

**TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**Select Board**

**Approved Minutes for Meeting of January 21, 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"/>
Stephen Murrell	Police Chief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jesse Moore	Director of Sanitation, EMS & Grounds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Norlander	Moderator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prescott Trafton	Road Agent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kim Kercewich	Forest Fire Warden/ Fire Dept.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bobbie Wilson	Supervisors of the Checklist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mike Kercewich	Fire Chief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wendy Underwood	Police Corporal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rich Beringer	Fire Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS:** **In person:** Susan Blake, Rich Nalevanko, Jeanne Brooks, Annie Hess, Lisa Tusveld, Barbara Viegner, Joe Levesque, Marge Noonan, Judith Willis; **Google Meets:** Karen Keim, Jeanne Brooks

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

The current draft of the budget is being projected for meeting attendees to see and is provided in printed form at this meeting. During the budget review, the following questions/comments were brought up by the public:

#### FROM LICENSES, PERMITS & FEES

- Ms. Willis asks why the amount for State Bridge Aid is so high? Mr. McCarty says they are anticipating reimbursement for bridge work, as detailed in some complex warrant articles (#s 3&4).

#### CAPITAL RESERVES

- Mr. McCarty asks Mr. Kemp to speak to the Capital Reserve amount of \$280,001. Mr. Kemp says that this is money that was taken out of Capital Reserve - \$250,000 out of Bridge Capital Reserve and \$30,000 for the Library roof.
- Ms. Viegenger suggests that Selectman's wages be put back in.
- Ms. Wilson asks if the Selectman will post the final decision from this meeting before the Deliberative Session, and they confirmed it will be posted by 1/27.

#### GENERAL GOVERNMENT - EXECUTIVE

- Ms. Willis asks about the Bookkeeper position. Mr. McCarty says they used to have a bookkeeper but don't currently. The office is behind on reconciling and closing on the books. Mrs. Gratacos says that Mr. Kemp spoke with a CPA today who is getting a proposal sent to the Selectboard for his services to hold them over until a bookkeeper gets approved. They'd like another set of eyes to verify the work that she does as well as Ms. Iozzo, to ensure that records are accurate. Ms. Viegenger asks if Ms. Iozzo was working part-time for the Selectman in 2024, and Mrs. Gratacos said that she was.
- Mr. Nalevanko asks if Software Support (\$8,000) is based on anything we know we're going to need? Mrs. Gratacos says that Charman IT Solutions confirmed this is what will be needed to cover what needs to be done.
- Mr. Nalevanko asks if Telephone Expenses represent Town cell phones? Mrs. Gratacos says not in this case. Cell phones are represented as High Power User Equipment.

#### GENERAL GOVERNMENT - TAX COLLECTOR

- Mr. Nalevanko asks if the Tax Collector Software Support is the same as the Town Office, and Mr. McCarty says it depends on the software.

#### GENERAL GOVERNMENT - AUDITORS & ASSESSORS

- Mr. Nalevanko says the Assessors budgeted \$18,850 and only spent \$14,000. He thought the Town was going to anticipate the same budgeted amount over 5 years using historical data, but the current number looks "lumpy".

#### GENERAL GOVERNMENT - PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

- Ms. Viegenger asks if Personnel Administration Dental should have a dollar there, and Mrs. Gratacos says the Town does not pay for dental. They withhold money from employees' checks and take care of the billing and payment for that. This is a bookkeeping error.

- Ms. Wilson asks what portion of health insurance is paid by the Town and what is paid by the employee. Mrs. Gratacos says it is 87% (Town)/13% (employee).

#### GENERAL GOVERNMENT

- Mrs. Tusveld asks what the General Government figure for Vilas and Warren dams represents, and Mr. McCarty says inspections.

#### CEMETERIES

- Mr. Nalevanko asks if the figure for Cemeteries is for general maintenance of stones, not just engraving, and Mr. McCarty says yes and notes that it's hard to find someone to do the work.

#### REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Mr. Nalevanko asks who the Regional Associations are, and Mr. McCarty says NHMA. Mr. Nalevanko asks if money was spent on these services in 2024, and Mr. McCarty says yes, and they should be reflected here.

#### POLICE DEPARTMENT

- Ms. Willis asks what is meant by Private Duty under Police. Chief Murrell says this is when the State needs them to do any contracted road work.
- Ms. Viegenner asks if Overtime can be broken down and asks what part of it is grant funded. Chief Murrell says that \$2,000 is Town funded overtime and \$5,400 is grant funded time. He says the reason the grant funded time is put in overtime is because it gets paid out as wages/salary, even though it's grant funded (this is what he was advised to do years ago).
- Ms. Viegenner asks about the Chief wage increase. Mr. McCarty says that when they budgeted for it in 2024, they made an error, so it has been corrected for 2025.
- Ms. Willis asks for clarification on the Community Policing line? Chief Murrell says it pays for all the programs done throughout the year (school, supplies for tree lighting, Trunk or Treat, etc.).
- Ms. Viegenner asks that now that we have another part time police officer, are they sharing cars? Chief Murrell says yes, which is something they're doing currently, and will continue to do.

#### AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT

- Corporal Underwood asks for clarification on the 3rd ambulance, and Mr. Kemp says we're renting one for free right now due to a mechanical failure with another ambulance, but will likely buy a third next year as we have had several instances where both ambulances are out at the same time, and likely one of the current ambulances will reach the end of its utility in the near future, due to its age.
- Ms. Viegenner asks what the ambulance revenue was in 2024? Director Moore says actuals were right around \$57,000, and they billed out around \$90,000.
- Mr. Beringer suggests that the words "3rd ambulance" may throw people off, and should be amended/removed.
- Mr. Nalevanko asks if the 3rd ambulance is going to be in a warrant article? Mr. McCarty says not at this time.

#### FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Mr. Nalevanko asks for clarification on what is meant by New Equipment, and Chief Kercewich says it could be a nozzle or hose that needs replacement. Mr. Nalevanko

asks why that would not be under Repairs, and Chief Kercewich says it's because they're not fixing a part, they're replacing it.

#### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Ms. Willis asks if Keene Dispatch raised their prices, and Mr. McCarty says yes, they raise them every year.

#### DPW HIGHWAY AND STREETS

- Corporal Underwood asks for clarification about the Glass Road Base Cleanup. The Selectman explained that previously broken up glass was used to maintain roads, but the glass was not prepared properly and when the road washed out it resulted in glass debris washing onto private property. Corporal Underwood asks if insurance will cover this, and Mr. McCarty says they called them, FEMA, and NHDES and none of them will pay. He notes that we don't have to pay for this, but morally we should because it was a result of the Town's mistake. Mr. Saxton says this is just one piece of a large project, because contractors couldn't estimate the whole project. Corporal Underwood asks how much this will cost in the end, and Mr. Saxton says they won't have that information until this project is done and they have a better idea of the work involved.
- Mr. Beringer asks if the Town is taking steps on Cobb Hill to ensure it's less likely to wash out again, or just fixing it to the same standard as before? Mr. Trafton says that the existing issues have already been addressed with culverts.
- Ms. Willis asks what a cutting edge is, and Mr. McCarty says it's the part on the bottom of the plow that gets replaced every so often (versus replacing the entire plow).

#### VILAS POOL PARK

- Mr. Beringer asks why in 2024 the amount was \$1, but for 2025 it is set at \$15,000. Mr. Kemp clarifies that tax payers don't pay for this, the Vilas Pool Trust reimburses the Town for these salaries, but he thinks it's better to estimate the costs and reflect them in the budget.

#### PATRIOTIC PURPOSES

- Mr. Trafton notes that in Patriotic Purposes he didn't ask for any money to be put in for flags on Main Street, so if someone wants to see flags there this will need to be increased to do that (around \$1,500).

The list of Warrant Articles were then reviewed, and the only change that was made was the addition of a Warrant Article to adopt a Capital Reserve fund for water quality issues at Lake Warren.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. McCarty then called the Select Board meeting to order at 7:35 PM and proceeded with leading the agenda-based discussion.

#### **GUESTS:**

**ACTION ITEMS:** Public Budget Hearing followed by a brief Select Board Mtg. Review & sign Payroll Manifest (\$34,717.47); review & sign Bills Manifest (\$291,758.01); review & sign Tax Liability Manifest (\$); review and sign intent to cut; review emails

**MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:** 1/17 meeting minutes were reviewed, amended and approved as amended by the Board.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- A. **Washed-out glass** – No updates.
- B. **Thayer Brook bypass** – No updates.
- C. **Bridge projects** – No updates.
- D. **Dams** – No updates.
- E. **Status of property at M11 L2 (abuts Town Hall)** – No updates.
- 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** – No updates.
- K. **Ambulance Revolving Fund** – No updates.
- L. **Department & Board**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**OTHER ITEMS:**

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:** Not collected.

**BOARD REPORTS:** Not collected.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:**

**INFORMATIONAL:**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION/S:** RSA 91-A:3 II (c) reputation

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 7:43 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c) reputation.***

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 8:06 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) compensation.***

On a motion made by Mr. Saxton and seconded by Mr. McCarty ***the Board voted to leave the non-public session at 8:13 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 8:13 PM.***

**Important Upcoming Events/Meetings**

<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Notes</b>
January 23 at 5:00 pm	Public Hearing re: Walpole withdrawal from FMRSD	Town Hall; 9 Main Street	
January 28 at 5:00 pm	Selectboard Meeting	Town Offices; 15 Mechanic 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
February 11 at 5:00 pm	Public Hearing re: Vilas and Warren Dams update	Town Hall; 9 Main Street	Selectboard meeting to follow
March 11 8:00 am - 7:00 pm	Town and School Voting Day	Town Hall; 9 Main Street	

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Steuwe

Recording Secretary