

TOWN OF DEERING

762 Deering Center Road
Deering, NH 03244

Board of Selectmen
Final Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 23, 2024
6:30 P.M. – Public Session

Members Present: Chair Jill Smith, Selectman Roy Watson and Selectman Steve Diers
Also Present: Town Administrator Meagen Kerris and Recording Secretary Wendy Baker

Opening of the Meeting at 6:30pm

Pledge of Allegiance

NEW BUSINESS

Item 1: Consent Agenda

- **Payroll** April 10th - \$16,652.42 / April 17th - \$13,236.26 / April 24th - \$13,335.39
- **Accounts Payable** April 10th - \$44,354.29 / April 16th - \$13,206.80 / April 17th - \$31,006.53 & April 24th - \$31,398.57
- **Deering Community Summer Fair**
- **Tax Collector Audit**

Chair Smith made a motion to accept Anne Cavagnaro as a Supervisor of the Checklist for the term of 1 year ending in 2025. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Chair Smith expressed her appreciation of Anne Cavagnaro for serving as a Supervisor of the Checklist.

Chair Smith said they also have an application from Brian Stimpson to serve on the Conservation Commission and offered Brian the floor.

B. Stimpson said he is interesting the Conservation Commission and is learning as he goes.

Selectman Watson expressed his appreciation to B. Stimpson for volunteering.

Chair Smith made a motion to appoint Brian Stimpson to a 3-year term on the Conservation Commission as a full member. Seconded by Selectman Diers. Motion Passed 3-0.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the items in the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Item 2: Funds Transfer Requests

- **Cemetery Trustees Perpetual Care**

Cemetery Trustee John Reynolds said he made some inquiries and found a 1974 survey done and found that perpetual care was 14%.

Chair Smith said she found information on the website, on the Trustees of Trust Funds page under a document called the Summary of Fund List saying that 17% was the percentage and it was dated 2017. She read the following excerpt from that document: “ They counted all the grave sites in the town cemeteries and determined the Common Trust perpetual care accounts amounted to about 17% of the roughly 1,200-1,300 sites they counted. The result of this is that the town annually appropriates the balance of the necessary funds for the general mowing and trimming of the cemeteries.”

Chair Smith said if the Cemetery Trustees are looking at 2023, the Town would pay 83% and 17% would come from perpetual care leaving the amount to be paid from the Trust Fund to the Town’s General Fund \$2,720. She also said to find out about reimbursing the Town for previous years the authority would be the Attorney General under Charitable Trusts.

- **Computer Systems**

Chair Smith said this request is for a fire wall and three docking stations to come from the Computer System Capital Reserve Fund.

Selectman Watson made a motion to approve the transfer of \$1,363.59 from the Computer System Capital Reserve Fund to the General Fund to pay Back Bay Networks for a firewall and three docking stations. Seconded by Chair Smith. Motion Passed 3-0.

- **LUCT Transfer**

Chair Smith said this request is to transfer Land Use Change Tax revenue from the General Fund to the Conservation Fund for 2021, 2022 & 2023.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the transfer of \$5,028 from the General Fund to the Conservation Fund for 2021 Land Use change Tax. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the transfer of \$43,100 from the General Fund to the Conservation Fund for 2022 Land Use change Tax. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the transfer of \$6,000 from the General Fund to the Conservation Fund for 2023 Land Use change Tax with the caveat to not duplicate if it has already been done. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Item 3: Conservation Commission – New Member Appointment

Motion made earlier in the minutes.

Item 4: Fire Department – Chief Bob Richards

- **Garage Door opener update**

Chief Richards said they have had a couple of issues with the garage doors at Murdough but they were mostly self-inflicted issues and at the present time they are not having issues.

- **Souhegan Mutual Aid Membership Review and Approval**

Chief Richards said Souhegan Mutual Aid voted to accept Deering and they will also allow us to store the foam and replace it if we use it. He said we are just waiting for the final contract to sign.

