

TOWN OF DEERING

762 Deering Center Road
Deering, NH 03244

Board of Selectmen Final Meeting Minutes Thursday, September 21, 2023 7:00 P.M.

Members Present: Chair Jill Smith, Selectman Roy Watson and Selectman Steve Diers
Also Present: Town Administrator Peter Flynn

Request for non-public per RSA 91-A:3, II, (a) and (c)

Chair Smith made a motion to go into Non-Public Session at 6:02pm per RSA 91 A-3, II, (a) employee & (c) reputation. Seconded by Selectman Watson.

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

The Select Board came out of Non-Public Session at 6:57pm.

Chair Smith made a motion to seal the minutes, 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. Seconded by Selectman Watson.

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

Opening of the Public Meeting by the Chair at 7:00pm

Pledge of Allegiance

NEW BUSINESS

Item 1: Consent Agenda

- **Manifest for Payroll of 9/13/2023 (\$4,669.29) and 9/13/2023 (\$11,195.51) and Accounts Payable 9/18/23 (32,698.84)**
- **Appointment of Keith Johnson to the CNHRPC as a Deering Representative**
- **BOS approval to endorse State Historical Signage on NH 149**

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

APPOINTMENTS

Item 2: Capt. Tom Cavanaugh – Further Discussion Re: updated cost of tasers

Capt. Cavanaugh presented an update on the future of the taser purchases. He said the cost for the tasers would have been \$21,123, however, it appears there is an unused TAP credit of \$2,784 on our account with AXON that can be applied to the upgrade purchase. The credit brings the cost down to \$18,339 which can be taken from the general operation funds instead of ARPA.

The Board approved his new recommendation.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the purchase of the requested tasers for \$18,339 and take the funding out of the general operation funds from the budget and not from ARPA funds. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Chair Smith made a motion for Capt. Cavanaugh to sign the contract for the tasers. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Item 3: Brett Martin – Highway Department Representative

- **Additional Highway Department Updates**

Brett Martin presented updates on Road Agent activities along with projects that are being worked on or are projected for work soon.

He told the Board that the Ford F-150 was not worth the cost of \$26,000 to repair as it needed a new motor. The 5500 truck from HP Fairfield has a total cost for plow, sander and truck at \$151,000 and this is the first priority.

He also discussed the timeline and cost of purchasing a new loader and how he would be on the lookout for grant money wherever available. CAT has the best deal at \$228,500 with a trade-in of \$35,000. Worst case to fix the loader is \$23,000 and with a rental a total cost of \$30,000.

Chair Smith mentioned funds from the Highway Block Grant and Road Reconstruction Fund to possibly pay for new equipment (vehicles specifically). She also recommended paying for the Garage doors out of the Highway Building Repair Fund instead of ARPA.

Chair Smith made a motion to rescind the previous ARPA funding motion for the 4 garage doors for \$17,944 and to now fund them from the Highway Building Repair Fund. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the purchase of the 5th door for the highway garage in the amount of \$2,655 from the Highway Building Repair Fund. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Selectman Watson made a motion to authorize the purchase of a 5500 truck from HP Fairfield for a total cost of 151,533.50, \$101,000 from the Highway Vehicle Replacement Trust Fund and \$50,533.50 from ARPA Funds. Seconded by Selectman Diers. Motion Passed 3-0.

There was a discussion regarding the best plan for the roads this year.

Brett said putting a 1 ½” top on Clement Hill Road for approximately \$75,000 is what he recommends and continue to come up with a well thought out plan for 2nd NH Turnpike.

Chair Smith made a motion to conditionally approve the work on Clement Hill Road up to \$100,000 by Continental Paving upon receiving a formal quote. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

- **Request for approval for ‘Gas Boy’ account at fuel station**

Brett brought forth a request to utilize a new method of purchasing fuel from Ayer and Goss known as a ‘Gas boy’ account which is a charge account system instead of each employee using their own credit cards and then seeking reimbursement.

