

**Selectmen's Meeting  
Monday, January 8, 2024**

These minutes were transcribed by Angela Eldridge, Secretary. Selectman Martha B. Eldridge was in attendance, Selectman Jonathan H. Smith was in attendance and Selectman Susan J. Simpson was in attendance. Matthew Sawyer Jr., Town Administrator, and T.J. Eldridge, Public Works Director, were also in attendance. The meeting was held in the Bub Avery Gymnasium at Town Hall.

**Smith called the meeting to order at 4:15 PM.**

**Call to Order/Roll Call: Completed in the work session.**

Smith opened the meeting with the Plèdge of Allegiance.

**Bids:**

The Board received 2 bids for 88 Main St., which was court ordered action for removal of a structural deficit barn and fill the hole. Smith opened the bids. They are as follows.

Bid #1- Dallas Emery of 16 Moultonville Rd. bid \$75,000 to demo the barn and this includes closing off the side of the barn.

Bid #2- Pine River Sand & Gravel bid \$25,000 to demo the barn and fill the hole.

**Discussion:**

Smith advised that the Court has given the owner of the property until January 14, 2024, to comply. If he does not comply, the Town of Ossipee will step in with one of the above bids. M. Eldridge mentioned the difference in the prices of the bids. Discussion ensued. Emery advised that he was planning to close off the side of the barn because there was a statement on the RFP that the other building would need to remain structural. He acknowledges that it was a big difference in price. Smith advised that they are meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Frank Burke asked if they are going to close it up. Smith advised that the court does not state that it needs to be closed up. Smith advised that the court order says to destroy and take down the building and fill the hole. Emery is bidding above and beyond the court order so they can't award to the higher bidder doing work above and beyond the scope. The lower bid is only to take down the building and fill the hole. Discussion ensued. M. Eldridge thinks they should wait and review further. Smith said they can take some time to review and decide before the deadline. Chris Elliot asked if Emery will get a chance to rebid for the job based on the court parameters. Smith said the only way to do that is to reopen the bidding process and Emery knows what the other party bid so he could undercut that bid. T.J. Eldridge advised that Pine River Sand and Gravel has done work for the Town previously. Emery said he doesn't mind losing the bid but mentioned that he wouldn't feel comfortable leaving the building wide open. Discussion ensued. Smith also mentioned that if they award the bid to Emery who would be doing extra work, the court may not approve the extra work which would leave the Town of Ossipee on the hook for those extra costs. Discussion ensued. T. J. mentioned that the hard thing about RFP's is that someone could bid on it without using the dimensional lumber and you have to have an engineered plan to go by. This was just a bid to tear it down and fill the hole. Emery said that the bid needs to make sure the other building was structurally sound. He said it was in the RFP. Smith said replacing the wall and making

sure it's structurally sound are two different things. Emery asked how they make it structurally sound then and Smith advised that it would be up to the contractor. Discussion ensued.

Smith made a motion to award the bid to Pine River Sand & Gravel for the amount of \$25,500 for the demolition of 88 Main St, the small barn, per the court order. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

#### **Public Input:**

Jenny Spofford, Library Director, advised that the AARP tax prep appointments will be available January 16, 2024. They also have the mountain lion program happening Thursday at 4PM. They have a scheduled play group meeting every Tuesday at 11:30 AM. She encouraged people to call or stop by with any questions.

Smith closed the public input.

#### **HB 1468 Discussion:**

Smith advised that Bouse Bill 1468 is sponsored by himself as the State Representative for Carroll County District 5. He explained about the Legislative Service Request filing period, which is a small window of time to draft legislation, file it at the State House and from there it becomes a bill. He has been communicating with the State of NH for the last couple of years and Chris Elliot has also been involved as well, regarding the Rail Bed in Ossipee. He mentioned that the night before the deadline to file the LSR, he had a dream that he put this bill in and it forced the DOT to do something with the rail bed. He made some calls and came up with the idea to have DOT create a Master Plan for the Rail Bed from the Route 28 overpass all the way up to Conway. They have no vision or plan and this is an asset here, whether it's restored for freight or becomes a rail trail. The bill is sponsored by Smith and co-sponsored by Rep. Mark McConkey, Rep. Glen Cordelli, and Rep. Avalani. It will be going to the public works and highways committee sometime in mid-February. It's simply to generate a master plan, which is a vision for this rail bed so they come up with a process or a vision on how to move forward so everyone can enjoy this asset. Smith is asking for support from the Board so that this bill can go on the town website with some details to gather support from residents via letters. He mentioned that a bill like this will never pass without support. He said public works needs to be inundated with letters and emails of support stating that this needs to be done. It's vital and will bring economic development to the community. He would like to get this on the website and have Matt solicit other towns North to see if they would also write letters of support so when he goes to Concord in February to testify, he can present it in support of the HB. M. Eldridge made a motion to approve to support NH House Bill 1468 regarding a master plan of the rail bed development and to appoint Matt Sawyer Jr. to work on this also as well as to put this on the town website. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

