

Approved

Town of Grantham Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes November 8, 2023

The regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 5:00 PM on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, by Chairman Peter Garland. The Board met in the Grantham Town Building, Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room, 300 Route 10 South, Grantham, NH.

Present: Chairman Peter Garland; Selectman Constance Jones; Selectman Warren Kimball; Town Administrator Melissa White; Administrative Assistant Ann Jasper; Fire Chief Justin Hastings; Conservation Commission Chair Dave Wood; Chris Kinney; and Mr. Kinney

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Selectman Kimball to approve the meeting minutes of 10/25/2023, and 11/03/2023; seconded by Selectman Jones. *Unanimously approved.*

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Payroll #694
2. Accounts Payable #867
3. Community Nurse Agreement
4. Transfer Station Rules and Regulations
5. 2023 Second Issue Tax Commitment
6. Building Permits:
 - a. M/L 222-151-007; 30 Pleasant Drive – Propane Stove and Tank
 - b. M/L 216-058-000; 15 Oak Lane – New House
 - c. M/L 222-225-000; Heating and Cooling System
 - d. M/L 215-163-000; 23 Bright Slope Way – Asphalt Driveway (ATF)
7. Correspondence:
 - a. NHPDIP Annual Report: The New Hampshire Public Deposit Investment Pool (NHPDIP) Annual Report dated June 30, 2023 was received.

A motion to approve the Consent Calendar was made by Selectman Kimball and seconded by Selectman Jones. *Unanimously approved.*

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

APPOINTMENTS TO MEET WITH THE BOARD

Grantham resident Chris Kinney introduced himself and said that he is a Life Scout with Troop 71 in New London who is working towards being an Eagle Scout. His project idea is to build two benches outside of the Fire Station for the Firemen to sit on. He already presented it to the Grantham Fire Department and received approval. The purpose for the two benches is to have a place for the firefighters to go and sit after

Approved

a call if they wish to do so to clear their minds, and also to have a nice place outside to sit if they want to take a lunch break on a nice day. The benches will be made of pressure treated wood. The plan is to have two work days sometime after winter ends and the ground is thawed out. The first day, on the first weekend, will be the scouts staking out a 12 foot x 16 foot area that is 9 inches deep, removing all the fill and adding gravel into the hole for the benches to sit on. The second day will be on the second weekend and that will be when the scouts assemble the benches. All the precuts and predrilling will be done by Mr. Jarvis, who has offered to donate his time to cut them out because he has the proper tools and workspace to do it. There will be no cost to the Town and any expenses will be fundraised by him through his Eagle Scout project. Chris asked if there were any questions. Town Administrator White asked him where on the property this will be located. Fire Chief Hastings explained that if you are looking at the Fire Department lawn, it will be the far right corner, near the entrance to the school. White asked what tools will be used to dig the 12 x 16 fill. Chris said shovels. Fire Chief Hastings asked if there is any kind of town permit needed for this project. The answer was no for this project. Hastings said he will make sure that lots of pictures are taken during the process and after as well. Conservation Commission Chair, Dave Wood asked out of curiosity, which way the benches will be facing. Hastings said one will face the shed of the Fire Station and the other one will face the road. Chairman Garland asked if the benches will be permanently mounted. Kinney said no, and Hastings explained that, his thought on that is during the winter, he could ask Road Agent Jeff Hastings to help them move the benches into the shed so they would be able to plow. A motion to approve Chris Kinney's Eagle Scout project of building two benches outside of the Fire Department was made by Selectman Jones; seconded by Selectman Kimball. ***Unanimously approved.***

OLD BUSINESS

MPR Safety and Drainage Improvements: Engineer, Peter Blakeman, met with the two property owners where the town needs the additional easement area. They were agreeable, so Surveyor, Clayton Platt, will need to prepare an amended survey so another easement can be drafted for signature by the property owners. Chairman Garland asked White if this means that this project won't be completed until sometime next year. White stated most likely.

758 Route 10 S Zoning Complaint: No Update:

Sale of Tax Deeded Property: The Board reviewed a Public Notice for Sale of Tax-Deeded Property, for the sale of the remaining six parcels of land that did not sell at the auction on October 14, 2023. The only change the Board wanted was to make the minimum bid \$1,000. Town Administrator White said she will make the change and publish the Public Notice next week, which will have instructions for submitting a sealed bid to the Town. She will also send the notice out to direct abutters. The bids must be received by Friday, December 8, 2023 at 3:00 PM and will be opened at the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen on December 13, 2023, starting at 5:00 PM.

