. NH DRA does, they go through tests, they take

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samplings of them to say if they agree with the amounts. We did get a report from them, they have a minimum of acceptable number for differences, based on their opinion and the assessors. We were below their minimum. The person that looks at them is from COOS County but may not live here now.

There are a couple of commercial assessments that Sean pointed out.

- 1) Prima America, 248 State St., - 8.3 acres that's not in current use. Their price / acre is \$7,395.00/acre. Sean has .97 acre and is being charged \$148,000 for it – not commercial. Building - their replacement value: \$28.46/sq. ft.
- 2) Global Investments, 48 Mechanic St. - 2.45 acres; \$9,250/acre; Building – replacement cost: \$8.82 / sq ft.
- 2) Rotobec, 150 Brown Rd. – 13.2 acres in non-current and 47 acres in current use; \$4,185/acre; Building cost – \$41.28 / sq. ft.
- 4) Chapman – He got more but feels everyone gets the point.

He's paying close to \$8,000 in taxes. He lives in a 1500 sq. ft. 1 bedroom house. It's a lot of money for him, a lot of money for anyone. He doesn't know how we check this or what avenues we go down. But we need to look at this and it needs to be adjusted, we are only hurting the tax payers here in Town. He is pro-business; businesses are going to help this economy but there also needs to be an acceptable level to compensate.

T. Letson said she agrees with what Sean said and it does need to be looked into. It does appear they are valued on the low side. Assessments are not based on replacement they're based on market value, which sometimes matches, and a lot of times doesn't. Sean said some of these are prime commercial locations and they should be paying higher than residential. B. Caron said he talked with the assessor's; they did say it's market based. As a homeowner the standard is property increases about 7% for re-sale. 6 years ago, his home was \$48,000 over 7 years it should be about a 50% increase – his went up 125%. There are homes in Town that the owners have condemned which tripled in value. There are people from out of state bidding and inflating the prices. His neighbor has a 50 year old trailer; it doubled in value and the land went from \$25,000 to \$75,000. There is a lot of discrepancy and how do we change it? S. Durkin commented that they are pricing people out of here.

The assessors are hired and sign a contract, which is renewed every 5 years. Durkin feels it's up to the Board to figure this out. J. Tierney said the last time there was an uproar with assessments; Ron Caron went to BTLA; they came out and said a number of things that were wrong. It could be the only way it can be done again. Individuals have to go and file a complaint. It needs to be investigated. M. Kennett said there have been a lot of abatement forms that have gone out. Discussion continued on the values of residential and commercial properties.

B. Caron commented that everyone needs to complain to the State.

P. Marshall said he bought 2 lots / 5 acres from the Town; one tripled and the other stayed the same. J. Tierney this is the type of complaint that can go to the State.

M. Kennett said some people are not complaining and have come in to pay and others that are complaining, she gives them a form.

Al Rossetto, the information he brought forward was just informational for the Board. He asked J. Tierney if he's suggesting that the citizens go to the State, which normally won't talk to us and file a complaint to an agency that doesn't take public input. J. Tierney said not you go to BTLA which does take complaints when you feel an assessment is wrong.

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They won at BTLA, it's a court. Al discussed filing for an abatement through the Town and the process. If we want to go to BTLA we have to pay \$65.00 to the State of NH for them to accept our petition to look at the overcharge. At some point the government needs to be more responsive to the absurdities of the sub-contractor that doesn't know what they are doing. Somebody has to step up for the citizens. He's asked the Board to look into the item's he presented to them. We are paying these people to do a service which needs to be done in a fair and equitable way.

8. Town Administrator Business:

- a. Election Warrant – B. Caron – the warrant needs to be signed. He read the warrant for the election on 01/23/24. M. Kennett gave them 2 one for the meeting room and the other the Town office.

Motion to sign by: J. Tierney, 2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0
Roll Call – J. Tierney – Yes; B. Caron – Yes; J. Weagle - Yes

M. Kennett mentioned the router box for wi-fi isn't working correctly. It shows that she's hooked to it, but it's not even plugged in. J. Weagle said Peter will be looking into it. Min said we were having trouble with it on election day.

- b. Other – Nothing discussed.

9. Applications/Permits and Warrants:

- a. Building Permits (4)-

1. Map/Lot 236-005 – Dean Brook MHP, putting in a slab. Swallow and Son is the contractor. A. Rossetto said this is the 2nd time they've done this. It's a federal law that requires the tie downs. The permit should only be valid based on those specs. The slab is already in, they poured the slab without the tie downs and then they came in after the fact for the permit. They paid the fee and the Late fee – total \$350.00. Al said there are no tie downs on the slab. B. Caron said he would vote to approve with the condition that the tie down are put in before a trailer can be placed.

J. Tierney said it would be illegal to put a trailer on it without the tie downs. T. Letson commented that a trailer can't be brought in until the tie downs are in. An exception was made on a lot that was hard to get into. Glenn said there are special anchors that need to be in the cement. Al said they are skirting it and shoveled it off to the home owners. Reggie said every time they do these slabs; they are hitting the water line. It's not our water, but we have to maintain it. There have been problems with this contractor. Glenn said we feel they need to be bonded.

There is an exception on the building permit that specifies the tie downs are needed prior to installation of a mobile home. Al further discussed the required specs., 4" is the standard. Tierney recommended holding the permit until the next meeting on 12/18 and asked T. Letson to talk with Sean at legal about the laws, etc.