- **Comstar billing**

Chief Richards said Comstar declined coming out to meet with the Board but said they would answer any questions we had. He said what he did find out was that they do is a soft billing for the 1st and 2nd time after the 3rd they take their portion of whatever has been received and will provide for us a sheet of what is owed to Deering. He asked what the Board would like to do for next steps?

Selectman Diers said we should find someone to help us figure out the spreadsheet.

Discussion ensued.

Selectman Watson suggested keeping this topic in Old Business and revisit it again.

Chair Smith suggested asking other towns.

After more discussion, the following questions were formulated to ask Comstar:

1. After the 3rd soft billing, what is their communication with us for what we want to do and how do they get that information to us.
2. What is Comstar's billing practice? When do they turn it over to the Town?

TA Kerris asked if the Board wanted to address the rate change for billing?

Chair Smith said the rate change was approved pending more information and we could go forward with the rate change and build the policies behind it.

Selectman Watson agreed he is in favor of changing the rates as soon as possible.

Chair Smith made a motion to accept the ambulance billing rates put forth by Chief Richards effective today. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Chair Smith asked for more billing guidance on the payments that we are receiving that are not full payments, is what is left the patient or health provider responsibility?

- **Pay Scale – update on info from surrounding towns**

Chief Richards provided pay scales for two other towns, Milford and Mont Vernon (they were the only ones that responded to his request).

Chair Smith said Mont Vernon does a flat rate and Milford gives a range.

Chief Richards said his recommendation is still his original proposal.

After discussion the Board decided they need more data of the current Fire and Rescue staff and asked Chief Richards to put together a spreadsheet of their current rank and pay.

Selectman Diers said we also need to find more comparable towns to Deering to compare.

Chair Smith asked when someone responds to a call, what is the minimum time paid?

Chief Richards answered it is from the time of the tone until the call is terminated and is a minimum of one hour.

Chair Smith asked how many hours of training is standard?

Chief Richards answered there are four hours per month training and four hours per month of meetings and work detail.

Chair Smith asked if there is any guidance of how many people should show up at a call?

Chief Richards answered no.

Chair Smith asked how many hours are required for meetings to stay active?

Chief Richards said it is all spelled out in the Pay and Participation Policy that they all employees agree to.

TA Kerris said she will send the Pay and Participation Policy Agreement and the Current Employee spreadsheet to the Board and put it on the Agenda for the May 21st meeting.

- **McAlister Station – Septic update**

Chief Richards said he has three estimates for the septic with one company that came out to look at it without charging to do so. He said it could be either the switch to the pump (approximately \$400-\$500) or the whole pump (approximately \$3,000-\$4,000). He said the septic has been pumped and it can be used.

The Board agreed to allow the vendor to assess what it needs and to let them know of the policy of needing to get three quotes.

- **Thermal Imaging Review**

Chief Richards said the current thermal imaging cameras are not supported anymore and it is difficult to get batteries. He said this purchase should be on the radar for the future (approximately \$20,000 for three with chargers) and he will obtain quotes.

Item 5: Highway Department – Darin Labier

- **Gravel Crushing**

D. Labier let the Board know that they received 3 quotes for Gravel Crushing and Sand and the two quotes that came in the closest were Fuzzy Brothers for \$52,000 and Big Foot Crushing at \$49,600.

Selectman Diers asked what is being crushed, stone and pavement? He also asked if we test what is in it because he is concerned there will be clay and silt in it.

D. Labier said they do not typically have it tested but that it is mostly all rock and pavement. He also said he could follow-up about testing.

There was a brief discussion regarding the quotes.

Chair Smith asked what funding source this would be coming from since this line was reduced to \$15,000 due to 2023 purchases.

D. Labier said this crushing would be used for the Road Plan as well.

Chair Smith asked if the Board could wait to vote on this purchase until they see the Road Plan?

Selectman Diers said again that he is concerned if we are using this crushed rock under pavement if it contains a high clay and silt content.