Sawyer Brook Headwaters Forester RFP: The Board was provided with a draft of the SBH Forester RFP at the last meeting to review for this meeting. Town Administrator White told the Board that she had one edit in the title and asked them if they had any edits. They did not. Conservation Commission Chair, Dave Wood, explained why they are doing this, that they hired one logger who took another job and need to replace him. A motion to approve the RFP with the change in the title was made by Selectman Kimball; seconded by Selectman Jones. ***Unanimously approved.***

Approved

Short Term Rentals: White explained that, because short term rentals are not listed as a permitted use in the Town Zoning Ordinance, we interpreted that to mean that it wasn't allowed. This spring, the Supreme Court found that short term rental use was permitted as the phrase, "living as a household within the context of the entire definition of residential/dwelling unit". Our view on short term rentals has now changed based on that Supreme Court decision. White thought that maybe Eastman should look at changing their covenants and seeing what they can do for restrictions. Chairman Garland asked White to get in touch with Mr. Nicolai to let him know and supply him with a copy of the Supreme Court decision if he does not already have a copy of it. This should help them too. White said she would and added that if the Board is looking for enforcement, they would have to request an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance but cautioned that more staff would be needed for this.

NEW BUSINESS

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: A Request to extend polling hours for State Elections was received from Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Ken Story. Story requested the extension of polling hours for all state elections to 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM and asked that it remain in effect in perpetuity, until the Selectboard decides to approve a change in these hours. After discussion, White clarified that all federal elections are governed by the State which is why Story worded it the way he did. A motion to accept Ken Story's proposal to extend polling hours for all State elections (which includes federal) to 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM, to remain in effect in perpetuity until the Selectboard decide to approve a change in these hours, was made by Selectman Jones; seconded by Selectman Kimball. *Unanimously approved.*

Transfer Station – September Report: The Transfer Station September Report was reviewed. Chairman Garland noted that earlier in the meeting, under the Consent Calendar, the Board signed and approved new rules and regulations for the Transfer Station effective immediately, and some prices have increased.

Trustees of the Trust Funds Report through October 2023: The Trustees of the Trust Funds Report through October 2023 was reviewed.

Town Administrator: In October, the office processed eight Building Permits, two Planning Board Applications, one Zoning Board Application, and 24 property transfers.

Since the last meeting, most of White's time has been spent on budget and finalizing everything that is required by DRA to finalize the tax rate for 2023. At the meeting on November 3, the Board finalized the tax rate using \$200,000 of the undesignated fund balance to steady the Town's portion of the rate. DRA approved it later that day which totaled \$17.59 broken down as follows:

- Town \$ 3.81
- County \$ 2.17
- School (local) \$10.28
- School (State) \$ 1.33
- Village District of Eastman Rate: \$1.99; Total VDE Rate is \$19.58

After setting the tax rate, the Town's undesignated fund balance is \$1,971,010.

Chairman Garland noted that it was mentioned in the last meeting, that Grantham is in the top three municipalities in Sullivan County for the highest assessed portion of the County Budget.

Approved

Class VI portion of Dunbar Hill Road Emergency Lane Designation: All of the abutters on the road have to be notified and White has a letter ready to send to them. White said she would like to hold the Public Hearing at the regular meeting on December 13 at 5:00 PM and the Board will need to make written findings during that process. The Board agreed to hold the Public Hearing on December 13.

Dave Wood asked what needs to be done. White said she believed that the tree needs to be cleared and the road material replaced. Wood stated that the reason that the dam blew out, as they know, was because of the beavers. He subsequently made a few trips up there over the next few months and towards the end, he discovered one lone stick in the breach, so he assumed that the beavers abandoned the dam. He went up a week ago and there is now a five-foot pile of sticks extending the entire width of the breach, so the beavers are there, however, they are not yet impounding any water. He then contacted Sheridan Brown, who in turn contacted the Eastman Charitable Foundation. They are willing to continue to provide funds to put in the beaver deceiver. He commented that it would have been easier to do that before the beavers rebuilt the whole thing. He said Brown is speaking with Skip Lyle to figure out what to do. Wood said the other pond with a small dam near Blackberry Way shows that the beavers are also building that up and have renewed habitation in the lodge there. The decision is that even if Skip could do something this winter, this small pond provides habitat and some security for the beavers this winter. Next summer, we can wait and see what they have decided to do and make another decision.

White reminded the Board that they will be meeting on November 15 at 10:00 AM with department heads to review their proposed budgets.

The State of NH State Hazard Mitigation Plan has been adopted and approved. White sent a link to the document to the Selectmen. The goal of this is to reduce the loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters. Repetitive loss from natural hazards places NH communities into financial peril and increases the likelihood of loss of life. In past versions of this plan, the planning team looked at natural hazards, human-caused hazards, and technological threats. This version focuses specifically on natural hazards in an effort to focus mitigation planning efforts across the state. White said that this came on the heels of notification from the State that the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan will expire in September 2026. The process takes up to two years from when FEMA awards the funding, so she submitted the letter of intent and that will determine the amount of funding that we will be allocated. She will keep the Board updated during that process. White indicated on the letter of intent that the Town will be using the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission to go through the process of the update.

As reported at the last meeting, the Town's Assessing Company, KRT Appraisal has decided to terminate our contract in June of next year when it expires. White prepared a new RFP for assessing services and is waiting for Town Counsel approval. When approved, she will mail it to qualified assessing firms.

The New Hampshire Retirement System has changed and updated its online reporting system. Administrative Assistant, Ann Jasper, has been spending a lot of time with that. White said they are hopeful that the hiccups that have occurred have been corrected and things will go smoothly from now on.

White scheduled the training for credit cards in the Selectmen's Office on November 13 in the afternoon. She will close the office that afternoon so they can concentrate on the training without interruptions. Chairman Garland asked White what this entails. White said the training is to get the machines set up and for learning the online reporting software.

Approved

White extended a thank you to Police Chief, John Parsons, for keeping all of the AED pads updated at Town Hall, the Library and the Transfer Station.

White provided the Board with an updated office calendar through January 2024 and an updated expense report.

Chairman Garland also wished to thank the Fire Department for all of its help during Halloween with traffic control and keeping everyone safe.

Conservation Commission Chair Dave Wood said he would like to thank Road Agent, Jeff Hastings, for helping with the Fisher lot. Every three or four years, the meadow needs to be mowed to keep trees from taking over. Wood was trying to find someone to mow and the Highway Department did it for them. White said that she will pass that on to Hastings (Jeff).

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

In accordance with RSA 91-A:3 section II-c, a motion was made by Selectman Kimball and seconded by Selectman Jones to enter into a Non-Public session at 5:47 PM. Present: Chairman Peter Garland; Selectman Constance Jones; Selectman Warren Kimball; Town Administrator Melissa White; and Administrative Assistant III Ann Jasper

Roll Call vote to enter non-public session: Chairman Peter Garland - Yes; Selectman Constance Jones - Yes; Selectman Warren Kimball – Yes

A motion was made by Selectman Jones to leave the Non-Public session and return to Public Session at 5:58 PM; seconded by Selectman Kimball. *Unanimously approved.*

In accordance with RSA 91-A:3 section II-c, a motion was made by Selectman Jones and seconded by Selectman Kimball to enter into a Non-Public session at 5:58 PM. Present: Chairman Peter Garland; Selectman Constance Jones; Selectman Warren Kimball; Town Administrator Melissa White; and Administrative Assistant III Ann Jasper

Roll Call vote to enter non-public session: Chairman Peter Garland - Yes; Selectman Constance Jones - Yes; Selectman Warren Kimball – Yes

A motion was made by Selectman Jones to leave the Non-Public session and return to Public Session at 6:08 PM; seconded by Selectman Kimball. *Unanimously approved.*

A motion was made by Selectman Jones and seconded by Chairman Garland to seal this Non-Public session because it was determined that divulgence of this information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board. *Unanimously approved.*

In accordance with RSA 91-A:3 section II-c, a motion was made by Selectman Jones and seconded by Selectman Kimball to enter into a Non-Public session at 6:10 PM. Present: Chairman Peter Garland; Selectman Constance Jones; Selectman Warren Kimball; and Town Administrator Melissa White

Roll Call vote to enter non-public session: Chairman Peter Garland - Yes; Selectman Constance Jones - Yes; Selectman Warren Kimball – Yes

Approved

A motion was made by Selectman Jones to leave the Non-Public session and return to Public Session at 6:46 PM; seconded by Selectman Kimball. *Unanimously approved.*

A motion was made by Selectman Jones and seconded by Selectman Kimball to seal this Non-Public session because it was determined that divulgence of this information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board. *Unanimously approved.*

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Selectman Kimball moved to adjourn, seconded by Selectman Jones; by Unanimous vote, the Board adjourned at 6:46 PM.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held on **Monday, November 20, 2023, at 5:00 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,



Ann Jasper
Administrative Assistant