

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Select Board

Approved Minutes for Meeting of May 7, 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: In person: Richard Beringer, Fire Department; Jesse Moore, Director of Sanitation, EMS, & Parks; Stephen Murrell, Police Chief; Mary Schoppmeyer, Administrative Consultant; Prescott Trafton, Road Agent; Misty Gratacos, Town Administrator; Bobbie Wilson, Supervisor of the Checklist/Ambulance Lt/Vilas Pool Committee; Shelley Steuwe, Recording Secretary.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: In person: Rich Nalevanko, Marge Noonan, Joe Levesque, Jonathan Landry, Barbara Viegner, Judith Willis

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.

ACTION ITEMS: Review and sign nine (9) Timber Cut applications; review and sign five (5) new hire packets; review and sign three (3) exemption applications; review Stoddard Cell Tower agreement, Review and sign purchase for side-by-side for Vilas Pool

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: Minutes from 4/30 were reviewed, updated and approved by the Board.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. **Washed-out glass** – Mr. Kemp reports that he, Prescott, and Jonathan were set to meet with the consultant but he did not make it to the meeting. It was rescheduled twice, and they expect to meet with him on Thursday, May 9. Mr. McCarty asks if he might reach out to Rob Bouchard about the multiple reschedules, and Mr. Kemp agrees it might be helpful, so he will.
- B. **Thayer Brook bypass** – No updates.
- C. **Bridge projects** – Mr. McCarty reports there has been communication between NH DOT and Hoyle, Tanner and Associates regarding engineering revisions. A certification from NH DOT is anticipated by 5/10. He reports we are on schedule for the bridge build on Bell Hill (2025), and the Comstock Road (2026). There are no updates on the Drewsville Road bridge.

- D. **Dams** – No updates.
- E. **Sale of town-owned properties** – Mr. McCarty reports that there is progress being made, but does not provide details.
- F. **Abutting Town Hall property** – Mr. Kemp reports that he doesn't anticipate a speedy resolution. He was informed that the CT lawyer has retained someone in NH.
- G. **Model T MOU** – Mr. McCarty reports that Mr. Kercewich promises something next week when the association meets again.
- H. **East Station chemical barrel** – Ms. Gratacos reports the barrel is now gone.
- I. **Langdon Transfer Station and Library fees** – Mr. McCarty reports that he met with one of the Langdon selectmen on 5/6, and has no update.
- J. **Employee Health Insurance** – Mr. McCarty reports there is a staff meeting scheduled for 5/23 to discuss areas in need of improvement. Ms. Gratacos reports there are two insurance companies ready to provide quotes, if requested.
- K. **Accounting Software** – No update.
- L. **Department & Board** – See below.

GUESTS: ReVision Energy; Jude Nuru, Director of Community Solar Initiatives, and Mark Zankel, Director of Community Solar Farms

PRESENTATION: ReVision Energy is a solar company serving northern New England. They are a Certified B Corporation, one hundred percent employee owned, have offices in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, and have been awarded numerous honors, including New Hampshire Magazine's "Best of NH". Mr. Nuru and Mr. Zankel presented the Community Solar Rebate Program (CSRP) to the group.

The CSRP provides a bi-annual payment to eligible energy consumers that subscribe to a community solar farm and participate in New Hampshire's group net metering program. The town signs up to become a CSRP member, ReVision develops and constructs a solar farm in the same utility territory as the town, the utility company purchases the energy generated from the solar farm and sells that energy to the towns they service in that territory, and the solar farm owner pays the CSRP members a rebate for every kilowatt hour of electricity usage they subscribe.

Questions from the public, Board, and Town staff:

- What is the lifespan of the installation, and what is the likelihood that technology changes will necessitate equipment replacement?
 - Mr. Nuru – Systems last up to 40 years.
 - Mr. Zankel – Solar panel's productivity degrades at about .5%/year. The technology is mature at this point, so we don't expect solar farm to need large-scale replacement.
- Where are they made?
 - Mr. Zankel – Most of the panel components are made in South Korea, and assembled in the US. We expect panel components to bring manufacturing of the panels to the US within the next couple of years. The racking is completely US-

made. The inverters are manufactured abroad due to lack of availability to do so within the US.