The Board asked TA Flynn to investigate combining this system into the 'credit card' policy but also supported the idea.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the conditional opening of a Gas Boy account for the Highway Department once the Finance Administrator reviews and approves it. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Selectman Diers asked their opinion of crack and chip sealing.

Brett said he prefers chip sealing over sand but there is a small window of time to do it.

Selectman Diers asked them to put information together of the roads that could benefit by chip sealing and the estimated costs.

Chair Smith asked that she has heard that the Highway trucks could not be stored inside the garages.

Brett said there is no regulation against it but common practice is to leave at least one truck outside.

Chair Smith made a motion to rescind the previous motion to spend \$20,380 on grinding Fisher and Bennington Depot Road. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

The Board thanked Brett and Darin for their good work and would look forward to the many upcoming purchases and projects.

TA Flynn made the following statement: On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, I would like to make the announcement that the Selectmen had several interviews with candidates for the part-time Fire Chief position. After much deliberation in Non-Public Session, with the candidate, the Selectman agreed to offer the position to Robert Richards from Weare with no contract for \$30/hr up to 26 hours per week and he will be starting in approximately a month.

Item 4: Asst. Chief Doug Connor – Ambulance Recommendation

Assistant Chief Connor said they had 3 bids for a new ambulance and his recommendation is to purchase the gas option from Demers for \$346,874.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the purchase of a gas powered ambulance from Demers in the amount of \$346,874 (after trade-in) with \$225,000 from the Ambulance Revolving Fund, \$84,000 from Undesignated Funds and the balance from the Rescue Department Vehicle Replacement Fund. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

- **Fire Department issues including recommendation of new position – Chief of EMS Operations**

Assistant Chief Connor said he has a history with the newly selected Fire Chief and he has spoken to him briefly about the needs of the department.

He said Chris Rousseau has stepped up and he feels creating the new position of Chief of EMS Operations for him is a good way to go and the new Chief is in favor of this new suggested position.

Chair Smith read the following statement from Town Counsel:

The Board received an opinion from our Town Counsel that ownership and management of a private EMS company could cause a divided loyalty and the appearance of a conflict of interest. If the Board hired Mr. Rousseau in a management role in the Deering Fire Department we may be in

violation of the Town's Personnel Policy. In that light, the Board needs to stand by the opinion of town Counsel, however we would be interested in seeing the job description that is being suggested and suggest that it be an advisory type roll.

Assistant Chief Connor said they had many hose failures last year that haven't gotten replaced and he is going to look into pricing to replace them. He said they received the AEDs.

Chair Smith asked what their thoughts were on the exhausts for the stations. Are they needed in all three stations. After discussion they decided Donovan and McAllister needed the exhausts.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve \$40,000 for exhaust kits for Donovan and McAllister Stations. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Item 5: Discussion and review of possible updated Budget Advisory Committee Charge

Chair Smith distributed a visual chart as a Draft for the budget process. She said Step 1 would be goal setting by the Board of Selectmen which gives guidance to the Budget Advisory Committee. Step 2 would have the Department Heads putting together their budget, turning their proposed budget into the Town Administrator and working with them, then a joint preliminary meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Advisory Committee where the budgets are presented, Budget Advisory Committee has a meeting to do their independent review and comes up with recommendations, Board of Selectmen looks at their recommendations and creates a 1st Draft Budget and last it goes to the Budget public Hearing.

Chair Smith proposed the following charge:

The Deering Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) is a non-Official budget committee, is purely advisory, and has none of the statutory duties or authority of an official budget committee.

