

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Select Board
Approved Minutes for Meeting of December 20, 2022
Town Hall, 9 Main Street, Alstead, NH 03602

SELECT BOARD PRESENT: Joe Levesque, Joel McCarty, Matthew Saxton

STAFF PRESENT: APD Admin Penny Gendron, Ambulance Chief Jesse Moore

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: Jordan Cannon, Glenn Elsesser, Gordon Kemp, Mark Mastrocinque, Rich Nalevanko.
Judith Willis

GUEST:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER: The Board Chair called the Select Board meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS:

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: Due to a mix up, the board decided to defer until the next meeting the approval of the minutes of the public Select Board meeting on December 13, 2022.

SELECT BOARD REPORTS:

Joel McCarty reported that the work on the 2023 budget earlier today has the budget still ~\$11,000 over the 3% cap. The next meeting on the 2023 budget is scheduled for 12/27 at 10:00 a.m. at the town offices.

Joel reported that he and **Carol Reller** are working on an algorithm regarding the proposed COLA for town employees.

Joel reported per the NH DOT the state road 123A will remain one lane going past Vilas Pool Park for all of 2023.

Joel questioned putting money in Capital Reserve Funds (CRF) during times of high inflation. Possibly, a better solution is to take out a low interest loan and buy the equipment now at today's prices. We should think about this. **Gordon Kemp** countered that putting money into CRFs keeps our taxes more even.

Joe Levesque reported that the School Board and the NEA (teachers union) has ratified a new 3-year Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with 2.5% COLA and 2.5% Step increase for each year. The CBA also includes \$1,300 stipends the first year and \$700 stipends the second year. These stipends come from ESSER funds (Federal grants), so there is no additional tax burden to the 5 communities of the district for these stipends. The tax burden for this CBA is less than \$500,000 per year. There is also a penalty for signing a renewal contract (every May) and then leaving the district before the school year ends the following June 30th (i.e. if they plan on leaving the district, just don't sign the renewal contract). This CBA is still subject to review at the Fall Mountain Regional School District deliberative session.

Joe reported that the town was turned down by FEMA for the \$120,000 self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) equipment grant for the Fire Department.

Joe reported that the next window for the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP) grants opens 1/9/2023. We plan to hire a professional grant writer for this application. FEMA will pay for the grant writer, if they approve the grant. Grant writer candidates will be vetted between now and 1/6/23. The grant covers 95% of the cost; the town pays the other 5%. The town also pays for the grant writer, if the grant request is unsuccessful.

Chief Moore suggested spreading out the replacement of the SCBA equipment, so it does not all expire at once. The Select Board plans to do this with a Warrant Article to replace 2 of the 16 sets of SCBA equipment. **Chief Moore** also suggested trying other organizations for this grant. He recommended “Firehouse Subs” and the “Dennis Leary Fire Fighters Foundation.”

Joe reported that this morning the Judge met on site on Bennett Road with the Bergers, the lawyers, Prescott Trafton, David Crosby and Joe, and viewed the issues. The Judge will rule in January on whether to extend the class 5 road to the Berger’s driveway and will continue to hear arguments for and against closing the remaining class 6 road.

Matt Saxton reported that a missing 2015 document may hold up the sale of property on Mechanic Street.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Ambulance:

Chief Moore reported that the department is still very busy. They are at 170 calls, which is 29 more than last year.

NEW BUSINESS:

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Glenn Elsesser asked about the outdoor propane heaters stored at the Town Hall. Who paid for them, and if it was the Town, can we sell them?

INFORMATIONAL: The next regular meeting of the Select Board is scheduled for Tuesday, January 3, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. at the Town Hall.

Langdon will host the next Five-Town Select Board meeting on Friday January 27th, 2023 at 4:30 PM.

Minutes compiled by Joe Levesque with the assistance of Judith Willis