



BOARD OF SELECTMEN
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MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Monday, September 12, 2022 – 6:30 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

Members Present: Randy Bunnell, Jamie Connelly, Vaughan Morgan, Steve Smith, Richard Winsor
Staff Present: Matthew Scruton, Town Administrator

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 COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Monday, August 29, 2022

MOTION: R. Winsor moved to approve the minutes of Monday, August 29, 2022. Second – V. Morgan; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

III. OLD BUSINESS

1. Coakley Update

TA Scruton attended the Coakley meeting on Wednesday, September 07, 2022. They will be releasing the Deep Bedrock Final Report again by September 16, 2022. A copy will be distributed to the Board when received. V. Morgan questioned the new water service at 399 Breakfast Hill Road; TA Scruton will contact the Coakley Landfill Group.

2. Conservation Easement with City of Portsmouth (Map U3, 8A)

The conservation easement with the City of Portsmouth has been ongoing for over a year; a revised easement has been submitted to the Board for review (copy on file). New language has been proposed for the easement. TA Scruton recommended the easement be reviewed again by the Town's attorney, if Portsmouth agrees to pay the legal fees. Residents of Greenland should not have to shoulder the cost of something that will benefit Portsmouth. TA Scruton also recommended that the Board authorize him to reach out to the City of Portsmouth about covering the cost of another legal review.

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

MOTION: R. Winsor moved to forward the City of Portsmouth conservation easement to the Town Attorney for further review if Portsmouth agrees to pay any fees associated with the review. Second – J. Connelly; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

There was a brief discussion about maintenance of the conservation easement area. TA Scruton noted that on page 4 of 6, in the blue box on the right side, Item F-2 was an area of concern for either the City of Portsmouth or NHDES. That relieves Greenland of much of the responsibility. TA Scruton recommended the Board keep that in the conservation easement. The final question for the attorney: does the conservation easement need to be reviewed by the Conservation Commission?

TA Scruton will contact Portsmouth. R. Winsor commented that it was interesting they would let the conservation easement sit so long. The Board needed to be cautious and watch the timeline: is there an incentive to delay approval long enough, especially with the changes in the Town.

3. Other Old Business

TA Scruton updated the Board that Jim Jones, snow removal contractor, turned in the signed agreement for an extension to the snowplowing contract for 2023. Several conditions were added to the agreement by J. Jones, which the Board will need to agree to: the Town of Greenland will be responsible for cutting edges (approximately \$2,500). In the original contract with J. Jones, the Town paid for cutting edges. It was removed from the most recent contract; the Board felt equipment maintenance was the contractor's responsibility. The other amendment was the fuel surcharge, which the Town covers.

MOTION: R. Winsor moved accept Jim Jones' amendments to the snowplow contract as it relates to cutting edges with the stipulation it is not to exceed \$2,500. Second – R. Bunnell; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

R. Winsor questioned how the Town validated that the \$2,500 was real. TA Scruton recommended the Board ask for receipts. V. Morgan added that the amount was real; he had plowed in another life.

IV. NEW BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE

1. 2023 Budget

A Social Security Administration fact sheet was distributed by V. Morgan (copy on file). They have deemed the COLA for 2022 as 5.9%. The Board needed to keep that in mind when working on the budget. In the past, employees received 3% increases. V. Morgan continued, if employees receive a 3% increase this year, they will be going home with less money than in the past. The 5.9% needs to be kept in the forefront.

R. Winsor did not disagree. He hoped it could be pushed forward prior to seeing first presentations from department heads. The Town is facing some real challenges and the Board needed to find offsets to make this work. Residents could not absorb that kind of money increase. The Board needed to find a way to absorb it somewhere else. R. Winsor continued that he, personally, was not willing to accept a huge increase in salaries without seeing something else being offset. Responding to R. Winsor, V. Morgan did not feel it was a huge increase in salaries. He always looked for ways to offset things.

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

R. Winsor noted the Police Department could absorb a salary increase for the whole Town and there was a extra money in that budget that needed to be removed. It is time to right-side that budget.

It was noted by V. Morgan that the School had scheduled one budget review with the Budget Committee and the Town budget takes much more time. The School costs \$0.75/dollar; the Town is less than \$0.25/dollar. S. Smith noted that the School budget was approximately \$12 million; the Town was approximately \$5 million. V. Morgan will be meeting with Pat Walsh (School Board Chairman). He would like to see more communication between the Board of Selectmen and the School Board.

School enrollment and the staff to student ratio was discussed. J. Connelly noted there were currently 370 students; two years ago, it was between 400 and 420 students. The cost per student last year was approximately \$43,000. V. Morgan noted that the Board of Selectmen had no control over what goes through for the School; they have many considerations such as unfunded mandates. He felt that the School Board did not have control over much of the money. R. Winsor felt it was important for residents to know that and see what has happened. He questioned the teacher/student ratio and suggested graphing it over the last several years for the cost per student per year. He was unsure if residents understood that enrollment at the school was coming down. V. Morgan stated the Selectmen may not understand and needed to be more aware.

