



BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Town of Greenland • Greenland, NH 03840
11 Town Square • PO Box 100
Phone: 603.431.7111 • Fax: 603.430.3761
Website: greenland-nh.com

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Monday, October 23, 2023 – 6:30 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

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

Staff Present: Paul Sanderson, Town Administrator

Also Present: Susan Parker – Greenland/Newington PDA Representative; Chief Ralph Cresta – Fire Department; Chief Tara Tucker – Police Department; Members of the Energy Committee

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. APPOINTMENT

1. Energy Committee

Alice Passer, Energy Committee, addressed the Board. The Energy Committee was established several months ago to research community power communities. A. Passer reported that they have interviewed two for-profit vendors (Standard Power and Colonial Power Group). They also interviewed non-profit groups (Statewide Cooperative and Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire also known as CPCNH). In addition, vendors customers were interviewed. Information was given to the Board to illustrate some of the differences between the non-profit and for-profit vendors.

A majority of the Committee favored CPCNH and recommended them as the first choice: the Town would have a voice in the direction and operation of the Coalition. Their Board of Directors is chosen from member representatives of each town, increasing the likelihood that the energy and electricity needs of New Hampshire municipalities would be a priority over the need to provide profits for shareholders.

The Energy Committee's second choice was Colonial Power Group over Standard Power. They liked their professionalism, their long history of providing electricity in New England, and in the near future CPG could offer the Town the very lowest electricity rates.

It was explained by A. Passer that the Town could choose one contractor now and change to a different in the future. Adopting community aggregation poses no risk to the assets of the Town of Greenland. Community aggregation cannot be launched until the Town votes in favor of it in March.

V. Morgan thanked the Energy Committee for their work on this project. He clarified that out of 75,000 rate payers there would be a savings of \$267 per year. A. Passer stated they would not know until the rate was set. Community Power could not be launched until the coalition partner could offer lower rates than Eversource. P. Stanley asked what the rate difference was between CPCNH and CPG. Peter Bowen explained the rates vary with time. It was clarified that the rate would be lower than Eversource. Rates would also vary depending on the length of the contract. Responding to a question from Susan

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Parker, A. Passer explained that Eversource would be the energy supplier. It was further explained that regardless which company is chosen, Eversource provides the transmission and distribution. R. Bunnell thanked the Energy Committee for doing this public service for the Town. He added that by law they had other choices and was glad they found a partner for the Town.

The next step for the Board would be to select who they wanted to contract with. Once they decided, the Energy Committee could move forward with the Electric Aggregation Plan. A. Passer felt it would benefit the Town to have either Colonial Power Group or the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire help the Energy Committee with the plan. Two public hearings will be needed on the plan. The plan will then go to the Public Utilities Commission for review. A warrant article will need to be written for the March Town Meeting.

L. Malloy questioned where in the process the Board would get a pricing snapshot. She did not feel the Board could move forward without the comparison. A. Passer stated they could provide CPCNH rates now as well as possibly request them from CPG. TA Sanderson explained that even though it goes to Town Meeting in March, there is still the budget public hearing and Deliberative Session. It will need to be drafted and in good form in December. TA Sanderson clarified that the Energy Committee was recommending the Town not entertain proposals from other suppliers. A. Passer recommended waiting for Community Power; she felt the rates may be lower. TA Sanderson noted that the warrant article needed to be drafted in December; the Board should hear from them in November with a more solid recommendation. A comment was made from an Energy Committee member that based on their interviews and working with three candidates, there was no bad choice. A bad decision could not be made.

Further discussion was continued to Monday, November 20th. A copy of the Energy Committee's report is on file.

2. Susan Parker, Greenland/Newington PDA Representative: PDA Update

Susan Parker, Greenland/Newington PDA Representative, updated the Board on the latest PDA meeting held Thursday, October 19th. She noted that attendance at PDA meetings is typically 100%.

S. Parker reported that the terminal expansion of the airport would cost approximately \$19 million, most of which is FAA money. There were no updates on the projects discussed with the Board on September 25th. Million Air is still in the due-diligence process for permitting. The FAA was at Pease in early October and stated an increased interest in the environmental aspects. S. Parker noted that it was usually indicative that someone had a higher-level conversation regarding the environment and what may/may not be happening. It was noted that the Town continues to monitor the Coakley Landfill and there is a call on Tuesday, October 31st. Newington has provided S. Parker with lengthy recordings of their briefings.

Last March, the Corps of Engineers dredged in the Piscataqua River to provide safer passage for bigger cargo ships to dock at the installations in Newington. During the dredging process, they uncovered a very large boulder that could seriously damage the hull of a large cargo ship. It rises 32 feet from the bottom; the standard for the draft is 36 feet. A device is needed that is large enough and strong enough to remove the boulder. S. Parker noted it does relate to the local economy.

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

S. Parker reviewed the training program for airplane mechanics at the PDA. The training program is taking place at Skyhaven Airport in Rochester. S. Parker discussed Jalbert Leasing, also known as C&J Bus Lines.

S. Parker commented on the airport recently closing down to take-offs and landings. The airport was closed due to inadequate fire protection coverage. There is one key machine, with two others as back up. The truck with multiple means of firefighting (water, foam, and chemicals) and used for tankers was out of service. Allegiant Airlines and the NH Air National Guard were affected. S. Parker questioned why the PDA was depending on a municipality to provide highly specialized equipment and its maintenance when 24/7 coverage was needed. S. Smith added that the runway district is covered by the National Guard. They have three crash trucks as well as other equipment and all were out of service at the same time. The rented equipment was out of service within two days. A truck from Rhode Island was rented.

3. Fire Department Hiring

Chief Cresta requested permission to hire Matt Gobbi as a firefighter. M. Gobbi has gone through the certification process. Chief Cresta is waiting for the written results of the background check. There is funding in the budget to hire an additional firefighter. Both positions were approved at Town Meeting in March.

MOTION: R. Bunnell moved that Chief Cresta could go forward in hiring Matt Gobbi as a firefighter. Second – V. Morgan; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

S. Smith thanked Chief Cresta for the job he did in Stratham on Sunday. Chief Cresta was one of the first officers on scene at the house fire and ran the scene. Chief Cresta noted that Greenland had two crews on the scene.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Tuesday, October 10, 2023

MOTION: V. Morgan moved to approve the minutes of Tuesday, October 10, 2023. Second – L. Malloy; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

III. OLD BUSINESS

1. MS-1 Summary of Valuation

TA Sanderson reported that the signed MS-1 and MS-535 could now be uploaded to the DRA portal, which is two-thirds of what is needed to set the tax rate. The MS-1 (Summary Inventory of Valuation) summarizes the recent revaluation. The Town's value is now \$1,447,593,100 with utilities; this is approximately 63% higher than last year's total value, including utilities, of \$884,534,665. Last year's approved amount on the MS-232 of \$6,688,896 will be raised over a much broader base. The tax rate will be lower than the current rate of \$18.09; however, it will not be known until approved by DRA. TA Sanderson hoped the tax bills would be in the mail November 01st and collected by December 31st.

TA Sanderson explained the MS-535 (Financial Report of the Budget). This report is prepared by the auditors. The Committed Fund Balance is \$517,600: funds set aside by Town Meeting vote for the

purchase of the Smith Farm conservation easement, which is likely to close in December. The Unassigned Fund Balance is \$2,158,154 and slightly higher than estimated. The projected School budget is \$14 million and Town budget is \$7 million: approximately \$21 million. If the Board would like to continue the current policy of leaving 10% in the Unassigned Fund Balance, it would be approximately the same as the projected budget. TA Sanderson explained that the Restricted Fund Balance of \$91,660 is money from Highway Block Grants that has not been expended; that will be less money that has to be raised through taxation for road work.

Responding to V. Morgan's comment about remaining at the 10%, TA Sanderson stated the Board could discuss what the fund balance should be. He also responded to L. Malloy's question that DRA recommends 8% to 17%. With a projected School and Town budget of \$21 million, 10% would be a fund balance of \$2.1 million, 9% would be \$1.89 million, and 8% would be \$1.68 million. Below 8% is a risk in case of an emergency. This will be a Board decision when the tax rate is set. The School projects that it will give the Town \$278,000 towards the Unreserved Fund Balance. Continuing at 10% is in line and the \$278,000 from the School could be used for programming. If the fund balance is lowered, it would free-up money for operations and programming reappropriation, or tax relief. The Board should know the projected tax rate before making any decisions.

R. Bunnell questioned why the School budget was being factored into the Unassigned Fund Balance. TA Sanderson stated he has been advised by the Business Administrator they would be giving that to the Town as revenue. R. Bunnell noted that the School has their own Unassigned Fund Balance and questioned why the Town's Unassigned Fund Balance was factored into the totality of the Town and not what is needed to maintain the Town's operation of \$7 million. TA Sanderson explained that was not how DRA recommended the calculation of the Unreserved Fund Balance and Retained Fund Balance. The Town collects taxes for the School and is the only revenue source for the School. DRA recommends combining the School and the Town budget to determine the correct amount to retain. There is no statute requiring that between 8% to 17% be retained, but it is recommended by DRA.

