

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

February 12, 2024

MEMORIAL BUILDING

4:30 P.M.

The following are to be considered draft minutes only until approved by the Board at their next meeting.

Selectmen Present: Poul Heilmann, Chair; Amy Lewis, Vice Chair; Don Hill

Others: Tim Bray, Zoning Coordinator/Health Officer; Derrick Ferland, Sullivan County Manager; John Anderson; Ed Shank; Laurie Jacques; Steve Dzubak; Hope Damon, State Representative

Poul started the meeting by explaining that in Amy's absence from tonight's meeting and the need for a couple of things to be reviewed, the Board will delay the approval of the Personnel Manual and the STR's vote. Poul was informed just before the meeting tonight that John Anderson and Ed Shank of MVST to review the three-year agreement, and it wasn't noticed. John explained the way the agreement is worded is indefinite, it just needs to be reviewed every three years. Poul stated in order to give the public an opportunity to speak on this, he would like to move it to the next meeting, February 26th, so it can be properly noticed in the agenda.

Scheduled Appointments:

Derrick Ferland, the Sullivan County Manager, appeared before Board to present the proposed plan for putting up Welcome to Sullivan County signs. Municipalities, DOT and property owners have been contacted about the placement of signs for this project. If all involved agree on the signs the project will move forward, if not it will stop. Mr. Ferland reviewed the project handouts with the Board and audience. The current layout of the design was provided, the signs will be 4x6 in size. Mr. Ferland also discussed some of the locations they were looking at for sign placement.

Don explained the project of the town signs that were completed by the Springfield Garden Club. They are tasteful and small and fit with the feel of our town. The town fully supported the Garden Club in this project, which was completed at no cost to the town. Don's feeling is these Sullivan County signs would just minimize our tasteful little signs. Laurie Jacques, one of the owners of Twin Lake Village, took this time to state they do not want a sign on their golf course. TLV did allow for a town sign on the corner of their property, it fits with who they are and is very appropriate. Laurie Jacques explained the numerous amounts of signs, being on a state road, on their golf course and they don't want to add another if they can help it. Laurie added this is a local road, not a touristy road so it isn't necessary to have that sign by the golf course; and as a taxpayer Laurie is looking at this project wondering if there are better ways for us to spend our county money. Mr. Ferland explained that a USDA grant was obtained that is paying for the vast majority of these signs. Poul's reaction is that the sign work is nice and he likes the idea of creating a brand around Sullivan County, but we are a rural town and are low key and this sign is very loud; a more understated sign might fit in better.

Don stated that Route 4A would be the one place that is wide open, people travel through and a 4x6 sign would catch their attention, or even out on I-89, but for the rest of our town, a sign of that size would be too much. The Board agrees on this, if there are other size/design options, they might be willing to reconsider. Don stated in terms of any project similar to this that comes before the town, the Garden Club has done so much to do the gardens, flower tubs our town signs which the club refreshes every couple of years. It is a labor of love and it would look like a pathetic attempt of a sign in the vicinity of a 4x6 metal sign. Poul stated if the County comes up with an option that is more in keeping with Springfield, they may consider it. Mr. Ferland thanked the Board for their consideration and input.

Don wanted to make it clear for the minutes that with any similar future endeavor the Garden Club should be invited to be part of the conversation as they were the ones who spearheaded our town signs; it would be good to have their voice on any type of project like this.

Poul asked Tim Bray, as chair of the Planning Board, if there are planning and zoning regulations on signs. Tim stated there is only a limit on the size of a business sign, which is written in the ordinance; that is specific to a home business. Tim stated the Selectboard could submit a separate ordinance to restrict sizes of signs in general if desired.

Zoning/Health Officer Report:

REPORT: ZONING COORDINATOR *Board of Selectmen Meeting, Monday, February 12, 2024*

Application for Zoning Permit – APPROVED

none

Other Business

1. Ontiveros, Cemetery Rd. map 29, lot 60, non-conforming 0.8-acre lot, Inquiry concerning zoning requirements for house and ISDS,
Progress: Driveway curb cut and house footprint has been staked. ISDS design pending.

