

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Select Board
Approved Minutes for Meeting of November 15, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.
Town Hall, 9 Main Street, Alstead, NH 03602

SELECT BOARD PRESENT: Joseph Levesque, Joel McCarty, Matthew Saxton.

STAFF PRESENT: In person: Julie Bacon, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Penny Gendron, Police Department Administrator; Ben Hoy, Transfer Station Supervisor; Kim Kercewich, Fire Chief; Jesse Moore, Ambulance Chief; Stephen Murrell, Police Chief; Steve Reynolds, Emergency Management Director; Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator; Adam Vose, Assistant Ambulance Chief; Bobbie Wilson, Ambulance Lieutenant.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: In person: Gordon Kemp, Rich Nalevanko, Marge Noonan, Barb Viegner, Judith Willis. **Google Meet:** Glenn Elsesser, Craig Winter, and a third attendee.

GUESTS: Recycling proposal: Scott Hunter, Hubbard Farms. **2023 Budget:** Julie Bacon, TC//TX budget; Steve Reynolds, EM budget; Mary Schoppmeyer, prelim EX and GG budget.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER: The Board Chair called the Select Board meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and introduced the first guest attendee.

PRESENTATIONS: Transfer Station/Trex/Hubbard plastic bag recycling proposal: Scott Hunter and Ben Hoy presented a proposal for recycling bales of plastic bags in partnership with Trex (decking vendor) and Hubbard Farms. Mr. Hunter described Hubbard's interest in plastic bag recycling via a program offered by Trex (decking company) using a baler/compactor to assemble plastic bag bales that Trex picks up at no charge, possibly in shared loads with another recycler. Questions were fielded with regard to estimated payoff for the baler (4-5 years), storage of bales, revenue possibilities after the baler is paid off, whether another baler in addition to the one Alstead already has is necessary. Alstead would purchase the baler; installation would be sponsored by Hubbard. A wide range of plastic bags would be acceptable. Community contributions of plastic bags would be accepted in addition to Hubbard's plastic bag waste. The Board expressed its interest with thanks to the presenter and asked for more information before making a final decision.

2023 Budgets: Before Ms. Bacon presented her numbers, Mr. McCarty reminded those in attendance that as an elected official Ms. Bacon presents her budget to the Board as a courtesy and the Board cannot change it, but the people can at the appointed time. Ms. Bacon presented her 2023 Town Clerk and Tax Collector budgets totaling \$84,044.30, compared to the 2022 budget of \$77,445.00. The main reasons for the increase are proposed cost of living increase in wages, increased postage rates, increased rates for Interware and Avitar software and support, and projected increases in IT costs for necessary services. There was additional discussion of expense monies for dog licenses and vital statistics that have traditionally appeared in the Town Clerk budget, but which are fees collected by the Town as an agent for the State that are then paid out to the state. Ms. Bacon questions whether these actually need to be included in her budget and plans to research what other towns do this year. She noted that no Motor Vehicle expense is typically included in the Town Clerk budget, even though the Town also collects those monies on the state's behalf and pays them out to the state just like dog licenses and vital records. The Board expressed its thanks to Ms. Bacon. Mr. Reynolds presented to the Board his 2023 Emergency Management budget request of \$30,238.00, an increase of \$1100.00 over last year's budget. The increases are due to an additional \$100 for office supplies, and \$1000 to hire a grant writer with the skills needed to successfully win funding for much-needed new breathing apparatus equipment for the fire department through FEMA grants. Mr. Reynolds noted that in addition he expects the Mutual Aid fees to increase, but he does not have that information yet. There was additional discussion about microgrants, grants for radios, and seeking grant writing coaching from the Cheshire County grant writer instead of hiring a grant writer. The Board commended Mr. Reynolds' efforts and the improvements implemented under his watch, and they thanked him for his time. In reference to the previous discussion about motor vehicle, dog license, and vital records revenues taken in on the state's behalf, Mr. McCarty reminded the group that the MS-434R report that the town files with the DRA every year includes that information; it appears in the Town Report every year. There was further discussion of building permit fees and the fact that the costs associated with those have been adjusted recently and forms with the updated fees posted on the Web site. Ms. Schoppmeyer presented very early Executive budget numbers and noted that both Cemetery and Planning budget numbers have been received and presentations scheduled. Work is in progress on wage numbers and the possibility of adding additional part time help in the Select Board office in 2023. She investigated changing electrical suppliers and lower rates

than we pay now are available; but there are questions re: the propriety of making that commitment into the next fiscal year without the approval of the voters. Mr. McCarty volunteered to investigate what other towns are doing about that, since the rates are significantly lower. There was additional discussion about power providers who service municipalities through Liberty Utilities. There was some question about the recent separation of the municipal and PD computer networks and whether that work was fully completed; the Administrator was instructed to ask Primex what best practice is and whether our solution suits our liability needs. Ms. Schoppmeyer reported that she is getting help with the numbers in the General Government portion of the budget and also working to obtain quotes for some minor repairs that are wanted in 2023. Mr. Kemp walked the Board briefly through the Planning budget, which is asking for a laptop for the Administrator, who has for years been using her home computer for PB-ZBA business but her home computer is no longer up to the task. A wage review is needed also to ensure that the wage is level with other office workers. There was additional discussion of 3 new computers for Election officials as well. The IT team will need information to spec out 4 new laptops.