TA Sanderson, responding to P. Stanley, clarified that the School has their own Unreserved Fund Balance. The amount being returned to the Town was approved by the School Board after they voted on the amount to retain in their Unreserved Fund Balance.

MOTION: V. Morgan moved to approve the MS-1 Summary of Valuation as prepared by the assessor. Second – L. Malloy; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

2. 2024 Budget

There will be a kickoff meeting with the Budget Committee on Wednesday, October 25th, at 6:30 pm. The Basic Laws of Budgeting will be reviewed as well as the Right-to-Know Law and budget calendar.

3. Vacation and Sick Hours for Town Employees

Chief Tucker reviewed her request that the Police Department be able to rollover or cash out remaining vacation days into 2024. The sick leave buy back would be the amounts as noted in the Personnel Policy. Chief Tucker also discussed selling back sick leave for health insurance. TA Sanderson stated that the policy as written dates back to 2007. At that time the intent was for enough sick leave to be sold back to cover the cost of health insurance for the following year. The Town does not have a mechanism to hold money from an employee and then pay out in increments for a particular contribution. If sick leave is sold back to the employee, it is treated as compensation and appears on their W-2, subject to

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

taxation, and in certain cases a requirement to contribute to the NH Retirement system. How those funds are used is up to the employee. Originally, the buyback was used to cover the cost of health insurance. Selling sick leave back to the employee could also hurt them: they would not be able to take the contributions they make as pre-tax and save on their taxes. Laws have changed since 2007.

The Board can decide whether to allow employees to sell back sick leave and what the fiscal impact would be. If paid out, it requires cash. At this time, the Town has expended approximately 75% of its appropriation authorized at Town Meeting; transfers can be made. TA Sanderson reviewed some of the unexpected expenses. He could not provide the Board with an accurate projection for the end of the year; the bottom line cannot be over-expended.

Responding to P. Stanley's question regarding the amount for buyback, Chief Tucker stated they would be restricted by the Personnel Policy guidelines. She stated there would be three people who are eligible if the Town stayed with Health Trust: a total of \$13,007. With ClaimLinx six people would be eligible: a total of \$13,644. Employees understand the tax implications and that the policy needs to be amended. It was important that the employees did not think the Town was making an eleventh-hour change.

There were 400 hours of vacation time that had the potential of being cashed out in the Police Department. Chief Tucker noted those were earned hours that had to be paid. TA Sanderson commented that if vacation time was cashed out now, funds would not be available.

The Personnel Policy includes a use it or lose it clause. Chief Tucker was requesting an exception for vacation hours because of the difficulties that department has had this year. Chief Tucker noted that the policy allowed 80 hours to be carried over and up to 56 hours can be cashed out each year. Responding to R. Bunnell's question, Chief Tucker stated they were requesting all remaining vacation hours be rolled over or cashed out. It was clarified that a carryover would have no current cash issue. Carryover would be used at the current rate of pay at the time.

V. Morgan's concern was overspending the bottom line, which cannot be done. TA Sanderson explained that in the last quarter they needed to be aware of the expenditures so the budget does not exceed the bottom-line appropriation on December 31st. Transfers can be made within the budget if an account is overspent, but the bottom line cannot be overspent.

Marcia McLaughlin, Nantucket Place: If the hours were carried over, would the rate be retroactive to January 01st? TA Sanderson stated that has been the practice.

R. Bunnell suggested allowing them to carry over an additional 40 hours as an exception to the policy until the policy is revised due to managerial challenges this year. All employees in all departments have shown a commitment to their job. P. Stanley stated it made sense and this was cash flow timing. The Board preferred carry over to cash out. This will apply to all Town employees.

R. Bunnell noted that it would be helpful to have spreadsheets prior to meetings to allow time to review. He felt the Board needed to be better prepared in the future.

MOTION: P. Stanley moved that an exception be made, and employees be allowed to carry over all unused vacation leave to next year. Second – L. Malloy; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

P. Stanley noted that if this is brought forward next year, he would vote against it. TA Sanderson stated that next year at this time there will be a new policy in place.

R. Bunnell recommended tabling sick leave buy back until the Board received financial information.

4. Facilities Update

The coating on the roof of the metal building may be done this week or early next week. They want to put the coating on during warm weather. Electrical and lighting upgrades will also be done so the building will be fully functional.