Motion to table Building Permit 236-005 by: J. Tierney
2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0
Roll Call: J. Tierney – Yes; B. Caron – Yes; J. Weagle - Yes

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2. Map/Lot 236-005-MH-29 – Paul Bouchard, 162 Dean Brook Dr., 11’ x 32’ car port not attached to the house. Fees have been paid.
 Motion to approve by: J. Tierney
 2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0
 Roll Call: J. Tierney – Yes; B. Caron – Yes; J. Weagle - Yes

3. Map/Lot 105-07; Jenna Wheelock – For an addition 8’ x 22’ on the rear of garage. It’s all done. They paid the late fee.
 Motion to approve by: J. Tierney
 2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0
 Roll Call: J. Tierney – Yes; B. Caron – Yes; J. Weagle - Yes

4. Map/Lot 104-090 – Kelsey Ledger 10 Second St, Apt 2 – aluminum ramp. Fee has been paid.
 Motion to approve by: J. Tierney
 2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0
 Roll Call: J. Tierney – Yes; B. Caron – Yes; J. Weagle – Yes

b. Abatements (2) –

1. Map/Lot 205-009 – Town of Northumberland - Housekeeping. \$280.00.
 Motion to approve by: J. Tierney, 2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0
 Roll Call – J. Tierney – Yes; B. Caron – Yes; J. Weagle - Yes

2. Map/Lot 205-011 – Town of Northumberland – Housekeeping. \$515.00
 Motion to approve by: J. Tierney, 2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0
 Roll Call – J. Tierney – Yes; B. Caron – Yes; J. Weagle - Yes

10. **Public Comment:

- a. P. Marshall said he was talking with a resident at the trailer park; they told him the park had 2 slabs poured so they could rent the lots out. With the anchors, unless they knew the size of the trailer going onto it wouldn’t that vary depending on the size of the trailer.

- b. P. Marshall asked if there is anything the Board can do about the MV issue. It’s gone on and on, he stops by the office and see’s extra money being spent. It was supposed to be 1 year and gone beyond that. No one seems to know anything. J. Tierney said it’s not in DMV’s hands at this time. M. Kennett said she is going down tomorrow and intends to stop in. She has called and left a messages but gets nothing. Now she is paying her own lawyer, per their agreement it said October 27th.

- c. John Richard, Angella Richard – John asked if the Board came up with any accident investigation procedures? They had to pay for the accident report, but someone else didn’t. J. Tierney called for William Daisey to address.

Daisey said there are times at the discretion of the Chief when he will waive the fee for an accident report. The insurance company pays for and gets the report and those involved can then get it from them at no cost. Since this all happened, we have a policy where we only give them out to insurance companies unless there isn’t any insurance.

Angella asked for a copy of the Town’s Police Dept. for accident investigation procedures; Daisey said there isn’t one. We investigate the same every time, we follow the Police Standards. There was an investigation, this accident is with the County Atty, and the driver has been charged. Angella said the accident report shows there were no charges.

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Daisey explained their process. She asked why the Chief couldn't come to their shop to be more transparent. Daisey said sometimes we just don't know. Angella said it could have been communicated to us that it's being investigated, and charges are pending.

Daisey said there are a lot of moving parts, we might not have been effective communicating with them. John asked about Officer Dagesse, he has a complaint against him. John further discussed the Dagesse complaint; Angella asked him to be professional and then he took the girl down under the street light and they continued to laugh and giggle. Daisey asked if it would make sense as a police officer to get as much information as possible during an interview or interrogation in evidence that can be used against this person down the road. Angella feels he could have taken her off property.

John isn't happy because everything in the accident report isn't correct. Daisey said if you want a complete, effective investigation, it makes more sense to be nice. John and Daisey further discussed the accident / interview. Angella said the wrong tow truck operator is on the police report. She specifically asked not to have Jamie Arsenault. Discussion ensued regarding the driver's license, the State of issue and where she lives. John is trying to get the information because he needs to hire a lawyer.

Daisey said he overlooked this investigation with the Chief; there are criminal charges, we made an arrest, the investigation is complete. Angella and John further discussed the issues with the report / investigation.

Angella as a citizen she doesn't know the whole anger issues with the Town. In the long run, it would have gone a long way if the officer would have said he didn't have the answers and just shrug his shoulders. Daisey said in the future reach out; he will find out what he (Dagesse) has to say and will get back to them later this week.

T. Letson said you should come and ask for an abatement; exceptions are allowed. Reach out to Liz Ball to ask for an abatement form. Discussion ensued about replacing the home and the current codes, etc. Talked about setbacks and using the same foundation. J. Tierney said you can request a variance through the Zoning Board. Liz Ball is the clerk for the Planning and Zoning Boards and will work with you to be sure it goes before the correct board.

John is irritated with the whole process and not getting answers.

11. Announcements: The Town Office will be closed at noon on Friday, December 22, 2023, and all day on Monday, December 25, 2023, in observance of Christmas. The Town Office will also be closed all day on Monday, January 1, 2024, in observance of New Year's Day.

12. Next Board Meeting Date: Monday, December 18, 2023 – 6 pm

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

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

Into Non-Public Session at 8:11 pm.

Motion to come out of Non-Public Session by: J. Tierney
2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0
Roll Call: J. Tierney – Yes; B. Caron – Yes; J. Weagle - Yes

Non Public Session adjourned at 8:51 pm

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Into Regular Session at 8:51 pm

14. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn the Regular Session by: J. Tierney
2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0
Roll Call: J. Tierney – Yes; B. Caron – Yes; J. Weagle - Yes

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca 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)

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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

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