REPORT: HEALTH OFFICER *Board of Selectmen Meeting, Monday, January 22, 2024*

Application for Sewage Disposal System Permit - APPROVED

none

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Bray

Zoning Coordinator / Health Officer

<<February 12, 2024>>

Tim Bray reviewed his report with the Board. We have two non-conforming lots in town, one is 0.8 acres, and the other is 1.4 acres. Both property owners are working towards putting a house, septic and whatever else on the properties. The property on Cemetery Road, 0.8 acres, has

staked out the driveway and the corners of the proposed house. Currently, it meets requirements so they wouldn't need a special exception for that. Tim has stayed in contact with them throughout the process. The builder has hired a septic designer and once that is done, they will need a potential spot for the well and then will submit the whole thing as a zoning application. Tim's question to them will then be can they fit everything they are proposing within the non-conforming lot without a special exception.

The second lot is on the corner of Bowman Road and Main Street, 1.4 acres. There was a lot of inquiry on this lot when it was on the market wondering if it was a buildable lot. Tim informed those who asked that it is a legal lot. The first step Tim does as the Zoning Coordinator is have the property owner send a copy of the deed so he can double check and see if it was made a lot before Zoning came in, which would qualify it as a non-conforming lot; this is a new step to the zoning process. The Board thinks that is a great process to follow. This property owner goes to the Planning Board this Thursday. Their biggest challenge is that part of their lot is in a prime designated wetland so there is a 100' buffer zone. Tim is pretty sure the wetland line encroaches into the property, then you add the 100' buffer that will make it challenging for them. When they come Thursday Tim will let them know the only way they can really proceed is to hire a wetlands scientist to flag it and bring him a wetlands report.

This brings up the subject of the wetland overlay maps, which hasn't been working recently. Tamara and Tim worked on this for a bit today trying to fix the issue. Tamara did some research and discovered the overlay map is held by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region Planning Commission. They are in the process of getting this resolved and our overlay maps working again. Tamara explained the Upper Valley held the license to this software and in 2019 there was an employee change, the new employee was not aware of having to renew this license. They are working on getting it turned back on.

Tim is concerned because we have a Zoning Ordinance that depends on this map and it is in the hands of another entity. He feels we should look into having control over this map. The software is based in Silicon Valley, they have the infrastructure of the map. Upper Valley put the overlay layer showing all the wetlands in Springfield. In Tamara's investigation they informed her they will continue to hold the license and charge us a minimal fee each month as there is a fee for them to host it. Don stated one of the concerns the town had when we first started using the map was that the overlay of our tax maps wasn't accurate, which is still a concern. Regarding the databases, Don added a lot of this stuff is done through the state with Granite View. If we own the digital map, he's curious if there is a way that we can take that map and have Granite View, which is state-run, make it a detailed wetlands map. We will encounter this more and more and we need the rights to the map. Tim added that he doesn't use the overlay as an exact measurement, it just alerts them that there is designated wetlands in the area and it needs to be looked at.

In looking ahead, Tim feels we want to be less dependent on these moving parts. Steve Dzubak asked if we are asking a property owner to bring in a wetlands scientist to flag, in his experience, they won't do that in the winter so how do we handle that; there are specific time periods that wetlands scientists will actually flag the ground. Tim stated he was a wetlands scientist for years and did as much business in the winter as he did during the growing season; you have to be able to do it either way and you have to do it any time of the year. Steve explained he has used Horizons out of New London and they give a window of when they will perform the service. Tim added it might be a New Hampshire requirement, he's unsure.

Poul asked Tim Bray if his reports could provide a bit more detail; for example, mention if business activity is observed. Don stated that references to a site plan is very beneficial, the more we mention it when it's involved the better. Tim stated he will add these details to his future reports.

Minutes of January 22, 2024:

Page 4:

*Jen Roberts, on behalf of the Friends of **Fire and Rescue**, informed the Board that they have been asked to do a gift basket raffle.*

Page 5:

*The Friends of **Fire and Rescue** have researched all the regulations surrounding raffles.*

*m. Administration – Tamara spoke with Monique, **our designated auditor from Vachon Clukay**, and they will need to complete a mini audit when the Town Clerk/Tax Collector changes.*

