

Town of Newington, NH  
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday November 16th, 2022

**Present:** Chair Ted Connors, Vice-Chair Bob Blonigen, Selectman Brandon Arsenault, , Building Inspectors Jeremy Boston and Mike Hoffman, Recreation Committee Chair Rebecca Navelski, Recreation Committee Member Jessica Morgan, Planning Board Chair Denis Hebert, Road Agent Len Thomas, Town Engineer Eric Weinrieb, Fire Engineer Ann Hyland Hebert, Unutil Project Support Manager Will Jones, Finance Director Sheryl Bagley, Martha Roy, Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recorder.

T. Connors called the meeting to order at 5:33pm. Followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes Approval:** B. Arsenault moved to approve minutes from October 31<sup>st</sup> and November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**Manifest Approval:** B. Blonigen moved to approve the manifests for \$195,047.42 dated 11/3/2022 \$224.63 dated 11/4/2022 and \$93,351.06 dated 11/10/2022. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**Town Recreation YMCA Summer Program:**

The Board reviewed the budget proposed provided by the YMCA. The Recreation committee believes that there will be between 35-45 campers. J. Morgan said that she thought that it was a very reasonable proposal. The budget includes the Town subsidizing \$400 per camper. The Recreation Committee has voted to accept the proposed budget. The contract with the YMCA should be available in December. Some updates in the contract will be to run the camp from 8-5, Newington Camp will share a bus with the Camp Gundalow. The Recreation Director will be the “point person” between the camp and the town. The Recreation Director will “check in” with the camp every day. B. Arsenault asked if there will be a YMCA site director on sight all summer. R. Navelski said yes. **B. Arsenault moved to approve the YMCA contract and to proceed with all items that are addressed in the contract. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.** T. Connors asked R. Navelski and J. Morgan to make another attempt to be included in the interview process for the counselors. J. Morgan asked to make sure that there won’t be any events at the Old Town Hall for the summer. E. Boy said that she has blocked off the calendar for summer camp.

**Highway 2023 Budget Review:**

M. Roy told the Board that there has been flooding along Shattuck Way today and Road Agent L. Thomas there now. The water did not go over the road. B. Arsenault asked where the Town was with the NHDOT about the flooding on Shattuck that has been

happening since the Spaulding Turnpike expansion. M. Roy said that the NHDOT thinks the road culvert is fine. B. Blonigen said that he trusts E Weinrieb's analysis of the drainage problem, especially because there was no problem before the construction. B. Blonigen is also concerned because the State has applied for an "Intent to Cut" permit for their State Highway Shed and this could add more water to the Shattuck flooding problem. B. Arsenault thought that the Town should put more pressure on the State to resolve the problem.

Road Agent Len Thomas entered the meeting.

L. Thomas said that the flooding was worse because beavers had built a damn in the culvert. They dismantled most of the dam tonight. T. Connors suggested that the Town write a letter to the Division Chief and ask him to come to a meeting to explain their position on the flooding on Shattuck Way. B. Arsenault said that is it unfair to the property owners and businesses to have this flooding problem.

The road projects for 2023 are crack sealing to improve the longevity of roads. Reclaim Fox Point and McIntyre (through the bend). Repairs to Captains Landing, Old Dover Road and Piscataqua Road. Overlay for Nimble Hill Road. B. Arsenault asked how E. Weinrieb comes up with his recommendations for the Town's roads. E. Weinrieb said that he drives around to look at the conditions, he has conversations with M. Roy and L. Thomas. The Town can't do anything on Shattuck Way next year because of the Air Force projects. B. Arsenault asked why the Town isn't following the Rockingham Planning report that was done a few years ago. M. Roy said that she asked for an updated report this year, but Rockingham Planning didn't have anyone to do the report, so she asked E. Weinrieb to update the report this year. M. Roy said that the Highway budget usually includes \$190,000 for resurfacing. E. Weinrieb's list of 2023 projects exceed this budget by \$168,000. B. Arsenault suggested that the Town collect impact fees from businesses to maintain town roads. E. Weinrieb said that the town needs to crack seal Woodbury in order to keep it in good shape because it is a main piece of infrastructure in Newington. There are three culverts that are on the priority list; McIntyre Road, Patterson Lane and Shattuck Way. B. Blonigen pointed out that there was \$28,000 remaining in the culvert expense line for 2022, all three culvert repairs could be done with this money.

#### **Unitil Drilling Request:**

M. Roy explained that Unitil has directional drilled from Cumberland Farms in the direction of Woodbury and hit ledge. They need to bore using a larger rig from halfway between Jared's and the Subaru dealership. They will be off the edge of the pavement but will need to block the right-hand lane of Gosling, on the Newington side, for a month. T. Connors expressed his concern with shutting down a lane during the Christmas season. The Malls need to be considered. Unitil has already disturbed Gosling and will put it back to its original condition after the project. Unitil was aware

of the Gosling moratorium before it started this project. B. Arsenault questioned why Unitil would burden our retail sector when they were aware of the moratorium. B. Arsenault asked if it would be a hardship for Unitil if they started this work in January. W. Jones said yes because it would put them behind on other projects for 2023 and the State has ordered them to get it done before the end of the year. T. Connors said that the timing could not be worse. M. Roy asked if Unitil knew the exact days the lane would be closed. They did not. E. Weinrieb asked if they could work from midnight to 7am? W. Jones said that they would be working 24 hours a day when pulling the pipe through. B. Arsenault suggested that Newington offer December 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> for the project to be completed. If Unitil can't do these dates then the project will be delayed until January 3, 2023. B. Blonigen asked that E. Weinrieb look at the road damage as of today and monitor any future damage. D. Hebert said that other companies have had to pay a \$20,000 penalty for digging up the road during the moratorium. E. Weinrieb suggested a financial penalty if they can't complete the project during those three days. B. Blonigen asked M. Roy to check with legal about what penalty could be imposed. **B. Arsenault moved to allow the right lane closure of Gosling Road from Cumberland Farms to Jared Jewelers on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022. In addition, there will be a penalty, as recommended by the town attorney, for digging up Gosling Road during the moratorium. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

