

Town of Newington, NH
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Tuesday July 5th, 2022

Present: Chair Ted Connors, Vice-Chair Bob Blonigen, Selectman Brandon Arsenault via Zoom, Finance Director Sheryl Bagley, Planning Board Chair and COAST Rep Denis Hebert, Board of Fire Engineer Chair John Klanchesser, Fire Engineer Ann Hyland Hebert, Resident Bob Siede and Martha Roy, Town Administrator.

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

Minutes Approval: B. Blonigen moved to approve the June 20th, 2022 minutes. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Manifest Approval: B. Blonigen moved to approve the manifests for \$52,571.03 dated 6/23/2022 and \$231,169.91 dated 6/30/2022. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Facility Use Requests:

B. Blonigen moved to approve the following requests:

Jacob Crosby-Old Town Hall and Grove-July 31st-Birthday Party

Recreation Committee-Town Hall-October 1st-Senior Dinner

B. Arsenault seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Denis Hebert-COAST Bus Budget:

D. Hebert said that the new COAST Bus facility is going to cost \$14,700,000. As of now it looks like the seacoast towns and cities are not going to have to pay anything. COAST will be using federal grant money for the project and the State will be paying the matching amount of the grants. The goal for COAST is to have all the buses stored inside. This will reduce the amount of maintenance and will extend the life of the buses. Coast will also be saving \$50,000 a year that they now pay to rent a second facility for their administrative staff. B. Arsenault questioned why COAST needs a new facility when they are cutting routes. D. Hebert explained that the demand for service is high, but COAST is unable to hire enough drivers, that is why they are cutting routes. B. Arsenault asked if COAST was a private company. D. Hebert said he didn't know. B. Arsenault said that he thinks that COAST is a private company that is taking public funds to run it. D. Hebert said that it is a non-profit. B. Arsenault said that C&J Bus takes no public assistance, but is doing well. D. Hebert said that C&J gets their buses through grants. B. Blonigen said that C&J has raised their prices recently. B. Arsenault asked if D. Hebert thought that COAST Bus was run well. D. Hebert said yes. D. Hebert explained that COAST will never be profitable. It is a service for people who can't get to work any other way. COAST Bus was originally established by the coastal community to support the workforce for their businesses. Newington doesn't have high ridership numbers because we are a wealthy town, it is for out-of-town residents that work in the area who need the service. D. Hebert said that when Newington doesn't donate their allotted amount for the year, the other towns have to pick up the slack. M. Roy pointed out that COAST Bus Executive Director, Rad Nichols, had sent a letter to the Selectmen saying the towns would have to close the gap for the funding of the new facility. D. Hebert said that the goal is to not have any town in the seacoast give any money for the

new facility. COAST is applying for loans and is waiting to hear back. B. Siede spoke in favor of COAST because they help lower wage earners to get to work at the mall or other businesses.

Resident Bob Siede said that the tree cutters had driven across his lawn and had crushed a corner of the asphalt on Nimble Hill Road. B. Blonigen said that the Selectmen are in communication with Eversource about the tree cutting. They are supposed to ask the private citizens before they cut. Also, the Town is having Nimble Hill Road paved in August and will ask the contractor about the damage at that time.

T. Connors thanked B. Siede for letting them know about the problem.

Vacation Buy Back Policy:

The Board reviewed the vacation buy back policy. B. Blonigen asked that the words "full time" be added in front of the word "employee". M. Roy will add it. **B. Blonigen moved to accept the new vacation buy back policy for full time employees. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

Finance Director-Sheryl Bagley-2022 Budget Status:

S. Bagely presented the current budget through June 30, 2022. The Town has expended 40% of the budget so far. Town Buildings and Land Management are running a little bit ahead in their budgets due to the high cost of fuel and electricity. S. Bagley expects budget overages at the end of the year. The salary and wages are currently at 43% through June 30th, 2022. B. Blonigen said that he like these reports and thinks that they help the citizens see where their money is being spent. S. Bagley reviewed the \$34,293 that has been spent out of the capital reserve accounts so far. The zip line is being shipped out on July 8th. The repairs to the ball field will be completed by July 30, 2022. The new position of the Recreation Director has been advertised and interviews will start soon.

Discussion ensued about the paving of Nimble Hill Road and the need to make sure be water line construction scheduled on the road happens before the paving. M. Roy will follow up on this.

Adjournment: B. Arsenault moved to adjourn at 6:13pm. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy, Recorder