Tim Bray had a comment on the minutes. There was a statement in the minutes by a resident that cast aspersions on the fact that decisions are not made equitably in town. There are no details or specifics given, just a general accusation that the town doesn't arrive at decisions in a fair manner. Tim is unsure that has a place in the minutes; it's not related to any one thing that was being discussed. A blanket statement that things aren't done fairly in town and people are not treated fairly is not a fair statement for the people who are trying hard to make sure that isn't true. Don stated maybe the Board needs to do a better job at stating that people are entitled to their opinion but the Board disagrees; something that says it didn't go unchallenged in the meeting. Poul read that part of the minutes as more of a statement of our goal as a town is to be fair and equitable. Poul knows what the spirit was in the delivering of that statement but when you see it in writing without having the full context you could interpret it differently. Tamara stated there are towns that do not post their draft minutes, they are always available in the office, but they aren't available online until after they have been approved; Tim Bray feels that is a better system for meeting minutes.

Poul proposes at the next meeting, when there is a full Board, that we discuss and agree to a potential modification of our draft minutes availability. Hope Damon, State Representative, made a comment that she has nine towns in her District and she appreciates the way Springfield

does their meeting minutes. Hope was not weighing in on the subject of publishing draft minutes. Hope appreciates that she can look up online and get a very thorough report of what was discussed at a meeting. There are two kinds of minutes, there is the kind Springfield does that really relays the discussion and the work that was done. Then there are minutes that just relay the outcome, what was voted on. From that you don't get how those conclusions were achieved. There is no right or wrong, Hope just personally has a preference for ones you can learn more from. Tim Bray agrees, he likes the minutes as we do them, but with the type of minutes we have but we should make sure the one that goes out to the public reflects the spirit of what took place at the meeting. Don stated it's more than just transparency, it's trying to share the narrative of what has transpired.

Don made a motion to accept the minutes of January 22, 2024 as amended. The motion was seconded by Poul. Don and Poul voted in favor of the motion.

Unfinished Business:

- a. Warrant Articles – Poul reviewed the dates of the voting, March 12th 11am to 7pm, and the town meeting, March 16th at 9:30am at the Meetinghouse. The warrant articles were reviewed and signed by Poul and Don. Poul and Don were present for the budget review and went through the details and agreed with the budget committee. The Board chose to eliminate the article on the culvert because we need to do more investigating and we've applied for a grant. Tamara discovered in her research that there was an open-ended tax anticipation loan approval, so it didn't need to be included this year.
- b. Budget – approval – This was completed at the final Budget Committee meeting last week.
- c. Personnel Manual – This approval has been postponed until the next Selectmen's meeting.
- d. STR's – Vote on defining use of 30 days or less – This vote has been postponed until the next Selectmen's meeting.
- e. Revaluation RFP status – Tamara informed the Board that George Hildum will be here Wednesday with a near-final copy of an RFP that we can send out and hopefully find someone to complete our revaluation in 2025. Tamara spoke with Skip at the company that handles the power plant today and part of the discussion edged off into revaluations and most towns in New Hampshire are in the same boat we are. Hope Damon has heard a few other towns in her district have brought up the same issue. Hope suggested Tamara reach out to Yoshi Manale, City Manager in Claremont, he might have suggestions as they have just completed theirs. Hope will make some pre-emptive inquiries about what the statutes are if unable to find a company able to complete the revaluation.

New Business:

Tamara and Poul have been talking about fixing the files for Planning. The idea is to consolidate so that everything is driven by map and lot number. It will require hiring someone to do the physical transfer from one file to the others. With roughly 1000 files, figuring about ten minutes

per file that is about a 170 hours of work consolidating the files; that would be step one. Step two would be digitizing each of those files; that would likely require more time. Poul is in the process of laying this plan out as we will need to budget for it and find someone who would be able to do it.

Board and Department Updates:

- a. Agricultural Commission – Next meeting is in March.
- b. Buildings and Grounds – The next meeting is Wednesday February 28th at 7pm. Tamara was asked to notice that meeting.
- c. Cemetery – Their next meeting is likely in March.
- d. Conservation Committee - Don was unable to attend the last meeting but received an email from Erin Meding. There were no updates to report from her. Tamara provided appointment forms for those on Conservation at this time. The Board signed the appointment forms. Tamara was asked to invite Erin Meding to the next Selectmen's meeting.
- e. Energy Committee – No updates to report
- f. Fire Department – No updates to report
- g. Highway Department – The new truck had to go in for a recall and small fix on Friday, it was picked up today.
Poul will lay out a goal and objective for the Grader Replacement/Refurb. Committee. This will be published inviting people to volunteer to be on the committee; they would like to limit it to three or four people. As of now we have two definite members and one who is likely to join. It has been identified that the current grader has 7100 hours on it, it was bought in 1996 with 400 hours on it. Typically, you can get about 12,000 hours out of a grader. There are a lot of options floating around.
- h. Library – It was a good meeting. There was an observer who was thinking about running for a seat on the Board. There will be two Ladies Lego Nights happening one Thursday, February 22nd, and one Saturday, February 24th. The Friends of the Library are purchasing the Lego sets for this event. There has been good feedback on this.
- i. Planning Board – They meet Thursday, February 15th.
- j. Police Department – They are excited for the potential for a new cruiser, although we likely won't see it until the Fall.
- k. Recreation Committee – The bonfire is set for March 2nd at 5pm. Don informed everyone that Recreation is working hard to go through all of the boxes and containers that have been collected over the years. They were cleaning out rooms at the meetinghouse and all the spare bulbs, timers, electrical chords, etc. for the candles that go in the windows disappeared. The good news is nothing has been disposed of, they know it's there and will return it to the meetinghouse. This brings up a good point that no one knows what is in these storage rooms. Poul shared that Jim Bednar has organized a meeting of all the chairs of the different clubs in town so there is a coordinated effort to calendars and possible cross-sponsorship of events. This might be a good place to get a group together

to go in and organize and clean out the items in the storage closets and reorganize. That meeting is scheduled for February 29th at 6pm.

- l. ZBA – No updates to report.
- m. Administrative Update – Tamara has been working on property transfers and of course the budget which took up much of her time. The Board decided on a photo for the cover of the annual report.

Signatures:

Veteran's Tax Credit

Land Use Change Tax

Miscellaneous Business:

Hope Damon, State Representative, wanted to share some New Hampshire House Bills that will be presented at a public hearing this Friday, February 16th.

NH HB 1168 – This bill proposes to form a committee to look at the impact of the housing crisis we have statewide and nationally on people with disabilities. This is not specific to any one community, Hope felt it was something people should be aware of if it moves forward.

NH HB 1065 – Relative to fire sprinkler requirements in residential buildings. Hope is a sponsor of this bill and it is to, in existing residential buildings, make the requirement for fire sprinklers optional for four or less units. Right now you don't have to have a sprinkler system if there is two or fewer units; this would increase it to four units with dedicated egress, secondary fire escape or the appropriate size according to fire codes. Hope explained that it was realized the fire code and building code are being revised to do exactly that, so it isn't entirely clear that this statute is needed. Hope is trying to withdraw the bill, but other sponsors want to move forward.

NH HB 1215 – Relative to subdivision regulations on the completion of improvements and the regulation of building permits. This is an effort by some of the housing committee members to exempt approved subdivisions from future changes in codes. Hope feels that bill will have a lot of discussion.

NH HB 1291 – Relative to accessory dwelling unit uses allowed by right. Hope explained this bill has had a lot of preliminary work done. The primary factors of the bill is it would increase the ability for people to have an ADU by right from one to two. It would increase the square footage for the primary ADU to 1000 sq. ft. And if there were a second ADU that could be 850sq. ft. Lastly, one of the ADU's will be allowed to be detached; it could be a freestanding unit if this goes through. Tim Bray has read this bill and feels it would have a big impact on small towns like ours. This is something the town should pay attention to. Hope explained what the housing committee is trying to figure out is what, if any, impact on the state level can we have on improving the fact that we don't have enough housing without overstepping the bounds for local control and respecting differences between communities.

Don stated this might work and fit in a city like Concord but won't work on Sanborn Hill Road and cannot work around our ponds. If you get two ADUs all of a sudden you have parking problems. If you add to the amount of daily traffic on our dirt roads they will not hold up, the water quality will be gone. Hope feels this is a good point that she doesn't believe has been brought up yet; Hope is now wondering if there should be an amendment to that bill that makes it not applicable to waterfront properties because that will be an issue in many communities.

These aren't the only housing-related bills but they are the ones being heard before the special committee on housing.

The Board thanked Hope Damon for sharing this information.

Meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Jill Hastings

Deputy Administrative Assistant