

**TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**Select Board**

**Approved Minutes for Meeting of October 16, 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	•	
Shelley Steuwe	Recording Secretary	•	
Stephen Murrell	Police Chief	•	
Jesse Moore	Director of Sanitation, EMS & Grounds	•	
Steve Reynolds	Dir Emergency Management	•	
Bobbie Wilson	Vilas Pool/Supervisors of Check List	•	

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS:** **In person:** Nathaniel Robeson, Olivia Lincoln, Barbara Viegener, Joe Levesque, Marge Noonan, Judith Willis; **Google Meets:** Kenyon Nesbitt

**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:** Nathaniel Robeson and Olivia Lincoln; new residents @ 55 Main (Birch Croft)

Mr. Robeson and Ms. Lincoln just purchased the property at 55 Main Street. When they purchased the property, the tax card reads “89 acres”, but it appears that 6 acres are owned by an adjacent property. They’d like guidance about how to have their tax card corrected to read “83 acres”. Mrs. Gratacos has passed this information along to Mrs. Bacon, the Town Clerk/Tax Collector, who is on vacation this week but should be able to shed light upon her return. Mr. McCarty says they can look through the tax cards on Monday morning, but that the cards are generally (though not always) accurate. Mr. Kemp asks if most of the property is in current use,

and Mr. Robeson said it is not. Mr. Saxton says they can also apply for current use through the Town Clerk. Mr. McCarty says there is no fee for the application. Mr. Saxton goes on to inform them that if they log the land, there is a Timber Tax that they would have to pay. Further, you can get an additional 25% deduction on your current use rate if you have a Forester write you a Forest Management Plan. Mr. McCarty notes that if/when any portion of the property comes out of current use, they'll have to pay a Land Use Change Tax on that portion of land, at 10% of the new assessed value.

**ACTION ITEMS:** Review & sign Payroll manifest (\$32,666.15); review & sign Payables manifest (\$); review & sign Tax Liability manifest (\$6,709.25); review & sign employee reimbursement for Elections; review & sign Vilas Pool payment request; review & sign One Source Security contract for updated security in Town Offices; Review "Notice of Hearing"; review County Tax bill (due 12/17: amount of \$648,135); review information request from Trustee of Trust Funds

**MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:** 10/9 meeting minutes were reviewed, amended and approved as amended by the Board.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- A. **Washed-out glass** – Ms. Viegenger reports that Mr. Landry spoke with Mr. Hubbard, who has been sick for two weeks, which explains his delay in response to Mr. Saxton.
- B. **Thayer Brook bypass** – waiting on Cold River Bridges for proposal
- C. **Bridge projects / Dams / Pine Cliff Road** – Mr. McCarty reports that Jason Ayotte, from NHDOT, would like to do a public presentation about what they have planned for Route 123A by Vilas Pool on 11/12 at the Town Hall. Mr. McCarty recently met with Charlie Johnson, from Dubois and King, regarding the engineering analysis of the Vilas and Warren Dams. Mr. McCarty hopes to get Dubois and King to attend the 11/12 Town Hall public presentation that is being put on by NHDOT about 123A to discuss their goals and see how efforts can be combined to most efficiently accomplish work on the dams and bridges. Whatever Dubois and King proposes has to be consistent with the goals for the Pine Cliff Road modifications.
- D. **Status of property at M11 L2 (abuts Town Hall)** – Mr. Kemp reports that Mr. Bouchard has a family court date set for 11/6, and will have an update after that.
- E. **Model T MOU** – No updates.
- F. **Employee Health Insurance** – Mrs. Gratacos reports that on 10/23 she will attend a seminar on open enrollment for health insurance. Rates have been set, and packets are being put together for Cigna and Harvard Pilgrim.
- G. **Fire Chief Search** – Mr. Kemp reports that they have received 8 applications, 3 of which are out of state. He reached out to those 3 to ask if they are really interested and willing to relocate. Only one has responded in the affirmative, so there are 6 viable applications. Mr. Saxton reports that a Committee is being put together, and currently consists of Joe Levesque, Chief Murrell, Ed Reller, potentially Ms. Viegenger, and Mr. Saxton. They plan to schedule interviews next week.
- H. **Fire Dept Policies** – Mr. Kemp reports that there are many in process, but there is nothing to present now.

- I. **210 Gilsum Mine Road land merger talks** – No updates.
- J. **Complete Streets Information** – Mr. Levesque reports that they will also be participating in the public discussion hosted by NHDOT on 11/12.
- K. **Department & Board**

**NEW BUSINESS:** Steeple painting update

Mr. Saxton reports that the quote from Foster's Painting was about \$900 over what the Warrant Article provides. Jason Foster, agreed to charge only what the Warrant Article provides.

**OTHER ITEMS:** Ambulance Billing information, Director Reynolds

Director Reynolds reports that he called the ambulance billing service and spoke with their Clerk in response to getting a third bill. The Clerk reported that back in June they had issues with how the bill was sent electronically, and it did not go to Medicare appropriately (and this may have happened to many other bills), so they're going to go back and look at this. The Administrator called him back to discuss his concerns, and relayed some information that didn't align with how the billing process has been explained during Board meetings. He's asked that she come to a Board meeting to explain the process, which she will do at next week's Board meeting (10/22).

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

**Emergency Management** – Director Reynolds reports that he's waiting for information on the trailer from Rescue, Inc. He has been on government websites trying to get printed resources for emergency preparedness sent to him. He was able to request Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program information. There is a JLMC meeting 10/23 at 5:00 pm at the Town Offices. He asks about the oil burner maintenance schedule and wants to know when the next service is scheduled for. Mrs. Gratacos will find out and get this information to him. He asks if we can put the warrant article back in for the brush truck to ensure it gets discussed at the Deliberative Session.

