

Town of Newington, NH
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Monday January 23rd, 2023

Present: Chair Ted Connors, Vice-Chair Bob Blonigen, Selectman Brandon Arsenault, Fire Chief EJ Hoyt, Police Chief Mike Bilodeau, Sewer Commissioner Rick Stern, Building Inspector Jeremy Boston, Fire Engineer Ann Hyland Hebert, Town Administrator Martha Roy and Eleanor Boy, Recorder.

T. Connors called the meeting to order at 6:21pm. Followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes Approval: B. Arsenault moved to approve the minutes of January 3rd, 2023. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Manifest Approval: B. Arsenault moved to approve the manifest for \$237,317.13 dated 1/4/2023 and \$173,880.87 dated 1/12/23. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Mike Bilodeau, Police Chief/EJ Hoyt, Fire Chief-Hazard Mitigation Grant Application:

M. Bilodeau explained that the Hazard Mitigation Plan is up for renewal in 2024. The Grant Agreement documents are due by February 6th, 2023. The Board of Selectmen signatures are needed on these documents. The Rockingham Planning Commission puts together the plan. Four years ago, Newington got a good review, the only issue was the Police communication system which has since been updated. The Chiefs are looking for the authorization to proceed with the process. B. Arsenault moved to accept the terms of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities and authorize Ted Connors, Board of Selectmen Chair, to sign all documents related to the grant. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

The Select Board, in a majority vote, accepted the terms of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities as presented in the amount of \$6,999.75 for updating the local hazard mitigation plan. Furthermore, the Board acknowledges that the total cost of this project will be \$9,333.00, in which the town will be responsible for a 25% match (\$2,333.25).

Mike Bilodeau, Police Chief-All Terrain Vehicle Grant:

M. Bilodeau discussed the need that Newington has for an all-terrain vehicle to help during big events, like the Air Show. The grant writer for the Build Strong Program has volunteered to write the grant for the vehicle if the Board of Selectmen agrees with applying for this grant. There would be no cost to the town. The ongoing expense for

the vehicle would be taken out of the Emergency Management budget. The vehicle will have to be outfitted with lights and other items for a cost of \$24,000. It would be stored in the Police Garage. M. Roy asked if there would be a need for a trailer. E. Hoyt said not at this time. **B. Blonigen moved to authorize the chiefs to move forward with the grant application for the all-terrain vehicle. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

Sewer Department Budget Revision-Rick Stern:

R. Stern asked that the Sewer budget be increased by \$30,000. They would like to add \$30,000 to their major maintenance budget expense line. R. Stern explained that when the sewer department put together their budget, they didn't have all the 2022 bills. When the bills finally came in, they realized that they had overspent the major maintenance line by \$30,000. Their overall budget was not overspent, they were able to absorb this extra expense. B. Arsenault asked if this was a planned maintenance cost. R. Stern said no. T. Connors said that he thought they had over a million dollars in their enterprise fund, and this could be used for items like this. R. Stern thought that it should be budgeted. B. Arsenault said that if they don't use the additional funds in that expense line in 2023, it would go into their enterprise fund. If the sewer department underspends their budget, the extra funds go into the enterprise fund. If they overspend their budget the extra amount should come out of the enterprise fund instead of increasing the sewer rates. B. Arsenault asked if the Sewer Commission would be willing to compromise and to ask for a \$15,000 increase instead of a \$30,000 increase. R. Stern said no because their revenue will be less in 2023 because they are no longer charging businesses for their irrigation. **B. Arsenault moved to increase the major maintenance budget line in the sewer budget from \$50,000 to \$65,000. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

Library End of Year Status:

B. Arsenault said that he had talked to the Library Director about the end of year procedure and found out that they are not asking for the Town to pay them an amount at the end of the year. M. Roy said that she thought that the Town and the Library were not in agreement about the end of year "true up". M. Roy will put together the information for the Board.

Trash Collection Bids Review:

The Town received two bids for three years of trash collection. One from G. Mello for \$192,960 and one from Elm Services for \$195,000. After the bids became public, Elm Services reduced their bid by \$28,530. Discussion ensued about who would own the bins, the vendor, the resident or the town. What would happen if a bin got damaged, if they would pick up trash if it wasn't in one of the bins, the extra cost to service the three dumpsters in town, if an alternative bid was needed. **B. Blonigen moved to accept the bid from G. Mello for \$192,960 for a three year contract. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

Pease RAB Open Position:

The Board discussed the need to have a representative on the Pease RAB. B. Blonigen thought that Huddy Grandy would be a good person for the Pease RAB. It was a consensus of the Board to ask H. Grandy to join the Pease RAB.