The BAC is charged with providing independent review and objective analysis of the proposed annual Town budget and monetary warrant articles. Data reviewed should include estimated expenditures, revenue projections, proposed monetary warrant articles, and the existing Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

The BAC is requested to review each year's budget and warrant proposals under the following operating/guiding principles:

- Utilize a 3 year historical review of trends in actual expenses and previous budgets
- Maintain existing level of services
- Identify areas where the existing level of services require improvement, and identify areas for and opportunities to reduce existing expenditures/costs
- Consider all available funding sources (budget/taxation, trust funds, warrant articles, grants, etc.) for expenditures and make recommendations as appropriate
- Consider the BAC's recommended budget with respect to its overall tax impact to the Town tax rate

The main objective of the Budget Advisory Committee is to do what is necessary for the Town while keeping the budget in line.

Chair Smith said the standard authority is to have 7 members and 3 alternate members with one Selectmen Ex-Officio, a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary. The Budget Advisory Committee will need to put together their own Rules of Procedure.

The Board discussed the proposed process briefly.

TA Flynn suggested that this be considered a 1st reading.

Selectman Watson made a motion to move the proposal for the updated Budget Advisory Committee and Board of Selectmen's charge including the Budget Process document to a second reading. Seconded by Selectman Diers. Motion Passed 3-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Item 6: Minutes Approval - Public 9/7 and 9/13; Non-Public 9/7 and 9/13

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the September 7, 2023 and September 13, 2023 public and non-public minutes as presented. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Item 7: Town Administrators Report

1. Worked with Highway Department personnel in following through with many inquiries and projects discussed at previous Selectmen's meeting.
2. Installed new microphone for public info table for Board meetings.
3. Re-arranged moving of large map table from TA's office to Assessing. Revamping map storage under way.
4. Placed order for replacement of garage doors for the Highway Department and 2 Fire Stations.
5. Met with new Fire Chief to complete necessary paperwork for new employee.
6. Assigning task of Planning Board minute taker through remote process.
7. Ordered new file cabinet for Planning Board as requested.

Item 8: Selectmen's Reports

Selectman Diers voiced his concerns with Fisher Road, 2nd NH Turnpike and Dickey Hill Road. He said the signs are not installed yet on Wolfe Hill. The Planning Board had a meeting and they requested a file cabinet. He also said the purchase of a projector would be very useful.

Selectman Watson said there is only one meeting before Safety Day and he would like to get food figured out.

Chair Smith said there is a concert Friday night. She also gave shoutouts to the landscaping volunteers that made the commons look great. The Patriotic Committee had a 911 ceremony. She said the Town is being run by many interim employees and she wanted to thank them and let them all know they are doing a great job.

Chair Smith requested that the moving bulletin boards be moved into the meeting room and new boards are mounted on the walls in the hall and would like a special decorated shout out board.

Board agreed by consensus to move the rolling boards to the meeting room.

Selectman Watson made a motion to authorize Chair Smith to design, purchase and install bulletin boards in Town Hall. Seconded by Selectman Diers. Motion Passed 3-0.

Item 9: Public Comment (MAXIMUM-3 Minutes)

The Board always welcomes public comment and feedback. This is the only opportunity for public comment. If there is any need for the board's response a request should include an appointment on a future agenda, to include supporting documentation. Forward your request to the Town Administrator at least five business days beforehand. When speaking please state your name and address.

Pat Murdough voiced his opinion that he did not like how the Board handled the hiring of the new Fire Chief.

Chair Smith said the Board is subject to RSAs and to HR rules, we cannot share some information. As much as we may want to put out there what the entire process of our deliberations may be, in many cases we cannot. I would ask that that may be considered as well.

Item 10: If Needed-Non-Public per RSA 91-A:3, II, (a) & (c)

Chair Smith made a motion to go into Non-Public Session at 9:39pm per RSA 91 A-3, II, (a) & (c). Seconded by Selectman Watson.

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

Chair Smith made a motion to appoint Brett Martin as Interim Road Agent until a permanent choice has been made, rate of be to be determined upon completion of a final contract. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion Passed 3-0.

Chair Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:25pm. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion passed 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wendy Baker

Wendy Baker
Recording Secretary