- Is there an environmental impact from parts that need to be replaced?
 - Mr. Zankel – Solar panels are 95% recyclable, and the materials within them are largely inert. There is nothing in the solar panels that we use that are on any lists of contaminants, and we don't expect them to be a burden on landfills or the environment.
- Under the Liberty program, does it matter that there is about 15% of residents who receive their power from Eversource?
 - Mr. Nuru – The CSR program is for municipal buildings only, not residents. There is another community program for residents, but that is not what we're talking about today.
- Has this been presented to anyone at Fall Mountain yet?
 - Mr. Nuru – No.
- How is the rebate calculated?
 - Mr. Nuru – The rebate is 10% of the supply rate. The Town will not see a change in your energy bill, but you will get a rebate check to invest into the Town.
 - Mr. Zankel – The rebate is tied to what the Town's energy use is; the more the energy used, the higher the rebate.
- What is the commitment?
 - Mr. Zankel – It is a five year commitment. During that time the Town can't partner with any other similar program (including during the period between signing and build, ~ two years), and there is a 90-day exit requirement.
 - Mr. Nuru – There is no financial commitment, just a commitment to participate.
- Does the solar farm need to be located in Alstead?
 - Mr. Nuru – No, just within a Liberty service area.
- Does entering this agreement preclude the Town or residents from building our own system where we sell to the grid?
 - Mr. Nuru – For the town, yes, due to state laws. It does not preclude residents from building their own.
- Will we get a larger rebate if the solar farm is built in Alstead?
 - Mr. Zankel – You won't get a larger rebate, but there are financial benefits from leasing land over the lifetime of the project.

Mr. McCarty mentions that the Town has been approached by two brokers about similar work, however the Board is pulled toward ReVision Energy, given their connection and commitment to the Monadnock Region. He thanks Mr. Nuru and Mr. Zankel and will follow up with Mr. Nuru if the Town agrees to enter into an agreement with ReVision Energy.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Police Department – Chief Murrell reports the agreement regarding the Communications Tower on Cobb Hill has been signed, notarized, and presented to the Select Board. He reports they have received 393 calls to date. He reports there are no updates on the burglaries, and that the investigation is ongoing.

Highway – Mr. McCarty reports that he received a complaint about potholes on Comstock Road. Mr. Trafton reports that on Thursday they picked up the CV dump truck from Manchester with a new transmission (under warranty). He reports that the mower for the back of the tractor has been delivered and asks permission to clear trees on Bragg Lane with the new mower. He had been previously advised to only mow the walking path there, but would like to make room for parking for the upcoming Pow Wow. He would also like to clear it back even further with an excavator in the fall (when the ground is frozen). There is a perimeter drain in that area that ducts into a stream that feeds into the Cold River, and clearing this area will make that drain more easily accessible. He doesn't believe a DES permit is required for this work so long as the ground is dry. He would like to start the more immediate work within the next week. Mr. McCarty states he will review Mr. Trafton's plans with Mr. Blaylock to make sure he has no objections.

Fire Department – Mr. Beringer reports that the Village Fire Station truck, Engine 1, will be gone for a week. He also reports there have not been any calls.

Transfer Station, Ambulance, and Parks – Mr. Moore reviews the actual projected and years total projected income billing for the last three years. He asked the Board on 4/30 if they would be interested in entering into an agreement with a nearby town to provide their ambulance service, and provided the aforementioned information today at their request. He reports the numbers would be in line with our 2022 numbers, 99 calls, which results in \$40,489 in revenue, in addition to a standby fee. Mr. Kemp offers another way to consider this – in 2022, the \$40,489 did not cover the cost of the ambulance, and because residents are not keen on Alstead subsidizing service to another town, the standby fee would have to be greater than or equal to what the difference would be to do the job. He clarifies for the public that typically the town providing the ambulance service would project the unpaid bills and charge that as the standby fee. This fee also includes the cost of staffing, vehicle/equipment wear and tear, etc. He also reminds the group that because of Mutual Aid, we are already required to assist this town with ambulance calls and are not being reimbursed for providing aid. Entering into an agreement would allow us to collect that standby fee. Mr. Moore reports we are well staffed and have the resources to support this. He also states that while we do receive payment from insurance companies for calls, this does not always happen and results in a net loss. Mr. Beringer expresses concern with the possibility that doing this will eventually become a burden on resources. Mr. Moore asks the Board to simply take some time to consider this idea. Finally, he reports there is a proposal (\$740) for putting a water line in at the Village Fire Station so that work can be completed with a power washer. Mr. McCarty asks if this is in the budget, and Mr. Moore cannot confirm as he has not seen his budget yet. Mr. McCarty states they will defer this request until they have had a chance to review the budget.

