



Town of
Northumberland
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Town of Northumberland
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes - Draft
Date: Monday, July 17, 2023
Place: Town Meeting Room – 10 Station Square
Time: 6:00 P.M.

Board members present: Jim Weagle, Bill Caron, Jim Tierney
Others: Tammy Letson, Al Rossetto, Sean Durkin, Jim Gibson, William Daisey, Kathy Frechette,
Judy Fox, Rebecca St Cyr-Minute Taker

1. Chairman opens the meeting: B. Caron opened the meeting at 6:00 pm

2. Acceptance of Minutes:

Motion to approve the 07/10/23 minutes with corrections below by: J. Weagle
2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 3-0

J. Tierney said there are corrections – see below:

Attendance: Dylan – could not read the last name; technically he doesn't need to be listed.
Gary Brown needs to be added to the roster.

T. Letson noted that she removed an address that Kathy Frechette referenced from the draft minutes before they were sent out.

3. Department Head Business:

a. Ambulance and Police Depts – EMS Chiefs Report - Jim Gibson

1. 2023 as of this printing, we have had 248 calls to date.
2. 2022 at this time we were at 268 calls.
3. The Comstar report is not due until the 19th.
4. All ambulances are at par and up to date on maintenance and running well.
5. Included are emails regarding Medicare and NH Medicaid. As we discussed previously, we are required to collect and report all costs for operations and collections for the ambulance this calendar year; and then report it to Medicare by March 2024 for cost analysis. To hopefully increase reimbursement rates. The State of NH passed House Bill 2, which should increase our NH Medicaid payments by 3%. It is supposed to be effective July 1. T. Letson said that it's a 2-year cycle.

Jim included a couple of articles that speak about the conditions of the local EMS services in the area. He was included in an article in the Democrat and the surveys. He didn't attend a recent round table that was hosted by Executive Councilor Cindy Normington. Their big discussion was on transfers that many aren't making due to staffing. There is a lot of good information. There is not a Town in our area that is making money on just billing their 911 calls. This was reported by the Executive Council at this meeting.

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J. Tierney asked what the SAFER Grant is – Jim Gibson said available yearly; it's more Fire Dept based, but if Fire and EMS are together you can get grants to help with staffing and retention.

He thanked the Board for the cookout which was sponsored by them; his crew enjoyed it.

b. Police Dept: William Daisey

Since the last report there have been: 213 calls, 68 traffic stops, 3 arrests and 1 crash. Toward the end of June collaborated with Lancaster (in their town) for another sobriety check point, a couple of tickets were issued, but no arrests were made.

They were able to acquire quite a few bike helmets that are available for kids. J. Tierney asked if they would be doing a bike safety clinic at the school. Either before school starts or right after. W. Daisey will check into it. Jim said they would check the bikes, lights, etc. That's when they gave out the helmets. W. Daisey said we were late getting the helmets, we have quite a few, but a limited number in certain sizes. Starting next year, we could have them available year-round. He's not sure if they give out bike certifications.

B. Caron asked about National Night Out where all the EMS, Police, and Fire got together. J. Weagle said it stopped due to Covid; a lot of the agencies were not doing it. By next year we should be able to plan another one. B. Caron said it was well attended and would be a good place to give out helmets, etc.

4. Requested Agenda Matters: None were requested.

5. Town Administrator Business:

a. Follow-up discussion of vehicle leases - T. Letson heard from the other municipal leasing company, they came in with much better rates. The 2 rates we had so far are 1) - 7.75% for 3 or 4 years; 2) - 6.36% for 4 years or 6.27% for 5 years. The one that was missing – they will do 5 years; they have 2 percentages one based on making a payment in the 1st calendar year and one if you don't - 5.59% or 5.54%. No payment in the 1st year is the lower rate because there is the extra year of interest accrued.

B. Caron asked if we get 5 years out of the cruisers. Tammy said yes, we've got 8 years out of the ones that we have. The ones we are looking at have a better reputation as cruisers. W. Daisey said we are at 8 and 5 years now; he contacted a rep that brought a outfitted cruiser up; you could probably fit the Explorer in the Tahoe and still have room.

We are looking at leasing only one, to replace one of the older ones. The 8-year-old just had the motor replaced, so we would be replacing the other one. That would be the one that we would want to turn in. We own both current cruisers. The new one can be bought out at the end of the lease. It's a lease with a buy out of \$1.00 at the end - It's a lease / purchase.

S. Durkin asked if anyone had done a cost analysis of cost of purchase vs. lease over a 5-year period. Usually with leases there is a buyout of \$1.00 or a set purchase amount at the end. T. Letson said in a municipal lease it's the purchase price that gets leased. There isn't an extra buyout at the end. It's a lease / purchase. The cost difference would be the interest. The great thing about it for municipalities is the escape clause or non-appropriation clause. When it goes to Town Meeting, if the taxpayers zero out the line, the cruiser goes back. It's an as in trade and we walk away with just what we've paid them. Sean Durkin asked if there is a difference in the interest rate for a lease vs buy. J. Tierney said yes, a lease is lower. Sean asked if the cost is lower than a purchase. Jim said it's lower on a lease. He further discussed how it was done on a previous experience he was involved in.

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Al Rossetto asked, didn't the Town get low interest rates on the TAN notes? T. Letson explained that is a Tax Anticipation Note – It's not used for buying a vehicle. So, if the Town went out for a 5-year note it would cost more than the 5.50% on a lease? Tammy said she will check with our bank, but it would force us to wait until the Town Meeting. B. Caron said with the lease we would have the capability of drawing from the Capital Reserve account. Tammy agreed, but the balance of the account would be destroyed if we purchased from it.

T. Letson reached out to Noyes Chevrolet; they can't supply the vehicle and GM Financing doesn't do municipal leasing. She also reached out to No. Country Ford – the lady she talked to is new and wasn't familiar, but she will research the details and get back to us. It is something that they will do, and she will get back to us. Tammy thinks we should have the final approval as a Public Hearing at the Aug 7th Select Board meeting.

- b. Follow-up discussion of community power - T. Letson said this was tabled from the last meeting. This is to see if the Board wants to create a committee to research the concept. B. Caron said he did some reading on it; in California they are all doing rolling brown outs, he's not sure about it. J. Tierney said the committee would do the research and bring it back. Henry Noel has done a presentation about this, and some other committees are looking at it as well. T. Letson said there are only 2 companies in NH that's she's aware of. It doesn't mean it's going to happen; setting the committee up they will do the research and make recommendations back to the Board. Then it must go on the Warrant. J. Weagle, he understands if the committee says it's going on the Warrant, we must go with that.

Motion to set up a committee by: J. Tierney
2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

J. Tierney suggested 9 members and one Selectmen (Chair and no vote); Tammy would represent the Town; a School Board member or representative from the school needs to be on it also. If approved, this would take over the contract that we currently have with the school. There should be 6 residents. We have 3 that have already volunteered; Sean Durkin, Al Rossetto, and Courtney Robba (she works for Q Hydrogen).

J. Weagle wants to be on it as the Selectman, B. Caron abstained since he's not always here. J. Weagle will contact the School Board; J. Tierney said to stress to the School Board that they need to have representation. Tammy suggested Clint Bramlett; she will call him to see if interested. Tracy Morrill was suggested, he would be a good candidate if interested. J. Tierney suggested Dwight Berube.

Tammy will send the information she has to Sean and Al.

K. Frechette said if I understand this correctly, if it was passed - we don't have to go with it; we can opt out. Tammy said yes that's correct.

B. Caron said he used to belong to a Co-op for power and further discussed.

- c. Designate CDBG grant administrator – T. Letson said we just went through one grant for Brook View; the 1st grant was the preliminary study and now they are going for the construction funding. Brook View would like the same administrator, Andrea Muller. Tammy further discussed. There have not been any complaints or issues with her. Donna Lane recommended her.

Motion to keep Andrea Muller as administrator by: J. Tierney
2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

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- d. Highway Safety Grant Acceptance – T. Letson – The Board approved applying for this grant and now they are voting to accept it. We applied for it and received the Highway Safety grant and kudo’s to Lt. Daisey. It was submitted in the amount of \$12,900 and was approved for \$27,400, it’s a 75/25 grant. It pays for the officers to go out and do sobriety checks, speed control stops. We bill for the cruiser, which is the 25% match.

Motion to accept the Highway Safety Grant by: J. Tierney

2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

T. Letson asked if the Board wants to sign or assign someone.

Motion to make Tammy Letson the signer by: J. Tierney

2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

J. Tierney asked when the rules changed; it used to be when you apply you go under the assumption that you will get it; then when you do it’s no longer anticipated funds. Tammy said everyone looks at it differently. It starts in October, if we keep what we get from Oct 1 – December 1 less than \$10,000, we don’t need to have a public hearing. And then we can build it into the budget or just hold a Public Hearing for the \$27,400. W. Daisey further discussed the grant and the amount he thinks was 72 details. Tammy said all the details must be overtime – the State will not fund us for straight time, they will only do this if they have worked their 40 hrs. and are on overtime. If it’s a part time person, they need to be under 40 hrs.

- e. Garage Doors – Tammy reached out to NHMA; they said if it was a special warrant article then we are stuck with the wording. There isn’t anything in the article that makes it special, so it is an individual article. Once the work is done anything that’s left over can be spent as needed. She recommended sticking with the garage doors and getting more done. Troy won the bid.
- f. Other Business: B. Caron commented on follow-up letters that will be sent to residents that need to clean up their property. The Board just needed to sign them.

6. Applications/Permits and Warrants:

a. Building Permit

- 1. Richard Patry, Map 107, Lot 054 – the fee has been paid. Replacing Windows, new siding and insulating; Al Rossetto has signed.

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

7. Public Comment:

- a. Jim Gibson, the Town acquired some property. The owner had wanted to get a 911 number for it, does the Town want to pursue getting the 911 number. T. Letson suggested holding off since it’s the Town that owns it right now. She recommends waiting until it goes back to the owner. If it does go back to the owner, they must comply with the ordinance(s).
- b. Sean Durkin read the minutes from the last meeting. He asked about the backflow issue with Guildhall that was discussed. He understands if the backflow isn’t installed there is a possibility of contamination. J. Weagle said it’s mostly if a fire happens and said Lancaster has preventative measures they take if hooking into the line. Sean asked if Guildhall has been approached demanding they get this straightened out. J. Tierney said that’s what the committee is going to do and that’s part of what they got funding to do. They have received funding to rectify the issue.

Durkin asked if it would be wise to send them a letter with a time to get it fixed by from a legal standpoint. J. Weagle discussed what they (Guildhall) need to do; Sean said it’s not

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what they have to do, it's what the Town needs. T. Letson will reach out to Gary Brown and find out from him when they expect to have the money and will come back with a date that's viable. If the Town wants to set a sooner date, then Guildhall will end up having to borrow to do it. Sean asked why the Town is waiting for that, is there a possibility the grant will say no. T. Letson said this is new to her; Durkin said the Board needs to get on top of this, so if the grant doesn't come through, they have the Town covered. He said Reggie must know by now what the figure is to get it fixed.

T. Letson said she had asked the Board to allow her to talk with Gary Brown first. She agrees that it needs to be fixed sooner than later. If they have the funding and can do it, let's get it done asap. S. Durkin commented, "Let's negotiate from a point of strength because we supply the water. You have control over what goes on there. Put a call in to Guildhall to cover our base; let them know we will be sending them a letter within a period to get this resolved. If it's not, we are going to do what it takes to protect our taxpayers to get this resolved. Tammy said let's make the approach from facts. She doesn't know the repercussions of this. This was part of a warrant that was turned down at the Town Meeting.

Durkin said he is leery about this – 1) we have subsidized water to Guildhall for years; 2) subsidizing the Ambulance to other towns. Tammy said Guildhall pays for their water. Sean said yes at a lower rate, which concerns him. Tammy said they don't pay for the infrastructure. The other issue is subsidizing the Ambulance, and then you go to the School Board, and they are subsidizing students from other towns. The Board should be looking out for the people in this Town first.

J. Weagle said other towns are charged a flat rate which is based on the number of residents. S. Durkin said when the cost per student in this Town are \$19,000 and those out of Town pay \$17,000, we are subsidizing their students. When the ambulance goes out and it costs \$500 for out of town and it's \$800 in town – we are subsidizing.

J. Weagle said when we go to another town we get paid better. We get paid by a set Fed rate. VT has its own rate. Sean said from what he understands (from a previous meeting) we are subsidizing the ambulance. T. Letson said that it is what's said by the public not what the Board has told you. We receive the insurance money; we are also billing the appropriate town to have the service available. It's also in the contracts that the Towns get billed for those with no insurance. We've implemented it for this year; we are now saying to pay a percentage for the ambulance to have it sitting here waiting for calls. That's a cost if all the other towns left us, we would still have to pay. This year we are asking those other towns to help subsidize our ambulance.

Durkin said we have 2 ambulances; do we have the staff for 2 ambulances. J. Gibson said this year both ambulances have been out numerous times. Tammy said we can't guarantee that we have staff for 2 ambulances with 24/7 coverage. We can say that we can staff 24/7 for one and other on call to cover the second one. The Chief picks up an exorbitant number of calls to cover.

B. Caron said we are responsible. Right now, we are mopping up from past forefathers and we need to incrementally make changes. S. Durkin feels the Guildhall issue should have been taken care of and further discussed. J. Weagle said a letter was sent to Guildhall by a past Select Board, which was some time ago.

A. Rossetto asked when is the committee meeting? There hasn't been a meeting scheduled yet. Tammy needs to discuss with Reggie and call Gary. Let's do it with facts and knowledge from both sides.

J. Tierney also suggested talking to legal (Sean) from a legal standpoint. To see what we can and can't say in a letter to Guildhall.

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c. Kathy Frechette – the cookout was wonderful and thank you.

T. Letson said to clarify for the minutes, this picnic is not paid for by the taxpayers. The Select Board and she personally pays all the expenses.

8. Announcements: None

9. Next Board Meeting Date: Monday, August 7, 2023

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

Motion to go into Non-Public session by: J. Weagle

2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 3-0

Into Non-Public session at 7:09 pm

a. Legal Matter – The minutes are sealed until resolved.

Motion to come out of Non-Public session by: J. Tierney

2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

J. Tierney – Yes; J. Weagle – Yes; B. Caron - Yes

Out of Non-Public session at 7:18 pm

Into regular session at 7:18 pm

Motion to “Seal” the Non-Public minutes section a. by: J. Weagle

2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 3-0

J. Tierney – Yes; J. Weagle – Yes; B. Caron - Yes

There was no further business discussed.

11. Adjournment:

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:19 pm

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