



Town of
Northumberland
Office of Selectmen
19 Main St
Groveton NH 03582
Phone (603) 636-1450
Fax (603) 636-6098

www.northumberlandnh.org

**Town of Northumberland
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes - Draft**

Date: Tuesday, January 2, 2024

Place: Town Meeting Room – 10 Station Square

Time: 6:00 pm

Board members present: Jim Tierney, Jim Weagle

Others present: Tammy Letson, Judy Fox, Amanda Anderson, Melinda Kennett, Sean Durkin, Pete Marshall, Norm Cotter, Al Rossetto, Glenn Cassady, Reggie & Terri Charron, Andre Brasseur, Kathy Frechette, Rebecca St Cyr – Minute Taker

1. Chairman Opens the Board Business meeting:

J. Tierney opened the meeting at 6:02 pm

2. Acceptance of Minutes:

- a. 12/11/2023 - Motion to accept the 12/11/23 minutes by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J Tierney, All in Favor 2-0
- b. 12/18/2023 – Motion to accept the 12/18/23 minutes by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: J Tierney, All in Favor 2-0

3. Department Head Business: Water / Sewer and Highway Dept.

Glenn Cassady, Road Agent

- It has been an interesting month with the weather. The forecast is for 4" - 8" of snow and then warming back up into the 40's.
- Randy and Glenn both went out, pulled the York rake to straighten out the dirt roads and filled in potholes. We fared very well during the storm; the brooks got high, but there were no wash outs. On Silver Rd., the beaver dam in that area flooded over, but it just took the fines off the top of the road. We took out some gravel and dressed it back up. We tried to stay off the roads until they firmed back up.
- Al came in and congratulated us on what we did on Page Hill Rd. Al commented that they are out there doing it manually. Page Hill is a dirt road and gets an enormous amount of traffic. Glenn said it needs more work with all the rain we had last week.
- Glenn commended our crack sealing program; he's been to other towns that haven't been doing it. He's glad we do what we do, sealing the cracks to help preserve the pavement.
- Randy has been busy doing repairs on Reggie's vehicles and Reed has been doing some deep cleaning in the shop.
- There is some brush cutting that we can get out and do.
- Briefly discussed employees out sick and the quarantine period.
- Didn't do too much work for Reggie. Glenn said he observed Bart doing all the digging; he did an excellent job.
- Briefly discussed recent water breaks.

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- Cleaned up some of the budget line items.

Reggie Charron, Water/Sewer Supervisor

- Had a couple of major leaks on Lancaster Rd.; one was the main line near the Meeting House. It was noticed on Sunday. The couplings have rubber seals which got slack and loose. Once that was isolated, there was another private line that burst. We've been after the property owner to fix this line for several years. We were up to 225,000 gallons per day and now we're at 198,000 or less gallons of water per day. The lines have been leaking for some time and we don't see it until it surfaces. Reggie further discussed.
- We finished the year at 93,000,000 gallons of water pumped. Compared to three (3) years ago, our best was 62-63. We've been running between the 93 and 62 for the last four (4) or five (5) years. With the leaks that we just found, we caught about half of where we should be. We are back on que.
- Lost Nation water -1,300,000- that's the best we've ever been. It has been steady and good, it's a smaller system and easier to keep track of.
- Reggie has been working diligently on the LCR compliance program for NH DES and EPA. Reggie has another meeting with them. The quarter 4-meter reads started today. There will be an insert with the bills requesting that homeowners (that can) take a picture and email to him. This needs to be done by October.
- Sink hole on the Brooklyn St. pump station - with the storm we had in December, we had a sink hole that was going out of sight. Reggie said we put in 7 buckets of stone (21 yards) to fill in an old tank that was there from years ago. It's right beside the new water line in front of the sewer tanks. He spoke with Richard Marshall, who advised that the tanks are old and in cement, 3 stories deep. Reggie further discussed the old tank. Richard Marshall advised not to try digging it up.
- Lost a circuit breaker on Perras Rd on the pumps. That was on Christmas day. It was a circuit breaker that is obsolete now. Ron Caron came up with a plan to make it work. Ron will be unavailable, but has it set up so we should be fine. Fred Rainville will be Ron's back-up.
- There was a safety issue with one of the trucks, Randy got it straightened out. We started talking about needing a new truck. We need to "move on it" in the interim. We have been working with local dealerships for quotes. We need a utility bed. They make an aluminum body. One quote came in at \$73,000 - 74,000 complete with aluminum body...a 2500 - 3/4-ton Chevy. Randy is working on more numbers. There is money in the CRF to purchase. T. Letson said there are also ARPA funds. J. Tierney asked for the spec sheet on the truck when they get it and wanted to know if the front end is boosted or standard? Reggie further discussed the quote. The engine will not be diesel. We want to get away from diesel. Tierney suggested having the truck weighed to compare the weight limits. Gas will be a lot lighter.

