



BOARD OF SELECTMEN
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MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Monday, December 20, 2021 – 6:30 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

Members Present: Jamie Connelly, Rick Hussey, Steve Smith, Richard Winsor

Members Absent: Randy Bunnell

Staff Present: Matthew Scruton, Town Administrator

Also Present: Susan Parker, Greenland/Newington PDA Representative; Dennis Malloy, NH State Representative; Marcia McLaughlin, Weeks Library Trustee Chairman; Bob Krasko, Budget Committee Chairman; Frank Hansler, Budget 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. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE – THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2021

1. Payroll Manifest 21-26

MOTION: R. Hussey moved to approve the Payroll Manifest, pay date December 23, 2021. Gross amount, excluding payroll liabilities: \$74,102.69. Second – R. Winsor; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

2. General Fund Manifest 21-26

MOTION: R. Winsor moved to approve the General Fund Manifest of Unpaid Bills Detail as of December 23, 2021, in the amount of \$332,512.21. Second – R. Hussey; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

3. Fire Inspection Fund Manifest

MOTION: J. Connelly moved to approve the Fire Inspection Fund Manifest of Unpaid Bills Detail as of December 23, 2021, in the amount of \$550. This invoice is in support of the Weeks Library Renovation. Second – R. Winsor; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

TA Scruton explained the invoice was from Beverly Kowalik who assisted with the code enforcement aspect on behalf of the Fire Department.

II. APPOINTMENT

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

Susan Parker, Greenland/Newington PDA Representative, updated the Board on the PDA meeting held on Thursday, December 16, 2021. The PDA approved building four hangars at Pease that will be 12,100

sq. ft. each. There will be approximately 4.5 acres involved. Upwards of 20 planes may be stored in the hangars.

Pease Greeters will be back on January 01, 2022, for one year due to the new FAA required security system in place in the terminal and adjacent buildings. The Pease Greeters can renew after one year.

Air traffic has increased at Pease. 65% of Port City Air's business over the past year has been Department of Defense cargo overseas. 15% of PCS's business is commercial aviation. An additional 15% is the general corporate jet. There are currently 150 planes housed at Pease.

S. Parker and TA Scruton were both on the Coakley Group conference call for their meeting last week. Two key studies involve movement of the plume and water that carries PFAS. Two entities are being looked at: bedrock water, which is different than surface water. The call was abruptly ended and the Coakley Group went into private session. TA Scruton explained there is an RSA stating a public session must be available to the public. They disconnect the phones of people calling in when they enter into non-public session and do not reopen the phone lines at the end of the meeting after coming out of non-public session. The public has no way of knowing if the non-public minutes are sealed or what happened after the non-public portion of the meeting. TA Scruton continued that the deep bedrock study mentioned by S. Parker should be available in January 2022.

1. Ralph Cresta, Chief – Fire Department: Use of ARPA Funds - Ambulance Purchase

Selectmen Bunnell had previously asked TA Scruton if ARPA funds could be used to purchase an ambulance. TA Scruton has consulted with the State GOFFER experts. It is a gray area; however, they talked about the public health pandemic. TA Scruton stated that the fact they did not say 'no' likely means 'yes'. If the Town wanted to use ARPA funds for an ambulance and reserve the existing Fire Department funds, it could be done. Other towns have done this and not been told 'no', to his knowledge. If the Board decided to use ARPA funds, CRF funds would not need to be involved. TA Scruton added that the culvert work discussed by the Board next year could be done with available funds. There are funds in the Highway CRF.

Chief Cresta was confident the department could purchase an ambulance outright. Prices have increased, anywhere from \$350,000 to \$405,000. No one will commit at this time due to prices and the delivery time. Chief Cresta was planning to submit a warrant article for an ambulance this year; the current ambulance will be 10 years old and requires more maintenance.

Responding to R. Winsor, Chief Cresta stated there is approximately \$300,000 set aside for a new ambulance at this time. Chief Cresta added that there may be \$400,000 in the account by the time the ambulance is delivered. Chief Cresta explained that the money in the CRF was earmarked for fire apparatus or equipment. A portion of the last fire truck was purchased using funds from the CRF; there was a warrant article for the balance.

S. Smith clarified that the ambulance includes everything (stretcher, lift, etc.). He suggested using the ARPA funds up to a specific amount and the CRF for the remaining balance. TA Scruton reminded the Board approval was needed from the legislative body to use the CRF; a warrant article would need to be done. TA Scruton added that ARPA fund expenditures do not need approval from the legislative body.