Chair Smith said she is concerned about where the funds are coming from, would like to look at the big picture with the Road Plan and asked for this discussion to be added to the May 7th meeting.

- **Vehicle Updates – 10-Wheeler Repairs & 10-Wheeler Purchase**

D. Labier went over the issues that T2 has, it needs a water pump, has broken gears etc. He said the cost for parts is approximately \$2,950 and \$680 to fix the rear end, \$4,935.33 for other parts as well as an unknown cost to have someone re-time the engine. He said a second option would be to get a rebuild kit which would only cost about \$200 more but Brett would need to have a certified tech come to help for 2 weeks which would cost approximately \$14,400. A third option is to have it sent out to be repaired with a cost of between \$24,000 to \$26,000.

D. Labier said they cannot get parts for the T3 any longer, they were lucky to get the last axel in the country.

D. Labier said Brett has looked at options to purchase a used 10-wheeler and the best option he has found is a 2007 Mack that was formally used in Francestown.

Selectman Diers asked how many years could we get out of the Mack?

Chair Smith said Brett had said they could get 5-7 years.

Chair Smith said that because the T2 & T3 have tier 1 engines, there is a grant called the NH

Clean Diesel Grant that closes on May 24th and the grant would require the trucks to be turned in.

Chair Smith recommended using the extra unanticipated Highway Block Grant that was received in 2023 to help with the purchase of the 2007 Mack. She said there is also \$110,000 in the Highway Vehicle Repair Fund.

The Board discussed buying the 2007 Mack, dependent on oil samples coming back good and holding off on deciding to move forward with repairs to the T2

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the purchase of the 2007 Mack truck for a total of \$74,500, pending oil samples, to fund \$30,000 from the Highway Block Grant and \$44,500 from the Highway Vehicle Repair Expendable Trust. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

The Board authorized TA Kerris to take action on the NH Clean Diesel Grant.

Chair Smith asked the Board to move up Agenda Item 13, Non Public Session per RSA 91 A-3, II, (b)

Chair Smith made a motion to go into Non-Public Session at 8:35pm per RSA 91 A-3, II, (b). Seconded by Selectman Watson.

Vote by Roll Call: Chair Smith – yes, Selectman Watson – yes, Selectman Diers - yes

The Board of Selectman came out of Non-Public Session at 8:44pm

Chair Smith announced the Board is making an offer of employment to Jaan Luikmil for the position of Per Diem Firefighter/AEMT at the standard AEMT rate, pending successful completion of the Deering Fire & Rescue Department’s standard vetting and hiring practices.

Item 6: Financial Software – Presentation of Options & Review of Quotes Highway – Exhaust system

Finance Administrator Baker presented the Board with 3 quotes for new accounting software along with annual costs including hosting. The reasons for the need to change are: current software was made for a School System not a Municipality, it is mapped incorrectly, training is very expensive, the Auditors feel it is a necessary change and Avitar can be batched in instead of having to enter manually. The details of the quotes are as follows:

G-Works: \$3,500 one-time fee for data migration, configuration, training, on-going support. \$3,450 yearly.

Municipal Technology Systems: \$25,750 one-time fee for software license, data conversion, setup & implementation services and training. \$5,500 yearly for annual support, maintenance, upgrades and hosting.

BS&A: \$40,330 one-time fee for modules, data conversion & setup, project management & implementation planning, implementation & planning and travel. \$2,560 yearly for support, unlimited storage, security, and disaster recovery.

TA Kerris and FA Baker’s recommendation is to purchase accounting software with Municipal Technology Systems. They feel it is the best fit for Deering as well as they are a local NH based company and focus NH Municipalities and NH practices. There will also be a reduced yearly fee from Tyler ERP Pro and will include training. They also recommend and request using ARPA Funds for this software need.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the purchase of Accounting Software from Municipal Technology Systems including the 1st year annual cost totaling \$31,250 and to withdraw from the ARPA Fund. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Item 7: Updates on Open Items

- **Policies & Procedures**

TA Kerris said she put a request in to the Treasurer to create an Investment Policy.