R. Bunnell stated most of the School budget was non-discretionary. The new union contract was recently signed. His concern was that enrollment was down 50 students; he was unaware of any reduction in the number of teachers. R. Bunnell continued that there were certain classes with only nine students when 15 to 20 students were expected. He saw no reason why the School could not come to the Budget Committee with at least a 10% reduction. The School has received a lot from the Town for a long time; it was time to start giving back. V. Morgan stated it was important for the Selectmen and School Board to talk and have logical discussions. V. Morgan stated that the Selectmen should attend all the budget meetings.

R. Winsor stated he appreciated R. Bunnell's comments, noting that was something he had been passionate about. R. Winsor requested information at the next meeting on student population and staffing over the last few years at Greenland Central School. J. Connelly also requested the amount mandated by the State that the School is required to pay over the last five years. R. Bunnell stated it was more on the Special Education side; the State does not support the federal monies to schools. There has been more of a burden at the local level.

TA Scruton asked the Board if they had a planned approach for department budgets. Last year department heads prepared budgets and the Selectmen decided on a flat budget, almost a default budget, in an effort to control the tax rate. Was that how the Board wished to approach the 2023 budget, with a fixed percentage for employees? TA Scruton further explained that last year department heads presented their budgets line by line and spent a lot of time crafting their budgets. Does the Board want last years budget plus "X" percent? V. Morgan noted that the Budget Committee would review the budget line by line. TA Scruton stated that is what happened last year even though the Board included an escalator for benefits and wages.

R. Bunnell stated department heads went through a lot of effort and the Board went with a flat budget, and the Budget Committee went back to what was originally done. He, personally, wanted to stay with the same budget and have department heads talk to the Board, noting any significant changes. He preferred a flat line budget.

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

R. Winsor agreed, in part, with R. Bunnell. He continued that there are certain budgets in Town that need to come down; there is 'fat' that needs to be cut out. He has challenged it for two years and is not prepared to do that again. He would challenge each department head to note where cuts could be made. R. Bunnell felt the Town ran 'pretty lean'. He felt the Town could benefit if the School reduced their budget. Some of the significant concerns of the Town need to be addressed.

R. Winsor noted there is incredible inflation right now. He would like to see people taken care of in this Town. V. Morgan agreed with R. Bunnell and R. Winsor. S. Smith stated he would like to see what the department heads are looking forward to in 2023 and would like numbers presented. The Board could make a determination if the numbers were out of line and present the Board's budget to the Budget Committee with changes. If department heads did not like it, they would have to figure out how to move the money around.

J. Connelly questioned the tax impact to residents with a 5.9% wage increase. V. Morgan did not think it would be that much. TA Scruton stated it could be calculated once the tax rate was set. R. Bunnell and R. Winsor agreed the money should be found in other areas. V. Morgan stated the pay in this Town was at the bottom of the barrel as told by MRI three years ago. A wage spreadsheet from Rye was given to the Board. It was noted there are significant differences in wages comparing Greenland to surrounding towns.

TA Scruton summarized: department heads should start working on their budgets as they see fit without holding them to last year's budget. The Board of Selectmen will have the ability to add or remove money as they see fit and in the best interest of the Town before it goes to the Budget Committee. R. Winsor stated the challenge would be to offset salaries within the overall budget.

S. Smith commented that he would like to see the Budget Committee continue to work hard but not continue into January.

2. Other New Business

S. Smith reminded Board members that the NHDOT meeting regarding proposed improvements to Rt. 33 will be on Wednesday, September 14th, at the School, 6 pm. There is also an RPC meeting at the same time in Stratham. S. Smith plans to attend the RPC meeting to discuss the Rt. 33 Corridor Study and the Winnicut River Bridge project. S. Smith has spoken to the Stratham Town Administrator; there is interest that there is not a corridor study. R. Winsor stated it would behoove the Town if the PDA representative was aware RPC meeting. S. Smith has spoken to Susan Parker, PDA Representative. She has had a meeting with Paul Breen, PDA, regarding traffic concerns.

S. Smith has confirmed that the Winnicut River Bridge is on the 10-year plan for 2024, in the amount of \$125,000 for preliminary engineering.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Payroll Manifest: \$71,548.66
2. General Fund Manifest: Total - \$44,451.35 (No School)

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

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

VI. NON-PUBLIC

1. Personnel – RSA 91-A:3, II(a)

MOTION: R. Winsor moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II(a) at 7:13 p.m. Second – V. Morgan; roll call: Randy Bunnell - yes, Jamie Connelly - yes, Vaughan Morgan - yes, Steve Smith - yes, Richard Winsor – yes. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: R. Winsor moved to leave non-public session and return to public session at 8:22 p.m. Second – V. Morgan; roll call: Randy Bunnell - yes, Jamie Connelly - yes, Vaughan Morgan - yes, Steve Smith - yes, Richard Winsor – yes. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: R. Winsor moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session. Second – J. Connelly; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: R. Winsor moved to adjourn at 8:24 p.m. Second – J. Connelly; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING

Monday, September 26, 2022 – 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room

Submitted By – Charlotte Hussey, Administrative Assistant