

Select Board Meeting
Monday February 27, 2023
6:50 PM
Nowak Room, Town Offices
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Julie Gilman, Molly Cowan, Lovey Roundtree Oliff, Niko Papakonstantis, Nancy Belanger, and Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy were present at this meeting. Ms. Cowan and Ms. Oliff were present remotely via Zoom; they stated that they were alone in the room and it was not practical for them to be physically present.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:50 PM. Mr. Papakonstantis, Ms. Belanger, and Ms. Gilman went downstairs to the Wheelwright Room for an interview.

2. Board Interviews

- a. Timothy Gwynne for the Budget Recommendation Committee

The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 7 PM.

3. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this time.

4. Police Department - Swearing In

Police Chief Stephan Poulin introduced Patrol Officer Sonya Robicheau to the Board, and Town Clerk Andie Kohler swore her in as Patrol Sergeant.

5. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. Mr. Papakonstantis thanked the DPW for its efforts clearing the roads during winter weather.

6. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: February 13, 2023

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of February 13, 2023 as presented. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

7. Appointments

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to appoint Timothy Gwynne to the Budget Recommendations Committee with no term. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

8. Discussion/Action Items

- a. OmniBallot update

Town Clerk Andie Kohler gave an update on the OmniBallot testing. She did two tests, one using a touch screen test and one through headphones, and

both were successful. She sent Democracy Live PDFs of the March ballots and they had it turned around within a day. She hasn't had a chance to upload and test it yet, but will test tomorrow, and she doesn't foresee any difficulties. She added that anyone can use this, not just those with disabilities.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for an update on the Polling Pads. Ms. Kohler said they will be delivered on March 9th and we will have a ballot clerk training that night. There will be no line and no waiting at Town Meeting.

b. VHB - Roundabout Presentation

Town Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Paul Vlasich and Greg Bakos of VHB were present to discuss the roundabout proposal. Mr. Vlasich said this is on the warrant as Article 5 for \$798,000. It addresses two intersections, the first a roundabout at Pine/Linden/Front Street, and also some curb and sight line adjustments at Columbus and Railroad Ave.

Mr. Bakos said VHB evaluated traffic flow, crash data, and safety concerns, did field observations, and took town input. At Front Street and Pine, we were concerned about the geometry of the intersection. Front Street is the main roadway, but Linden and Pine Street converge as they are getting to Front Street. Pedestrians are left exposed there, so there are safety concerns. The proposed solution, after studying the alternatives, was a roundabout. This gives more fairness to each of the approaches and balances the traffic flow better. The roundabout would have an outside diameter of 102'; for comparison, the roundabout in Foy's Corner is 104' feet and processes a lot of cars. A pedestrian only has to cross one lane of traffic at a time and only look in one direction. Crashes at this intersection tend to be broadside crashes which are more serious. With a roundabout, any crashes are less severe. It will also slow Front Street traffic. This would not impact the park, but there are some minor property impacts. It's not possible to do a test because we need this property to achieve the dimensions.

Don Clement of 5 Thelma Drive, who was present via Zoom, asked about losing some property. Is that private property? Mr. Bakos said yes. Mr. Clement asked whether the compensation for property owners is included in the cost. Mr. Bakos said yes. The amount of property is very small and the value should be small. Mr. Clement asked how many parking spaces will be lost, and Mr. Bakos said half a dozen or less, possibly not legal spaces. Mr. Vlasich said the parking on Front Street is in the town right-of-way. There would be a loss of 5 parking spots in that area. On Pine Street, we would lose 3 on each side for a total of 6. Mr. Clement asked how bicycles would interact with the rotary. Mr. Bakos said they would function the same way as a car: yield to vehicles in the rotary and proceed like a car would. There's no bike lane, it's intended to be shared. It's a slow speed operation. Mr. Clement asked how we would measure success on this project, for example, a reduction in accidents? Mr. Bakos said safety is the first priority, so there should be a reduction in serious crashes. Mr. Clement said there had been no crashes there. This intersection is 27th on the list. It only has

one accident a year. Mr. Bakos said secondly, there would be community recognition that there wasn't a long wait to get out of the side streets. Mr. Clement asked about the alternatives. Mr. Bakos said this intersection does not meet traffic signal requirements; each approach would have their own green time, which would take away Front Street time, and there is a driveway in the middle which complicates things.

Ms. Belanger said she would like to know who the parking spaces belong to. Where would we have "no parking" signs? Mr. Bakos showed it on the map.

Mr. Bakos said there was a suggestion to make Linden Street one-way and have those coming out on Front Street use Gill Street, but that would be funneling significant traffic through a residential neighborhood, and we didn't think that was a good diversion.

