

Town of Newington, NH
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Monday August 8th, 2022

Present: Chair Ted Connors, Vice-Chair Bob Blonigen, Selectman Brandon Arsenault, SAU 50 Superintendent Steve Zadravec, Budget Committee Chair John Lamson, Fire Chief EJ Hoyt, Police Chief Michael Bilodeau, Deputy Fire Chief Pat Moynihan, Police Commission Chair Brenda Blonigen, Board of Fire Engineer Chair John Klanchesser, Fire Engineer Ann Hyland Hebert, Martha Roy, Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy Recorder.

T. Connors called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes Approval: B. Arsenault moved to approve the July 25th, 2022. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Manifest Approval: B. Arsenault moved to approve the manifests for \$31,044.11 dated 7/28/2022 and \$277,551.83 dated 8/4/22 B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

SAU 50 Superintendent Steve Zadravec Introduction Meeting:

T. Connors welcomed the new SAU 50 Superintendent Steve Zadravec. S. Zadravec has come to the SAU with 17 years of experience, including the last 7 as the Portsmouth Superintendent. B. Arsenault asked about the SAU 50 Business Office budget that was \$100,000 more this year than the year before. The amount that Newington contributes to that budget is very high. It is based on the Town's valuation instead of the number of students in the system. The Business Office has 15 full time employees and a \$2 million budget. S. Zadravec said that he knows how important it is to have communication about the budget. B. Blonigen asked for the cost per student for each of the four communities in the SAU. B. Blonigen said that it is important to know if Newington is spending more or less compared to the other communities. T. Connors said that Newington is very proud of the school and wants to keep the high standards that the community is used to. S. Zadravec stated that Newington is a gem of a school. J. Lamson said that it is important that the SAU explains the value that they are giving to the Budget Committee and are able to support the substantial annual fee. S. Zadravec said that the SAU50 Facilities Manager has been a big help to the Newington School particularly the work that has been done over the summer. B. Blonigen expressed his concern about the school keeping funds left over at the end of the fiscal year. The SAU only owns one foot around the school. The Town is responsible for maintaining the ballfield and the school grounds. That extra money could be used to help maintain the outdoor space of the school. J Lamson discussed the previous Business Administrator, Jim Katkin and his historical knowledge of the various schools and the SAU. S. Zadravec said that he is hoping to have the same connection with the Town that Jim Katkin had.

Building Inspector Resignation: M. Roy announced that Steven Paquin, the Building Inspector, had resigned his position as of 9-1-22. The position has been posted.

Fire Suburban Replacement:

E. Hoyt said that the department had gotten the mechanical work done on the Suburban and they got an inspection sticker that will buy them time to find a replacement for this vehicle. E.

Hoyt is looking for the "ok" to move forward with ordering a new truck to replace the suburban. Right now, the turnaround time for getting a vehicle is 9-12 months. P. Moynihan said that there is no state bid for next year. The Board of Fire Engineers agree with moving ahead to order a new vehicle.

P. Moynihan would like to redo the Fire Vehicle Capital Improvement Plan to include these additional vehicles in the future. J. Lamson asked for clarification on the use of the Suburban. It is used as a commuter vehicle for the Assistant Chief. J. Lamson asked the Fire Department to not pay for more than they need. A. Hyland Hebert said that they look at value and utility.

B. Blonigen moved to go forward with the process of finding a replacement for the Suburban. This includes getting three bids for a ¾ ton truck and three bids for a ½ ton truck. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. All were in favor. B. Arsenault thanked the Board of Fire Engineers and the Chiefs for their hard work on this project.

SAFER Grant:

E. Hoyt explained that it is getting harder to find quality part time fire fighters. The Fire Department has had to use full time fire fighters to cover the part time open positions. They decided to look into a SAFER grant from FEMA. This grant would provide four more full time fire fighters to replace the current part time positions. The department has started to gather information in order to apply for the grant. This grant would pay 100% for the salary, benefits and gear for four full time fire fighters for three years and then the Town would be responsible for payment for the next year. The grant would be awarded in the fall of 2023. A. Hyland Hebert explained that these four positions would be to add one full time fire fighter to each shift. P. Moynihan said that these positions would add \$85,000 to the salary expense line. The Board of Fire Engineers is in support of applying for this grant.

