

Selectmen's Meeting
Monday, December 18, 2023

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 3:00 PM.

Call to Order/Roll Call: Martha Eldridge-Present, Susan Simpson- Present, Jonathan Smith-Present

Smith opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Input:

Dallas Emery asked why he couldn't pull up a map of Ossipee from our website. He said you need to put in an address for the map to show anything. Smith asked if he was talking about the GIS mapping system and said that you do have to put in an address but you can zoom in and out to see a broader map. M. Sawyer Jr. advised that he doesn't believe we have what Dallas is looking for, which is a map of the entire town with each property on it. Smith said properties need to be looked up individually. 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.

Accounts Payable & Payroll Manifest:

The Payroll Check Voucher total was submitted for the week ending 12/19/2023 in the amount of \$50,873.74. The General Fund is \$23,067.04. The County payment is \$1,120,248.00. The water accounts payable are in the amount of \$1,210.40. The sewer accounts payable are \$ 310.00. The total was \$1,207,709.18. M. Eldridge made a motion to approve. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

Review of Red Folder:

The Board received an Intent to Cut Wood or Timber for Map 272, Lot 053. The access road is Browns Ridge Road. The taxes are paid and there are no cemeteries. Simpson made a motion to approve. Smith seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received an Intent to Cut Wood or Timber for Map 266, Lot 007. The access road is Route 16 Road. The taxes are paid and there are no cemeteries. Simpson made a motion to approve. Smith seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received a Water & Sewer Warrant for \$101.90. Simpson made a motion to approve. Smith seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received a request from the Police Department for a grant for the Office of Highway Safety. It is for 100% reimbursement for printers and mobile adapters and a 75% grant for laptop and docking stations. The total would be \$39,000. The match from the town would be about \$12,000. Smith made a motion to approve this grant request. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken. Smith advised that it was in the Police Department budget.

The Board received the Police Department holiday pay policy that was instituted by the Board in conjunction with the Police Chief and the Town Administrator. Smith seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received a memo from the Finance Director regarding the passing vote by the Board to transfer \$200,000 of paving expenditures from the Highway Contract Services to the FEMA grant fund via a journal entry. Smith made a motion to approve. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received a Notice of Decision from the Zoning Board of Adjustment for case # 23-10-V for Map 031, Lot 021 was granted a Variance from side and rear setbacks and article 8.2 greenspace. It is on file in the Selectman's Office.

The Board received a letter from the Trustees of the Trust Funds requesting the Board approve an alternate for a 1 year term. Her name is Brenda Golden Hallisey. Smith made a motion to approve. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

Old Business:

Smith addressed the Frank Lord Scholarship request from Mr. Babson. He advised that the scholarship is administered by UNH. The Board has done their due diligence. Smith has the will, and it does not show that the town is liable or responsible for the administering of this scholarship. He read from the will, which states, "the beneficiaries of the afores trust shall be chosen and designated in the following manner. I request that the president of UNH serve annually as a Committee of Selection or designate some member of the faculty of the institution to serve his stead. Said committee to meet at such time as shall be agreed upon by said president. I request that there be added to this committee each year, the executive head of each and every preparatory school wherever situate which shall have graduated a boy or girl who is a candidate that year for such selection or some member of the faculty of such preparatory school." Smith advised that it is administered between UNH and the school system and has nothing to do with the town. The Board also has email correspondence from Gina at UNH who reviewed the documents and said the gift is from Lord's estate to the University with nothing about the town or county being involved. They are waiting for the final letter from the attorney for UNH stating such as well. He mentioned that if students want to apply for the scholarship, that the application is straight forward. Dallas Emery asked if the claim of Ossipee students getting preferential treatment for the scholarship is in the will. Smith said it goes beyond Ossipee students. It also said you needed to be a Christian and a Protestant but the will gave UNH a disclaimer that if that can't be worked out then it does not apply. Discussion ensued.

Selectman Smith discussed the valuation process that the Town is Constitutionally required to adhere to. He read Part 2, article 6 of the Constitution set forth in 1784 and it says, the public charges of government or any part thereof may be raised by taxation upon polls, estates, and any other classes of property including franchises and property passing by will or inheritance, and there

shall be evaluation of the estates within the state taken once every 5 years at least and as much oftener as the general court shall order. He also read part 2, article 5B, which states that power to provide for tax valuations based on use. The general court, which is the State House, may provide for the assessment of any class of real estate at valuation based upon the current use thereof. In this case, the values were so out of whack that we had to do the revaluation at 4 years. The threshold is 85% of our assessed value to market value and we were at 65%. Properties were selling for more than the assessed value. Emery questioned whether the percentage was accurate because the website showed we were at 86%. Smith said in 2023 we were at 65%. People moved here, driving up the prices and the valuation has to accurately reflect those prices. That is the legal process that the town is required to follow. Smith presented a pie chart from Matt Sawyer Jr., that shows the breakdown of the towns portion of the taxes which is at 28%. He understands that people aren't happy with the values, but he reiterated that people moved here driving up those values. In a few years, we will do this again as required by the Constitution. He also advised that people seem to be under the misconception that their bill is going to be twice as much next year. The second bill makes up for the shortfall on the first bill. So, if you combine July and December bills and cut that number in half, that will be July 2024's bill next year. Emery mentioned that if this was a few years ago, he would have questioned this, but he has learned a lot in the past few years and this process is not wrong. M. Eldridge said it's eye opening. Discussion ensued.

Smith polled the Board for a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (a) for a personnel matter at 3:17 PM. M. Eldridge seconded. A unanimous vote was taken. Roll call vote was taken. M. Eldridge answered yes. Simpson answered yes. Smith answered yes.

Smith made a motion to re-enter the public meeting at 3:31 PM. M. Eldridge seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

Smith a motion to seal the Non-Public Minutes, session 1. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

New Business:

None Presented.

Second Public Input:

Dallas Emery wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Kate Alexander presented the Board with 2 Narcan bags. She will work on getting a few more. Discussion ensued.

Emery mentioned that he was reading the Electricity Aggregation Policy and he questioned why we would need to give them 90 days to leave the program and people who want to opt out only get 30 days. Smith advised that losing a whole town as opposed to an individual would be more of a liability to leave a contract than to just opt out. Discussion ensued.

The next Selectmen's Meeting will be January 8, 2024. This is due to the upcoming Christmas and New Years holidays. Smith wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Adjournment:

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

Adjourned at 3:35 PM.

Jonathan H. Smith, Chairman

Susan J. Simpson

Martha B. Eldridge

To be approved at the next Selectmen's Meeting