R. Winsor's concern was that the funds were to purchase an ambulance and is appropriately funded. If ARPA funds were directed to the purchase of an ambulance, there would be overfunding. The Board

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agreed there would be for at least a year. TA Scruton stated a warrant article could be written to purchase an ambulance through the Fire and Ambulance CRF. It could pass at Town Meeting and the Board could choose not to withdraw any funds. TA Scruton recommended using that approach. Chief Cresta clarified the funds could not be used for anything but the purchase of an ambulance.

R. Winsor suggested the Town direct funds from the Fire & Ambulance CRF into the Fire Station CIP. He continued that ARPA funds could be expended on the ambulance and take the existing fund, release that and redirect it to the Fire Station fund. TA Scruton explained that the existing CRF would have to be closed and another CRF started, or a warrant article be drafted to change the purpose of the existing Fire & Ambulance CRF. He added that using the money in the Fire and Ambulance CRF for a fire station was not an authorized use. There is a Fire Station CRF at this time. S. Smith felt a fire station would not pass this year and would like to focus on purchasing an ambulance. He recommended a warrant article for a withdrawal of funds as well as using ARPA funds. TA Scruton explained that as long as the use of ARPA funds could be justified for a public health benefit, there should not be a problem. TA Scruton noted that the Town has received half of the ARPA funds at this time, the remaining will be received in 2022.

J. Connelly questioned if two ambulances could be purchased based on the current EMS staff. Chief Cresta responded there was not enough money in that fund. He planned to keep the current ambulance as a back-up.

R. Winsor requested quotes; Chief Cresta stated that pricing will increase in January and it will be tight. R. Winsor asked Chief Cresta if the Board approved now, would the company hold the price. Chief Cresta responded that if the Board felt this would work, he would be able to get some hard numbers and added he expected the increase to be 7% to 10%.

R. Winsor stated he would like to redirect the money from the Fire and Ambulance CRF into the Fire Station CRF. TA Scruton noted there would need to be a two-third's vote in favor to change the purpose, which is a higher standard than a majority vote. Towns tend to do two warrant articles: one to close the fund and one to start a new fund using the balance from the closed fund. A 50% majority is required for that process. TA Scruton stated it is a gamble if one warrant passes but the other does not.

S. Smith requested a hard number for the next meeting. Chief Cresta reviewed the Horton quote, noting there will be a 7% increase in January 2022. TA Scruton stated there is over \$400,000 available in ARPA should the Board decide to move forward. Chief Cresta suggested a warrant article for \$100,000 for the accessories (stretcher, lift, etc.) and ARPA funds for the ambulance.

Chief Cresta voiced concern about fees being directed to the Fire and Ambulance CRF. Some are electronically deposited and he was concerned they were going into the correct account. TA Scruton will work with the Financial Director on this concern.

S. Smith asked the Board if they wanted to authorize the use of ARPA funds for the ambulance pursuant to a warrant article. TA Scruton recommended waiting until Chief Cresta had more streamlined numbers. R. Winsor felt there was support for it, but recommended waiting.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Acceptance of Donations: Police Department

The Police Department received two donations for their Heroes and Helpers program. DD Cook Builders donated \$350; REP Enterprises donated \$500. The Police Department will send thank you notes.

MOTION: R. Winsor moved to accept the donations to the Police Department Heroes and Helpers program from DD Cook Builders in the amount of \$350 and REP Enterprises in the amount of \$500. Second – R. Hussey; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments. S. Smith thanked Brian and Deb Fogarty, 7 Moulton Avenue, for picking up trash along Rt. 33 on Saturday, December 18, 2021, in the snow and rain.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Monday, December 06, 2021

MOTION: R. Winsor moved to approve the minutes of Monday, December 06, 2021. Second – R. Hussey; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Coakley Update

NH State Representative Dennis Malloy reiterated what was previously stated by S. Parker that the bedrock study should be done by the end of December; a presentation will be made to the Seacoast Cancer Cluster on January 20, 2022. That meeting will probably be streamed.

