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Town of Northumberland
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes - Draft
Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025
Place: Town Meeting Room – 10 Station Square
Time: 6:00 P.M.

Board members present: Jim Tierney, Jim Weagle (6:15), Keith Bronson
Others present: Al Rossetto, Tammy Letson, Jim & John St. Jean, Deb Miles, Pete Marshall, Norm Cotter, Melissa Dano, Doug Dano, Kathy Frechette, Terri Charron, Andre Brasseur, Ron Nadean & wife, Judy Fox, Dawn Bryan, Jeff Normand, Tim Charbonneau, Eric Charbonneau, Shawn Swallow, Rebecca St. Cyr – Minute Taker

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

2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** All

3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** 01/06/25 and 01/09/25

   Motion to accept the 01/06/25 minutes by: K. Bronson
   2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0

   Motion to accept the 01/09/25 minutes by: K. Bronson
   2nd by: J. Tierney, All in Favor 2-0

- **5. Requested Agenda Matters:** *a. - moved up before Dept Head Business. See minutes below

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

FD – Andre Brasseur, Chief –
Since last meeting:
7 calls for service – 1 in December 81 calls, plus the detail for the Eclipse brought us up to 82 in 2024.

Since January 1st – 6 calls for service. With the heating season we've had a couple of heating issues and chimney fires.

All the trucks are running good. Andre reached out to the company to have the truck spec'd and hasn't heard from them yet. He will reach out to them again.

The light tower was used on the hill a couple weeks ago, and it's being used again today. It's used for Home Coming, etc. We got it a few years ago with a 50/50 grant.

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PD – Peter Pelletier, Chief -

2024 Summary – 01/01/2024 – 12/31/2024
Calls for Service – 3,429 / NHSP 214
Traffic Stops – 778 / 105 tickets issued – 7.4% to
Arrests – 98 / 185 charges
Crashes – 22

2025 – Y-T-D
Calls for Service – 269 / NHSP 20

Traffic Stops – 82 / 22 citations – 3.7% to 1
1. Defective Equipment – 4
2. Uninspected MV – 4
3. Auxiliary Lights – 1
4. Speed – 4
5. Failure to Display Plates – 2
6. Possession License Required – 2
7. Yellow line violation – 1
8. Open Container – 1
9. Driving After Revocation or Suspension – 1
10. Possession Registration Required – 1
11. Unregistered MV – 1

Arrests – 8 / 17 criminal charges
1. DWI's – 2
2. Drugs – 1
3. Other arrests – 5 (including resisting arrest/detention)
4. Crashes – 4

New Investigations – 16

We started utilizing the OHS grant money, and will continue to do so throughout the year. It puts an officer on the road in Town, it's directed at traffic enforcement but they are also available for calls. If something comes up, they can break off the grant patrol and then make up the time lost.

Tammy reminded that the Highway Safety grant reimburses us for all of the officers overtime as well the matching benefits; using the cruiser is our match but they pay us at a rate that more than pays us back for the wear and tear.

N. Cotter asked if the police are taking the cruiser up to the border. P. Pelletier said yes, we have been talking about it for months. Cotter asked about the wear and tear and needing another new cruiser in 2 years. Tammy said it doesn't go out that often, it's a grant that reimburses us for the employee's time, matching benefits and mileage. J. Tierney said why can't we put it into the cruiser CRF at Town Meeting for just in case what Norm is thinking happens.

Peter said the officer that's spending time on highway safety stays in Town. The only exception is the drunk driving enforcement they do with several other Towns. The Northern Borders Alliance initiative pays for enhanced police presence from the

border down – 25 air miles. Peter further discussed. Northern Border money is typically not spent in Town it's spent near the border.

P. Marshall said he heard we have new applicants. Peter said yes.

AMB – EMS Chiefs Report – J. Tierney read

1. 2025 as of this printing, we have had 25 calls to date.
2. 2024 on this date, we were at 25 calls.
3. Comstar report as of 01/13/2025 (this does not reflect 2025 payments): Net commitments - $256,610.17. This does not include payments made directly to the office or contract fees.
4. Both ambulances are operational with no problems to report.
5. A1's State EMS inspection is this Friday at 11:00 am.

5. Requested Agenda Matters: *a. - moved up before Dept Head Business.

a. * JSJ Auctions –
Jim and John St. Jean – Jim St. Jean has been an auctioneer for 35 years; Jim has been with JSJ for 42 years. They do a ton of tax deeded property sales so towns can get some income out of the properties. They met with Tammy in November, she went over a list of Town owned properties. They went out and looked at them and put together numbers of what they thought they would be worth at auction, which is part of the packet presented to the Board. There is also a sample contract in the packet for their services along with the values on most of the properties. Some of the properties they couldn't put a value on because they are unique.

They have done auctions in this area: Carroll, Colebrook, Haverhill, Lancaster, Lyman, Stratford, Warren, Woodstock. Jim said they have had good success up here and they have good turnouts. We have been selling a lot of tax deeded property to out of staters, they pay good money and are keeping everyone honest. J. Tierney asked what our fee is. Jim said they are done on buyer's premium; the Town pays nothing. If it has to be stopped a week before the sale – we charge a $500.00 fee plus the advertising. Advertising won't exceed $3,000. They prep all the properties for auction. They looked at 3 houses that are vacant; if they are not condemned, we like to show them.

The auctions are held on a Saturday morning, around 10:00 am with a power point presentation. Typically, with 8-10 properties you might get 30-50 people. Jim St. Jean asked if anyone had been through the properties from the Town. She said yes, at least one of them, there are 3 - Bearce, Winter and Rich.

JSJ doesn't charge for their services; they charge the buyers. We run display ads in the local newspapers, including the Union Leader. Social media - Facebook and Twitter. Tammy reminded the Board that we cannot make a profit on the sale of any tax deeded property. We will get the taxes owed, plus taxes accrued, penalties and delinquent interest and any costs we have against it. Anything above and beyond those amounts go back to the previous owner. Jim said you can use your own attorney or we will use ours for some occasions.

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Jim St. Jean asked Tammy to expand on the 2 big pieces of land. She said they are asking about property near the Stratford town line. It's owned by multiple owners who each own a percentage. The largest owner didn't pay his taxes on his 80%, plus there are about 11 others. The land was for hunting, camping, etc. All the names are on the deed.

Jim asked if the goal is to get them back onto the tax rolls; or will min. bids be set. We like to do the auctions subject to confirmation giving you the right to either accept or reject the final bid. They like to have that answer before the auction. Tammy said it would be a property by property decision. If the Board goes with this, Tammy recommended going to the other side of the tax deed; normally mid-April; there may be a couple others that will be added to the list.

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

b. Ronald Nadeau -

Ronald said he is the maintenance person and caretaker for 645 Lancaster Rd. the old Dupuis property. He's asking the Town's permission to stay there off and on. There isn't any electricity; the house has a fireplace for heat, he knows the owner and has been doing masonry work for him. Ronald asked about the taxes; the owner offered him 5% and will co-sign for him. Since the roof leaks on the house, when it rains – it pours. There have been break-ins, they broke windows and the back door. They also damaged a dump truck. The owner asked him to go there to watch the place and work on it. He's afraid it might get broke into again.

He doesn't want to break any laws with the Town. He has cleaned a lot out of the house, but has had an issue with a lady that's called the Town saying it's not livable. Ronald is just looking for permission to stay there. Tammy has not spoken with this person, but there are lawyers involved with this property. J. Tierney said we can't make any decisions, it's private property. J. Tierney said we have no say in it, you probably need to get permission from the lawyers.

Ronald said he's not paying any rent to stay there. He said they were hoarders, there is stuff from floor to ceiling, the garage is packed. He put some out to the road and got in trouble with the garbage people. Tammy said it might mean getting permission from the Health Officer. She looked up in legal inquires about having a guest staying there. Tammy read – he's a house guest unless he pays rent. If you spend more than 6 months there then you are considered a tenant. Tammy said the Health Officer will need to keep an eye on it and if he's there more than 6 months the homeowner is then required to bring everything up to code.

Ronald asked if the store can be changed to residential zoning instead of commercial. J. Weagle said you would need to go before the Zoning Board to change it, and didn't recommend if it's just temporary. If fully converting the owner would have to do it with the Zoning Board. Tammy said Ronald can stop in at the Town office and get an application from Romy McMann, that the owner has to sign, there is a fee and costs to notify the abutters then it goes to the Zoning Board.

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6. Town Administrator Business:

a. Tammy – we received a couple of unsigned complaints. One of them Tammy was asked to bring up at the meeting is re: the Supervisors of the Checklist held a session that wasn't advertised in the paper and we are told that's illegal. Tammy said we reached out to the Secretary of State, they said because it wasn't a session for people to sign up, (it was a work session) it doesn't need to be in the paper.

b. Tammy - We owe the Public Works Dept. huge kudo's for working outside all day on a water break since 8:00 am this morning. They knew there was a leak and rode around trying to find it on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, but couldn't find it. It showed this morning with water bubbling up from the ground on State St. Eversource was called to come and hold the pole, which was very close to the dig. It was at or near an old service line, the pipe was old, it had a wooden box around it. It's very old. There hasn't been a building hooked to that line in a very long time.

Peter asked Judy Fox if it affected her crossing guard duties. Judy said no, Randy put up the road closed sign and she put up her sign if anyone tried to turn. The kids had no problems. Tammy noticed there weren't any lights around the Road closed signs, it was difficult for cars to notice after it began to get dark until they made the turn. Andre said the highway crew needs more signs, road closed ahead and detour. There were not any signs at the junction of Route 3 and Church St. cars were going over to State St and then had to turn around.

S. Swallow asked how they come up with the company that is called in to help when there is a break. Tammy isn't sure, but knows they have a strong working relationship with who they used, but they are not the only company they can use. Swallow said they have the same equipment, and as a taxpayer he would like to think it would be kept local. It's not the first time, but at least a phone call, since they are taxpayers. Tammy will look into it, and asked Shawn to stop at the Town Office to leave their info. Swallows have been in business for 30+ years.

c. American Legion Auxiliary Road Toll for poppies– Saturday, May 24, 2025 – 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. It will be on Church St. J. Weagle asked if they were sent a letter for road tolls, there is a letter that goes out to the school in the spring as well.

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

d. Budget Workshop and Budget Hearing Dates – need one more workshop; and need to set the Public Hearing date, which needs to be after Feb 4. J. Tierney is available on Friday's. Scheduled the Public Hearing for: February 7th at 6:00 pm in the meeting room. The last workshop date will be Saturday, Feb 1 at 9:00 am in the meeting room

e. Stark PA-28 – This is for property that we have that's in Stark, they are still using the inventory form. There haven't been any upgrades. In Groveton, we haven't used this form for a long time.

Motion to sign the Stark PA-28 by: J. Weagle

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2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

f. Health Ins – Tammy – July – June plan. They want us to sign an agreement to do by Feb 1st. Tammy reached out to 2 other companies for quotes. Our current insurance, SchoolCare, is going up 16.7%. Tammy noted that HealthTrust would cost the taxpayers money and it's a worse plan. NH Inter-Local Trust could save the taxpayers $7,100 for the year. When they called, they said it will be going up 11% and more next year but didn't know what that amount would be.

Tammy said with the pools we need to stay with them 3 years, which we have met with SchoolCare. Tammy said we could go with NH Inter-Local Trust, but the deductible goes up to $250 for individual; $500 for 2 person/family. Because we offer a HRA, we pay the first 50% of the deductible so the taxpayer cost goes up. She took that into account when figuring the $7,100. Other things to note: if we leave SchoolCare we are saving the taxpayers, but the school will pay more; HealthTrust will cost the taxpayers $39,400 on the Town side. J. Tierney said it makes sense for us to stay with School Care for another year. Tammy has talked with Heather at the SAU, they have collective bargaining units, it's not easy for them to change.

Motion to stay with SchoolCare for another year by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

g. Celebration / history committee – Tammy has been bringing this up at Town Meetings since she's been here; in 2029 it's Northumberland's 250th Anniversary. We've been putting away a little money each year, 3 years will go by fast for planning. Some towns tried to do an event each month, one town did the month they were incorporated and did different events each weekend, Stark had theirs over one weekend last year, No. Stratford did the same. A resident stopped in to advise they have a strong interest in writing a Town History book. They would like to see 2 committee's and start the History Book Committee now to have it ready before the 250th. J. Tierney said the Country's 250th is in 2026. We will look for volunteers for the committees, if interested call or stop in at the Town Office to join. Becky Craggy wants to be on it but not the Chair. Tammy said if they are Town committees, they need to have minutes. She would like to see the Board appoint the chairman but not have to appoint each volunteer if possible.

Becky and Tammy came up with some methods for advertising, re: Town Meeting, Town Report, social media, etc. We didn't narrow the CRF down to just the Town's 250th, some of the funds could be used for the Country's 250th.
Motion to form a Town 250th Celebration Committee and a Town History Committee by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

h. Trustee of the Trust Funds – one has stepped down due to health reasons, do you want to appoint somebody until March or leave it vacant. All 3 positions will be vacant and on the ballot, 1 or 2 of the current Trustee's might sign up again. They have quarterly meetings. The Board didn't think we need the position now since there are still 2.

i. Possible cut of timber on M/L 219-002 – L. Meservey, MOM's came in, they want to do a timber cut on some of their land. It abuts the lagoons and the backside

of the Highway Dept. land. Meservey is suggesting the Board consider asking the cutter to extend the cut onto our land and harvest the timber off of it. This is one of the few ways we access to the area, otherwise there is a thin strip of land along the edge of the road. At Town Meeting 2 years ago, it allowed the abutter to have that lot of land. We haven't heard from them. Meservey wants to have the Intent to Cut in a couple of weeks. J. Tierney suggested contacting Ed Mellett, Tammy will email him to get his opinion. If we get the Intent to Cut it can be added to the agenda for Feb 3rd. Tammy said he knows he has to put in the Intent to Cut.

7. Applications/Permits and Warrants:

a. Tax Exemption Application (1): Map/Lot 234-004 – Solar panels have been there since 2017; they are just now asking for the exemption. They don't have $10,000 worth of solar assessed value, they can have up to that amount, it's just the max. The exemption is just on the panels.
Motion to approve by: J. Weagle, 2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

b. Abatement Application (1): Map/Lot 234-004 –
Motion to send to the assessors by: J. Weagle
2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0

8. **Public Comment:

P. Marshall asked, isn't there something on the computer, something about signing up for text messages or something? J. Weagle said textmygov. Pete asked if the water break was on it? Andre mentioned that the water was still on. Tammy said no it wasn't. It only affected that section of State.

9. Announcements: The Town Offices will be closed on February 17, 2025 in observance of President's Day.

10. Next Board Meeting Date: Monday, February 3, 2025 – 6 pm

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

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 7:25 pm

a. Resident Matter
b. Land **– "Sealed"**

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 8:23 pm
Into Regular session at 8:23 pm

Motion to seal Part b of the Non-Public minutes by: J. Weagle

2nd by: K. Bronson, All in Favor 3-0
Roll call – J. Tierney - Yes, J. Weagle – Yes, K. Bronson - Yes

- Erica Canales used to be with CDC went into business on her own. She is going to have Steve Fortier from Rural Policy, Andew Dorsett from InvestNH and Ian Davis from NBRC (all related to BEA) here next Tuesday, they are talking to towns that they don't normally visit. They will visit Lancaster then us. They want to know if any of the Board members are available to meet with them around 2:00 or 2:30 that day.

  J. Tierney said InvestNH is primarily housing. There is a possibility of a for profit person turning the building they own into apartments. If it's for workforce housing, InvestNH might be able to help. If InvestNH continues with the grants – the Town can get money for allowing it.

- Discussed the Warrant Article for improving the bridge and train. We haven't spent any of the money waiting for the Beautification Committee to use it. The money wasn't used and rolled back to the Conservation Commission. Further discussed the warrant article. Tammy will speak with Ed.

12. Adjournment:

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:31 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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