The structural engineering analysis on this complex has been received from Aaron Bennett and is available. The fire station bays upgraded in 2018 and 2019 are structurally sound and in good condition. Station 2 (formerly used for winter maintenance) needs repair but is deemed to be salvageable. Floors will need to be raised over 2 inches so water does not flow into the building and floor drains dealt with so they do not discharge to an unknown point. The structural crack in the foundation can hold the weight of the building, metal panels need to be fixed. Eastern Propane will be doing a full inspection of the propane system and doing any upgrades. The salt bays have severe damage in the vertical structure and metal sidewalls as well as the concrete due to salty water, causing corrosion. The recommendation is that they are not salvageable and would have to be taken down. The salt tent was installed in 2015 and is nearing the end of its useful life. The remaining salt is becoming brine and flows into the drainage areas around the Town complex. The USEPA, in the MS-4, regards that structure as a pollution hotspot and must be addressed in the MS-4.

The Town Hall was built in the 1980. The useful life was projected to be 20 years and serve a population of 2,000. The Town Hall has functional problems. More than 5% of siding (shingles) is missing, mildewed, and starting to fail. Water is not getting all the way in due to the foam that was used. A second floor cannot be added due to the truss system. The recommendation was to tear it down and start over. The air conditioning systems will need to be replaced when they no longer operate.

5. Other Old Business

GACIT Meeting: The Governor's Advisory Council on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) held a meeting at Greenland School on Thursday, October 19th. The hearing is held by an Executive Councilor in their district for inclusion in the 10-Year Plan with funding by the legislature. In attendance were several members of the Planning Board and Select Board as well as the Town Administrator. 5% of the Town of New Castle was also in attendance, including past and current members of their Select Board. They wanted the causeway from Portsmouth into New Castle renewed and the major bridge from Rye into New Castle replaced: it is a removeable bridge, and they would like a fixed bridge.

The 10-Year Plan in this area does not include Greenland other than \$125,000 to do preliminary engineering work on the Winnicut River Bridge. There is also a provision that there would be a corridor study on Rt. 33 in conjunction with Greenland, Portsmouth, and Stratham. The study is programmed for 2028; there is not very much funding attached and not enough to do it in 2028. The Greenland representatives made a presentation that the corridor study is a high priority and allows the Town to work with the Rockingham Planning Commission, Stratham, and Portsmouth on improving the corridor needs. Councilor Stevens did support the corridor study being done earlier and fully funded. Written testimony can be filed with those objectives noted.

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Projects do not have to be on the 10-Year Plan to be funded. The current 10-Year Plan has over \$100 million earmarked for this general area: \$97 million for the Pease airport, \$12 million for railroad upgrades, reworking the intersection of Grafton Avenue and Rt. 33, a project in Stratham, and in Newington on Arboretum. Economic activity will be increased and impact Rt. 33.

An argument for the Winnicut River Bridge is fire protection. There is no municipal water or fire protection beyond the bridge. The Fire Department must rely on cisterns for fire protection in that section of Town and the adjoining portion of Stratham. Congressionally directed spending is another possibility for the Winnicut River Bridge. If it is closer to shovel ready, it is more likely to be a candidate for congressionally directed spending. TA Sanderson noted that Rt. 33 is an evacuation route during a natural disaster or nuclear emergency.

The Board was in agreement to advocate for a Rt. 33 corridor study. S. Smith will attend the GACIT meeting on Tuesday, October 24th in Hampstead and present the Board's stance on this issue. He noted that although attendance at GACIT meetings was not mandatory, the committee should be aware of Greenland's recommendations. TA Sanderson commented that the bill would not be signed for many months; however, this will forward the GACIT recommendations to the Governor.

S. Parker suggested a 'model' letter be written; that will be provided by S. Smith. TA Sanderson explained that after moving from the GACIT and Governor phases, the bill moves to the legislature and the Transportation Committee in the House and Senate; this will be an opportunity to testify. S. Parker suggested seeking press attention for a corridor study; TA Sanderson stated it would not hurt.

Dennis Malloy, NH State Representative and Van Etten Drive: It will be important to be heard when this goes to the Transportation Committee; D. Malloy will notify the Board of the date. They will listen more closely to local officials.

TA Sanderson: The 10-Year Plan spends approximately \$2 billion on transportation. Each year of the plan adds only \$8.5 million and that's what towns are competing for.