#### **Air Force Connecting Water on Nimble Hill Road:**

The Air Force is connecting a resident on Nimble Hill Road to Portsmouth Water. B. Blonigen said that the Board is assessing a penalty for the Air Force for cutting Nimble Hill Road during the moratorium. **B. Arsenault moved to permit Rye Beach to do the work on Nimble Hill Road for resident Tom Hourihan and a \$25,000 penalty will be charged to the Air Force for the project. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

#### **Town Buildings 2023 Budget Review:**

The Town Buildings Administration 2023 budget is the same as in 2022. The Town Hall building electricity expense line increased by 48% and the natural gas expense line increased by 25%, however the overall 2023 budget is the same as 2022 because the maintenance line was decreased. M. Hoffman suggested that an energy audit be done all the town buildings. The Town Garage budget increased because of the increased electricity and fuel lines, plus a containment barrier is needed for the fuel tanks. The Old Town Hall building budget increased due to electricity and fuel increases. Future projects for the Old Town Hall would include windows, painting exposed wood and flashing between the old and new parts of the building. The Meeting House budget increased due to electricity and fuel increases. The Board is meeting with the Church people on December 5<sup>th</sup> to discuss how to conserve the resources this winter. The Town spent \$115,000 on utilities for town buildings last year. T. Connors pointed out that most of these buildings are vacant the majority of the time. The Fire Station needs to

have the engineering and architectural studies completed. The building also needs a fence at the top of the hill behind the Fire Station for the safety of the school children when they are sledding. A. Hyland Hebert mentioned that they also need gutters on the new addition. The Police Station has several needed projects; repairing drywall and paint, commercial carpets and ceiling tiles, repair water coming into the vehicle storage area. M. Hoffman said that the Stone School is a “tight” building now and the Town needs to figure out the future use of the building. The Old Parsonage has had a large increase in the utilities in 2022. M. Hoffman said that the town needs a policy to control the mini-splits and the increased expenses. The east side of the building’s clapboard and trim need to be painted. The clapboard will need to be replaced in the future.

M. Hoffman thought that the Town is spending too much money on the contracted services for the buildings. The Town spent \$5,591 on fire extinguisher inspections and \$5,000 on pest management. The Town could purchase its own porta potties or develop policies for using the buildings facilities. B. Blonigen suggested completing some of these projects using money in the 2022 budget.

#### **School Tax Funding:**

Newington and the Coalition of Communities have filed an objection to a temporary restraining order by other towns asking that tax rate settings be suspended, and all funds be given back to taxpayers until a new education tax can be arrived at. The Coalition stated that tax rate setting has been happening since early October. This would do significant chaotic harm to the public interests. This is a very important issue and could affect Newington significantly.

#### **Town 2023 Budget Review:**

**Insurance:** The Board has already approved the 2023 expenses.

**Regional Associations:** The Board reviewed the 2023 requests. COAST Bus has requested \$38,907 for 2023. D. Hebert said that Newington is the only town that doesn’t pay its full amount. B. Blonigen said that bus routes in Newington have been cut. D. Hebert said that was because they didn’t have enough drivers. D. Hebert said that ridership is down because of the lack of drivers. B. Arsenault asked how they decide the amount for each town’s contribution. D. Hebert said that they have a formula and he will get it for the board to review. D. Hebert also said that for every dollar we give, the fed gives them a dollar.

**Finance and Assessing:** The actuarial expense line has been moved out of the Executive Office budget to the Finance and Assessing budget. M. Roy will check the numbers for the Trust Management fees.

**Legal:** The 2023 amount is \$10,000 less than 2022.

**Transfer Station-Collection:** The 2023 budget is \$2,000 less than the 2022 budget. M. Roy said that Craig Daigle does a great job managing the transfer station and actively works to reduce costs. B. Arsenault asked M. Roy to put out bids for residential waste collection for 2023.

**Street Lighting:** The 2023 budget is \$2,600 more than the 2022 budget.

**Health and Dental Quotes:**

Harvard Pilgrim's quote is \$44,000 less than HealthTrust. A. Hyland Hebert said that the union likes HealthTrust because of the network, providers and accessibility.

**Alcohol Usage on Town Property:**

B. Arsenault said that there is no procedure for BYOB at private gatherings on town properties. B. Arsenault didn't think the town should be acting like a major city with lots of rules and regulations, but the town has to be protected. T. Connors said that he believes that people tend to drink more when it is BYOB situation. B. Blonigen is concerned because of the town's liability at these events. The Town's insurance carrier Primex says that the town should not have these events without a bartender. B. Arsenault thought that the town should not be advertising drinking or BYOB events and participants should have to sign a "hold harmless" document and the alcohol should only be beer and wine.

T. Connors asked that M. Roy prepare a draft of the "hold harmless" agreement and the Board will review it later.

**2017 Ford Explorer Bid:**

T. Connors opened the submitted bids for the 2017 Ford Explorer. One from Yousef Dabbagh for \$1,875.00 and one from Steven Zanazzi for \$1,378.00. **B. Arsenault moved to accept the bid for \$1,875 from Yousef Dabbagh. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

**Adjournment:** B. Blonigen moved to adjourn at 8:29pm. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eleanor Boy, Recorder