Representative Malloy is also a member of the Seacoast Long-Term Drinking Water Commission. The commission is still collecting information. There have been no decisions or legislation put forward. Representative Malloy stated that DES is in the process of establishing a drinking water standard for manganese. An EPA health advisory has been issued. By law, NHDES must adopt an ambient, enforceable ground water quality standard. The EPA has issued new draft toxicity data for PFOA and PFOS that could indicate there are no safe levels for those chemicals. Initiatives were discussed that were supported by the Drinking Water and Ground Water Trust Fund that include rebates for PFAS treatment systems where no immediate responsible party is identified. There is money available for the Dover/Portsmouth Interconnectivity Project and the Seacoast Private Well Sampling Initiative. The initiative will collect data and help residents avoid future exposure to chemicals such as arsenic but not PFAS.

2. Budget Update/Warrant Article Review/Year End Encumbrances

Budget: TA Scruton commented there had been four meetings with the Budget Committee to review the Town budget. TA Scruton reviewed the Budget Committee's recommendations. They initially rejected the Board of Selectmen's recommended budget. The Budget Committee has reviewed budgets

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with department heads. TA Scruton noted that all the changes made by the Budget Committee are within \$976 of the original budget submitted by the Board of Selectmen. S. Smith added that some numbers look like they changed; it is just a reallocation from one line to another. It is not an actual change in the overall total. The reallocation in the Recreation budget was made at the request of the department head.

Warrant Articles (Copy on File): The Police Chief slightly increased the amount in Article 7. The 'big ticket items' in the warrant articles are Article 14 – Conservation Easement and Article 15 – Conservation Land CRF Withdrawal. The Board previously approved the amount of \$725,000 for Article 14 be allocated towards the acquisition of a conservation easement for Great Bay Farm. The Board has the option of funding that through general taxation: the immediate tax impact would be \$0.83 per thousand of the assessed valuation, or bond \$725,000. A bond schedule was included in the Board information and would significantly lower the incremental tax impact; a bond would be paid over a longer period of time as well as a higher amount paid back. Bond counsel would be an additional expense. The next period to be eligible for a bond would be July 2022.

Currently, \$725,000 is from general taxation. TA Scruton asked if the Board would prefer the 'one and done' approach or to go with a bond and extended time period. R. Hussey stated that as a Selectman and a taxpayer, \$0.83 per thousand would be hard to swallow because everything increased 12%. R. Hussey would be more apt to vote on a bond issue. Residents were not going to approve it after adding up the tax impacts on the warrant articles and they just received a significant tax increase. R. Winsor, while in favor of the easement, stated the Town could not afford the warrant or bond. He was in favor of the \$0.83, stating the people needed to understand what they were buying; this was not a lease plan. There would be full disclosure of \$0.83 on the tax rate. J. Connelly noted that the difference with the easement was no expenses were involved. It will be discussed at Deliberative Session. R. Winsor and J. Connelly agreed on 'one and done'; \$0.83 would be gone the following year. S. Smith noted that the amount could change at Deliberative Session. The Board wanted residents to make the decision.

TA Scruton reminded the Board that if they wanted to do a bond, that decision would need to be made at this meeting to meet the posting requirements for a public hearing. The consensus of the Board was to keep it as is.

Year-End Encumbrances: Altus Engineering recommended holding on the completion of the roadwork on Sanderson Road, Meloon Road, and Fairway Drive. Those funds can be encumbered from the 2021 operating budget since there is a contract for that work. TA Scruton recommended those funds be encumbered.

MOTION: R. Winsor moved to encumber \$163,192 from the 2021 operating budget for roadwork (Sanderson Road, Meloon Road, Fairway Drive) contracted in 2021 that was not completed due to weather. Second – J. Connelly; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

There were no other encumbrances. TA Scruton will check on striping for Bayside Road.

3. Other Old Business

There was no 'Other Old Business'.

VII. NEW BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Town Hall Holiday Hours

The Town Hall will be closed on Friday, December 24, 2021, for the Christmas Holiday and on Friday, December 31, 2021, for New Years. On Thursday, December 23, 2021, there will only be two staff members working and they would like to close the office at noon and will use leave time. Staff not working that day will also use leave time. J. Connelly noted the Transfer Station would be open on Friday, December 24th and Friday, December 31st.

MOTION: S. Smith moved to close the Town Hall at noon on Thursday, December 23, 2021, with the understanding that leave time must be used. Second – R. Winsor; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

2. Other New Business

There was no 'Other New Business' to discuss.

VIII.ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: R. Winsor moved to adjourn at 7:42 p.m. Second – J. Connelly; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING

Monday, January 03, 2022 – 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room

Submitted By – Charlotte Hussey, Administrative Assistant