

## **BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**January 8, 2024**

## **MEMORIAL BUILDING**

**4:30 P.M.**

*The following are to be considered draft minutes until approved by the Board.*

Pledge of Allegiance

Selectmen present: Poul Heilmann, Chairman; Amy Lewis, and Don Hill.

Others present: Tim Bray, Zoning Coordinator, Jen Roberts, John Chiarella, Josh McGraw and Steve Dzubak

Poul recognized John Chiarella to speak during the public comment part of the meeting. John was before the Board to discuss a stream on his property that he is of the opinion is an intermittent stream. For as long as he has owned the property (1986) it has stopped flowing when there is a lack of rainfall to the extent that there might be muddy little puddles but no movement of water. Last summer during May and June there was no flow between the little pools, when the rains started in August the flow started back up and was at unusually high levels for that time of year. John wanted to know when the classification changed because no one has visited his property to look at the stream or discuss the condition of it with him. He stated that when the Zoning Coordinator/Health Officer came to look at the replacement septic he had to have installed due to the prior one failing, they discussed changing the barn or building a run-in and that would need a zoning permit, but the flat area where Oliver's swing set is and where the tent for Sonya's wedding was did not need anything if it was built up with gardens, logs or a retaining wall. John's understanding from when Tim visited was that there was nothing to note other than the stream to indicate any wetlands were present. Tim Bray brought up that the 2016 Wetlands map is a tool to use as a first look type item and if there are further questions about an area, looking at it further possibly with a Wetlands Scientist to help determine the type of wetland the area is.

Poul recognized Josh McGraw to speak during the public comment part of the meeting. Josh shared that during the most recent rain storm his property experienced significant runoff from Old Grafton Rd due to several culverts uphill from him that were not functioning correctly due to being plugged. The water was running off the road and under his house. To rectify this issue, he diverted the water away from the house which then ran over a newly installed and approved septic field and washed away significant topsoil and grass seed. After meeting with Tim Hayes, Road Agent, and discussing possible fixes and getting approval from the Road Agent, Josh rented an excavator, purchased 18" culverts and replaced the 12" culvert that crosses Old Grafton Rd in front of his house. The culverts located further up the road that were plugged he worked on them to clear them of debris, noting that the 12" size is too small for the storms that we have been experiencing and suggests that the town begin changing out undersized culverts as possible. He also would like to note that both Tim Hayes and Cody Osgood are doing a fantastic job taking care of the roads. Josh requested partial reimbursement of the cost of the culvert. Amy Lewis asked what the total cost was to which Josh replied \$945. Poul Heilmann moved to

reimburse Josh McGraw \$945 for the purchase of an 18"x30' culvert. Amy seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.

Tim Bray shared with the Board what he has been doing regarding Zoning, Driveway and Septic permits. Owners of 175 Oak Hill Rd reached out to question the construction of a shed on the neighboring property which they felt was being built within their view easement and directly below their home. Tim visited with the neighbor to discuss the construction and if there was a zoning permit on record and the location. A zoning permit had not been applied for because the owner was told that due to the size one was not needed. Tim informed him that a permit was indeed needed. The issue with the location within the view easement is a civil matter between the neighbors, it is not something the Town gets involved with.

Tim Bray would like to be called prior to even site work being done to assist homeowners in determining if there is a possibility of wetlands on their property. If further questions arise a wetlands scientist should be hired by the property owner to assist. The Wetlands Map the Town uses is a good starting tool though adding an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance next year to include sitework which will further protection of wetlands within the Town might be something the Planning Board will investigate. Josh McGraw shared with the Board that he and Clayton Platt often work with wetland scientists when they do surveys, and it is quite costly. Tim Bray stated that if a property owner is going to develop a piece of land there are always going to be expenses. For individual property owners concerned with a single lot line the expense should be less.

**REPORT: ZONING COORDINATOR** *Board of Selectmen Meeting, Monday, January 8, 2024*

Application for Zoning Permit – **APPROVED**

None

Other Business

1. Inquiry concerning potential wetland encroachment, Nichols Hill Rd.-under review.
2. Resident concern about alleged shed construction without permit, Oak Hill Rd. -under review.
3. Inquiry concerning demolition of structure and permit to rebuild. -under review

**REPORT: HEALTH OFFICER** *Board of Selectmen Meeting, Monday, January 8, 2024*

Application for Sewage Disposal System Permit - **APPROVED**

none

Respectfully submitted,  
Tim Bray  
Zoning Coordinator / Health Officer

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At 5pm Bruce Purlo from gWorks called into the meeting to discuss and answer questions from the Board regarding the current Payroll, Accounts Payable and Financial software the Town is using. Currently the software being used is client based, locally loaded on the workstations though there are options for Web-based software. Amy Lewis questioned who hosts the applications, Bruce replied that it is an Amazon web hosting service and can be run off any Chrome book with 8GB of RAM. Backups are done nightly to the Amazon Cloud. Don Hill is concerned about the Tax Collector/Town Clerk programs due to the State requiring the use of specific printers for some documents. Don also shared that Avitar has extremely effective customer service and whenever assistance is needed, they were on top of it. Tamara asked Bruce if gWorks has an Assessing program, at this time they do not. The Board thanked Bruce for calling in and answering their questions.

Minutes of December 27<sup>th</sup>

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Recreation: Alison Conlon presented to the Board the budget request of \$3,650, an increase of \$1,650 over past years. They would like to purchase storage totes to organize the equipment (replace equipment with materials and supplies) they have and to better organize the closet located at the Meeting House and to purchase T-shirts for the staff to wear at events.

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Also, Avitar and BMSI will be contacted to find out how their software works related to off the server or at individual work stations. Amy Lewis shared that Eastman (add Water District) uses Culver Technologies at a significantly less cost.

Poul moved to accept the minutes as amended, Don seconded the motion. The board unanimously approved.

Old Business:

Personnel Policy

Edits were not received by Amy from the other Board members. Moving finalizing the policy to the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Jen Roberts asked if the employees were able to meet with the Board to discuss the changes as the policy is something that directly affects them. The Board agreed to include the employees and planned a lunch-time roundtable discussion on the 22<sup>nd</sup> at noon. An employee has questioned how FMLA works in Springfield, the Town employees less than 50 so Amy is going to investigate how that affects Springfield and their employees.

Energy RFP

Steve Duzbak shared with the Board that only 1 proposal was received and due to missing requested items and the cost he felt it was not beneficial for the Town to accept it. Also, times have changed, and companies are no longer bidding on and installing projects the size the Town would like to do. Holding off for a year or two and having a relook is his suggestion. The other project with Community Power should also be pushed off for a year to get a better feel for

electricity rates, among other things. This will give the Select Board and Energy Committee time to effectively communicate the advantages to the public and put together a warrant article.

#### Budget

Poul would like to request 3-4 individuals to work on finding a solution for the grader, replace with new, used, or a location to get parts. Discussion of establishing Capital Reserve Fund accounts. How much to start with, are the trustees prepared to account for the funds, who are the current Trustees? Susan Chiarella and Steven Albrecht. Steve Duzbak questioned why the Town wouldn't want to fund Capital Reserve Fund accounts. Many individuals feel it is cheap enough to borrow money and don't want to ask the tax payers to put money into accounts that will not be used until years later. Tim Bray shared that his thought is there are residents in town that don't have savings accounts for themselves because they can't afford to and asking them to fund accounts for the town will be hard. Discussion on the value of what the town office is getting from the current computer support company for money being spent each month. Poul requested a list of the services being provided.

Don Hill shared with the Board that he received a call from a resident who required EMS to respond to their home last month. The resident had nothing but positive comments for those that responded, Deputy Fire Chief Ian MacMillan, Hanna MacMillan and Jen Roberts. Response time was very quick and each of those responding acted very professionally and with the upmost care and concern.

Discussion of voting coverage for the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Amy is available all day to cover the election. As far as positions opening on various town Boards seem to be greater than in past years. It was suggested that encouraging neighbors and others in town to get involved if they are able.

#### Board and Department Updates

Agriculture Commission – will be meeting quarterly going forward, budget request is \$500 as they have in past years.

Buildings/Grounds – the library motion light was fixed by Jim Dewkett, he has agreed to work with/for the Town when items/repairs need to be addressed.

Cemetery – meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> to work on consolidating the record books.

Conservation Committee – met on the 4<sup>th</sup>, planning to host a number of hikes to include snowshoeing during the course of the year.

Energy Committee – nothing additional to report.

Fire Dept – admin meeting is on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Highway Dept – nothing additional to report.

Library – nothing to report.

Planning Board – nothing to report.

Police Dept – Nothing to report.

Recreation Committee – hosting a bonfire on the 25<sup>th</sup> at the Rec field. Jen Roberts shared that Jesselyn Straniti is doing an amazing job with the Recreation Committee, she listens to and is open to all ideas voiced during the meetings.

ZBA – No applications have been received for February.

Administration update – office copier is up for replacement, new lease is up for renewal, monthly fee will be \$113 down from \$124.

Signatures:

Current Use Application - Munholand

The board voted to go into non-public session 91a32c at 6:35.

The board returned from non-public session at 6:50, voting to not seal the minutes.

Discussion of what was done in the past to show the Board's appreciation for the Town employees for their work throughout the year; at Thanksgiving turkeys were given for many years, most recently gift cards were given. Poul moved to give the Town employees gift cards to Hannaford's, Don seconded the motion, Board unanimously voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Submitted by,  
Tamara Butcher,