

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Select Board

Approved Minutes for Meeting of October 1, 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"/>
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"/>
Steve Reynolds	Dir Emergency Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Penny Gendron	Police Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prescott Trafton	Road Agent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rich Beringer	Fire Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: **In person:** Joe Levesque, Marge Noonan, Judith Willis, Rich Nalevanko, Werner Drouin, Jean Kelly, Maryann Wolfe ; **Google Meets:** Kenyon Nesbit

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:

- Dennis, E-max Billing (oral presentation) –
 - Emax is a locally operated company (Peterborough, NH) that has been in business since 1985 and is a multispecialty biller with a robust automation

system that allows them more time to spend individually reviewing and processing claims that encounter issues. They are the first billing company in the US to be accredited with the Healthcare Business Management Association, which means they had a third-party company review their compliance measures. They promise to turn claims around within two business days, and partner with a certified ambulance billing coder. Director Moore points out that everyone south of us uses Emax. They will alert the Town if they're in risk of a compliance issue and can provide guidance in coding, if we request it. If we don't obtain a patient signature at the time of service, they will reach out to them to obtain one so they can proceed with billing. If there are overpayments, it will be seen through their tracking system and refunded appropriately (they can do it or we can do it). The onboarding process takes 30 days.

Q – Is there a cost per claim?

A – No, they charge 8% of revenue collected, with a minimum charge of \$750.

Q – Are we losing our billing company?

A – Yes, they sold, and the new owners are not committing to the previous agreement we had with the company.

Q – Do you understand that we want the claim to come back to us if no payment is collected after 3 attempts?

A (Director Moore) – Yes, the policy has been provided to Dennis.

Q – Have you looked into other companies?

A (Director Moore) – Yes, but the other companies are “predatory” in that they pay us the claim and then hound the patient for payment.

Q – What about motor vehicle accidents?

A – Patient gets to decide whether the claim goes to auto or health insurance, and they can't send out a bill until the patient lets them know (they follow up with the patient).

Q – What's our recourse when the patient gets a check from insurance and refuses to pay the Town?

A – We can encourage the patient to pay, and most do, and the Town could choose to take them to small claims court.

Q – Is this an annual contract?

A – It is a 3 year contract that is renewable. The 8% fee is a fixed number. If the Town wants a shorter contract, it would change the percentage above.

Q – If you don't follow through, can we cancel the contract?

A – Yes, both parties have 30 days to “fix” any issues and then can cancel.

Mr. Kemp notes that the Board cannot enter into a multi-year contract without voter approval (March). Mr. McCarty recommends that we ask for a 3 year contract, run it by our legal team, and have a discussion about how long and how to present it to the voters in March. Unanimous agreement from the Board.

- Maryann Wolf, Wage Study (PowerPoint presentation) – [click here to view the presentation.](#) (Misty – can replace this link with a link to the website if you plan to upload there)

Mr. McCarty suggests meeting with the Department Heads to review the data and formulate budget proposals. Unanimous agreement from the Board.

ACTION ITEMS: Review & sign Payroll manifest (\$34,516.23); Review & sign Tax Liability Manifest (\$); Review & sign Bills Manifest (\$); review emails from Julie Avenant, NHDOT; Susan Norlander, Town Moderator; “Bill” William Loranger, NH DRA; report from Brian Fogg, LLC, regarding PA 81 filings; Bruce Kneuer, NH DRA; and additional information from Health Trust re: Retiree Billing for Insurance.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: 9/24 meeting minutes were reviewed, amended and approved as amended by the Board.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Washed-out glass** – Mr. Saxton reviewed an email from Mike Hubbard, who confirmed he is still interested in the project. He'll be coming back out to the site to get additional details and will send a quote within a week.
- Thayer Brook bypass** – No updates.
- Bridge projects** – Mr. McCarty reports that the funding package for the Drewsville Road bridge is changed, and there is a conference call scheduled with the principals to discuss this.
- Dams** – Mr. McCarty reports that he received a copy of the Hydrologic and Hydraulic study for Lake Warren, which he has forwarded to NHDES for comment and review. He is also expecting one for Vilas Pool.
- Status of property at M11 L2 (abuts Town Hall)** – Mr. Kemp reports that Mr. Bouchard notified him that he is 1/3 owner of the property.
- Model T MOU** – No updates.
- Langdon Library Fees** – Mr. McCarty reports that the Treasurer says in 2023 Langdon paid us \$5,300, and in 2024 paid us \$7,500. He noted that the Board plans to use the same calculation used last year to create the next invoice.

