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Town of Northumberland
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes - Draft
Date: Monday, October 21, 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, Dave Auger, Al Rossetto, Jim Gibson, C. R. Wheeler, Sheila Smith, Norm Cotter, Andre Brasseur, Kathy Frechette, Peter Pelletier, Rebecca St. Cyr–Minute Taker

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

2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** All. K. Frechette requested for a moment of silence for Rae Davenport.

3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** 10/07/2024 **–** correction – re: Community Power

   Page 5, paragraph 2 – "Anyone with net metering cannot be part of the program.

   Motion to accept the 10/07/2024 minutes as corrected by: J. Weagle
   2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

4. **Department Head Business:** AMB/PD/FD

Ambulance – Jim Gibson, EMS Chief

1. 2024 as of this printing, we have had 427 calls to date.
2. 2023 on this date we were at 376 calls.
3. Comstar report as of 10/11/2024. Net commitments are $197,023.08. This does not include payments made directly to the office or contract fees.
4. The new ambulance has arrived and will be in service soon. I would like to thank the town's people, the association, and Weeks for all they contributed to help get this ready to serve the community. Also, a big thanks to Ande, Trevor and Kylee for all their help.
5. Reminder that once we have everything squared away with the new ambulance, we will be open for business on certain days upstairs at the Town office. This will make it easier for those that want to come in and discuss payments and billing. We are still in the process of moving some stuff over and getting computers up and running.
6. There will be an EMR/EMT class in Whitefield starting on December 19th. If interested I can supply you with the information.

Jim said there are 2 attendant's outside with the new ambulance, if anyone would like a

tour. It's been well received; we got a good deal on it. Until the new ambulance is in service with the State, we have the old one in service. Tammy said part of the purchase price is the trade in. The company is allowing us to keep it until the new one is in service. Kudo's to the company for that.

PD – Peter Pelletier, Chief
Since the Sept report -
320 calls for services / NHSP - 22
MVP Stops - 57 / 3 Tickets
Arrests – 5 / 12 criminal charges
Crashes - 8
New investigations - 18

Currently we have 2 students that are shadowing us 1 from WMRHS and 1 from GHS; it sounds like there may be more to follow. We enjoy having that kind of public outreach and contact.

We have a hiring process in progress. Physical testing was last week, which filters out those that think they can pass, but can't. Then its backgrounds, polygraphs, etc. Pete is looking forward to bringing a candidate or 2 before the Board. K. Bronson asked if the candidates where from the high schools. Peter - we have one as young as 18 and one that is an air force vet; another is a job shadow from earlier this year.

C. Wheeler asked if questions that Eric Brown had at a previous meeting had been resolved. Pete addressed, the questions were resolved 2 and 1/2 years ago. Tammy asked which case Chris was asking about the one from 2 ½ years ago or a current situation? Chris commented it was about a former police officer. Tammy said he is a current police officer. Discussion continued re: Brown's right-to-know requests. Chris said this was the unregistered vehicle incident. Pete commented the statute of limitations is 90 days, he took care of the issue – it's resolved. Tammy noted she had issued a verbal disciplinary action and gave him a window of time to get it registered. He called her to say that his town had very part time hours. He called to advise it was done; which was just outside the window she gave him. Chris asked if he is also suing the Town; Tammy commented he wasn't suing the Town for anything to do with the unregistered. Peter said he was suing 2 Town employees for revealing confidential MV information in a public meeting; he further discussed. J. Tierney commented that sometimes we can't let everyone know what's going. Tammy said originally the Town was named in the beginning. Our insurance company hired a lawyer who successfully removed the Town from the lawsuit, which was appealed, but the Judge dismissed the Town from the lawsuit.

C. Wheeler asked about an incident near the funeral home with a BB gun. Peter reviewed what happened; a BB broke the window out in a vehicle, we didn't know what was going on at first. We kind of swarmed the area and within 20 minutes, we had the BB gun and the boys. But all the parties involved have agreed to work it out and not take to court.

N. Cotter commented that he's the one that noticed the unregistered vehicle out here. He went to the Town office; 2 Selectmen were there; they chose not to do anything. Chief Pelletier addressed Norms concern; and reiterated that it's been handled, and people need to move on. Peter commented that a lot of times we will pull someone over, we always hear excuses. The driver might be driving it to work to get paid and take care of his family. We could be ruthless and give a ticket, but we try to have a heart. It's not as if he was driving around flaunting it. Sometimes we have to have a heart and when it started to get out of hand we had to take care of it.

FD – Andre Brasseur, Chief
August – Sept – we had 5 calls for service.
In the last month we've had 10 calls for service
YTD – 70 Calls for service.
Last year we had a total of 75 calls for service.

We had the equipment tested; 2 lengths of hose didn't pass, which the company we bought them from will replace at no cost. All the ladders passed the stress tests. Andre reviewed the process for testing the ladders. 1 truck failed the pump test; it's been fixed and is back in service. The tanker truck that we bought from Canada we are having issues with an electronic valve and not finding a replacement that works. We've found after the fact, that the truck built in Canada doesn't meet a lot of the US fire truck specs. Some of the valves used were not up to US fire standards. Andre further explained.

K. Frechette complimented the Fire Dept, when you do a show for the little ones they get completely into their uniform (including the mask) and tell them if you see us come into your house, it's ok. That's amazing and they won't forget that. Kudos to all of you!

Chris asked what do you do with the parts that don't fit. Andre said as they have issues, we will replace them to code. It's an extra that was added to the truck; once the pump is charged it won't open. Andre further discussed the operation of the valve. It's approx. $2,000 to replace it. Tierney asked which ones didn't meet muster? Andre said a lot of the valves that were looked at said were not fire standards. Tierney said it might be worth it to get a cost to replace those that need to be brought up to code for a warrant article in March. Then the citizens won't have to worry it breaking in the middle of a fire at their house. He asked Andre to work on the numbers for anything that isn't up to spec. J. Weagle asked Andre if he called the company that we bought it from. Andre, yes we have called and emailed. At first they were receptive, but they have since not replied. Weagle suggested he forward the email to him, and he will contact them..

Tammy asked Andre if he had reached out to the NH Fire Assoc about a legislative bill that passed; Andre hasn't yet. The bill that was passed is - any and all uniforms/equipment must have zero PFA's in them. Most of the fire retardant clothing is full of PFA's. Tammy further discussed, and noted that she hasn't seen it in writing yet. A heads up for budgeting, it will include all the turnout gear, there is supposed to be a phase in for that, so it doesn't have to be replaced all in one year. Andre spoke with the salesman about it, they are all scrambling. Andre said when one of the manufactures does come up with PFA free it will probably be double the cost. Chris suggested a warrant article for equipment. Currently the Capital Reserve Fund was worded to include vehicles and equipment; the more you dip into it the less there will be for a new(er) engine. J. Tierney asked Andre if he has foam on the trucks. He said that currently we don't have any foam; it needs to be replaced with a PFA free foam. Discussion continued re: foam

5. Requested Agenda Matters:

a. Energy Committee- JPA (Joint Powers Agreement) – Tammy has read the majority of the agreement. What she has seen doesn't obligate the Town to get your energy from these people. It gets them to assist us get it to Town Meeting and then you are open to choose your energy from whoever you want. There needs to be a resolution, this is what Dave, Al and Tammy came up with, which is for CPCNH. They want you to have a resolution prior to signing the joint power agreement. J. Tierney read the resolution.

Motion to approve the resolution by: J. Tierney
2nd by: K. Bronson, 2 in Favor – 1 Against

J. Weagle doesn't understand why they want this before even meeting with us. Tammy further explained the need for the resolution.

Tammy researched the minutes in regards to a chairperson:
July 10, 2023 - J. Tierney recommended 9 people be on the committee and made suggestions as to who, and that one Selectman would be the chair – no motion was made. It was one person's opinion, nothing else was done by the Board.

August 19, 2024 – The minutes show that J. Weagle had started the committee and currently the members were Sean Durkin, Al Rossetto and Dave Auger. A motion was made to appoint the 3 of them with a 3-0 vote.

Sept 16 – Sean Durkin said on 9/24 there would be tentative Energy Committee meeting. Then at the last meeting you appointed Sheila Smith.

Tammy recommended appointing a Selectmen rep to the committee and appoint J. Weagle to the committee. K. Bronson asked who chooses the chairman? J. Tierney said it should be up to the whole committee. Tammy said there isn't anything in the RSA's that say how it's run. She reached out to free legal counsel who said a lot of others communities are falling back on the rules for the land use committee's; planning Board, Zoning, Conservation, and those RSA's state the committee shall appoint the chairman annually. For Planning Board, the Select Board member can't be the chairman. It doesn't state that for Zoning or Conservation Commissions. The free legal counsel stressed they were not making a recommendation but just informing what other towns do.

Motion to appoint J. Weagle as the Selectmen rep to the Energy Committee by: J. Tierney
2nd by: K. Bronson, 2 in Favor – 1 Abstained

The next Energy Committee meeting is 10/22/24 - 6:00 pm at the Library. Tammy said the Select Board has given the committee the right to sign whatever you feel you need to with CPCNH. She recommended doing at the meeting tomorrow. Al said we are trying to bring the legislative body a comprehensive of what this is, what the benefits are and the rules, etc.

6. Town Administrator Business:

a. Beaver Trapping – Tammy, we were given a permit for someone that is willing to trap beavers during the trapping season. It runs mid-October – mid-April; this person is willing to do it for free. He works for Fish & Game and knows the rules. J. Tierney said that Jacob DeBow from is Whitefield, and he will be trapping all winter.

Chris asked what they do with the dams? Tammy said the Highway Dept will do it, and the trapper is supposed to help with taking them out. C. Wheeler said there will be less flooding if it's done in the winter and someone should stay in contact with the trapper to know where he's trapping. Tammy said one of our highway dept employees are in contact with Jacob.

*Al Rossetto asked for item g to be moved up in the agenda. Updated items to keep in sequence.

b. Fence Building Permit – Tammy said someone reached out to ask if a building permit is needed for a fence. Romy took the call and said she would verify. She got a lot of opinions that were both positive and negative.

For those associated with the Town, if we've said we need to research, give us some time to do the research. It wasn't an 8 hour period before we had an avalanche.

The answer was: If it's a fence only, you do not need a building permit for a stockade fence. There is a question where it was described as a stone wall, which could be considered a change of footprint.

Tammy reached out to the assessors, who said it doesn't matter what it is they don't tax it period. They don't need a building permit. If it's just a pile of rocks, Tammy doesn't think a permit is required. If someone is putting in a nice (to last hundreds of years) stone wall, she would like the Board to weigh in on – do you feel that is

something that requires a permit. Right now, our building permit is change of footprint of the land or $5,000+ of materials.

J. Tierney said basically NH is a you must have permission to State and if you don't have permission you can't do it. Tammy said this is for municipalities not citizens. Jim said if we don't have permission for a stone wall; it changes the footprint and requires a permit. He feels it would have to come from Concord. A stockade fence doesn't add much value; a fine stone wall does.

A. Rossetto said if you are putting in a long term stone / concrete wall it's attached to the ground, and it probably exceeds the $5,000 threshold. He feels we should be looking at the permanence of the structure. We need to be reasonable and maybe the $5,000 would be the determining factor. K. Bronson said he was on the other side of that; he was taking down stone walls and had to get a permit because he was changing the footprint. A. Rossetto suggested the Select Board address the issue so that we have some guidance for everyone. J. Tierney asked Al and the Planning Board to find the RSA's and bring it back. It will be further discussed at another meeting.

Tammy reminded the Board that as Selectmen there are 3 of you, it takes 2 to make a decision. When you get calls from citizens, can you change your answers to: you need the answer to come from the Town Office or you need to do it at the next Selectmen's meeting. That was part of the problem with the avalanche!

c. Ballot Box – One of the high school classes was approached by Randy Potter to make the Town a new ballot box. There were 6 kids involved with making it. It's made with metal and wood and weighs approx. 80 lbs. We would like the Board to recognize the students and their teacher. J. Tierney read a certificate that will be presented to them, which names them: Gage Collins, Connor Hand, Boe Parks, Sean Simpson, Michael Mellett, Michael Beyers, and teacher Ben Blodgett.

> Motion to sign the certificates of appreciation for all the students involved in the project by and their instructor: J. Weagle
> 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

d. Ambulance Lease – We have it, but need to sign the paperwork, it had to be sent to the attorney. The attorney wasn't ready so that it could be signed tonight. The Board will get together Friday, 10/25 at 8:00 am to sign it at the Town office. Our 20 day plates are running out; and we've got all the paperwork fixed. Someone will need to go to Twin Mountain with a letter from the Town. Jim Gibson will take it down.

> Motion for Jim Gibson to take the paperwork to Twin Mountain to get the plates for the new ambulance and sign by: J. Weagle
> 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

e. NBRC Grant – Tammy needs the Board to sign; this is to repaint and/or reside the covered bridge and make repairs to the train. She asked if the Beautification Committee was going to do that, the $15,000 is going to lapse. J. Weagle didn't think it would get processed this year. It will go back to Town Meeting. And to meet the requirement of the grant, to put in a pavilion in the field. J. Weagle said there is a small slab there already that can be made bigger.

Chris asked if it's for the removal of the side boards, Tammy said depending on the cost of putting new boards on, we will at least scrap and paint. It will need to be tented either way. N. Cotter noted that by adding to the slab, it might heave. Tammy commented that the person in charge of the NBRC grant came up, he want's her to dream bigger and would like to see bathroom facilities there. The grant is in-kind and there is no match. Tammy further discussed

J. Tierney read the resolution for the NBRC grant authorizing Tammy Letson to apply for, accept and expend grant funds from the NBRC and sign all NBRC investment documents that bind the applicant.

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

f. Highway Safety Grant – 2 options – 1) appoint someone to sign; or 2) all three of you can sign it tonight

Motion to have J. Tierney sign it by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

$32,433.88 – this covers 1)the highway patrol's /and sobriety check points; 2) it sets up the State to pay us for specific details – speeding, distracted driving, join the click - seatbelts; drive sober, DWI – there are 5 total. Tammy further discussed the grant.

The other piece in the $32,433.88 is speed equipment. We talked at a previous meeting about what's in the boxes – there isn't any cameras in them. We will also be able to replace the sign near the high school. It covers 75%, with a 25% match; which will be included in the PD budget. Tammy further discussed replacing the sign and costs.

g. USDA Loan Resolution – It discusses the loan and grant. The Board are acknowledging on $5,119,000; page 2 you are acknowledging that after that is spent you can have grant up to $1,721,000. It has to be signed now to move forward to have bond council sign off so we can get a contract. It has to signed by 2 – it can be position; J. Tierney suggested Chairman (no name) and Town Administrator (no name).

Motion to have the Chairman of the Select Board and the Town Administrator sign the paperwork by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

h. Merging Properties – Tammy present the Board with a map of the lots in question. We have a Town forest up off Lost Nation, there are water wells in a section of the property and there is a small building also. Tammy reviewed the map with the 3 lots. We picked up 1 of the lots through tax deed this year. The Conversation Commission is asking that we merge the 3 lots into 1 property and then we will have access to the Town Forest that goes across our land. The Selectmen have to agree it's ok to merge before sending it to the Planning Board. The water wells are for 28 users in Lost Nation.

Motion to send to the Planning Board to merge the properties by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

i. Tammy – we have a small business that has found a building to rent. It needs a zoning variance because the location is in an industrial zone. J. Weagle said she is asking if the Select Board will approve and if the Zoning Board doesn't approve, she will be out. She knows this, but has advertised to open on Halloween, she has all the licensing and is ready to go. J. Tierney said if she can get all the paperwork in for the Zoning Board before she opens, he would be ok with it. She has 8 days to get it done.

K. Bronson asked where does it want to go in? It's located on the Chapman property the old scale shack; it's a tattoo parlor. J. Tierney suggested putting it in the resolution, it has to be in writing. J. Weagle made a motion buy didn't specify the wording.

K. Bronson agrees that she needs to get all the paperwork in and then come back to the Board. Tammy said if she gets the paperwork in by Friday, can it be added to the agenda for Friday 10/25 if she get the paperwork in.

Chris asked is there a specific amount of land that goes with the lease? Bob Chapman would have that information. Tammy noted where the weigh station is located is on a large chunk of land, she is assuming that it will be narrowed down through the lease.

J. Tierney asked about the area where the teachers park, Tammy said it's a separate piece of land. Chris asked about the taxes, Tammy said they will be taxed the same way; she isn't making any changes. If she buys it that's different. K. Bronson asked if we are going to be approving that she can before Zoning. J. Weagle explained that she goes to Zoning for a variance; and then to Planning for a site plan review. Tammy said you are not approving it, the business owner is only asking for a temporary ok so that she can open before Zoning meets. If Zoning says no – she's done.

S. Smith asked shouldn't it be the owner asking for changing the zoning? Tammy said she will get the paperwork together for him. J. Weagle said he will sign off on it. Tammy said you are not changing the zoning, they will issue a variance. If the business leaves the variance goes away. J. Weagle said it won't affect the taxes unless she improves the building. She just wants a location for her business. There is no signage now; discussion ensued about signage. If she gets the paperwork in it will be discussed at the Select Board meeting on Friday 10/25.

j. Cruisers - We have 3 cruisers now with the new one. Will the Selectmen consider taking the cruiser the PD feels needs to be gotten rid of next and giving it over to the Fire Dept. Andre said the FD would use it for going to meeting, foster home visits, etc. Peter said what Andre is saying makes sense, if they can resolve the exhaust and electrical situation it's a good option for them. As a cruiser there is just too much wear and tear on it; the FD might get a few years use from it.

Tammy asked if this is the vehicle that's gone to multiple garages, and they can't find what's wrong with it. One bill was $2,500 which is a concern. Pete said we replaced the motor, it has been to multiple garages, and they can't find the electrical issue. Discussion continued about issues with the vehicle. C. Wheeler recommended a donation location where you can get rid of it.

Andre asked for a shot at fixing it at little to no cost. J. Tierney said no more than $1,000 max and no more than $1,000 in the budget for next year. Tammy asked where it would be stored; Andre said there isn't room in the Fire Station, but he could store it at his house. Tammy noted that the Town insurance would cover it. Andre commented that the ambulance crew could use it as well. C. Wheeler thought the exhaust would be $1,000 alone. The vehicle is a 2015. Tammy suggested letting Andre come back with an estimate and go from there, the Board agreed.

7. Applications/Permits and Warrants:

a. Building Permits (1): Map/Lot 237-002 **–** Adrian Reyes, 789 Lancaster Rd.;
28' x 30' concrete pad installed by Swallow & Sons; 28' x 30' metal garage installed by landowner. Tammy said the front set back is 75' from center; it's well behind the front of his house, he had been told by a Town official that as long as it was behind the front of the house he should be ok. She doesn't think it needs a variance.

Motion to sign the Building Permit by: K. Bronson
2nd by: J. Weagle, All in Favor 3-0

8. **Public Comment:

C. Wheeler said that the polls are open from 8:00 am – 7:00 pm; if there is still a line at 7:00 pm are they allowed to vote? It's up to the moderator, but J. Tierney said if they are in line they have a right to vote. J. Weagle we check to be sure there are no others in the parking lot before closing the polls.

N. Cotter asked about the tax rate, J. Tierney said DRA has the MS1. They will come up with a rate and call us to see if there is extra money we can throw down. So not yet; we got an extension. Hopefully, it will be in by mid-November.

9. Announcements:

Elections are Tuesday, November 5, 2024 from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm. Due to election set up, the November 4, 2024 Select Board meeting with be held at the Town office conference room at 6:00 pm.

The Town Office will be closed on Monday, November 11, 2024 in observance of Veteran's Day.

Water and Sewer bills were delivered to the Post Office today.

10. Next Board Meeting Date: Monday, November 4, 2024 – 6 pm at the Town office conference room.

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

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 – 8:07 pm.

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

The Non-Public session adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Into Regular session at 8:17 pm.

No further business was discussed.

12. Adjournment:

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

Meeting adjourned at – 8:17 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