



BOARD OF SELECTMEN
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MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Monday, July 31, 2023 – 6:30 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

Members Present: Randy Bunnell, Laura Malloy, Vaughan Morgan, Steve Smith

Members Absent: Paul Stanley

Staff Present: Paul Sanderson, Town Administrator

Also Present: Chief Ralph Cresta – Fire Department; Chief Tara Tucker – Police Department; Dennis Malloy – NH State Representative

Chair Smith opened the Board of Selectmen meeting at 6:30 p.m. A roll call was taken, and it was announced a quorum was present and the meeting was being live-streamed and recorded.

I. PUBLIC HEARING

1. National Night Out Donations: Police Department

The Police Department has received many donations to support National Night Out, which will be held on Tuesday, August 01, 2023: Seacoast Children’s Dentistry (\$500), Revive Auto Detailing (\$100), Haircuts or Dye (\$200), National Wrecker (\$400), Pearl’s Landscaping (\$500) and Greenland PTO (\$100). Total donations are \$1,800.

S. Smith opened the hearing to public comments. There being no comments, S. Smith closed the public hearing and returned to the Board.

MOTION: V. Morgan moved to accept and expend the donations received by the Police Department for National Night Out on Tuesday, August 01, 2023. Second – L. Malloy; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

II. APPOINTMENTS

1. Rockingham Planning Commission Update: Bob Dion, Planning Board Chair & RPC Representative

Bob Dion, Greenland’s representative to the Rockingham Planning Commission, updated the Board on various topics, including the Winnicut River Bridge. He met with Tim Roach and Dave Walker, RPC, on March 06, 2023, requesting a complete review of the necessary steps to design a new bridge on Rt. 33. There have been many complaints from Greenland that the RPC is not paying attention to the Town’s needs. They explained the process, which included an engineering study; the study is funded for FY 2024. \$125,000 has been allocated for the engineering study.

The 10-year plan has been completed for 2023 through 2032. The first item recommended by RPC was engineering for the Portsmouth Traffic Circle. B. Dion noted that voting can only be done on the funding available, which is not enough. The vote for the Traffic Circle was to do the engineering and leave the remainder for later, which is not on the 10-year plan at this time.

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A charrette for the Rt. 33 bridge will be held in Greenland in early October. The charrette will include RPC, NHDOT, traffic engineers, landscape engineers and interested citizens from Greenland and Stratham. The objective of the charrette is to have a viable option for Rt. 33 that will be acceptable to citizens. They would like to hold the charrette at Greenland Central School on Post Road. RPC will organize the professional support.

The project number for the corridor study is 43849; none are planned at this time. Two studies a year are supposed to be done. A corridor study needs to be done before the bridge can be done. A corridor study may be done on Rt. 125 rather than Rt. 33 because there have been several deaths on that road in recent years and is a higher priority.

Striping from Bayside Road to Stratham Hill Park is finished. Project funding was \$1.4 million in FY 2023. Construction on the Rail Trail being done by NH Seacoast Greenway Alliance was expected to be at Breakfast Hill Road at the end of 2023. Work is currently being done on the portion of the trail between Breakfast Hill Road and Ocean Road. The Seacoast Greenway Alliance submitted a grant application to build a structure at the trailhead on Breakfast Hill Road. Grants will be awarded in October; construction cannot begin until the trail from North Hampton to Portsmouth is complete.

There continues to be a strong focus at every meeting addressing the State-wide shortage of workforce housing. B. Dion attended the 2023 New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions (NHARPC) meeting in May. Commissioners from all the Planning Commissions in the State met to discuss workforce housing needs and opportunities.

B. Dion noted that NHDOT has substantial funding for the Pease Development Authority (PDA). The PDA budget with NHDOT for the 10-year plan (2023-2032) is \$119.5 million.