- H. **Employee Health Insurance** – Mr. McCarty reports that there is a meeting set for 10/8.
- I. **Fire Dept Policies** – No updates.
- J. **Pine Cliff Road information/updates** – Mr. McCarty reports that it looks like we missed the deadline for the pre-application for the grant, but will confirm this information by the end of the week.
- K. **210 Gilsum Mine Road land merger talks** – No updates.
- L. **Complete Streets Information** – No updates.
- M. **Lighting upgrade for Village Station** – Mrs. Gratacos reports that a check in the amount of \$3,250 has been received.
- N. **Department & Board**

NEW BUSINESS: Report from Dubois & King – we didn't talk about this...unless I totally missed it!

OTHER ITEMS: Today is National Walk to School Day, thank you to Chief Steve, Corporal Wendy and Joe Levesque

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Emergency Management – Director Reynolds reports he still has not received an update on the grant. He notes that the inability to get culverts delays the Hazard Mitigation Plan. In looking at previous years' damages, the Town's services are stretched as far as we can go in terms of emergency response to weather events (based on '21, '23 events). He wants to determine what we don't have for supplies and get stocked up for the next event. Residents can visit [Plan Ahead for Disasters | Ready.gov](#) to find out what they need for emergency supplies. He asks Mr. Levesque if he received the things that he sent him on the Library safety audit. Mr. Levesque says yes, and he is turning it over to the Library trustees. PBS is airing a one hour video by the National Fire Council called "Odd Hours, No Pay, Cool Hat". He ends by saying we are very fortunate that we have the relationship with Kevin Hicks and the school that we do for emergency services.

Highway – Mr. Trafton reports that the Purchase Order for culverts can be canceled as materials are in high demand (being sent south for hurricane repairs). He's worried we may not even get materials next year as prices will likely skyrocket due to supply and demand. Any bridge detail could be pushed off more due to hurricane damage. He reports that they should be putting in the Comstock Bridge next week.

Police Department – Chief Murrell reports they have received 866 calls to date. Reminder about 10/4 power washing - no parking in the lower parking lot. Kids walk today went well. Looking forward to trunk or treat on 10/31, 5-7.

Transfer Station, Ambulance, and Parks –

Director Moore reports that:

- Ambulance – They have received 140 calls to date. Last week he met with Keene about acts of mass violence, as Keene has adopted a different core value system than other cities and we are hoping to learn from them.
- Parks – No updates.
- Transfer Station – No updates.

BOARD REPORTS:

Mr. Kemp – Still fielding calls about fiber internet. Working on Fire Department policies. Asks if we have provided the requested letter to the Sheriff's office for antenna work? Mrs. Gratacos will write this up tonight.

Mr. McCarty – Would like to publicly commend the office staff for making voter access easier for residents who are mobility impaired. NHDRA sent someone to Town for a week to review 12 properties and will report findings to the assessors.

Mr. Saxton – Met with Chief Kercewich on Friday; his last day is 12/11 (50th anniversary), and there is a plan to have a party to celebrate. The Board will begin their search for a new chief. He took a call from Kenyon Nesbitt, who said he heard in a Selectboard meeting that the slide opposite the entry to his property would be repaired by moving the road over.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

INFORMATIONAL:

EXECUTIVE SESSION/S:

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 6:57 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee.***

On a motion made by Mr. Saxton and seconded by Mr. McCarty ***the Board voted to leave the non-public session at 7:05 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 7:08 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee.***

On a motion made by Mr. Saxton and seconded by Mr. McCarty ***the Board voted to leave the non-public session at 7:26 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 7:27 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c) matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this board.***

On a motion made by Mr. Kemp and seconded by Mr. McCarty ***the Board voted to leave the non-public session at 7:45 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 7:47 PM.***

Next regular Select Board meeting:	Tuesday, October 8, 2024 @ 5:00 PM, Town Offices, 15 Mechanic Street.
Next FM School Board meeting:	Monday, October 14, 2024 @ 6:00 PM, High School (2nd Monday)
Next 5-Town Select Board meeting:	TBD – Reschedule in progress

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Steuwe

Recording Secretary