

MINUTES

**SELECT BOARD/ASSESSORS' MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2023
WILLIAM L. PULLEN MUNICIPAL BUILDING MEETING ROOM
ONLINE NON-INTERACTIVE ON TOWN HALL STREAMS
6:30 p.m.**

Select Board present: Jim Justice, Adam Fuller, Martha Johnston-Nash, Wayne Kirkpatrick, and Linda Mountainland

Others present: Jay Feyler (Town Manager), Chief Jesse Thompson, Assessors' Agent Jim Murphy, Greg Grotton, John Mountainland, Heather Jackson, Steve Migliorini, Erik Amundsen, Holly Lombardi, Paul Bruno, John Shepard, Ellen Harrison, Argy Nestor, Kathleen Thornton, and others

1. Call Select Board Meeting to Order: at 6:30 p.m. by Adam Fuller.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Chief Thompson Report to the Board:

Chief Thompson reviewed the ambulance situation. He said the Ambulance Advisory Committee made a motion and agreed to spend up to \$100,000 out of the ambulance reserve to buy a second second-hand truck.

Wayne spoke about recent times when there have been two calls at once, necessitating mutual aid. In answer to Adam, Jesse said the Ambulance Advisory Committee made the motion and voted on it; all members present were in favor of it and no pushback.

Motion to authorize Chief Thompson to look into and expend up to \$100,000 from the ambulance reserve fund for another ambulance by: Martha Johnston-Nash

2nd by: Linda Mountainland

4-0-1 abstention (Kirkpatrick)

4. Approve Minutes of Tuesday, August 15, 2023:

Motion by: Jim Justice

2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash

5-0

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5. Approve Treasurer’s Warrants dated Tuesday, September 5, 2023:

Motion by: Wayne Kirkpatrick

2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash

5-0

6. Set 2024 Tax rate and Sign Commitment:

Jim Murphy gave a quick rundown, including the mil rate is unchanged at 1480. Frozen taxes for seniors will impact next year with some people seeing spikes. Valuation is up around \$8 to \$9 million total. There is a tremendous amount of construction going on.

Linda said the school is asking for \$81 million in renovation for the schools. They do not tell you town percentages or interest rate. Union could end up paying \$77,000 per month. She urged people to attend the next select board meeting and ask questions.

In answer to Greg Grotton, Jim said there is no frozen taxes program next year.

He said the 2023-2024 valuation base for the town is \$372 million.

Motion that we set the mil rate for this coming year at 14.8 by: Martha Johnston-Nash

2nd by: Wayne Kirkpatrick

5-0

7. Abatement – Karen Blackwell:

Jim said this account was deleted in 2015, and in the last year it got undeleted. This now “phantom” lot was combined with another lot through the planning board a couple years ago. Jay mentioned TRIO (software) conversions.

Adam summarized this is an account that used to exist that had a valuation of \$45,000 that was deleted and came back through records so we automatically assigned a value of \$666 they would owe this year for an account that doesn’t exist.

Motion to approve this abatement by: Wayne Kirkpatrick

2nd by: Linda Mountainland

5-0

8. Discussion and vote on Special Warrant Articles:

Adam read six articles aloud and summarized their content as follows: 1) moderator; 2) essentially entering into the agreement with the developer, re: TCC; 3) set up a tax TIF; 4) changing the zoning; 5) after an agreement has been finalized, allows the select board to basically stabilize the building and go after grant money; and 6) if all this fails, it gives the select board authority to look into what our other options are.

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The articles in their entirety will be posted on the town website. Discussion followed.

Motion to accept the articles as read by: Wayne Kirkpatrick

2nd by: Linda Mountainland

5-0

9. Continued discussion on the ACO ordinance change:

Holly Lombardi spoke about having dealt with this issue for 10 years. In answer to Martha, Jay said if permit criteria is not met, the planning board can recommend their license be pulled; he believes it would then come back to the board.

Jay reiterated the original license was for a grooming business. She has a state kennel license. The question is does our ordinance require a local kennel license. Again the wording is not the same; ours is if you take in dogs overnight for a fee. The planning board can look to change that particular ordinance, and see if the current ordinance is being followed or not.

Motion to ask the planning board 1) to review the existing license in question and see if it is being followed and deal with that appropriately; and 2) review the ordinances to see what they might recommend for clarifying boarding and breeding licenses by: Martha Johnston-Nash

2nd by: Linda Mountainland

Adam mentioned adding another tier of fines. Paul Bruno spoke on behalf of his daughter. There was further discussion.

