

**TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**Public Hearing and Select Board Meeting**

**Approved Minutes for Meeting of January 14, 2025 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 Office Administrator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shelley Steuwe	Recording Secretary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mike Kercewich	Fire Chief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bobbie Wilson	Supervisors of the Checklist; Vilas Pool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wendy Underwood	Police Corporal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Norlander	Moderator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jesse Moore	Director of Sanitation, EMS & Grounds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS:** **In person:** Barbara Viegener, Joe Levesque, Marge Noonan, Judith Willis, Jeanne Brooks, Jonathan Landry; **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:** Jasper Lampiensi; proposal for purchase of 52 Mechanic Street (map 11/lot 142)

Mr. Lampiensi is a MA resident with family in Acworth. He noticed the property at 52 Mechanic Street during one of his many visits to the area, which he is interested in purchasing and renovating. The barrier he's encountering is that there is \$20,000 of back taxes due that he cannot afford to pay. He spoke with Alstead's Tax Collector, Mrs. Bacon, who recommended he

approach the Board about the possibility of abating the back taxes. He is here tonight to propose that the back taxes be abated as a condition of sale. He believes this is in the best interest of the Town given that the property continues to deteriorate, and that he can flip the home and restore its condition within approximately two years. In his opinion, the home will not survive another year and as a result will not be salvageable. The Board confirms that as it stands, the Town is set to assume ownership of the property in May of this year via tax deed, at which point the property will be put up for auction in an effort to collect the back taxes. Mr. Kemp wants to avoid this outcome, and also asks for reassurance that this sale will go through if the taxes are abated. Mr. Lampiensi said that his current offer has been accepted by the seller, pending this discussion, and says that tax abatement will be included in the conditions of sale to protect the Town. Mr. McCarty is looking to the residents in attendance at tonight's meeting to see if they are supportive of this plan before moving forward. Several people expressed support. Mr. Landry asks why Mr. Lampiensi doesn't pay the back taxes and has the property owner "give" the property to him, to avoid the Town "taking the hit" on the back taxes. Mr. Kemp says that the purchase price will go into escrow and go to the Town. Mr. Saxton suggests that Mr. Lampiensi purchase the property first and then file for tax abatement as the new owner; however, Mr. Lampiensi says that Mrs. Bacon advised this type of abatement can only be done in advance of the purchase.

Mr. McCarty says that, given current support for this proposal, the next steps include the Board connecting with the Town's legal counsel to get advice on how to structure something like this, connecting with the Town Clerk, Mr. Lampiensi, and the seller with the findings of that meeting, and then present again to residents via a Public Hearing before officially moving forward.

**ACTION ITEMS:** Review & sign Bills Manifest (\$ );

**MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:** 1/7 meeting minutes were reviewed, amended and approved as amended by the Board.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- A. **Washed-out glass** – Mr. Kemp reports there's a line in the proposed budget.
- B. **Thayer Brook bypass** – No updates.
- C. **Bridge projects** – Mr. McCarty reports that he received the bridge design engineering and contracts, and current status reports for Hill and Comstock Bridges. These are on the Town website.
- D. **Dams** – Mr. McCarty reports that he received reports for the Vilas and Warren dams from Dubois and King (which are now on the Town website in draft form), which the Board will review. Of note, in the reports there is an \$800,000 proposal for Warren Dam, and \$600,000 proposal for Vilas Dam. He says that Warren Dam fits the bill for a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant. Each report also suggests that one solution is to remove the dams, which would be the cheapest option, though Mr. McCarty doesn't support that. He will advocate that we create a Capital Reserve Fund. He communicated today with the Regulator, who feels we're moving in the right direction to proceed to the next step (scope and fee) to start designing solutions. Mr. Kemp says that he thinks it's

reasonable to put it to the voters to remove one or both of the dams. Next month there will be a public hearing run by Dubois and King to review the reports and answer questions/collect comments.

- E. **Status of property at M11 L2 (abuts Town Hall)** – Mr. Kemp reports that Mr. Bouchard reached out to see if any lawyers have been in contact regarding his sisters buying him out of the property, but he has not heard of any other progress.
- F. **Model T MOU** – No updates.
- G. **Fire Dept Policies** – No updates.
- H. **Pine Cliff Rd info/updates** – No updates.
- I. **210 Gilsum Mine Road land merger talks** – No updates.
- J. **Complete Streets Information** – Mr. McCarty reports that on 1/9 he met with NHDOT staff and members of the Complete Streets project group for a site visit and found out that things are starting to come to fruition with State funding. Mr. Levesque reports that he met with Southwestern Regional Planning Commission to finalize the grant application and the group is awaiting the results of the 1/9 meeting along with associated costs, which he will pass along to the Selectboard.
- K. **Ambulance Revolving Fund** –
- L. **Department & Board**

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Adoption of RSA 31:19 (to accept gifts, legacies, and devices), and the official acceptance of the donation for the repairs of the ambulance –