Health Insurance: P. Stanley noted there was a time crunch with the health insurance. Kevin Delaney, Town Treasurer, explained he has been involved with employee benefits and retirement plans for 15 years and that this option has been fully vetted. He knows the company and solution personally. He had no vested interest in pursuing this insurance plan other than understanding the savings to the Town. Over the last few weeks, he has been advocating for this plan with the employees. The intention is to provide better benefits; employees would not be sacrificing benefits. He explained the basics of the program to the Board. The highest deductible plan would be used, and the Town would be self-funding after the agreed upon deductibles for all the employees. The benefits in place would not change: the network and insurer stay the same. Employees would have to carry two cards: ClaimLinx would do all the billing and negotiate high-cost bills for the employees as their advocate. The Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan (MERP) would help pay the claims. Premium outlays will be less so pay will increase. Additional benefits could be offered with the savings. Health Trust will need to be notified by November 17th. A decision will need to be made by the next Board meeting.

There will be a meeting in the Police Department on Wednesday, October 25th, for employees to address their concerns and have questions answered. TA Sanderson explained the program that was available to employees many years ago and questioned if this was the same type of program. K. Delaney assured TA Sanderson that ClaimLinx handles all claims. TA Sanderson clarified that the Town's role would be to pay provider invoices but not deal with employee information. K. Delaney explained

the invoices would be monthly for dental, medical, ClaimLinx and MERP (used to fund any claims after the agreed upon deductibles are met by employees). Employees will have the same deductibles they have now: ClaimLinx mirrors the schedule of benefits each employee has.

P. Stanley has been involved in researching the insurance option and sees no reason not to do it. He asked what else was needed to move forward. L. Malloy stated the meeting would be helpful to hear concerns and answer employee questions. R. Bunnell stated that for him it was if the employees felt comfortable. He noted that there could be a special meeting before November 17th, if necessary. P. Stanley commented that employees needed to be comfortable, and the Board needed to be sure they were doing what was truly the best for employees. R. Bunnell added he would be comfortable if the Board could have employee feedback at the next meeting.

IV. NEW BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Road Name: Proposed Development on Dearborn Road

It was noted that the developer had not submitted a formal application to the Planning Board and was still in the design review process. Further discussion was continued until a formal application was submitted.

2. Road Name Chage: Tide Mill Road

TA Sanderson explained that there is a family on Tide Mill Road that has recently experienced a great deal of tragedy and adversity. Members of the neighborhood have requested that the small portion of Tide Mill Road from Portsmouth Avenue to Rt. 33 be renamed Lavendar Way in honor of the girl who recently passed away. Chief Tucker stated that 911 wanted to rename the entire road. TA Sanderson stated that mechanically it stops at Rt. 33. The other side of Rt. 33 is also Tide Mill Road and goes down to the water and Bay where there was a tide mill. That segment has more historical significance. Chief Tucker explained that Tide Mill Road and Tidewater Farm Road are similar and the reason 911 wants to rename the entire road. She added that the Board of Selectmen does not have to approve changing the name of the entire road. S. Smith stated that Tide Mill Road has been there for over 100 years and did not think the section from Rt. 33 to the water should be changed; he was in favor of changing the name to Lavendar Way on the section from Portsmouth Avenue to Rt. 33. Responding to a question from R. Bunnell, Chief Tucker stated that she has heard the mother is happy with the name change. The number change will affect three homes. A public hearing will need to be held to change the name.

MOTION: R. Bunnell moved to change the name of Tide Mill Road to Lavendar Way from Portsmouth Avenue to Rt. 33. Second – V. Morgan; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

3. Use of Town Property Policy Review

TA Sanderson explained the process when there is a request for the use of Town property. He requested that requests go directly to the Police Department. If there is a problem, it could go to the Town Administrator for a final resolution.

MOTION: R. Bunnell moved that all requests for the use of Town property start at the Police Department. Second – P. Stanley; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

4. Other New Business

There was no 'Other New Business' to discuss.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Payroll Manifest: \$79,164.52
2. General Fund Manifest: \$141,549.66
 - o Weeks Library: \$108,660.09
 - o Recreation: \$145

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

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Stephan Toth, Palm Drive: Question for TA Sanderson regarding the State and Piscataqua Landscaping. TA Sanderson explained that the Deputy Commissioner of DOT approached him at the GACIT meeting about the comprehensive maintenance agreement and its revisions. He has not received any feedback at this time. DOT will be watching the outcome with interest.

Debbie Beck, Great Bay Road: Was worried who would show up to plow because the equipment is not there. Stated that she loved to come to these meetings because lives frugally and seeing how the Board spends money gives her hives.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Bunnell moved to adjourn at 8:37p.m. Second – P. Stanley; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING

Monday, November 06, 2023 – 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room

Submitted By – Charlotte Hussey, Administrative Assistant