Sale of Town Land Bid Opening Tax Map 19, Lot 2A:

The Town received one bid. It was for \$50,000 from The Storage Barn of Newington, LLC-Mark Phillips, Manager. The bid included the following addendum; This Town owned land is riddled with underground utilities and burdened with required setbacks that render it totally non-buildable as a lot by itself, thus leaving it with no economic value independently. It only has value when merged with our adjacent 0.98 acre lot known as Map 19, Lot 2, which will at least allow the side setback of 19-2 to be utilized for a structure. The vast majority of this Town owned lot prohibits erecting a building and can only support parking. No prudent investor would bid on this lot in the manner described by your RFP. Typically, commercially zoned vacant land is sold subject to approval for a specific use. Therefore, our offer remains at \$50,000 but only when approved by the Town for a structure of at least 10,000 square feet on the combined lots mentioned above. If we are the successful bidder, we will act as quickly as possible to seek approval for the largest possible building on the two lots when merged.

Respecting the 30-day appeal period, we will close 35 days after final Town approval and anticipate no state permits required. **B. Arsenault moved to enter into a purchase and sales agreement with Mark Phillips for the purchase of Tax Map 19 Lot 2A for \$50,000, contingent upon all town easements on the lot remaining in place and the closing takes place within 30 days after the necessary approvals. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

SAU Formula to Bill Towns by Assessed Valuation and Student Population:

M. Roy said that the Chair of the Budget Committee has asked the Board of Selectmen to look into the SAU Formula. Currently the towns in SAU50 are charged with a portion of the SAU50 Administration budget. The amount that Newington is required to pay for the SAU50 Administration budget is based on the valuation in town. This valuation includes 400 million for our large power plants. These industries don't pay any school tax, yet they are included in the formula for our valuation. B. Arsenault said that it is wrong that they don't pay any school tax but the residents have to pay for their valuation.

Stone School Lease Option and Warrant Article:

M. Roy said that if the Board is considering leasing the Old Stone School, you need to receive the authority to lease it for numerous years in a warrant article at Town Meeting. B. Arsenault thought that there is good reason to start to plan the future of the Stone School but recommends no warrant article in 2023. It is important to meet with the various boards to let them know what the Board of Selectmen is thinking before we put together a warrant article. All others agreed.

Kristen Poulin- HDC Alternate Resignation:

B. Arsenault moved to accept, with regret, the resignation of Kristen Poulin from the HDC. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor. T. Connors thanked Kristen Poulin for her years of service to the Town.

NHDOT Bridge Funds \$23,690.73-Warrant Article or Keep in Budget:

M. Roy said that the Board of Selectmen could decide to keep this money separately in the budget, but it would be defined for bridge work or establish a capital reserve fund designated for bridge work. B. Arsenault liked the idea of a warrant article. B. Blonigen thought it was important to start a capital reserve fund for bridge work because the bridge on McIntyre Road will need work soon. B. Arsenault moved to have a warrant article, to be designated for bridge work, prepared for the 2023 town meeting. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Fox Point Dead Wood Offer to Residents:

M. Roy said that there were a lot of trees down at Fox Point after the last storm. There are residents that would like to cut up the trees and take the wood. B. Arsenault thought it was a good idea but asked that residents only be allowed to cut between 9am and 5pm. B. Blonigen moved to allow residents to cut downed trees at Fox Point as long as they come to the Town Hall to register before and cut between 9am to 5pm. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Solar Options-Town Hall:

J. Boston said that he has received three bids for solar power. He is meeting with a company tomorrow and report back to the Board after. T. Connors said that he appreciates all the work J. Boston has done on this project.

The Board's 2023 goal and objectives will be on the next agenda.

B. Arsenault would like to revisit the fees charged to residents for permits. J. Boston said that he is putting together a report of surrounding towns fees and will have that information soon for the Board.

B. Arsenault would like to put a procedure in place at Town Hall to handle to complaints about the development of the Shackford property.

The Board thanked Laura Coleman for the letter she sent the Board saying that there won't be any meetings in the Old Parsonage until April to keep the cost of heating it down.

The Board wished Denis Messier the best on his retirement.

Adjournment: B. Arsenault moved to adjourn at 7:22pm. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy, Recorder