ACTION ITEMS: Signed 1 timber cut tax warrant; signed 1 zoning officer appointment; signed 1 registration refund.

VILAS POOL MOOSE PLATE GRANT: Gordon Kemp reported that Vilas Pool has been awarded a Moose Plate Grant for \$20,000. Mr. Kemp requested that the Board pass a resolution authorizing him to enter into the grant agreement with the New Hampshire Department of Cultural Resources. Once passed this resolution gives Mr. Kemp the authority for 30 days to sign the grant agreement, providing the voters accept the grant funds at a duly notified public hearing. On a motion from Mr. McCarty that was seconded by Mr. Levesque, **the Board voted to execute the 30-day municipality certification of authority instrument authorizing Mr. Kemp to sign the grant agreement upon acceptance of the grant by the voters at a public hearing to be scheduled two weeks from the date of this meeting on November 29, 2022 at 5 PM.**

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: Minutes of November 1, 2022; Minutes of November 1, 2022 non-public session. On a motion made by Mr. McCarty and seconded by Mr. Saxton, **the Board voted to approve both sets of minutes as written. The motion passed with all in favor.**

SELECT BOARD: **Lake Warren cyanobacteria warnings lifted:** Additional testing of lake water samples indicate that the bacteria levels were sufficiently reduced as to allow removal of warnings against swimming. **Bennett Road legal matter:** The judge will visit the site on Friday, December 2nd at 10 AM to learn more about the dispute. There was additional discussion about court costs and the budget. **Grant seminar:** Mr. Levesque attended the very helpful FEMA grant-writing seminar with Mr. Reynolds and Fire Chief Kercewich. **School board:** Mr. Levesque reported that the School Budget Committee, the Administration, and the School Board has an all-day meeting scheduled for the first Saturday in December at the central offices to hammer out the budget. **Tax rate:** Mr. Levesque reported that the School Board signed the school's MS-525 and submitted it to the DRA; tax rates will be set imminently. **Water release agreement:** The Chase Mill Heritage Association is proposing that the current 1-year agreement be a 3-year agreement; input is awaited from the Lake Warren Association. **Library:** Mr. Saxton reported that the library roof has undergone its fall drain cleaning and roof inspection. There is allegedly a problem where the copper meets the stone and he is working on getting a report from Melanson about that problem and proposed solutions, short of roof replacement. In addition, he is getting quotes for reglazing and painting of library windows in preparation for a warrant article in March. **ELECTION:** Mr. McCarty reported a very successful election, with 73% turnout and 53 new voters added to the rolls. He expressed the Board's gratitude for the huge community effort that made it a smooth, well-run event and commended the efforts

AMBULANCE: Chief Moore reported that the application for a paramedic license was accepted. The team has 5 paramedics already or nearly credentialed, with potential for 2 more. This will increase the pay scale for those holding that position, BUT Alstead will also be able to bill at a higher rate where paramedic services are needed. In addition Alstead can offer paramedic services to other towns as well. This is great news for Alstead and will take a few more months to accomplish completely. They decided not to ask for the new ambulance this year since the recent repairs make the equipment more likely to continue to function properly through the next year.

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Chief Kercewich reported that the catastrophic pump failure on Engine 3 means a 5-figure repair bill. One company declined to submit an estimate and another company submitted a \$13,000 estimate to come and repair it on site. Replacement costs for a truck of the same vintage is approximately \$200,000 and \$400,000. Towing and trailering the truck to another repair site is likely to cost more than repairing on site. Time frame for the on-site repair is 10 days to two weeks to do the work; no estimate on how long it would take to get the parts. Mr. Saxton expressed his concern about being without a pumper during the heating season. The Board requested at least one more quote.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: Director Reynolds reported that over the last two months, he attended threat assessments at the three schools along with Chief Murrell and Assistant Director Perlongo. He expressed his admiration for the level of

preparedness and training that the schools have achieved and for the extent of the communication between the Police Department and the schools. He further reported that Hazard Mitigation Plan meetings have begun with one meeting completed and four more pending. There is interest in trying to pursue regional grants and all departments are encouraged to do comprehensive assessments of their equipment to determine needs before writing grants.

9 MECHANIC STREET: Discussions continue with regard to water rights, surveying, and square footage changes to the #9 and #15 Mechanic Street lots.

INFORMATIONAL: The next regular meeting of the Select Board is scheduled for Tuesday, November 22, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. Alstead will host the next Five-Town Select Board meeting on Friday, January 27th, 2022 at 4:30 PM in Langdon.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Mr. Kemp asked about the status of the Griffin Hill Road extension and whether it is a Town road, pertaining to a pending subdivision request for a parcel in that area. The Board recommended that he contact the Road Agent to clarify the status of that road.

On a motion made by Mr. McCarty and seconded by Mr. Saxton, ***the Board Chair adjourned the public meeting at 6:50 p.m.***

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator