

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Select Board

Approved Minutes for Meeting of December 3, 2024 at 5:00 PM

Town Offices, 15 Mechanic Street, Alstead, NH 03602

SELECT BOARD PRESENT: Joel McCarty, Chair, Gordon Kemp, and Matthew Saxton.

STAFF PRESENT:

Name	Position	In Person	Google Meet
Misty Gratacos	Town Administrator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shelley Steuwe	Recording Secretary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prescott Trafton	Road Agent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jesse Moore	Director of Sanitation, EMS & Grounds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rich Beringer	Fire Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hans Mayer	Fire Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ben Kercewich	Fire Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bobbie Wilson	Supervisors of the Check List	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: In person: Barbara Viegner, Marge Noonan, Rich Nalevanko, Joe Levesque, Judith Willis, Glen Elsesser; **Google Meets:**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. McCarty called the Select Board meeting to order at 5:00 PM and then proceeded with leading the agenda-based discussion.

GUESTS:

ACTION ITEMS: Review & sign Bills Manifest (\$); Review emails from Glen Elsesser regarding Bridge Cash Flow, 1A2 engine replacement and 2025 Proposed Warrant Articles; email from Jensey Graham; review email regarding "maps of town roads/plowing".

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: 11/26 meeting minutes were reviewed, amended and approved as amended by the Board.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. **Washed-out glass** – Mr. McCarty reports that the Board will put a line item in Streets and Bridges for glass recovery, since it will be a multi-year project, and suggests to the rest of the Board (for later discussion) that \$70,000 be appointed to that effort. The Board asks Mr. Levesque to add a line item to Streets and Bridges.
- B. **Thayer Brook bypass** – Mr. Trafton reports that he is trying to negotiate a contract created by a bridge designer, but is having a difficult time making the designer's bid proposal work for FEMA. He still hopes to have it available for a warrant article this year. Mr. McCarty notes that it needs to be close to complete by the 1/21 Town Budget Hearing meeting. Mr. Trafton notes that he also asked for a deadline for Hazard Mitigation, but has not received that information yet.
- C. **Bridge projects** – Mr. McCarty reports that he is awaiting a year end statement from Hoyle Tanner. There was discussion between Mr. Elsesser and the Board about the way the financials for the bridge work are listed in the budget. Mr. Kemp also notes that he received more confirmation from DRA that by using the Capital Reserve Fund, there is no way to take the reimbursement and put it directly back in there. It needs to be rolled over into Fund Balance and then put in the following year. He thinks the best way forward is to come up with a "worst case" financial scenario for each of the bridges and have a warrant article for them and use the Fund Balance to cover whatever is left of the Town's 20% liability on engineering and the first couple of payments for construction to get hold the Town over until reimbursements start coming in. For the remainder of those warrant articles DRA has confirmed that the Bridge Aid can be used as offsetting revenue. Mr. McCarty will ask his point of contact at NHDOT what other towns are doing in this situation, and will report back with his findings.
- D. **Dams** – Mr. McCarty reports that he is awaiting final report from Dubois and King, which will include four different strategies to move forward into 2025 (for both dams).
- E. **Status of property at M11 L2 (abuts Town Hall)** – No updates.
- F. **Model T MOU** – No updates.
- G. **Fire Dept Policies** – Mr. Kemp reports that he has reviewed several and returned them to the committee with suggestions.
- H. **Pine Cliff Rd info/updates** – Mr. McCarty reports that he is awaiting final report from Dubois and King, which will include four different strategies to move forward into 2025 (for both dams).
- I. **210 Gilsum Mine Road land merger talks** – No updates.
- J. **Complete Streets Information** – No updates.
- K. **Ambulance Revolving Fund** – Mr. McCarty reports that this has been established and funded.
- L. **Department & Board**

NEW BUSINESS:

