

Draft Minutes

Board of Selectmen

August 21st, 2017, 7:00pm

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Don Clement at 7:00pm, in the Nowak Room of the Town Office building. Present were Dan Chartrand, Anne Surman, Don Clement, Kathy Corson, Julie Gilman and Town Manager Russ Dean.

2. Public Comment

Stephanie Marshall, an Exeter resident, came to the microphone and spoke about Energize 360, a town program which supports solutions to the Paris Climate Agreement. It would support Exeter residents to reduce energy resources by presenting a financial incentive to reduce energy consumption. The group started with a group of concerned citizens throughout the seacoast, and the first wave took place in Portsmouth, Dover, Durham, Madbury, and Lee from May through July. The second wave began in mid-June and includes Exeter. This wave will last through September 30th, 2017.

Renay Allen, another Exeter resident, told the board and the public about an event on September 12th, 2017 at the Exeter town hall for a seminar, where people could learn about weatherization and clean energy.

3. Minutes and Proclamations

There were no proclamations to report.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. August 7th, 2017

Selectwoman Surman pointed out a typo on page 3, paragraph 5 that said “hat” where it should have said “that”. Chairman Clement asked about the word choice on page 7, paragraph 1 where it said “demoed”. “Demonstrated” was suggested as a better word.

MOTION: Selectwoman Gilman moved to approve the minutes as amended, and Selectwoman Corson seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0-1, with Selectman Chartrand abstaining from the vote because he was not present during that meeting.

5. Appointments

There were none to discuss.

6. Discussion/Action Items

a. Public Hearing: Unanticipated Highway Aid Revenues

MOTION: Selectman Chartrand moved to open the public hearing under RSA 31-95b for the purpose of receiving unanticipated highway revenues, in the amount of 254,066.33 dollars. Selectwoman Surman seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Dean began by stating that the town had received additional highway block grant aid. A letter from the department of transportation to the town said that the funds are intended for highway purposes without already existing town funding. Examples of this include additional paving, local highways, matching for bridge projects, and equipment for the maintenance of the highways. The funds do not lapse and can be carried over to the next fiscal year. Selectwoman Gilman asked if there had been any prioritizing of projects done. Mr. Dean said that the public works director and he had talked about concepts like equipment, paving schedule and sidewalk projects.

Selectwoman Gilman brought up that she would like to see a traffic light on Epping Road. Selectwoman Corson said that she would like to know what equipment could be replaced, and would like to see paving advanced, which Selectwoman Surman agreed with. Selectman Chartrand would like to accelerate the sidewalk program, and pointed out that he'd like to see more people being able to walk and bike. Chairman Clement asked if paving would be useful this year, and pointed out a couple of sidewalk projects currently in development. He would like to look at the priorities for 2018.

Jennifer Perry, the public works director, asked the board what their preference on timing was. If the money was spent sooner, promoting 2018 paving would be a good idea. She pointed out that it was getting late in the season for sidewalk programs because they take more planning and coordination. As far as equipment goes, she would like to replace a grader which would be the same cost as the money coming in.

Chairman Clement said he'd like the equipment to be handled by the CIP. He said that the fact that the money doesn't have to be spent this year gives the board a degree of flexibility. Selectman Chartrand agreed with this, and said he would prefer to spend it next year as well. He would like to see the town manager and public works involved. Selectwoman Surman pointed out the possibility of letting the budget committee know about the money to help the taxpayers, and adjusting the costs next year accordingly. Mr. Dean said that the town already has the money, and it could be spent whenever.

MOTION: Selectman Chartrand moved to close the public hearing, Selectwoman Surman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Selectwoman Corson moved that the selectboard accept the amount of 254,066.33 dollars in additional highway block grant aid from the state of NH. Selectman Chartrand seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Clement asked if public works should put together a plan of recommendations this year. He also pointed out that the check includes the amount for the Lincoln Street subwater shed. Mr. Dean clarified that the state had approved a stormwater management grant for this, and that the check includes a portion of the reimbursement by the state.

b. Electricity Supply Contract Extension Proposal

Mr. Dean started by stating that the town buys electricity from various vendors, and that they were given a proposal by the broker UMG that if the town extends their agreement through 2021, they could lock in a rate of 7.75 cents per kilowatt hour. The town currently pays 7.77 cents per kilowatt hour. The current agreement expires in December 2017.

Selectman Chartrand expressed his support of this and his desire to have a predictable rate. Selectwoman Surman agreed with him and said the only downside is if the rate decrease significantly. Mr. Dean pointed out how unpredictable the market is, and that it could go up or down. Selectwoman Gilman said that if rates go down, the predictability makes up for it. Selectwoman Corson agreed.

Chairman Clement asked what the trend had been in past years on electricity rates. Mr. Dean responded that the lowest he's seen it was at 7.14 cents per kilowatt hour, and that it has been at around 7.7 cents for a couple of years. Chairman Clement asked when the current contract was entered. Mr. Dean said it had been about a year. Chairman Clement asked who we have tracking the price. Mr. Dean said that UMG does, and when they think it is favorable to change they contact the town. Chairman Clement had concerns that the rate could change if the board did not decide tonight. He also asked for the trends of the past three or four years. Mr. Dean said that in 2012-2014 it was 7.14 cents, and then from 2010-2013 it was 8.5 cents. There was a spike in 2014-2016 to about 10 cents.

Chairman Clement asked what the longest is that they have locked in the rate. Mr. Dean said that it was three or four years, and that the contract sometimes rolls over. Selectman Chartrand said that predictability is crucial in making this decision. Chairman Clement had concerns about the four-year length of the contract. Mr. Dean said that there is a 12-month option of 7.79 cents, and that with a shorter term the rates go up. Ms. Perry said that it would stabilize the electricity supply charge, and that the delivery charge would not be locked in.

MOTION: Selectman Chartrand moved to authorize the town manager to sign an agreement with NG Resources LLC for a 4-year contract at 7.75 cents per kilowatt hour. Selectwoman Gilman seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-2-0, with Chairman Clement and Selectwoman Surman voting nay.

c. 149 Kingston Road Property Sale Proposal

Mr. Dean began by explaining the property and that it has been leased to the fire department chief for several years. The proposal is to sell the property outright so that the town does not have to act as the landlord anymore. It would also relieve the town of any future and current maintenance of the house. There is nothing preventing the house from being sold. The town planner would have to be involved to carve out a lot that would include the house and garage, while the storage structure would remain separate for the town to use.

Selectwoman Surman asked what the town would charge for the house, and if it is on a desirable lot. Mr. Dean said that it is desirable and that the assessment was for about 260,000 dollars, but that they could possibly get more for it. Selectwoman Corson asked if the property could be easily subdivided, and if the town would use an auction to sell it. Mr. Dean said that the house has a separate entrance, and that they would consult with the legal team to see how to sell it. Selectwoman Corson asked if it was part of the facilities study. Mr. Dean said that the house and garage were not, but that the storage structure likely was. Selectwoman Gilman and Selectman Chartrand expressed their support of selling the house.

Chairman Clement asked if future residents would be unhappy about trucks going back and forth to the nearby storage barn and cell tower. Selectwoman Gilman pointed out that a disclosure

statement could be added. Chairman Clement said that it would be a good idea to turn it over to the town planner, then the conservation commission and planning board. He also wants to have someone estimate the selling price. Selectwoman Corson said she would like to have a survey done.

Selectman Chartrand said he'd like the board to decide tonight and is worried about the work done being entirely conditional. Chairman Clement disagreed, saying that too many legalities surround the lot. Selectwoman Corson expressed her concern with the costs involved, and Selectwoman Gilman said that the costs would be covered by the assets.

MOTION: Selectwoman Surman moved to start looking at the process of selling the property through the planning department, the planning board, and the conservation commission. Selectwoman Corson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

d. Maintenance Projects: Public Restrooms/Town Hall

Chairman Clement began by explaining a memo sent from Kevin Smart to Russ Dean. He said that last meeting he had asked about the amount of money spent on this project and wanted to know why it had gone overbudget and what that meant for the rest of the maintenance budget. He felt that the memo did not give him the information he was seeking. Mr. Dean said that the memo talked about the demolition of the restroom area, and that a fire-rated staircase needed to be done. Emanuel Engineering was brought in and estimated a cost of 10,663 dollars for related work.

Chairman Clement asked where the money had been charged to. Mr. Dean responded that it was most likely to the maintenance project account. He also said that the fire rated staircase project is scheduled for the fall and that there is 130,000 dollars in the warrant article for it. There may not be enough money to cover the costs. The 24,085 dollars is an addition of the 10,663 for the fire rated staircase work and the 13,422 dollars for the contract work for the bathrooms and labor costs. This is 24,000 above the 22,980 estimate.

Chairman Clement presented invoices he had gathered from the finance department. Selectman Chartrand expressed his concern with Chairman Clement getting this information, and Selectwoman Gilman said she would have liked it to be disseminated to the rest of the board and the town manager. Chairman Clement expressed his belief that he was within his rights to do so. Selectwoman Surman asked if anyone from the public could gather this information, Mr. Dean responded that they could.

Selectwoman Surman said that the project had been overspent by 29,615 dollars. She asked where the project plan was, and asked why nobody had noticed it was going overbudget. Selectman Chartrand agreed with this sentiment, although added that he understood that these were difficult projects and why there might be overages in budget. Chairman Clement asked why it went overbudget, and what maintenance projects will have to be deferred as a result. Mr. Dean said that the total costs to date of the project were 52,595 dollars. Chairman Clement pointed out that this amount did not match the invoice summary. Mr. Dean said that the budgeted amount was 22,980.

Selectwoman Surman said that their concerns had come from the selectboard meeting where the quarterly finance report was read. She asked why the project needed architectural design. Mr. Dean said he would need to go back and look at the expenses. Selectwoman Surman agreed with Chairman Clement that the memo did not give the board the information they were looking for. Selectwoman Gilman agreed with this as well. Mr. Dean finished by saying that there were things to follow up on.

7. Regular Business

a. Tax, Water/Sewer Abatements & Exemptions

MOTION: Selectwoman Corson moved to approve the current use reclassification of map 53, lot 8. Selectwoman Gilman seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Selectwoman Corson moved to approve the jeopardy tax map 87, lot 8, unit A-10 for 245.35 dollars. Selectwoman Surman seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Selectwoman Corson moved to approve the jeopardy tax map 64, lot 105, unit 83 for 204.67 dollars. Selectwoman Surman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Dean said he had the MS1 extension request form, which requested an extension through October 2nd, 2017 due to utility values.

MOTION: Selectman Chartrand moved to approve the MS1 extension request through October 2nd, 2017. Selectwoman Corson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

b. Permits and Approvals

Renay Allen asked for a permit to use the town hall on September 4th, 2017 for Energy 360.

MOTION: Selectman Chartrand moved to approve the use of the town hall. Selectwoman Corson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The E911 committee reviewed road names, and decided to approve McKay Drive, which was previously 80 Epping Road, even though the name contains a proper noun.

MOTION: Selectman Chartrand moved to approve this name change. Selectwoman Surman seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

c. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Dean reported that the new health officer had been working on health ordinance updates. The farewell party for Roger Wakeman from PEA is on August 23rd from 4:00-6:00. He also said that he attended the master plan committee, and that the process continues to evolve. He pointed out that draft financials had arrived from the 2016 audit, and that they are in the process of reviewing that. And finally, the first day of school is on Monday the 28th.

d. Selectboard Committee Reports

Selectman Chartrand reported that the master plan steering committee had met. He complimented the group and said the next step is to review the action plan. Chairman Clement asked if that got passed onto the planning board. Selectman Chartrand said he would imagine so. Selectwoman Surman said that she was unable to attend the arts committee meeting. Selectwoman Corson stated she had a planning board meeting later in the week. Selectwoman Gilman said the heritage commission had held a public hearing on the demolition of the rear L of 12 Front Street. The demolition review committee had recommended against demolition. She said that HDC had a discussion with the town planner about low impact projects vs. major impact projects. Chairman Clement reported that the E911 committee had

met and had received town wide mapping and a document of recommendations for non-standard addresses.

e. Correspondence

Chairman Clement said that there was a letter from the State of NH DOT about the highway block grant aid, letting them know what the amount is. For 2018, it is 300,301.60 dollars. This is about 8,000 dollars more than last year.

Selectwoman Surman pointed out that the ad-hoc social service committee did not fund the NHSPCA this year, and was disappointed about that because they had been supportive in the past. Selectwoman Gilman agreed, but that this budget year the committee was given a hardline amount.

8. Review Board Calendar

This was not covered during this meeting.

9. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Selectman Chartrand moved to move into the non-public session under RSA 91-a:3, 2 (l) and (d) review of advice from counsel and land acquisition, Selectwoman Corson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

The Board emerged from non public session. Selectman Chartrand moved to adjourn seconded by Selectwoman Surman. The Board stood adjourned at approximately 9:45 p.m..