TA Sanderson stated that the charrette will be important. Once the date is known, the Board will be notified. The last charrette was done approximately 10 years ago and was well attended. B. Dion noted that RPC did a charrette for the rail trail, from Seabrook to Portsmouth. L. Malloy added that it was a great work session and gets people involved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Monday, July 17, 2023

MOTION: V. Morgan moved to approve the minutes of Monday, July 17, 2023. Second – R. Bunnell; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Southeast Land Trust Agreement: Smith Farm

The Southeast Land Trust Agreement with the Town for the Smith Farm was reviewed. TA Sanderson explained that SELT had requested that the \$700,000 approved at Town Meeting be paid within 120 days of closing. He was concerned it was too long for the money not to be working for the Town. The Letter

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of Agreement was amended to 30 days prior to closing. The Town funds would provide liquidity for the closing. Preliminary matters are being resolved, and closing is getting closer. S. Smith noted that there was a problem with the original survey, and it had to be started over last year. He showed the Board a map of the property indicating the exclusion area, which is not part of the easement. S. Smith continued that the funding is in place, hoping the federal government would release their funds as soon as possible. Donations from other sources is complete. The Smith family is hoping the closing will be within 90 days. TA Sanderson added that this will allow him to work with the Treasurer to make sure funding is available.

MOTION: V. Morgan moved to approve the release of \$200,000 from the Conservation Land Capital Reserve Fund and \$500,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance as approved by voters in March 2022 to the Southeast Land Trust 30 days prior to signing of the Letter of Agreement with the Town of Greenland. Second – L. Malloy; three in favor, one abstain (S. Smith). MOTION CARRIED

A newsletter from the Southeast Land Trust was available explaining how the farm would be used.

2. Letter of Engagement: Plodzik & Sanderson

TA Sanderson updated the Board that the majority of the fieldwork had been completed. The Board was asked to sign the engagement with Plodzik & Sanderson for the 2022 audit. Audit work is continuing at the Plodzik & Sanderson office. TA Sanderson stated that the MS-535 (Balance Sheet) should be received at the end of August, allowing preparations for setting the tax rate. Once the MS-535 is received, the Unreserved Fund Balance will be known. TA Sanderson noted that Plodzik & Sanderson was happy working with all involved in the audit; they were provided with as much information as possible in advance.

The 2021 audit report was received in February 2023, three days before having it included in the Town Report. Information will be received much earlier this year. One concern was that the Town was in three different banks in 2023.

MOTION: V. Morgan moved to approve the engagement letter with Plodzik & Sanderson to be signed by the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen Chairman. Second – L. Malloy; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

3. E-911 Updates: Chief Tara Tucker, Police Department

Chief Tucker addressed the Board regarding proposed E-911 updates, explaining that years ago the Town worked on being 911 compliant with addresses; this has not happened for the last several years. She further explained that a lot had been subdivided on Stratham Lane where a new home was being built and would require a street number. Stratham Lane was going to be re-addressed: Stratham numbered Stratham Lane in their town, and Greenland numbered their portion of Stratham Lane; both start at '1', resulting in three addresses in both towns that are similar. After talking with the Town's E-911 representative, Chief Tucker felt it would be best to move forward with the changes. The Stratham numbers would be continued into Greenland. Chief Tucker briefly reviewed the E-911 process, which includes a letter to affected residents and the two hearings that will be held. She noted that utilities and the post office are notified.

Responding to V. Morgan, Chief Tucker stated that Holly Lane should be renumbered. He questioned the driveway adjacent to his residence with four residences. Chief Tucker stated it would be a private drive with its own name. She noted there were several small issues on Holly Lane that need to be addressed.

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Chief Tucker commented that the biggest issue in Town was the two intersections that are Portsmouth Avenue and Greenland Road.

V. Morgan asked if a public hearing was needed if the numbering or street name was changed. TA Sanderson stated that a public hearing would be needed for these proposed changes because numbers would be changed. Chief Tucker added that it would be both cases unless it was a brand-new road. It was noted by TA Sanderson and S. Smith that there would be a new development off either Stratham Lane or Dearborn Road.

MOTION: V. Morgan moved to hold a public hearing on Monday, August 28, 2023 for the proposed E-911 changes to Stratham Lane and Holly Lane. Second – L. Malloy; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

4. Revaluation Update

The assessor, Todd Haywood – Granite Hill Assessing, has been doing the data collection phase. It is 90% complete and he expects to be done this week. Notifications will be sent to residents about the revaluation, and they have the right to an informational hearing with the assessor to correct any issues. It was noted that the assessor only looks at the exterior of the home. The goal is to have the process complete by September 15th so the MS-1 can be created, receive a value of the Town, and be able to set a tax rate in October and November.

Informational hearings will be held in the Conference Room at the end of August; 150 residents are expected. Three assessors will hold up to 25 hearings per day. It is expected that the numbers will increase significantly. Last year, Greenland was valued at \$884 million; the equalization study from DRA estimates the Town's value at \$1.4 billion. The assessor, in his field reviews, has found those numbers may be a little low. Homes are selling for record-high prices.

