Town of
Northumberland
Office of Selectmen
19 Main St
Groveton NH 03582
Phone (603) 636-1450
Fax (603) 636-6098

www.northumberlandnh.org

Town of Northumberland
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes - Draft
Date: Monday, December 2, 2024
Place: Town Meeting Room – 10 Station Square
Time: 6:00 P.M.

Board members present: Jim Tierney, Jim Weagle, Keith Bronson
Others present: Tammy Letson, Glenn Cassady, Sheila Smith, Norm Cotter, Pete Marshall, Al Rossetto, Chuck Kenison, Sean Durkin, Jim Davis, C.R. Wheeler, Kim Bronson, Rick Archer, Reggie Charron, Terri Charron, Doug Dano, Melissa Dano, Alicia Roy, Paul C. English, Esq., Kathy Wiles, Jeremy Monahan, Eric Brown, Becky St. Cyr – Minute Taker

1. **Chairman Opens the meeting:** J. Tierney opened the meeting at 6:00 pm

2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** All

3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** 11/18/2024

   Motion to accept the 11/18/2024 minutes by: J. Weagle
   2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

4. **Department Head Business:** HWY/WATER/SEWER

Highway – Glenn Cassady, Road Agent
- All the equipment setup has been done for the winter season.
- We took care of the park benches, trash cans, etc. prepping for the winter season.
- We have been covering and uncovering manholes, drains, entrances to culverts, filled some potholes
- With the weather last week, we got out and treated the roads before it had a chance to freeze. We didn't have the issues that surrounding communities had.
- We used approx. 15 tons of salt last week due to the storm.
- Treated the roads Thursday morning (Thanksgiving) and came back in later, we had no issues. This winter he can see the dirt roads glazing over and needing treatment.
- He's making a list of what they can do on the nicer days, such as cutting brush at the cemetery to open the area between the old and new cemeteries.
- On the backside road there are a lot of potholes. We got them filled with gravel. Page Hill is holding up really good.

Water/Sewer – Reggie Charron, Superintendent
- He has been gone for a couple of weeks, just got back today.
- We lost the old aerator, which the State put in back in 1997. It had to be pulled out, there was not much left to it. It had to be taken out or it would have caused some problems.
- Reggie shut down the Groveton wastewater treatment plant a week ago; with all the infiltration that we don't have any more and the low flows, we've saved a lot. This Fall was the dryest on record. It will be down for approx. another 2 weeks. The ponds will fill back up to winter levels, we want them up due to the biological's in there. Usually, it's earlier in the Fall when this happens. While it's down, we don't need to do any testing.

- The pump station in Northumberland had an issue, it was due to another problem that's happening at the trailer park. We've had issues with their pump station, Brookview is trying to get though until Spring, so they need to spend some money. Reggie further discussed the issue. It burned out one of our overloads, Ron Caron went down and changed it out.
- In November, the girls in the office did a fine job getting the letters out by the 12th or the Friday before; they were not due until the 16th. He's been telling everyone that our water is fine, this is a mandate. If anyone wants their water tested, we will send it out.
- Lead and copper testing will be done in 2025, we will do 10 random homes. They will be high level homes that they consider as high level for possibilities of lead. There are hazards ranked 1-5; we are at 5. We don't have lead, if anyone does it's the line coming in. Bart and Keith have been doing a great job getting appointments to take a picture in the basements. When finished we will have 70% of the inventory done; the other 30% will be a problem, it was never documented. There is one project on Paper St., Rich St. & West St. where there are 2 lines that feed off it and it's considered galvanized. He will try to get some money and get it done over the next couple of years. We have 10 years to get it done and 2 years for the galvanized.
- Getting ready to start the 4th quarter water meter readings over the next 2-3 weeks. We are watching a few homes that have changed, due to deaths, etc. We are trying to make sure the homes are protected; we don't want any assets getting hurt with water damage.

5. Requested Agenda Matters:

6. Town Administrator Business:

a. Grievance Procedures – Tammy – This is a CDBG Grant requirement that was emailed to the Board for their review. It's procedures needed for residents at Brookview and if they have an issue with the grant project, what the procedures are to file a complaint /grievance. It's specific just for the project and for that park (Brookview).