Vilas Pool – Ms. Wilson reports there is a form to sign for the purchase of a CFMoto UForce 1000 side-by-side. Funds for this come from the Vilas Pool savings. Ms. Wilson also reports that they have not received the first of two Vilas Pool Trust Fund checks. She has inquired with the bank and was informed that the checks will be sent on 6/30 and 12/30. Ms. Gratacos confirmed she will be on the lookout for them. Mr. Kemp states the bank they were using (Peoples) was bought out and they now use M&T Bank. Finally, she reports that Vilas Pool opens on 6/1. Mr. Kemp

reports that Fall Mountain JROTC visited today to help clean up the park, and he plans to write a thank-you letter for them.

BOARD REPORTS:

Mr. McCarty – DES – Mr. McCarty reports he is working with DES to have them present at another meeting at the Mill in late June/early July to discuss the Lake Warren Management Plan and stormwater mitigation along Pine Cliff Road. He and Mr. Levesque are working on an application for the DES State Revolving Loan Fund, due 5/31. DOT 10-Year Plan – Mr. McCarty reports that he and Mr. Saxton are working on identifying projects that should go on the DOT 10-Year Plan fund.

Mr. Kemp

- Mr. Kemp reports that Fidium has promised the build for “Lost Alstead” (Maclean Road, Proctor Road, Barnett Hill Road, and a section of 12A) will be completed by the end of the summer. There is also a portion of Gilsum Mine Road that was also missed. Fortunately, Comcast does serve that area, so they are not without options. Finally, there are a few residences on Pratt Road that were missed. He emailed the VP at Fidium about this, who will look into this. He will get a tighter timeline for the completion of Gilsum Mine and Pratt Roads once “Lost Alstead” is complete.
- He reports his Letter of Intent for the Moose License Grant has been accepted. His chosen project is to repaint the footbridge over Vilas Pool. He believes the Grant (\$20,000) will only be about half the amount needed for this project, so they’ll need to keep that in mind.

Mr. Saxton

- He met with Mike Jasmin, Health Officer, regarding the complaint about the travel trailer on the Gilsum town line. Mr. Saxton attended the Zoning Board meeting on 5/6, where they discussed the regulation that prohibits someone from living in this trailer for more than 120 days/year. He stated that he does not plan to evict this individual as a result of this regulation, and he plans to put forth an article on next year’s ballot to eliminate this regulation.
- He has been trying, unsuccessfully, to get in touch with Jason Foster regarding painting the steeple later this Summer. He will continue to reach out.
- An Acworth constituent reported to him that they believe broken glass from Cobb Hill Road has made its way to their property on Route 123A via the Cold River. He went to the property to investigate this and found the glass to be inconsistent with the glass from Cobb Road.

Mr. McCarty

- He reports that 5/15 is the deadline for proposing projects for the DOT 10-Year Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Ms. Viegner asks the Board to provide a budget printout at the next meeting. Mr. McCarty confirms that can be done. Ms. Noonan asks the Board if they can enter into a five year commitment (regarding ReVision presentation), considering there could be a change in Board members during that time. Mr. McCarty states he has asked that question, but has not received a definitive answer. He confirms the Board will ultimately put it to the voters via a warrant article.

INFORMATIONAL:

Next regular Select Board meeting:	Tuesday, May 14, 2024 @ 5:00 PM, Town Offices, 15 Mechanic Street.
Next FM School Board meeting:	Monday, May 13, 2024 @ 5:30 PM, High School (2 nd Monday)
Next 5-Town Select Board meeting:	TBD – Reschedule in progress

On a motion made by Mr. McCarty and seconded by Mr. Kemp, ***the Board Chair adjourned the public meeting at 6:48 PM.***

On a motion made by Mr. Saxton and seconded by Mr. Kemp, ***the Board voted by roll call (Joel – y; Gordon– y; Matt – y) to enter non-public session #1 at 6:48 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A3, II(a) – dismissal, promotion, or compensation.***

On a motion made by Mr. Kemp and seconded by Mr. McCarty, ***the Board voted to leave non-public session #1 at 7:25 PM. The motion passed unanimously.***

On a motion made by Mr. McCarty and seconded by Mr. Saxton, ***the Board voted to enter non-public session #2 at 7:25 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A3, II(c) – dismissal, promotion, or compensation.***

On a motion made by Mr. Kemp and seconded by Mr. McCarty, ***the Board voted to leave non-public session #2 at 7:47 PM. The motion passed unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Steuwe, Recording Secretary