- Open enrollment for Aflac for all full-time employees on 12/12 at 1:00 pm, Town Offices (w/ Vanessa).
- Review & discuss 2025 OEM Budget – \$34,365. The budget was reviewed, discussed, and given to Mr. Levesque to be added to the spreadsheet.
- Budget presentation for Library –
 - Mr. Saxton is asking for \$53,445. The budget was reviewed, discussed, and given to Mr. Levesque to be added to the spreadsheet.
- Ms. Bacon reports that she is hiring a Deputy Town Clerk for 10-15 hours a week
- Cheshire Community Power – Mr. McCarty received an email from them, and the Town has declined to participate as a Town, though individuals can participate individually.

OTHER ITEMS: Mr. Nalevanko announces that as part of his new role as State Representative he put forth proposed legislation (at Mr. Kemp’s recommendation) for ambulance lighting. He will be in Concord most days for meetings, but will continue to try to attend Selectboard meetings. Mr. McCarty asks how we should reach out to him with questions and concerns, and he says that he’ll have an official email address soon, and will share that with the Board once it’s available.

Mr. McCarty reports that Mark Pitts says that the market being what it is for plastic, we should stop recycling plastic. Director Moore says that on the days that the Transfer Station is not open, staff needs to sort through the plastic, costing extra money in man hours. That said, he worries that if we stop recycling plastic now, and the price of plastic goes up in the future we’ll have to go back to recycling, which results in re-training staff. Mr. Kemp notes that we’ve been having this discussion for a while and the price has not changed enough to be worth it. Mr. McCarty suggests putting the sign trailer at the dump notifying the public that we will no longer be recycling plastic. Director Moore suggests putting the cardboard recycling where the plastic recycling is as there’s a safety issue with the current setup. Mr. McCarty asks Director Moore to put together a proposal for restructuring based on this discussion, which he will do and will bring to the Board for review. Mr. Saxton notes that he feels the residents who have been recycling plastic will feel undercut by this change. Mr. Nalevanko suggests providing educational materials to residents when they visit the dump to explain why the change was made. Director Moore is also looking into “plastic curbing”, where the plastic will be used to make something else.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Highway – Mr. Trafton reports he worked 16 hours and his team worked 13 hours on Thanksgiving. They have been fixing some minor equipment issues. He sat down with Mrs. Gratacos to look into the special highway block grant and couldn’t find it. Mrs. Gratacos since found it and it is \$18,826.79. He previously suggested these funds be used for Town vehicle tire maintenance. Costs for the previously mentioned tire changing is \$19,715, which is \$888.20 over budget. He asks to take the overage out of his Operating Budget. He will have to buy 12 new tires for two of the trucks. They finished the mezzanine in the sand shed, and made more room in the salt shed. Lastly, they are trying to find a different credit card company.

Town Office Administrator – Mrs. Gratacos informs the Board that an estimate was received for the repairs on the garage door at the East Station – \$1,200. The Board notes that the structural portion of the repairs will be made this year, with the cosmetic repairs next year.

Transfer Station, Ambulance, and Parks –

Director Moore reports that:

- Ambulance – Last Wednesday they picked up the loaner ambulance. A lease agreement has been presented to the Board, which has been signed and will be sent to Primex. He will work this week to create a “new ambulance” to represent the loaner in the system, as described last week. He believes it will be ready for use by Friday. They are at 170 calls to date. Mr. McCarty asks for an update on getting another bid from the engine rebuild. Director Moore said that 8 garages declined, but he is awaiting a response from Steve’s Equipment, and he will also reach out to the Dodge dealership in Keene. Mr. Kemp notes that if we like the loaner ambulance, it can be purchased for \$10,000. Director Moore notes that Shamrock Diesel inspected the ambulance and found no concerns. Mr. Trafton notes that the loaner does not have four-wheel drive, though.
- Parks – The lawnmower needs to get a full service done. He will find out what this will cost and will get more details to the Board. He connected with Luke Druschel and his family, who let him know that they’ll be doing their grand reveal at the Christmas tree lighting on Friday. He notes that per Primex, since the rink is not a service/accomodation provided by the Town, it is not liable. Mr. Beringer asks if the lights are working, and Director Moore says he believes they are but will follow up to confirm.
- Transfer Station – Waiting on the last barrier to go up, and an invoice from Mr. Lund. On Wednesday he received a report that there were icy conditions, and he instructed them to reach out to the Highway Department. They took care of it, and Mr. Trafton says they can take the backhoe to the Garage to get sand if it’s needed in a hurry in the future.

BOARD REPORTS:

Mr. Kemp – Asks Mr. Trafton for a meeting to get the internet switched over at the Town Garage. He asks Mr. Elsesser if he has included the warrant articles listed on the whiteboard in his list, which he has. He also asks him about adding a warrant article for the Selectman as agents to expend the Bridge Capital Reserve. The Board unanimously approves. Fire Chief Committee is moving right along, with the final interview tomorrow night, and a recommendation from the committee by the end of the week. He gave the go-ahead to Shamrock Diesel to move forward with the repairs to Refuse 1. He is still working on getting together with Chief Kercewich to review and sign off on the updated Personel Policy. He reminds Department Heads to have their staff sign off and return the signature to Mrs. Gratacos.

Mr. McCarty – The city of Keene is scheduling 24 household hazardous waste collections in 2025. Our fixed cost participation for all 24 collections is \$3,030.46. Mr. Saxton notes that

historically the Town has instructed residents that they can participate in the program individually and can submit a receipt to the Town for reimbursement. He was contacted by a resident on Pratt Road who is starting a new business, and has asked the Town to write her a letter that she can share with her lender that states it does not require a business license of any kind. The Board agrees unanimously.

Mr. Saxton – Presented Library Budget above.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

Mr. Elsesser asks for budget clarifications, which was answered.

Mr. Beringer provides copies of a written letter with signatures from several current and one former member of the Fire Department, expressing support for Mike Kercewich as the new Fire Chief.

Ms. Willis suggests that the Town Report be dedicated to Peg Sutcliff.

INFORMATIONAL:

EXECUTIVE SESSION/S: RSA 91-A:3, II (a)

On a motion made by Mr. Kemp and seconded by Mr. Saxton, ***the Board voted by roll call (Joel – y; Gordon– y; Matt – y) to enter non-public at 6:38 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) dismissal, promotion, compensation.***

On a motion made by Mr. Saxton and seconded by Mr. McCarty ***the Board voted to leave the non-public session at 6:50 PM. The motion passed unanimously.***

On a motion made by Mr. Kemp and seconded by Mr. Saxton, ***the Board voted by roll call (Joel – y; Gordon– y; Matt – y) to enter non-public at 6:50 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) dismissal, promotion, compensation.***

On a motion made by Mr. Saxton and seconded by Mr. McCarty ***the Board voted to leave the non-public session at 7:16 PM. The motion passed unanimously.***

On a motion made by Mr. McCarty and seconded by Mr. Saxton ***the Board Chair adjourned the public meeting at 7:18 PM.***

Next regular Select Board meeting:	Tuesday, December 11, 2024 @ 5:00 PM, Town Offices, 15 Mechanic Street.
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Next FM School Board meeting:	Monday, December 9, 2024 @ 6:00 PM, High School (2nd Monday)
2025 Alstead Town Budget Hearing	Tuesday, January 21, 2024 @ 5:00 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main Street
2025 Alstead Town Deliberative Session	Saturday, February 1, 2025 @ 10:00 AM , Town Hall, 9 Main Street
2025 Alstead Town Voting Day	Tuesday, March 12, 2025, @ time TBD, Town Hall, 9 Main Street
Next 5-Town Select Board meeting:	TBD – Reschedule in progress

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Steuwe

Recording Secretary