**Police Department** – Chief Murrell reports that they have received 903 calls to date. Reminder to see Mrs. Gendron to register your vehicle for Trunk or Treat. He recently interviewed someone for a part time Police Officer position. Our current part time Police Officer isn't available to work often, and the new applicant will have better availability. He'll provide more information to the Board as it becomes available. He asks the Board if information can be pulled for the Land Use Clerk Planning/Zoning Assistant, as it was not listed in Ms. Wolf's Wage Study presentation. Mr. McCarty says they will ask her to get this information. He reports that Corporal Underwood has been doing the Blue for Bucks fundraiser to raise funds for the Granite State Children's Alliance.

**School Board / Assistant Moderator** – As Assistant Moderator, Mr. Levesque reports that he and the Moderator met with Peter Hill (Moderator in Westmoreland) to discuss the option of Vote Tabulation Machines, which makes counting ballots much faster (1 hour versus 3-4 hours). The State would pay for a portion of this, and Alstead would be responsible for about \$3,500 for one of these machines. He and the Moderator will be doing some work to get this put on a Warrant Article for the Town's consideration. Mr. McCarty asks if the Moderators plan to have a public

meeting to discuss this with residents, and Mr. Levesque says yes, they're planning on a meeting in December.

Re: School Board – the Interim Superintendent starts in two weeks.

**Town Office Administrator** – Mrs. Gratacos reports that she has spoken with Peter Rhoades on the Planning Board about the Right to Know request. He will update her with their findings from the 10/21 meeting, which she can communicate to the lawyer. She reports that Mr. Trafton made copies of keys for Mrs. Jarvis, and she has been set up with Avitar for training. Both Mrs. Gratacos and Ms. Iozzo will also be doing property assessment training with Shelley at Avitar. Mrs. Gratacos also reminded Department Heads are encouraged to touch base with her to get on the schedule for budget presentations.

### **Transfer Station, Ambulance, and Parks –**

Director Moore reports that:

- Ambulance – Sunday night multiple calls at the same time and the team handled them all efficiently and without issue. They will have a quote for the transmission repairs for Ambulance 1 next week. Mechanics are coming Saturday afternoon to do some repairs to AC/heating unit on Ambulance 2. When the fiber was put in at the Fire Station, they connected it incorrectly, so Charland remote accessed the system and fixed it. Bennington Rescue Squad is putting their offroad rescue unit and trailer up for auction.
- Parks – Asks the Board if we can consider replacing the overhead lights for the ice rink (current horse ring) for evening skating. Mr. Kemp provided Street Light inventory information, so he can look into this and provide additional details to the Board.
- Transfer Station – The waste blocks that are damaged are being repaired by the Highway Department on Thursday. The repairs being done by Mr. Lund should be complete by next week. The container truck had issues with one of the containers getting stuck on it on Saturday as a result of rotting in the bottom of the container. There is a spare in place, and the damaged container is next to another damaged container. He's inspected the other containers and anticipates impending failure on them as well. He has asked Mr. Lund to provide a quote for repairs, and asked for a quote from WasteQuip for a new container. Director Reynolds notes that the condition of these containers was brought up last November. The oil burner in the waste oil furnace was serviced last week, but wouldn't start today, so they'll be coming back next week to re-assess (at no cost). The internals in the waste oil furnace have not been replaced since 2019.

### **BOARD REPORTS:**

**Mr. Kemp** – Mr. Kemp reports that Alstead was mentioned in the SWRPC newsletter. We owe the County \$648,135 (due 12/17). There is a Purchase Order from the Highway Department for 42 culverts (\$36,968.40). The Board unanimously agrees to sign the Order. He asks why we have not replaced the First National Bank of Omaha credit card. Mrs. Gratacos will add this to the agenda to discuss next week.

**Mr. McCarty** – Asks for clarification on the request for donation for the Granite State Children’s Alliance. Director Reynolds and Chief Murrell said that it’s a volunteer program that supports children in the court process, and the donations help to support administrative overhead costs. Chief Murrell goes on to say that the Town has donated to this cause for the last few years.

Mr. McCarty has been consulting with the Moderator regarding dates for the Town Meeting process, which are going to be a little later this year. He will provide dates once they are determined.

There is a Zoom call with the Labor Attorney regarding the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) request for verification of salaried employees. They are more than halfway through processing this request, having all employee’s job descriptions and salary history has been reviewed. He predicts they will be paying back wages to at least one employee.

**Mr. Saxton** – Asks to have the gazebo roof added to the list as a Warrant Article.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:** Ms. Willis asks if all the PDFs for the Lake Warren Public Hearing can be consolidated and linked to another page. Mr. Kemp will take a look at this.

Ms. Viegner asks for clarification on several budget line items. Mrs. Gratacos either provided insight about some or needed to look into others based on additional information provided to her from other staff members. Budget print off is a work in progress currently.

**INFORMATIONAL:**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION/S:**

On a motion made by Mr. McCarty and seconded by Mr. Saxton ***the Board Chair adjourned the public meeting at 6:46 PM.***

<b>Next regular Select Board meeting:</b>	Tuesday, October 22, 2024 @ 5:00 PM, Town Offices, 15 Mechanic Street.
<b>Next FM School Board meeting:</b>	Monday, November 11, 2024 @ 6:00 PM, High School (2nd Monday)
<b>Next 5-Town Select Board meeting:</b>	TBD – Reschedule in progress

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Steuwe

Recording Secretary