B. Blonigen said that he knows it is hard to recruit police officers and fire fighters. The NH State Police currently have 70 openings. A. Hyland Hebert said that the Newington Fire Department is 70 calls ahead of this time last year. **B. Arsenault moved to authorize the Fire Department to move forward with the gathering of information for the SAFER grant application. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

NH Liquor License Application-The Pink Hippo Café, 50 Fox Point Road:

M. Roy said that this café is in the mall and will be serving coffee with a kick.

B. Arsenault moved to approve the liquor license for The Pink Hippo Café. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Bernie & Phyl's Directional Signs:

M. Roy said that Bernie & Phyl's customers have been having a hard time finding the store, so they are asking for 2 or 3 signs to help customers with the location of the store. The Board reviewed the picture showing the locations of the signs. The signs will be the blue informational type of sign. **B. Arsenault moved to approve the three requested informational signs for Bernie and Phyl's. The business will pay for the signs. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

Crack Sealing:

M. Roy said that she has not received the quotes yet, but they should be here tomorrow. The roads that will be sealed are; Shattuck Way, Mott Cove, Dumpling Cove and Welsh Cove. B. Arsenault asked that going forward the Town put together an approved vendors list for projects and that the Town reach out to these vendors for bids. M. Roy stated she has vendors that bids are sent to and she will put all vendors for each type of work on an excel sheet for the Selectmen.

Railroad Depot-Memo from Historic District Commission:

The Board reviewed the memo from HDC Chair Lulu Pickering about purchasing the Railroad Depot, as mitigation for the removal of the General Sullivan Bridge, and then leasing it back to the Historical Society. B. Blonigen said that the memo had a lot of information and would like more time to review it. T. Connors said that the State has offered to pay the Town \$150,000 for the depot and then the Town would lease it to the Historical Society. B. Arsenault doesn't think that the Town needs another historical building to maintain. B. Blonigen said that the Selectmen have been told that it would cost \$450,000 for the depot renovation and another three million for the shoreline mitigation to the property. B. Blonigen didn't think he could support this proposal. B. Arsenault said that L. Pickering's heart was in the right place, but the town doesn't need another building. **B. Blonigen moved to table the decision on the Railroad Depot until a later meeting. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

Town Buildings 2022 Budget:

M. Roy said that the energy lines in the 2022 Buildings budget will definitely be over-expended. She was notified that municipalities will not be included in the recent hike in electricity rates. Discussion ensued about smart thermostats in the town buildings so the temperature could be monitored at all times, the amount the Town is charging for the use of town buildings, the amount the churches pay to use the Meeting House and how warm the town buildings are when they aren't in use. The Selectmen asked M. Roy to do a survey of local churches to find out how much they charge people to get married there. B. Blonigen would like to meet with the church trustees to discuss ways to save money. The Old Parsonage electricity expense line is overspent due to the new mini split and the events that are being held there. The Board would like L. Pickering to give them a list of events that are being held at the Old Parsonage. B. Blonigen would like to meet with the HDC to discuss the electricity bills.

B. Arsenault moved to enter a nonpublic session at 6:51pm per RSA 91-A:3 II (a & e). B. Blonigen seconded the motion. T. Connors asked for a roll call vote: B. Blonigen- Yes, B. Arsenault-Yes, T. Connors-Yes. All were in favor.

B. Arsenault moved to return to public session at 7:45pm, seconded by B. Blonigen. T. Connors asked for a roll call vote: B. Blonigen-Yes, B. Arsenault-Yes, T. Connors-Yes. All were in favor.

B. Arsenault moved to seal the minutes indefinitely. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. T. Connors asked for a roll call vote: B. Blonigen-Yes, B. Arsenault-Yes, T. Connors-Yes. All were in favor.

Adjournment: B. Arsenault moved to adjourn at 7:46pm. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy, Recorder