Mr. Kemp says that it was discovered recently, upon acceptance of a private donation to the Town, that the Town has never accepted donations correctly. In his review the Town is not likely to be held responsible by the State for these mistakes. To ensure donations are accepted properly going forward, there will be a warrant article discussed at Deliberative Session and voted on in March to adopt RSA 31:19 that allows donations to be accepted in the appropriate manner. Mr. McCarty notes that there are actually two statutes involved, one of which was adopted by the Town about 25 years ago. Mr. Kemp says that statute is geared more towards private grants, and it was believed this could include private resident donations. This is why he doesn't believe the Town will be held responsible for these mistakes. He goes on to say that after the second RSA is adopted in March, the funds will go into a trust fund in the custody of the trustee of the trust fund, as opposed to the General Fund and tracked through the Town's bookkeeping. The recent donation was made by an anonymous resident in the amount of \$10,000, to go towards the engine repairs for Ambulance 2. Mr. Kemp makes a motion to accept the donation and direct it to its stated purpose. Mr. McCarty expresses concern that there are ARPA funds assigned to these repairs already, and wonders if we'll need to return those funds to the government. Mr. Levesque, who is responsible for facilitating the procurement of ARPA funds, does not share this concern. The Board agrees unanimously to accept the donation

Another donation was briefly mentioned by Mr. McCarty, however, additional details need to be collected prior to announcing it publicly.

Draft Warrant Article review –

The current draft of the Warrant Articles was reviewed and discussed.

**OTHER ITEMS:**

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

**Fire Department** – Chief Kercewich reports that he received a phone call from a Langdon resident looking to do a celebration/cookout for the new skating rink (around 100-125 people) at the end of February. They said that garbage and bathrooms (Porta Potty) have been taken care of. The Board is in favor. Mr. Kemp asks if a Tenant Users Liability Insurance Policy will be required, and Mr. McCarty says they'll need to consult with Primex.

**School Board** – Mr. Levesque reports that the School Board is going to put a Warrant Article on the school ballot to raise and appropriate \$50,000 for a third party to do a study on what it would mean for the towns and school district if Walpole were to withdraw from the district.

**Town Office Administrator** – Mrs. Gratacos reports that the System for Awards Management number has been renewed, and W2s have been sent out via mail.

**Transfer Station, Ambulance, and Parks –**

Director Moore reports that:

- Ambulance – They have received 12 calls to date.
- Parks – No updates.
- Transfer Station – He thanks the Board and Police Department for their support during the transition away from plastics recycling. Fortunately, there have been no issues.

**BOARD REPORTS:**

**Mr. Kemp** – He received an estimate from Bellows Construction for a list of Town building maintenance projects ranging from \$200-\$3,300 individually, and says the Board needs to figure out if they want to put this into a Warrant Article or Government Building Fund before next Tuesday. MR. McCarty says they'll need to schedule another Selectboard work session, and it was decided that that will be held 1/17 at 10am (public meeting).

**Mr. McCarty** – He met with District 4 NHDOT staff and talked about the Vilas Pool. NHDOT is designing a large project adjacent to the pool on 123A. The Land and Water Conservation service helped pay for low level gate in the Vilas Dam, which gives them authority to demand some sort of compensation from NHDOT for negative implications that their project may have on the park.

He asks if the Town would be interested in receiving a kiosk or “pocket park” for the Land and Water Conservation service on the corner of Summer Street, once the NHDOT project is done

(at no cost to the Town)? NHDOT has suggested that they believe they can supply this as a way to keep the project moving forward. Those in attendance are in favor.

**Mr. Saxton** – He is trying to get in touch with folks to get information so he can write up the Town Report dedications.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:**

**INFORMATIONAL:**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION/S:** RSA 91-A:3 II (b) hiring

On a motion made by Mr. Kemp and seconded by Mr. Saxton, ***the Board voted by roll call (Joel – y; Matt – y) to enter non-public at 7:11 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (b) hiring.***

On a motion made by Mr. Kemp and seconded by Mr. McCarty ***the Board voted to leave the non-public session at 7:18 PM. The motion passed unanimously.***

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

**Important Upcoming Events/Meetings**

<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Notes</b>
January 17 at 10:00 am	Selectboard Working Meeting	Town Offices; 15 Mechanic Street	
January 21 at 5:00 pm	Town Budget Hearing	Town Hall; 9 Main Street	
January 23 at 5:00 pm	Public Hearing re: Walpole withdrawal from FMRSD	Town Hall; 9 Main Street	
February 1 at 10:00 am	Deliberative Session	Town Hall; 9 Main Street	
February 10 at 6:00 pm	FMRSD School Board Meeting	High School	2nd Monday of each month
March 11 8:00 am - 7:00 pm	Town and School Voting Day	Town Hall; 9 Main Street	

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Steuwe

Recording Secretary