Dennis Malloy, Van Etten Drive: Questioned how DRA computes the value of a town. TA Sanderson explained that at the closing when a house is sold, there is a form that goes to DRA for the payment of a transfer tax. The form shows the actual market value the house sold for. Information is compiled by DRA and compared to the Town's assessed value. By statute, the Town has to be revalued every five years and a cyclical revaluation of 20% per year must be done (20% of the Town is looked at each year).

A perfect market value would have an equalization rate of 100%. However, the market moves faster than the process. Greenland's equalization rate has gone from 100% to 60%. TA Sanderson explained that it was not the fault of the assessor, but rather the market moved faster than the process. The Town will be as close as possible to 100% of market value as of April 01, 2023; the equalization rate is expected to be in the 90's. Commercial properties are expected to increase substantially, and valuations are expected to be contested (this is normal). It takes approximately two years to resolve assessment questions (hopefully without litigation or the Board of Land and Tax Appeal).

R. Bunnell asked the pros and cons of Greenland being a wealthier town, noting when the Town became a donor town for additional funding across the State. TA Sanderson explained that as the Town becomes wealthier and of more value, this area is becoming a higher value faster than other parts of the State. If educational funding is provided to towns falling further behind, it is a legislative decision over which the Town has no control. Greenland probably will not receive substantial educational grant assistance compared to a community that has not risen as quickly in value. There is no impact on transportation funding, health, and human services programs, and similar. D. Malloy noted that there has been a change in the education funding formula.

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Information will be posted on the website. Some residents will assume that a higher revaluation number equals a higher tax rate, which will not be the case. The rate will come down and the revaluation will be higher.

5. Facilities Update

A structural analysis on the metal public works building has been received. The indication is that the building is worth saving. Roofing estimates have been requested from two companies. One company has indicated they would remove the roof and because there are trusses and strapping underneath, additional framing and a plywood deck would be required. Asphalt or metal would be put over the plywood deck. This is a very expensive alternative.

The other company felt they could provide a quote taking the existing metal, reattach it to the trusses with screws rather than nails, and apply a coating over the top that would resolve any pin holes and corrosion. This would give the building a useful life.

The structural engineer reviewed the buildings on this side of the property. TA Sanderson was hoping to receive information about the condition and possible uses for the buildings. TA Sanderson was able to provide information regarding the properties. The Town Office was designed to last until 2000 and serve a population of 2,000. All exterior walls are foamed with urea-formaldehyde and all wiring is encapsulated in the foam. A second floor can be added with the right supports.

6. Second Reading of Policies

TA Sanderson updated policies that were submitted (Cash Receipts and Fraud). He requested that the Board review and comment on the revised policies (copies on file). R. Bunnell would like the policies moved to adoption soon. TA Sanderson updated the policies as close to current procedures used and made the language more consistent. He explained that the highlighted areas are the statutory responsibilities. The auditors have not reviewed the policies.

7. Other Old Business

There was no 'Other Old Business' to discuss.

VI. NEW BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Unregistered Dogs: Civil Forfeiture Charges

The Board received a letter and list of unregistered dogs from the Town Clerk for informational purposes. The list has been given to the Police Department. TA Sanderson noted this was a statutory requirement by the Town Clerk.

2. 2024 Budget

TA Sanderson explained that the budget process will be starting earlier than in the past. In the first phase of the budget, department heads needed to assume that they would be budgeting on a default budget amount (approximately \$6.5 million). The revaluation will make it very difficult for residents to spend a lot of money.

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In the initial phase, department heads will be asked to submit to the Selectmen what they can and cannot be done on a default budget. The MS-535 and Unreserved Fund Balance will become the other source of funds used to not increase the tax rate. The Board will need to look at what cannot be done on a default budget and determine if the Unreserved Fund Balance can cover those additional costs. The goal would be to keep the new rate and the amount paid as consistent as possible.

When looking at the Unreserved Fund Balance, the reaction is to give immediate tax relief. Giving immediate tax relief makes it difficult to fund any new programs. A tax drop may result in a bounce next year. The idea is to keep the rate as stable as possible, increasing or decreasing in small increments. The same approach will be used with the Budget Committee.

L. Malloy stated that once the process is started and the Selectmen determine the budget they want to present, it should not be expected to change up to the budget timeline. TA Sanderson agreed, adding it will help the Board's representative to the Budget Committee when presenting the Town's budget. Discipline at the beginning will give the Board more credibility during the budget process.

R. Bunnell asked if areas with significant deficiencies were identified: technology, human resources, financial services, and others. There are areas that money needs to be put towards to get it to the right place. He did not see incremental changes as possible in certain areas right now. TA Sanderson acknowledged he was absolutely correct as far as the operating budget was concerned. Some areas may be appropriate for warrant articles. The Board will make a collective determination on how to proceed.

S. Smith stated he hoped some of the information would be forwarded to the School Board as well. TA Sanderson has been in contact with the Business Administrator who has indicated some funding may be returned to the Town for tax relief.

5. Other New Business

Tax Rate: TA Sanderson explained what could happen with the tax rate. Last year the Town had to raise \$15.8 million for the Town, County, School, and State education. If the Town budget was \$6.5 million and approximately \$16 million had to be raised spreading it over \$1.4 billion, the tax rate would decrease from \$18.09 to around \$11.40. NOTE: This was a guess only due to unknown factors. Assessments increasing by 50% would not mean more tax dollars out of pocket.

Transfer Station: Transfer Station employees frequently ask V. Morgan if the Town is looking for their replacements. The majority of the gentlemen working there are elderly and 'aging out'. Within the next year, the Town needed to consider new personnel at the Transfer Station. The young man currently at the Transfer Station is finishing his career in the Marine Corps and is working part-time at Novel Iron Works. Once he finishes his military career, he will get a full-time job and move on. How the Transfer Station operates, and community-wide curb side pick-up have not been discussed. There is a cost associated with curb side pick-up. The current companies operating in Town do not offer curb side pick-up for recyclables. R. Bunnell stated other options needed to be looked at; L. Malloy suggested something on a trial run that did not cost a lot of money.

Fire Station Hiring: At the last meeting, R. Bunnell questioned Fire Department hiring. TA Sanderson explained there are two candidates that can be hired once they pass their physical agility test. That is expected to happen mid-August. Responding to L. Malloy, TA Sanderson stated that hiring those individuals will get the Fire Department to its authorized strength. Referring to the fire the previous week, TA Sanderson stated that there were two Greenland firefighters on duty and able to respond. However,

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one firefighter had to be at the truck while the other was working the actual fire and a dangerous situation resulted. Without mutual aid, the situation could have been worse. The necessity of having three individuals on a night shift is an option. S. Smith added that he has spoken to Chief Cresta. The Chief will be reviewing his budget for the possibility of hiring a third person per diem for the night shift for safety. TA Sanderson noted people are available during the day for coverage. The police are often on the scene but unable to perform as firefighters. It was explained that there are minutes from the time the call is received to respond, and response time is a factor.

Chief Cresta arrived.

National Night Out: Chief Tucker updated the Board on National Night Out on Tuesday, August 01st. V. Morgan noted that there was not much publicity and residents were unaware. Chief Tucker stated that it was on Facebook and their website but there were only four people running the department and it was difficult. It is always the first Tuesday in August and is a nationwide event.

NH Public Works Mutual Aid: The NH Public Works Association works with various towns on public works issues. One of the valuable aspects is that there is a list serve for sharing information. At UNH there is a Technology Transfer Center (T-Square) that provides course work and training for individuals involved in NH Public Works Mutual Aid. NHPWMA is a great organization with a tremendous amount of information available. They are offering a free two-year membership to towns that have not been involved; TA Sanderson recommended joining that organization at no cost.

TA Sanderson noted that discussions have started between the Town Administrators of Greenland, Rye, North Hampton, and Stratham for issues involving building inspection. There is the possibility of discussing public works issues as well.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Payroll Manifest: \$71,648.07
2. General Fund Manifest: \$1,232,177.17 (General Fund - \$53,588.44; NH Retirement - \$590.47; Health Trust - \$42,998.26; School - \$1,135,000)

MOTION: R. Bunnell moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Second – V. Morgan; all in favor.
MOTION CARRIED

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: R. Bunnell moved to adjourn at 7:42 p.m. Second – V. Morgan; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING

Monday, August 14, 2023 – 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room

Submitted By – Charlotte Hussey, Administrative Assistant