Chris Elliot mentioned that he has been trying to work on this for the past 3 years. He had a hard time getting someone at NHDOT to communicate with him about this and with this action he has had 2 individuals advise that something has to happen with this. He would eventually like this to be a recreational trail but would just like a decision to be made regarding this stretch of land so we all can move forward. They did get confirmation that during the winter, pedestrians can walk on the rail bed, where this has previously only been for snowmachines and rail cars. 20 years ago, there was talk about a freight train system for \$20 million dollars to repair the trussells and railings but that did not move forward. He thanked Smith for stepping up and doing this. Smith said that spreading the word can help support bills like this. Matt will compile letters of support as they come in and Smith will get a

copy to submit to the committee in February. Once the hearing gets posted, people can submit electronic testimony to the committee directly but having a stack of letters to say this is the public's support would be good and more impactful. Kate Alexander asked if there have been any impact studies done on which option would bring the Town the most economic development. Smith advised that he was not aware of any. Chris Elliot said that UNH did a study 3 years ago which elaborated on the health and economic benefits of a recreational trail. Kate asked if the study found that a recreational trail would be the best option. Elliot said that it didn't really show it would be the best, but it did show it would be an environmental, economic and educational benefit to the entire town. Discussion ensued. Dallas Emery asked if the bill says vision because it only says for them to come up with a master plan. Smith said yes and he read the bill into record. The bill is as follows. Conway Branch Master Plan; Appropriation. The department of transportation shall develop and complete a master plan for the Conway Branch rail line from north of Route 28 to Conway by December 31, 2024. Funding to complete the master plan shall be appropriated from the general fund for the Department of Transportation. If funds from other sources, including but not limited to federal or state Department of Transportation planning funds, grants, and public donations, are or become available, the department shall expend those funds prior to general funds. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for any general fund sum out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated. Elliot asked if there will be any burden on the residents and Smith said ultimately it will because local and Federal money is tax money. This won't be directly funded from Ossipee's general fund. Discussion ensued. Kate asked for something to be put on the website. Smith advised that Matt would draft something and get it up there. Discussion ensued.

#### **Meeting Minutes:**

M. Eldridge made a motion to approve the minutes from the Selectmen's Meeting held on 12/11/2023. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

#### **Review of Red Folder:**

Completed in the Work-Session

#### **Old Business:**

T.J. Eldridge wanted to remind everyone about the parking ban for overnight parking in town owned parking lots and town buildings. It makes it harder for the guys to get it all cleaned up properly. Discussion ensued. He also mentioned that people should be careful with fire hydrants as well. He advised not to plow up against the hydrants. Elliot mentioned someone parking at Constitution Park by the path going into the big lake and T.J. advised that the parking ban does not cover that and it's only for municipal parking areas. He said if there was an abandoned vehicle, the Chief could probably do something about that. Discussion ensued.

#### **New Business:**

None Presented.

#### **Second Public Input:**

Chris Elliot discussed 3 bills in Concord pertaining to the lake. One is about wake boats, one is about fertilizer, and one is about decals and fees. He asked Smith for his thoughts on those. Smith said the committee relies heavily on testimony either written or verbal and that's the process. He explained that there are a dozen committees or so and those committees pass down the bills for the bigger House vote. They do all the leg work and from that comes a vote of recommendation either up or

down and from there it goes to the House. There are a lot of committees, and he is not on that committee so he can't give any input. Discussion ensued.

Bob Boose thanked the Selectmen for appointing him to the Mount Washington Valley Economic Council. He is looking forward to their first meeting at the end of the month. Smith thanked him for taking on that task.

The Board is meeting next Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 9AM for a hearing that is open to the public. Its not a public hearing, but a hearing relative to a termination of a Police Officer Carrie Blackwood. This Friday is a County Budget Hearing at 2PM at the old Annex building at the County Complex.

The Planning Board is having a public hearing January 16, 2024, at 7PM at the Town Hall for Zoning changes.

The next Selectmen's Meeting will be January 22, 2024.

**Adjournment:**

Being no further input, Smith made a motion to adjourn. M. Eldridge seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

Adjourned at 4:42 PM.

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Jonathan H. Smith, Chairman

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Susan J. Simpson

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Martha B. Eldridge

To be approved at the next Selectmen's Meeting