4. Requested Agenda Matters:

- a. Fish and Game Tax Exemption - waiting to have application reviewed.

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5. Town Administrator Business:

- a. Running Water Program (RWP) – T. Letson – The High School and Fire Station
Motion to approve the High School RWP by: J. Weagle,
2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0
- b. Other - none

6. Applications/Permits and Warrants:

- a. None - Liz has been on vacation and will get them ready for the next meeting.

7. **Public Comment:

1. Al Rossetto commented. At the last meeting, he provided the Board with some information on registering his Tesla. J. Tierney said he will be in Concord and will check with the DMV. Al said he could have saved \$200.00 if he had done the registration online. M. Kennett said the amount he's seeing is for next year's renewal. Min suggested that J. Tierney speak with Eldora before visiting the DMV.

Al has a friend in Canterbury that is a Selectman. He and his wife are buying a Tesla Model Y. He went to his Town Clerk and she suggested putting in the info for the vehicle, then adjusting the suggested mfg. retail price to what was paid. Al further discussed what his vehicle is. Min commented that the Town Clerk needs to answer to the auditor and that you need to be careful doing a favor for a Selectmen.

J. Tierney will talk with Eldora and will be back to Concord next week. Al said that the Kelley Blue Book numbers are wrong. Al asked the Borad to do what they can.

2. Amanda asked what is going on with Min's position, would it be advertised, and what is the intent of the Board if no one signs up for it? Min said that as of right now, no one has even inquired about it. J. Tierney said one person asked him, but hasn't decided. They asked if it would be advertised. We won't know until the filing period. He suggested they check the papers. If there aren't people to fill the position, we can go out and ask/appoint an interested party. If appointed, it would be until the term ends. Min wants it to be on the ballot. J. Tierney said if she resigns the position before the filing period, then it can be on the ballot. Min has put in her intent to retire. She said she won't resign until after the election on Jan. 23rd and then they are supposed to appoint her as interim to get through until after the Town election. Tierney said the position has to be vacant per the Secretary of State's office. Min commented that it's an elected position and should be that way.
3. Sean Durkin had 3 items to discuss:
 - 1) What's going on with the electrical coop that was discussed a while ago? Sean is running for State Rep and has been visiting other towns. A lot of other Towns are proceeding with joining the coop. He heard they are estimating a \$10.00 - \$20.00 savings per month per household. It must be done by a certain time, which may have passed or is going to pass. J. Tierney said the ball was dropped. Durkin said that's unacceptable, we need to keep moving on this. T. Letson noted that Sean is referring to the program for every residence in Town. He's not sure who is responsible for setting up a committee. Tammy said the Board gives suggestions of people to call and

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that she dropped the ball due to Becky leaving. This is one of the things that got put by the wayside by her. We will go back to the minutes to review who was talked about as being on it.

A. Anderson commented she is wondering how many more opportunities for taxpayers are lost because stuff isn't getting done. We need to start implementing things that are on the radar.

2) Sean Durkin – Revaluations – His went up 400%. People came in and bought properties at exorbitant prices, then the prices went up. He did some research and went into Mechanic St. – in 2009 they paid \$800,000; 2019 another lot for \$975,000; 2021 they bought another piece for \$1.25 million. In the assessments, the surrounding properties didn't change. For six (6) acres, they paid approx. \$1.25 million, but are being assessed at \$38,000. He paid \$35,000 for fourteen (14) acres, he put .97 into current use and is paying \$148,000 on his less than one (1) acre. They didn't reassess anything on that property at all, but they did for him.