- **Zoski Road**

TA Kerris said she spoke with Legal Counsel to discuss options and the first item that needs to be found is documentation on when the Road was moved.

Chair Smith said she hasn't found where Zoski Road was classified as a Class V or VI but is still looking.

- **Comcast Agreement**

TA Kerris said she did not have any updates to report.

Selectman Diers asked if the contract covered construction?

No one had an answer.

Item 8: Minutes Approval – 4/9/2024 (Public); 3/7/2024, 3/21/2024 & 4/9/2024 (Nonpublic)

Chair Smith asked to defer approval of March 7, 2024 Nonpublic minutes to have motions added.

The Board agreed by consensus.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the March 21, 2024 & April 23, 2024 Nonpublic minutes as presented. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the April 9, 2024 public minutes as presented. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Item 9: Town Administrator Report

- The Steering Committee completed their interviews last week. They are meeting this week to draw up their candidate suggestions. When would the board like to meet with them?

Chair Smith said a report from the Committee is enough.

Selectman Diers asked what they would be reporting on exactly?

Chair Smith said that the Board didn't ask them for anything specific. She also thanked the Steering Committee for their time.

- Continuing to do audit prep. This will be my main focus until the end of May.
- Hillsborough PD Contract discussion.

Chair Smith asked where we are at with filling the part-time positions and when do we need coverage from Hillsborough?

- ARPA Reporting is complete with the state. The end of this year, the remaining funds will need to be accounted for.
- Wendy will be going to the NHGFOA conference next week. ‘
- Fillable forms went out for the audit questionnaire
- Task lists are updated.
- The Silent Auction bid is up on the website.

- Primex does not offer insurance discounts for having the trackers in vehicles and equipment.
- Copier in the mail room is on the outs. Not working properly. To have it repaired and serviced, it will be over \$2,000. Working on quotes to purchase one outright with ARPA Funds.

Chair Smith recommends purchasing one with ARPA versus leasing.

The Board agreed by consensus they may need to meet next Tuesday to approve this purchase.

Chair Smith asked for task numbers to be added to the new task list.

Item 10: Selectmen's Reports

Selectman Watson reported that he attended his first Planning Board meeting.

Selectman Diers reported that the 2nd Solar Meeting is April 24th and that they have been receiving a lot of good information.

Chair Smith reported that she has been looking at other town's Policies and Procedures and would like to propose revisiting the Purchasing Policy at the next meeting. She said she would like to have TA Kerris ask the Town Clerk to provide a list of open positions for the Town's Boards and Committees. She has been looking at the requirement of reviewing Non-Public Session minutes to determine if they should remain sealed or can be unsealed and made public but she is not sure how far to go back.

Item 11: Public Comment (MAXIMUM-3 Minutes)

Public Comment is a time for the public to speak with no expectation of a Board response. To request an appointment to discuss a topic with the Board at a future meeting, email the Town Administrator at dadministrator@deeringnh.gov. Requests should be made 5 days prior to the next meeting and include any relevant documentation for review. Maximum time 3 minutes per speaker.

There was no one left in the room to comment.

Item 12: Nonpublic Session per RSA 91-A:3, II, (b) (I) {Potential new hires for Fire, employee review; Legal}

Chair Smith made a motion to go into Non-Public Session at 9:44pm per RSA 91 A-3, II, (a),(c) & (I). Seconded by Selectman Watson.

Vote by Roll Call: Chair Smith – yes, Selectman Watson – yes, Selectman Diers - yes

The Board of Selectman came out of Non-Public Session at 10:20pm

Chair Smith made a motion to seal the minutes. Seconded by Selectman Watson, because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board.

Vote by Roll Call: Chair Smith – yes, Selectman Watson – yes and Selectman Diers – yes.

Selectman Diers made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:22pm. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion passed 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wendy Baker

Wendy Baker
Recording Secretary