Above motion passed,

5-0

10. Town Manager's Report:

Jay said chip seal should have finished up today. It's on the town website that there was an issue last week. The company we've dealt with for years noticed it, caught it, and shut everything down. It cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars to take the material back and come back and do it right. He appreciates that relationship and their quality work.

Lines will be repainted as soon as Fine Line will come down – Clarry Hill, Shepard Hill, and North Union Road.

He asked about board members going to MMA.

The plaques for the benches came in. They look really nice. Public Works will get them out. Excelsior Company purchased the last bench, dedicated to the late fire chief.

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The auditor was here today and will be here tomorrow. 2022 is done. 2023 should be done in August, a miracle.

Martha noted Barrett Hill looks very good and said good job Matt and crew. Jay confirmed they will probably be going further up the road. He added everything on that road is based on the future, changing and redeveloping it, hence the deep ditches.

11. Other Business:

Re: tennis and basketball courts, Ellen Harrison asked about the \$30,000 and whether it had actually been set aside for repair. Adam said the motion by Bill Packard, which passed, was to put \$30,000 in a reserve account toward resurfacing the courts. Using part of it for lines and cracks would have to go by the lawyer. He reiterated the best way would be join Parks and Rec. Interest forms submitted by Ellen and others should be ready by next meeting. Parks and Rec could give the go ahead to put the lines on.

Jay clarified he told Pat that Parks and Rec needs to vote on that, but since it is an alteration of town property, the select board also needs to approve their recommendation. They need to come as Parks and Rec chair, vice chair, etc.

Adam clarified not touchup, not patch-up, Bill's motion was for resurfacing. He can check on the wording of the motion. Jay added since then, no company will resurface the courts, as they need to be totally rebuilt. Discussion followed.

Re: a federal grant application that has to be submitted by December 31, Ellen asked if the board knew if they were going to specify the original courts or another site. Jay reiterated a lot has to do with the redevelopment of the TCC. Adam reminded the vote on the warrant articles will be in November.

Argy Nestor said she's had trouble reaching Pat/Parks and Rec. Kathleen Thornton brought up pickleball near senior housing per a recent article on pickleball noise. John Shepard said he heard the four-letter word "dump" and noted we have a transfer station, which Martha said looks great.

12. Public Comment: None.

13. Committee Reports:

- a. Broadband – None.

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b. Green Space

Kathleen Thornton mentioned a letter sent to the board awhile back mentioning two options for protecting the Coggins Hill property from development and allowing public access: 1) a deed restriction and 2) a third party easement. The committee was split and recommended letting the voters decide.

She and Linda suggested that people watch the last Green Space Committee meeting, in which members give reasons for their voting as they did, and read all the information. Kathleen added she's confident about funding either way so no tax dollars needed.

Adam thanked the committee and said it would be on the June warrant. Kathleen said they are looking for more members. Interested parties should fill out a statement of interest form. They are looking for suggestions for their next project.

Adam clarified Jay has the committee's recommendation in writing and will start working with Roger on the wording of the warrant article. There will be a public hearing before the June vote.

c. Sestercentennial

Argy highlighted a few items including a storytelling session in North Union on October 7, for those in North Union. It would be great if it were done in different parts of town. Nancy Pike is doing a genealogy session, beginner level, on October 11 at Vose Library. Signup is needed. More will be scheduled if interest. On November 29 at Vose Library there will be a storytelling panel with people like Janice Linscott.

By the end of September, sponsorship letters to businesses will go out. They have a partnership with the historical society. They had an anonymous donation of over \$1,000.; the donor urged people to think about how to contribute and perhaps match what they gave. The committee now meets twice a month.

Argy also talked about Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War (Don Grinnell and Steve Gibbons) and their program for July 19, with many details including someone from the town needs to be there to reaccept the soldier's monument, lay a wreath, and make a few remarks.

d. Ambulance Advisory – None.

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14. Select Board Reports:

Linda confirmed that the food pantry is its own outside entity. Adam said the last couple years they asked for \$5,000, which we gave them just as we give Penquis. He added we got a thank you card from the food pantry.

Linda encouraged everyone to attend the next select board meeting on September 19 re: school budget.

Adam, who has a seven-year-old, said in response to school starting: “Hallelujah.”

Jim thanked contributors to the new sign out front. There is only \$400 to go.

Linda thanked all who came and/or helped at the chicken barbecue. They served about 80 people, raising \$800.

15. Adjourn:

Motion by: Wayne Kirkpatrick

2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash

5-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abaldo
Secretary