Motion to adopt by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

b. Zoning Board Alternate – Appointment of an alternate. This was done via a poll of the Board to appoint Romy McMann because there were not enough Zoning Board members present at a meeting and they needed a quorum. This is to make it official. Tammy said R McMann volunteered; it was her idea. Her term will expire on 3/31/25

Motion to appoint Romy McMann as an Alternate on
the Zoning Board by: K. Bronson
2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

c. HealthTrust Coverage Confirmation Transmittal – Tammy – This is the annual contract with HealthTrust for our Dental insurance, Life insurance and Short Term Disability.

J. Tierney reviewed the rates:
Dental – single $48.25, 2 person $92.80; family - $162.77 per month.
STD -
Life -

They didn't tell us what the increases are. Tammy reviewed last year's rates

Dental – single $45.95; up approx. $2.00; 2 person - $88.38, up approx. $4.00; family $155.02 – up $7.75.

The Town pays 100% of the single plan and we split anything above that 50/50 with the employee. Currently there are 4 employees on the 2 person; and 5 employees on family plan. The total bill currently is $1,833.57/month. This is the gross amount and then the employees have a portion that comes off.

E. Brown asked if we are renewing the plan we had or are we looking into another provider that could give us a better price? Tammy said she didn't get 3 quotes but has looked at 2 other plans that were much more expensive; they came back and said they couldn't touch it. Brown commented that before we just accept this shouldn't we get quotes from others to see if we can get a better deal? The deadline is December 6th .

S. Durkin asked if the Town requires that you seek out more than one estimate. Tammy explained it depends on the purchase policy. If it's over a certain amount yes, we require 3. For this the individual or monthly amount – no; for the annual amount, it might depending on the purchase policy limit. The Board can override. The STD and Liability are with this company also. Tammy said the Town has shopped for this in the past, but she has not gone out to ask other companies; other than the 2 she talked to. The amount is much lower through this company. It's not a typical insurance company, they pool other municipalities employee's to keep the rates low. It's doubtful that anyone can touch these rates. Eric discussed getting quotes for himself, for his benefit as a matter of respect why doesn't the Town require more than one bid as a practice. K. Bronson commented Tammy checked around but didn't get an official quote. J. Tierney said the drop dead date is December 6 and a response is needed by then. Tammy can't guarantee it but we might be able to get out of it if she finds someone cheaper.

Motion to go with HealthTrust by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson

Tammy noted when you go with the pools, they say you should stay for 3 years. We do shop for the health insurance; we've been with School Care for at least 3 years. The health insurance is not due until July. J. Tierney said it needs to be included in the budget; and Tammy will start shopping for it soon.

Discussion continued re: looking for outside vendors to buy insurance. Eric would like the Town to get the best rates possible. Sean suggested that it be made common practice to get quotes from at least 3 different companies to have it in writing.

All in Favor3-0

Tammy gave an example on Dental which was a quote from a year ago. It was $53.29 for the employee with a different company. This particular company says if the Town passes 100% on to the employee, it would be $61.93.

d. Christmas Tree – Jodi Paradis reached out to Jeremy Monahan who made the suggestion, that if Asplundh is going to do the lights, they would like to trim the tree. Jeremy asked if they could take some of the top and trim it to make it all uniform. It's getting too tall.

Motion to allow Asplundh to trim the tree by: K. Bronson,
2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

e. Brown Road Line Painting – At the last meeting someone said they had reached out to the line company who said the Town had not been in contact with them. Tammy followed through with them, they have 3 main people – one in Maine, one in VT and one in NH. The gentlemen she spoke with was in VT, he said he had been in touch with Glenn several times and at least weekly. Depending on the weather, they were planning to paint them on Wednesday and they did get them done. When someone called, they may have gotten the Maine Division office; it was the VT office that Glenn had been in touch with.

f. Metal Building – The Board has 2 quotes; the Public Works Department brought to our attention that the old car wash building is deteriorating. They would like to take the building down and put up a metal garage. Not where it is, but across the street in the parking lot. They have got 2 quotes which are within the same range. They want a 30' Long x 40' wide building and one of the quotes was for 30' wide x 40' long, which she asked them to go back for an updated quote.

We have some ARPA money that needs to be obligated by Dec. 31, 2024. There is $55,000 left and the quotes are approx. $30,000 is the amount for the building. It will also need a concrete slab which would use up more of the ARPA money. Armstong Steel – $31,721.72; Olympia Steel Buildings –$29,900.00 Because of where they are located, we need to make sure the delivery is included in the quote.

Sean asked what's in the building now? It's used for storage – the bobcat, sand, etc. The Town crew would demo the old building and do the install. We are still waiting for quotes on the site work. It would not be heated, it's cold storage, there would be electricity. It would be placed in the parking lot across the street instead of on the current site. J. Monahan asked why not keep it where it is, Reggie said the area is too full and it will make more parking for the Town office. T Letson is not asking the Board to approve the purchase tonight; we will have the full concept at the next meeting. J. Tierney is in favor of this with a total package cost of $55,000; anything above that he's not in favor of. He briefly discussed the County budget, overall, it's down, but it's asking for an increase in property taxes, however the delegation hasn't voted on it yet.

K. Bronson agreed to have the Town crew do this and use the ARPA money. Reggie said it could be downsized, but the old building needs to go; it's going to fall down. We need a place for the bobcat, etc. E. Brown asked if there is room at the Town garage for the bobcat? Glenn said it takes 25 – 30 min to drive it to Town, Reggie further discussed.

The equipment used to be stored in the Town barn behind the bank, which burned down back in 2012 and that land has since been sold. Eric asked about getting a price for demolition of the old one. Reggie said the Town crew will do it. Sean agrees the building needs to go, it's an eye sore. If it can be done with the ARPA money and it doesn't cost the Town anything, he's for it.

Motion to replace the old carwash building with a steel building with the total cost not to exceed $55,000 by: J. Weagle

J. Weagle retracted the motion above until the next meeting.

g. Follow up from last meeting – Tammy looked through emails about a part-time person; it did not go out via email. Two of the Select Board members were in the office on the same day; that's where it was discussed. For clarification, this was not meant to be a permanent position. When they allowed this person to fill in for us it was just temporary assistance to get us over a learning curve. It was not advertised, it's not a permanently filled position.

7. Applications/Permits and Warrants:

a. Building Permits - (2)

1) Map/Lot 237-031 – Granite Guild, 834 Lancaster Rd, demo, plumbing, electrical, heating, dry wall, insulation, roofing, basement, new deck, siding, pave the parking lot. R. Archer said Melissa and Doug Dano with D4 Rubbish have been doing the demo, Central Paving will pave the parking lot in the spring. They will use the foundation that's there; Jamie Swallow's recommendation was to fill the crawl space with stone and cap it with concrete. They will re-do the deck but expand it out 12'. Al has signed, the fee has been paid, Rick Archer asked for a waiver on the fee. J. Tierney asked Tammy to research whether we have charged other non-profits for the building permits before waiving the fee.

Motion to approve by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

2) Map/Lot 229-047 – Hope Demora, 540 Lancaster Rd., redo first floor, replace door and add wrap around deck, Fee has been paid, Al has signed.
Motion to approve by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

b. Intent to Cut **–** (1): Map/Lot 232-009 – Lost Nation Rd., Acreage of lot is 549; cutting 100 acres; logger is Cunningham Logging, LLC. J. Tierney reviewed the plan for the cut. E. Brown asked if it will be a clear cut or selective? Tammy said this is Town Forest and typically they do selective cutting. It's Town land across from the shooting range. Glenn said it's on both sides of the brook.

Motion to approve by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson

Kenison asked who tells them where they can gain access to the lot. The Conservation Commission takes care of that. Tammy said in the past, one of the neighbor's has said to use his land for access. We now have a small piece of Town deeded land that now will allow it to be contiguous to the brook. The neighbor said if it can't be there, they can use his land. The Conservation Commission is in charge of the Town forests, they hire a forester to manage all of their cuts. J. Monahan asked if the Town makes any money off this. Tammy said typically, yes and the money goes to the Forest Fund; which by RSA is something that supports the Town forest. Through a warrant article we are allowed to dip into it. This calendar year $15,000 was allowed for upgrades to the train.

Eric asked if we know how much money will be made from the cut before it's approved. Tammy said never because you don't know what the cost of timber is going to be when you cut it. J. Tierney said we will get that when we get the record of the cut. The Conversation Commission is not going to do it just to do it unless there will be a profit.

Al briefly discussed the emerald ash borer. It is at Martin Meadow Pond. The kill rate is 95% on the ash trees. Over the next 10 years the ash trees will be gone. At Weeks State Park, there is something that can be injected into the tree to kill the bugs. It will totally change the forest. Jeremy said 90% of the trees below the notch are already dead.

All in Favor 3-0

c. Abatements (3):
1)Map/Lot 205-009 & Map/Lot 205-011 -Town – we own 80% of these 2 properties. To get the other owner to pay their 20%, we have to bill for the entire property and then abate the difference. Map/Lot #205-009 - $269.00; Map/Lot# 205-011 - $510.00

Motion to approve both of the abatements above by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

2)Map/Lot 106-016 **–** Tammy explained that the property owner came to us; he has had a leak in the basement for a bit; he is asking for the sewer portion to be abated. The water leak has been on the last 2 bills. She gave the Board two abatements; one for 1 quarter and another for the second one. She did it as if it's a RWP to get the amount.

Sean asked if he provided any pictures of the leak? Tammy said he provided a bill from Al's Plumbing; they said it was a water leak in the basement that had been there a while. The abatement is only for the sewer, we don't abate the water. J. Tierney said the abatement for the final quarter is $225.60 and for the 2 quarters is $406.80. He didn't bring it to our attention until the current bill was received.

Motion to grant the sewer abatement on the current bill
the amount is $225.60 by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

d. Exemption Abatements: (34) – not listed due to multiple. When the bills were sent out, multiple people called us asking where is my exemption? The exemptions were not applied. We contacted the software company they don't know why it happened.

Their strong recommendation to fix is that we abate the entire second issue bill and then reissue (through a supplemental warrant) bills to these 34 people. The total amount is $74,165.00; but they all get a 2nd issue bill. The net abatement will be approx. $8,017.00. They are valid exemptions but were just not applied.

K. Wiles said she notified all the taxpayers; they are all aware they will get another bill. Reggie commented there is money involved in this; shouldn't the software company pay for this? Tammy said we can't prove that it's a software issue. On the screen that sets up the commitment, they have us copy last year's to this year. Last year the exemptions were applied; they have no clue what happened, but this is the fix. She can't say who was a fault and doesn't feel it's something that she feels they would need to pay for. Sheila asked about doing it manually; Tammy discussed and said in the long run it's manhours easier to do it this way. The company will make it right at no cost to the Town other than the postage on the letters.

Motion to approve the 34 exemption abatements by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

e. Sign permits (2)
Both - Map/Lot 229-027 – received in Monday's mail **–** 611 Lancaster Rd.
The signs are on the building and not the road. J. Tierney said they will need to check with the State also, because they are located on a scenic byway.
Motion to accept the Sign Permits by: K. Bronson
2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

f. Running Water Program – The Fire Dept and the High School
Motion to approve the RWP for the High School and the
Fire Dept by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

8. **Public Comment:

- G. Kenison re: Current use training has it been up to speed? Are these people going to give us any input so we can get our assessments better reflected. Tammy said the State of NH came to us to do some training on current use. We ran a bunch of the properties that we spoke about by her and she said the first step is to send letters to them to give us updated maps. She will be speaking with the assessors about current use, but they asked us to put it off until after their re-vals are done. They are not done yet. Kenison commented so the property cards have not been updated yet. Tammy said we can send out a supplemental bill up until – she would need to verify the date. She would recommend sending a supplemental bill if it's a significant amount. We can't go back to previous years.

  If they come out of current use, there is a penalty of 10% on the property value that comes out. She speaks with the assessors on a couple of issues every couple of weeks and we are not there yet. Kenison said to get this back on track, he has spent a lot of time on it over the last year and he sees a lot of cards that are not correct. Whose job is it to do that? Tammy said it's the value as of April 1; that's why we pay the assessors for the pick-ups. They didn't do the pick-ups until mid-summer but should be updated on the GIS site by now. It's lost revenue when we go beyond the date when we can no longer send a supplement bill; that's why Tammy talks with the assessors often.

- T. Charron asked about 39 Cumberland St., is there supposed to be anyone living there? Tammy said there is someone with more knowledge than she and the Board that's looking into it. Terri said we had 2 people come in to register during the election that was their permanent address. Tammy said they came in and spoke with us and in this case, it's been passed off to the Health Officer who can take action if necessary

- P. Marshall – commented about the lines on Brown Rd. bottom line – they got painted.

- E. Brown said he pulls records on the Town all the time; every time he does, he's more surprised with what he finds out. Last time it was people being hired w/o applications and he usually does it with multiple people in the same department. He asked for the Executive Administrative Assistant, the advertisement for the position, which she provided. He asked for the same info on Tammy's position and there was no record of any advertisement for that job. It's disturbing to him that we are not advertising for these positions. When we do advertise it's in the Chronicle, we are looking for the best people, why don't we put them online at a site like Indeed or another site where it goes out all over the State and not just the North Country.

  Eric heard we are looking to hire another police officer that we will send to school. We did that with James Dagesse, we paid $18,000 +/- to send him to school for 16 weeks by paying him, reimbursement, background checks, etc. Then we have to fire him? And if you want to find out why he was fired, go to the Groveton Chronicle Facebook page I posted it on there.

  He was first given a paid suspension and the reason he was fired was because he was having social and/or sexual relations with known criminals in Town. How many people knew that? What is going on this Town? We have a Lieutenant driving around in the Town in an unregistered vehicle for months and nothing's done. The Chief of Police doesn't know how to do an open records request, which violates the law. And then we have another police officer that was terminated due to sleeping with criminals in the Town. What is going on in this freaking town, really! I want to know why is this stuff going on here. J. Tierney commented as far as the sleeping goes, unless you're privy to the individual, (either one) as to what's going on in their house or houses. Eric said that was in the grounds of termination, social and/or sexual relations with a known criminal. Tierney said that came out afterwards.

  J. Monahan asked if we just fired a police officer. The Board said no, not recently; Eric is referring to one that happened awhile ago. Jerry said but we have an officer that blatantly breaks the law and nothing is done. J. Tierney said it wasn't just his private relationships; it was because of who the relationships were with and his position as a police officer and doing some undercover work. Because of his actions he was a threat on the lourie list to where anything that he did would not be admissible in court. The termination letter was dated January 24, 2024.

  Eric said nobody knows this stuff is going on. K. Bronson if it's under investigation it's not for public knowledge. Eric said we could let the public know. A lot is done in private session that the Town should know about. J. Weagle said we have to be careful so the Town doesn't get sued. Eric asked how many cases have to be thrown out because it's inappropriate behavior. J. Tierney said the Police Chief or maybe the County Atty is the one that says yes or no; we don't get that information. Eric said it seems that we have a problem with the Police Dept. He further discussed incidents that have happened and the punishment that entailed. K. Bronson said has been dealt with, it happened 3 years ago.

  Eric said he and his family live here; we shouldn't be having these problems. If Reggie lies on a form, gets in trouble with the Federal Government; he could go to prison for it. But the Police Chief can lie on a form that he gave to him and we are ok with it? A police officer can run an unregistered vehicle and nothing is done. He feels more should be done. He's not going to get off it until things are done right. J. Monahan said that the police officer that broke the law was given a verbal warning and the people that brought it to light were arrested and faced criminal charges. Discussion continued on this matter. Eric said you talk about a lack of leadership – you are looking at it!! J. Tierney said there is an open seat in March.

- C. Wheeler - asked, "have they paid the W/S bill yet?" Tammy said no.

9. **Announcements:** The Community Power Public Hearing will be held on January 13, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room located at 10 Station Square, Groveton.

The Town Offices will be closed at noon on December 24, 2024 and all day on December 25, 2024 in observance of Christmas. The Town Offices will be closed on January 1, 2025 in observance of New Year's Day.

Planning Board on 12/4 at 6:00 in the Town Office.

10. **Next Board Meeting Date**: Monday, December 16, 2024 – 6 pm

11. **Non-Public Session: (Pursuant to RSA'S 91-A:3, II (c)(d):**

Motion to go into Non-Public Session by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson. All in Favor 3-0
Roll Call: J. Tierney – yes; J. Weagle – yes; K. Bronson - yes

Into Non-Public session at 7:45 pm

a. Reputational – Sealed

b. Land – Sealed
c. Employee matter –

Motion to come out of the Non-Public Session by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

Out of Non-Public Session adjourned at 9:13 pm
Into Regular Session at 9:13 pm

Motion to seal items a and b of the Non-Public Session by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0
Roll Call – J. Tierney – Yes; J. Weagle – Yes; K. Bronson - Yes

12. **Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn by: K. Bronson
2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

Meeting adjourned at 9:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca St. Cyr, Minute Taker

*Agenda is subject to change

**Deadline for Agenda items is 12:00 noon on the Friday before scheduled business meeting (by vote of Board of Selectmen at 7/11/2005 meeting). This deadline may be amended by the Board of Selectmen at will (by vote of Board of Selectmen at 06/17/2024 meeting).

Minutes approved by Northumberland Select Board Members on_____

X_____
Jim Tierney
Northumberland Select Board Chair

X_____
Jim Weagle
Northumberland Select Board Member

X_____
Keith Bronson
Northumberland Select Board Member