Mr. Bakos said Winter Street at Railroad and Columbus would have minor improvements for safety. Making a small geometric improvement allows cars to see around the corner a little better. We would also add stop lines.

Ms. Belanger asked why there's no crosswalk from Columbus across Winter Street towards Front Street. Mr. Bakos said there's no sidewalk to receive them. It would be recommended if there were sidewalks.

Mr. Bakos said we considered a roundabout here, but with a threeway intersection it wouldn't slow traffic down. We looked at a realignment of Winter Street, but it was expensive. We recommend doing the small improvements first and look at that again in the future if necessary.

Ms. Belanger asked about the cost for alternative 3 [realignment of Winter Street], and Mr. Papakonstantis said \$350,000.

Ms. Belanger asked Mr. Vlasich if sidewalks for that area are on the DPW's list. Mr. Vlasich said the list deals mostly with repairing existing sidewalks. We have an idea of where new sidewalks could go in, but we don't prioritize them. Ms. Belanger said it's a little dangerous walking in this neighborhood. Ms. Gilman asked if the Town Planner had a master plan for sidewalks. Mr. Vlasich said he's not aware of one.

c. Squamscott River Siphons Project

Town Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Paul Vlasich and Kevin Garvey of Wright Pierce were present to give an update on the sewer siphons project. Mr. Vlasich said the last time he spoke to the Board, we were on our 5th attempt at drilling a pilot hole from Swasey Parkway to the Mill side of the river. The subcontractor was doing 50 feet a day. After that meeting, the drilling progressed faster, at about 100 feet a day. Some fluid worked its way through the sediments to the bottom of the river; we notified DES, but it's not toxic or harmful to the environment. On Thursday Feb 16, they were able to get to the other side. On Monday Feb 20, we had the seismic graph effort: a boat came in with an instrument that looked at the ledge profile for an alignment that did not have the ledge problem, but because of the bubbles in the sediments, they were not able to get usable data. Then at the end of last week, the shaft broke on the

drill. The reamer head is now stuck in the middle of the river. The subcontractor said the numbers will be expensive. We thought the total cost would be \$3.2M, but now, if we started a new drill to get one successful barrel, that one barrel will cost \$3.5M. We asked the consultant to get a waiver from DES to have two barrels instead of the three required.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked what concerns we have for the area. Mr. Vlasich said if the two existing barrels stay active, the only concern is the noise and disruption of construction. If the barrels back up, there could be some flow into basements in the area. We would have to take a pipe from Jady Hill Ave above grade across String Bridge, which would have to be one-way, and tie into a manhole at Water Street. The contingency plan would be sustainable once the pump and forcemain are installed. Ms. Belanger asked when the pumps would be present on site in that case, and Mr. Garvey said within 24-48 hours and operational within four days. The contingency could be started right away with Vactor Trucks.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if the subcontractor has insurance for the broken equipment. Mr. Vlasich said we're exploring that. Mr. Papakonstantis said he'd like to hear what responsibility the contractor and subcontractor bear.

9. Regular Business

a. Permits & Approvals

- i. Finance Director Corey Stevens said the town is authorized to utilize Water/Sewer impact fees to offset debt payments on Water/Sewer capital projects. The bank balances are \$56,000 in the Water account and \$96,000 in the Sewer fund. We could take one year's worth of fees from each and use it toward the debt service; we could use the 2021 collections to offset debt collections in 2022.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to transfer \$13,716.56 from the 2021 Water Impact Fees and \$28,428.71 from the 2021 Sewer Impact Fees to the General Fund, for a total of \$42,145.27 to offset debt payments in Water and Sewer capital projects. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Stevens said there was a Snow and Ice deficit in 2022. The budget was \$313,201, but we used \$400,704, so there was an overage of \$87,500. The balance in the Snow and Ice Deficit Fund was \$153,630 as of 12/31/2022. There's an article in the warrant to add an additional \$50,000, for new total of \$116,630.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to authorize the withdrawal of \$87,000 from the snow and ice deficit fund to cover spending in excess of budget during FY 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

- ii. FD Deputy Chief Jason Fritz, also of the E911 committee, said that we're looking for the Board to accept a new address, 31 High Street. This is a

new building which is part of the PEA faculty project. Ms. Belanger asked why they're looking for an address on High Street when Gilman Lane was redirected. Deputy Chief Fritz said the front door of their house is on High Street. The driveway will be on Gilman Lane. The Technical Review Committee talked about having a secondary means of egress, another road that could only be used for emergency vehicles, but thought that that would be confusing. To put the access between 25 and 31 would be too tight.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to accept the new address of 31 High Street as described. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

Deputy Chief Fritz said that on Gilman Lane, there were existing structures that needed to be renumbered.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved that 7 Gilman Lane be renumbered to 15 Gilman Lane, 8 Gilman Lane to 13 Gilman Lane, 10 Gilman Lane to 12 Gilman Lane Unit A and B, and add 11 Gilman Lane which is a new building. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

Deputy Chief Fritz said that Tan Lane was one of the streets identified by the State as not conforming to numbering regulations. We propose that it be renumbered starting from Main Street towards Front Street. Ms. Gilman asked if the new dormitory near Fisher Theater has a Front Street address, and Deputy Chief Fritz said yes.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to change 9 Tan Lane to 16 Tan Lane, 14 Tan Lane to 29 Tan Lane, 12 Tan Lane to 19 Tan Lane, 16 Tan Lane to 5 Tan Lane, 18 Tan Lane to 1 Tan Lane, 34 Main Street to 3 Tan Lane, 8 Tan Lane to 5 Lamont Place, 10 Tan Lane to 7 Lamont Place, and 12R Tan Lane to 8 Lamont Place. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

Deputy Chief Fritz described a Drinkwater Road property which was subdivided into 2 parcels.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to renumber 106/1 to 52 Drinkwater Road and 106/2 to 54 Drinkwater Road. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

b. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve Disability Exemptions for 60/9 and 95/64/226 in the amount of \$125,000 for tax year 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an Elderly Exemption for 104/79/118, 104/79/905, 103/13/20, 54/4/125, 104/79/320, 95/64/160, 65/75, 73/246, 54/4/6, 52/43, 81/31, 71/2, in the amount of \$236,251 for tax year 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an Elderly Exemption for 64/105/93, 95/64/321, 104/79/309, 104/79/121, 104/79/420, and 55/24 in the amount of \$183,751 for tax year 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an Elderly Exemption for 95/64/224, 104/79/705, 73/280, 95/64/101, 28/4, 87/8/C-13 in the amount of \$152,251 for tax year 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to deny an Elderly Exemption for 104/79/325 and 74/39. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. Ms. Roy gave the update on behalf of Russ Dean, who was not present. She said Corey Stevens and Steve Bailey will lead the upgrade of the MUNIS financial system starting Thursday and Friday. The goal is to be back up and running on Monday March 6. The downtime is not expected to cause major issues due to the billing cycles.
- ii. We're working with Exeter Housing Authority to explore using the 149 Kingston Road property as an affordable housing unit.
- iii. Town staff will be meeting to discuss the Swasey Parkway flooding. We need to talk about what stakeholders should be involved.
- iv. The Rec Dept is planning to apply for a State Community Center Investment Grant. We will bring this to the next Board meeting March 6. We're proposing using town ARPA funds as a match.
- v. We reached out to Attorney Mitchell for an update on the Swasey Parkway petition. He said that the judge rendered a decision this past Friday, and we're expecting it via mail this week.
- vi. Kristin Murphy reported that the town did not receive the T Mobile grant for Raynes Barn.
- vii. A complete version of Darren Winham's Economic Development newsletter is in the packet.
- viii. Ms. Gilman asked how the summer camp scholarship will be handled. Ms. Roy said the funds would go into the Rec Revolving account. We partner with the "R U In" program to determine need-based eligibility.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Belanger said the Conservation Commission approved the Wakefield Thermal application, which will bring 150 jobs. They will be refurbishing a building subdivided from Osram and adding a 3,000 sq foot addition. There were four small wetland areas on the site that were not significant. They voted to send a letter to the Planning Board regarding invasive species and stormwater drainage concerns with the site. Raynes Barn repairs are underway. A four-part training is underway from NH Fish and Game on monitoring butterfly populations. In the trail report, there are still

a few blocked-off sections; people are obeying the signs. We are updating trail signs, and a lost hiker was able to be rescued because they remembered information from one of the new signs. There were some downed trees from the high wind event, and they are looking into tree options. They discussed a possible snowshoe event or nature walk. They talked about whether to have an Alewife Festival this year; they were a little disappointed with the turnout last year. The Planning Board meeting Feb 23 was canceled.

- ii. Ms. Gilman had a one-minute Heritage Commission meeting, because they had no quorum. We were not awarded the grant for a historical survey on Town Hall. She also discussed State legislative issues.
- iii. Ms. Oliff had no update
- iv. Ms. Cowan had no update.
- v. Mr. Papakonstantis had no update.

e. Correspondence

- i. A legislative bulletin from NHMA

10. Review Board Calendar

- a. The next meetings are March 6 and March 20. The town election is March 14.

11. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A3II(b). Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

The meeting entered non-public session at 8:57 PM.

12. Adjournment. Motion by Selectwoman Belanger to adjourn, seconded by Selectwoman Gilman. The Board stood adjourned at 9:04 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary