Town of
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Town of Northumberland
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes - Draft
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024
Place: Town Meeting Room – 10 Station Square
Time: 6:00 P.M.

Board members present: Jim Tierney, Jim Weagle, Keith Bronson
Other present**:** Tammy Letson, Al Rossetto, Jim Gibson, Jodi Paradis, Pete Marshall, Norm Cotter, Melissa Dano, Doug Dano, Angela Richard, John Richard, C. R. Wheeler, George Kenison, Kathy Frechette, Judy Fox, Jennier Goulet, William Daisey, Dawn Bryan, Jeff Normand, Travis Parks, Andre Brasseur, Melinda Kennett, Rebecca 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:** 11/04/2024

   Motion to accept the 11.04/24 minutes by: J. Weagle
   2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

4. **Department Head Business:**

   FD – Andre Brasseur, Fire Chief –
   Since the last meeting - 5 calls for service, 3 MV crashes. Andre sent an email to the company looking into the truck; will work on getting a quote to retrofit. PFA's – the State passed legislation for Jan 1 ,2025 that we will no longer be able to purchase clothing with PFA's. In July we will no longer be able to wear clothing with PFA's in it. He thinks its pertains more to full time departments. There are some companies that are approved for components that are PFAs free, but it isn't holding up.

   K. Bronson asked how the car is coming. Andre said he got it fixed for just under $1,000. It was the flex pipes, and he also changed the brakes. Tammy noted that we are looking for the original title; that cruiser had a loan and the title goes to the lien holder. The State won't issue a new title until the lien holder signs off.

   C. Wheeler asked if he had looked into the cost of equipment to do our own hose and ladder testing. Andre has not yet. Littleton does some of their own testing by doing a couple of lengths a month, but they have full time firefighters. He didn't have a chance to ask them about the equipment.

   N. Cotter asked about the car repair. Andre said it was the flex pipes on the exhaust, and he had the rear brakes changed. There are other issues why it couldn't be used for a cruiser. That's not what we are going to use it for. There was other equipment that was taken off; the battery kept going dead, which he thinks was due to the wiring.

AMB – Jim Gibson, EMS Chief –

1. 2024 as of this printing, we have had 464 calls to date.
2. 2023 on this date we were at 416 calls. We finished the 2023 year w/460.
3. Comstar report as of 11/18/24; net commitments are $212,008.48. This does not include payments made directly to the office or contract fees.
4. The new ambulance (A2) is in service. It will remain second due until all attendant's go through driver training with it. Jim is in the process of training them. Once A2 is front lined, A1 will be going in the shop for heating issues, two vacuum assisted valves need to be replaced due to rusting issues. It's blowing cold air; he is meeting with them tonight.
5. We currently have one new prospect that will be attending the EMT class in Whitefield next month.

PD – Officer William Daisey –

Activity and Announcements:
311 Calls for service
19 additional calls NHSP
41 MV Stops
3 Traffic citations

5 arrests
12 Criminal charges
0 DWI / 1 Drug
6 crashes (estimated)
16 New investigations

K. Frechette – There are bicycles riding down the street after dark with no lights. Daisey said he will address.

C. Wheeler – only 3 traffic citations with 41 MV stops; what is the reasons of the 3 citations? Officer Daisey – 1) failure to yield to emergency vehicle and 2) speed. He doesn't remember the 3rd one, but can include that info for future meetings. S. Smith asked if some are repeat offenders? Daisey said sometimes that can be a thing if someone refuses to slow down or fix a headlight; they might need a citation. We can give out more tickets.

5. Requested Agenda Matters:

a. Health Officer – Jen Goulet, Health Officer – She would like to propose that we start putting out information relating to Health Officer items that are happening locally. What could be happening that poses risk to others by taking a public health approach, rather than saying one person is responsible for trying to stop or correct things. But providing the residents of Groveton and Northumberland with information to take a pro-active approach to prevent things like fire, rodents, other nuisances, etc. so we can start seeing things improve. There are current matters happening right now which cannot be stemmed or stopped and they will continue to grow unless we take a pro-active step towards stopping it now.

She proposed it could be monthly; and relates to things that are happening to all of us. Christmas time – lights go up, emergency safety and fire safety are important. For the short term, we can start with prevention and understanding rodent infestations. We can put it out on social media and post at the grocery store, laundromat, etc. for those not engaged in social media and also send out via email. If J. Weagle can turn into a jpeg file, it will be posted on the website. The documents handed out are Jen's long term objectives and short term logistics. It's the first write up related to the rodent infestation, it poses simple questions, and provides answers and resources. It's a very upstream approach.

K. Bronson said he knows there is a problem in Northumberland Village area. What are we doing about it? Jen said legally we are limited on what we can do on private property. If we engage without a professional exterminator and proceed on our own; baiting poses other risks to our pets. On ground zero, an investigation was launched, the residents are no longer there. Until there is power and electricity, the residents can't return either way. The reason it's not contained to a single residence is when you leave the home there isn't any food, and there is no warmth so the rats have moved, they have begun to migrate. The goal is to proactively notify residents that this is a possibility. There are things you can do – seal cracks in walls and crevices. pick up dog poop, take care of garbage, plug up holes, etc. Action has been taken.

C. Wheeler – asked if they own the property? Jen believes they do own it; it's currently not considered abandoned they haven't been out of it long enough to put it in that category. Chis asked about back taxes; Jen said not to her knowledge, but she doesn't have access to that information. Chris asked how long before it's considered abandoned? Jen wasn't sure.

K. Bronson asked what happened to the snake(s). Jen discussed the situation, there were multiple domesticated bald pythons that were released on the property, It's highly unlikely that we will have an infestation related to bald pythons. With no one living there it's likely there is no heat source and they will eventually die off. No one has called yet to report a giant snake.

C. Wheeler suggested someone should check on the back taxes and how many years has it been. J. Tierney said we will look into that, generally we take properties in April. Min said they are on a payment plan and the Town can take their property at their discretion if payments are missed.

S. Smith asked what kind of snakes they had. Jen said they were bald python's, they don't generally bite, not venomous, they generally constrict. They were domesticated animals they were used to being handled and currently are not expected to have any threat on anyone. They were pets that were released.

K. Frechette asked about the use of humane traps. Jen said she outlined those that do not require you to bait your property where a deer or dog could get into it. She also referenced sticky traps (they get stuck and can't get free – It's awful); humane traps kill quickly. Jen highly recommended not trying to catch and keeping them. They began as pet store pets; they have been in the wild and traveling through conditions where they could have picked up diseases.

K. Bronson said there is history of a rat infestation at the Town dump. Can she get the records on how it was eradicated at that time. Jen can attempt to; but if that was history kept by a former Health Officer, nobody left anything behind. She is investigating another property where the landlord claims they have fixed the issues, but there isn't a paper trail so she's starting at ground zero on it. She has a paper trail and keeps files; Tammy and Niki at the Town office have begun an electronic file there as well. When she is no longer the Health Officer whoever steps in will be able to see every investigation and report. For reference, if she believes that you have broken a public health ordinance, she will site the RSA, where an individual would be a fault; which is the league of statute or the Town ordinance for backup.

6. Town Administrator Business:

a. Nuisance Ordinance – This was tabled at the last meeting. J. Tierney read the section added, which is the appeal process.

Section 4 appeal: Any person who wishes to appeal a citation given under this public nuisance activity may do so through the proper court process, each citation being the charging document will have a court date assigned to the case upon issuance. Furthermore, it will be the responsibility of the recipient of the citation to bring forth any mitigating facts or circumstances of the case to the prosecution and their respective defense attorney, if applicable. At that time a decision will be made based on the merits of the case to move forward or not.

There was a section taken out, W. Daisey said that was Protective Custodies that he had the experience of using where the first time the person is given a warning as outlined in the ordinance. Then we start issuing a fine, where he's been before, it was usually $50. . While researching he actually ran across a law passed in the 70s that said if impairment, alcohol or drugs, is an element of the offense under Protective Custody you can't give a civil or criminal fine, it's illegal to do so. So, he struck that from the ordinance.

Tammy commented the ordinance being presented is when we have a nuisance property (it's a property that the Police Department is called to on a regular basis), normally not the homeowner, but yes, it might be the homeowner. This ordinance gives the Town the ability to issue a fine to the homeowner against that property for the calls there. The concept of this is to be able to pass off the cost, an indirect correlation of; you as the taxpayers are paying the officers to go to the same house continually because they continually hold a party every single weekend, there's always fights, always loud music there; every single weekend is a repeat of the same thing. You as a taxpayers are paying these guys to revisit this time and time again.

This ordinance is taking the burden off the taxpayers and lets us start charging the homeowner who's not fixing this situation. Whether the owner is not stopping and listening to them or they're not stopping their tenants, if you're an apartment building owner. It's meant to be for a repetitive location or person all the time.

W. Daisey added because it's written that way, when we go, and we have a violation - the very first time is a warning. We're telling the property owner that we're warning them. If we come back, get it under control or they could potentially get a fine the second time. That doesn't mean that it's going to happen. He's only used it a couple of times and it has been successful. This is just another tool to help us; it lets them know they need to stop.

G. Kenison asked what if the property owner doesn't live there; is the property owner going to be charged? Tammy said after proper notification, yes. The owner wouldn't just be issued a fine; they would be contacted and told about the repetitive issues with their tenant. Kenison said there are a lot of things you can't do to tenants. Tammy said there is a process to go through to get rid of the tenant if they wish. If the owner provides proof that he's going through the process, we are not going to issue a fine to someone that's trying to fix the issue.

W. Daisey said in his experience sometimes landlords that don't live there are not paying attention. We are going to contact them to say this is a problem and how can we help fix it. We are going to have a conversation we are very reasonable; but when we have to go there 6 to 8 times, we need some leverage through them.

D. Bryan asked if the majority of the calls came from rental places. Daisey said the 2 that he can think of one was a landlord, another that we were dealing with every weekend was possibly the owner.

C. Wheeler recommended having legal look at it. J. Tierney said we can have them look and have it back for Dec 2. Min asked because it's an ordinance, does it need a Public Hearing, Tammy will find out.

b. Right of Way Certificate – This is for the hill project; it's basically saying there is a right of way to be able to use High Street. That street has been owned for so long that there isn't documentation (back in 1800's) showing the Town owns it. We have easements with the homeowners; since there is no deed or Town Meeting vote we now have a right of way certificate we have to have signed saying there is a right of way on High St. that we've maintained since the 1800's. J. Tierney said that will solve the problem short term; but should there be a warrant article to claim it? Tammy said to take from whom? This will fill the bill.

K. Frechette commented we've been plowing it for years. Tammy said it's a gray area with the attorney. Because it's easements the Town Atty has to play a role in it. To fall back on maintenance, we would have to prove we've maintained it. There has to be records of what has been done on High Street for every year. We don't have records for the time frame they asked for 1948 – 1968. K. Frechette discussed her property and the easements. Tammy said we have spoken to the free Lawyers about the sidewalks on State St. They have said if you've maintained it's yours. The paid lawyer that we have to use for USDA said we should do it this way.

C. Wheeler – does this include or have anything to do with the streets that were never formulated. Tammy said it's not the undeveloped areas, which is another issue.

Motion for the Chairman to sign the right-of-way for High St by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson, 2 in Favor – 1 Abstained

c. Christmas lights – J. Paradis had someone on Facebook who said the Town is lame; because we don't have a Christmas tree up and what's the problem. She suggested they come down and help. She has the lights for the tree and has more coming. She has a truck that will help get the tree decorated, and she has some other people that will come to help. She will put it on Facebook, if anyone else wants to help. We are going to have a Christmas tree this year. The bridge they will work on and the train she doesn't have any info on that. J. Weagle said last he knew there wasn't any power there. Jodi noted that a lot of the people that used to do this are gone now.

M. Kennett said last year the Town crew put up the wreaths (which are in the Town Office basement) and they had the lights working on part of the train. Jodi knows the train is in tough shape. She will pick up the wreaths to check them. J. Weagle said the Chamber is getting banners for Lancaster and Groveton – Happy Holidays. When the lights come in, Jodi will call Jerry to get them up.

Min asked if someone will be taking stuff down after Christmas. Because the wind and weather rip them apart. Jodi said we are not getting donations in the way we thought they were.

K. Bronson asked if she could collaborate with the Beautification Committee and have them help you out. J. Weagle said there are only 3 of us. Jodi said she turned it all over to Courtney and she hasn't done anything with it. She used to do the whole Town by herself; she doesn't have anything to do with it. The Snowman on the Fire Station, Andre will have put out after Thanksgiving. The Hayride is on December 14th.

N. Cotter offered his help on the ground. Christmas donations will be added on the website. Checks can be made out to the Groveton Community Christmas Committee and can be dropped off at the Town Office. Jodi said we also do the fruit baskets.

7. Applications/Permits and Warrants:

a. Building Permits - (1)
   1. Map/Lot 211-009 – Kathy and Dean Wiles, to put 24 solar panels on roof existing pole barn. Each panel is approx. 5'5" x 3'9". It is being professionally done, but the packet isn't ready for tonight. The 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 **–** (3):
   Map/Lot 247-005, 247-005-01, 242-001 – This is one intent that covers 3 parcels. For the Beaton Family Trust. The lots all touch each other. J. Tierney reviewed the cut. Robert Crane is the contractor.
   Motion to approve by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

c. Transfer Station Non-Resident Permits (): None

d. Solar Exemption (1):
   1. Map/Lot 211-009 **–** Kathy & Dean Wiles, 72 Ball Rd.
      Motion to sign by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

e. Abatements (2):
   1. Map/Lot 232-006-01 **–** 1st issue tax bill that shouldn't have been issued. $11.00 – housekeeping abatement**.**
      Motion to approve by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

   2. Map/Lot 107-151 – 1st issue tax bill that shouldn't have been issued. $827.00 – Housekeeping abatement.
      Motion to approve by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

8. **Public Comment:

- P. Marshall commented about lines on the Brown Rd., he knows it's been put off until next spring. He listened to comments at the last meeting; and according to the company that does it, they had not heard from anyone and said they will contact the Town. Pete feels we should have an honest answer. Tammy will look into it.

- M. Kennett asked if it has been put off until Spring? The Board said we don't know that. We were told if they had more to do in this area they would swing in and do it. Min commented it looked nice when it was first done. There is a lot of traffic on that road with the track, Rotobec and residents. For safety reasons it's nice to have the lines. S. Smith asked if there are any streetlights on that road. Min said there are some; but maybe 10 years ago the Town reviewed all the lights, and some were shut off. Sheila thought it might be a good idea to have lights. J. Tierney said Route 3 had some shut off as well. The State shut some of them off and we shut some off too. D. Bryan asked who was fixing lights that are out. Get the pole # to the Town Office and they will make arrangements with Eversource.

- C. Wheeler – has the water bill been paid yet? Tammy said no not yet.

- P. Marshall commented that at the meeting on the Community Power, he thought it was supposed to run by the Selectmen? J. Tierney said the meeting was run by the Energy Committee. Al Rossetto said the Energy Committee has been tasked with bringing a Warrant Article to Town Meeting to allow the Board of Selectmen to make a decision on community power provider. If it's approved, it will then it will go to the Board for a decision. It will be about 6 months before the system would start.

G. Kenison asked if all of these things are getting posted somewhere other than Facebook. A. Rossetto said Dave Auger is doing the minutes for the Energy Committee then they go to the Town. J. Tierney said the minutes and information from the presentation should be sent out on the email tree.

C. Wheeler asked if this passes, will it be a requirement? J. Tierney explained, if approved you will get a letter and you can opt out, otherwise you will be opted in. The Town and businesses will be in on it. Al said anyone with a 3rd party energy supplier (other than Eversource); would already be opted out. At the end of their contract, if you want it, you can get into the organization that the Town signs on with. It should save $9.00 - $11.00 per month for 500 – 600 KW hr./month. The Town doesn't reap any savings from the program. What residents get for a rate, the Town's rate is cheaper. It's not binding, Al further discussed. Over time more people will be going into CCPNH and they will be able to buy at lower rates.

Al said the Energy Committee would like to put some info into the Town Report. Dave Auger is working on a draft to get information out for Town Meeting. J. Tierney suggested keeping it to 1 page front and back. There will be another Public Hearing on January 13, 2025 in the meeting room. S. Smith commented the rate goes for 6 months and then a new rate would come out. If any resident doesn't want it or want's join it's just a phone call. Al said there is no contract with CCPNH for the Town to sign. Al discussed other "for" profit entities. It will be posted in the newspaper; the library and it goes out on the email tree. J. Weagle work on getting it on the website.

- Jen Goulet asked if the Town puts out a newsletter. Tammy said we do not. Jen said all of this kind of information could be on a newsletter. Tammy commented that at this time she doesn't have time to do it. Min and Jen commented the information that she gave out tonight is on the DHHS website. Al asked the Energy Committee could put an insert with the tax bills. Min said the only thing that can't be inserted is political items. Jen commented with 3 pages she worries about literacy and people understanding what's on those pages. Min noted that Becky Craggy used to put an insert referencing the web site and to call the office if help is needed.

- G. Kenison asked how Tammy made out on the current use classes. She said they are taking a 3 day class now; one of the hot topics are properties with multiple RV's on them. Kenison asked if we've heard from the assessors on the follow up's? Tammy said they are still working on re-vals, she hasn't talked to her specifically about current use. We're hoping that these follow-ups are going to be reflected of the property tax card. If they are updated and if it's a large enough issue, the Board can issue a supplemental tax bill, so that they're paying their right amount. She is presuming it could result in a current penalty that they'll have to pay this calendar year. Kenison said he has been in touch with some State organizations, one is DES about a location where an application for a complaint can be submitted and then sent to the Town.

- Min asked if we have a tax rate yet? Tammy said no, we don't have it yet, everything is with DRA. She has contacted her (Jamie), she was still setting tax rates and had people ahead of us. She was going to work on us in the afternoon but she didn't get back to us yet.

  Min asked who is attending the current use training? Tammy said it's not just current use, it's an assessing class. Michelle Randall is attending and assisting in some of the assessing work until a permanent solution has been found. It's outside her PD duties; she is putting in a couple hrs. per week for the assessing stuff. It's temporary until the Board decides what they are doing with the assessing moving forward. Min expressed concern about training a person and wasting money. J. Tierney said it won't be determined until we see what the tax rate is and then what can be done with the budget for March. She is getting paid her hourly rate while in Concord. J. Weagle asked when we talked about this, he doesn't remember it; Tammy said it wasn't at a meeting; it was through email.

- S. Smith asked about putting the Energy Committee on the agenda for people that have questions. J. Tierney said the next Public Hearing will be in January and the Energy Committee will have a meeting possibly December; Al said the next is the Public Hearing in January and

possibly one more meeting. Dave is the rep to the CCPNH Board and a rep for another board in the State. Al's thought was to meet sometime in January. Sheila thought if we have something in Dec on the Selectmen agenda, someone might think they could get some information. Al said if we can get it in the tax bills perhaps that will spark some interest.

- Min – Judy had mentioned at the last meeting that as a crossing guard she didn't fill out an application. The crossing guard is hired by the PD and we have one that has taken her back. She was standing on the side of the road with headphones on; she has a colorful background. J. Tierney said moving forward everyone fills out an application regardless of who you work for. Min said she took the training for crossing guard to help out. She wasn't sure if this person had the training or a background check. K. Bronson asked what she meant by colorful background; why she would ask that? Min was only asking about a background check. J. Tierney noted that the PD does the background checks. Tammy said the person has had the training and she has received their certificate from the insurance company.

- P. Marshall said someone told him the flashing light north of the High School isn't working. It's on the speed sign for the school. K. Frechette said she believes it runs during certain hours. J. Fox said Randy Potter has fixed the one by Arlington St. before.

- K. Frechette – She is pretty sure that any job at the school requires an application.

9. Announcements: The Town Offices will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday, November 28, 2024, and Friday, November 29, 2024.

10. Next Board Meeting Date: Monday, December 2, 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
Roll Call – J. Tierney – Yes; J. Weagle – Yes; K. Bronson - Yes

Into Non-Public session at 7:39 pm

a. Reputation -
b. Deeded Property /payment issue -

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

Out of Non-Public session at 8:17 pm
Into Reg session at 8:17

12. Adjournment:

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 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).

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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