T. Letson said we reached out to the DRA and they wouldn't speak with us until a report is received from the assessors. We need to find out what the date is. Tammy will need to review the date. The starting of the clock depends on when the assessors deem the re-evaluations complete. Tammy also told the assessors that we have concerns with inconsistencies. Discussion ensued about other properties that don't appear to be correct. Tammy will appreciate the info from Sean. The more specifics we can give to the assessors, the better off we will be.

A. Rossetto said when he and Gail received their evaluation, their house was assessed for \$359,000. The lot went from \$33,000 to \$120,000. They were also charged for six (6) extra fixtures. He called and spoke with John. There was also an issue with flooring. He didn't approach them about the land or the building. John didn't call him back. The following week the evaluation went from \$359,000 down to \$319,000. It dropped \$40,000 because he called and complained. He asked if this is a professional organization? Al doesn't believe it's professional and their decisions are arbitrary and facetious. J. Tierney said they fell down on this evaluation. In the past, they did a good job. We brought them in fifteen (15) years ago. Durkin said there is a short coming somewhere. Nobody at the Town Office looks at it when the information comes in. J. Weagle said when it comes in, it's a big stack and we do review it, but don't look at every single one.

3) Sean said he lives on a private road and doesn't get any benefits. We maintain the road, etc. There are some that are getting an adjustment factor. If he's reading it correctly, it's .75% and they have been getting it since 2014. Anyone on a private road should be getting this as well. It needs to be looked at for all private roads and people need to be reimbursed for this. Discussion continued regarding the re-evaluations and the issues. Al commented if what he's seen is any indication, then these people don't know what they are doing. J. Weagle discussed DRA. They won't give us any answers until it's final. When it's final with them, then it must go through BTLA.

Min said that in her nineteen (19) years, Elaine was comfortable working with the assessors (CNP) and had a good working relationship with them. J. Tierney said they need to give us some answers and we need to find out what can be done and what DRA will allow us to do. It could have been a data entry error. If they can't or won't do

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it, BTLA will need to be involved. They told Purvis how to fix the problem. Tierney said if everything is overvalued there isn't enough money in the treasury to reimburse everyone. Min said a lot of abatement forms have been handed out. Tierney said everyone needs to be treated the same. Seans concerns are legitimate and they need to be fixed. He said we will see what can be done. Individuals need to go to CNP. They sent us the abatements and if we don't agree, then they go to BLTA. Further discussed previous revaluations.

Amanda asked how long the contract is with the assessors. J. Tierney explained that it's usually five (5) years. They do 25% in years 1-4 and in year five (5), they do pickups, etc. Nobody gets moved up in year 1-4. T. Letson said that there are two (2) contracts: one for the revaluation and a 2nd contract for the general pick-ups with building permits. It ends with this revaluation.

Amanda asked why commercial properties pay less than residential? She said that there is a lot wrong on the property cards. USDA was a former owner of the house that she currently rents. It was a foreclosure. She looked at Min's house and there isn't any history on it. On Lancaster Rd., it shows that a company owns someone's house, and they own it. She further discussed her property card and compared others. She also reviewed other property cards. The sales history isn't there, but it could be too old.

Al commented that directly across Long View, there is a lot that's being worked on. John from the assessing company went to the lot and insisted that he was from the Town of Northumberland Building Dept. The owner said "No, get out of here." John didn't have a badge on. J. Tierney said they should say they are from the assessing company for the Town of Northumberland.

4. Kathy Frechette said she is the one that found the sink hole and the crew was quick to respond to put a cone out. JW said we are working on a new app to text road issues, etc...which will go directly to the Road Agent.

8. Announcements:

The Town Offices will be closed on Monday, January 15, 2024, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr./Civil Rights Day.

9. **Next Board Meeting Date:** Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at 6 pm

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

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

Into Non-Public Session at 7:17 pm

Motion to adjourn the Non-Public Session by: J. Weagle
2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0

Non-Public Session adjourned at: 7:34 pm

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Into Regular Session at: 7:34 pm

Briefly discussed re-scheduling the Budget Workshop which was scheduled for today (01/02/24). January 5th is open. J. Weagle will let Tammy know if he is available on January 5th.

Discussed an NHMA email regarding a house bill about Right To Know legal fees, court cases, reimbursement and putting bills in for approval. If the court deems that we have done everything right, we still have to pay the lawyer.

11. Adjournment:

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm

*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