

TOWN OF DEERING

762 Deering Center Road
Deering, NH 03244

Board of Selectmen Final Special Meeting Minutes Wednesday, December 27, 2023 7:00 P.M.

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

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Item 1: Review of Prosecutor Agreement

Chair Smith asked the Board if everyone had a chance to review the agreement and if there were any questions.

Chair Smith made a motion to accept the service agreement. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion passed 3-0.

Item 2: Employment Updates

Chair Smith announced that as of 12/21/23 in Non-Public Session the Board unanimously voted to offer the Town Administrator position to Interim Town Administrator/Finance Administrator Meagen Kerris with a salary of \$82,500 and after a 6-month probationary period the Board may consider an employment agreement but did not decide to do so at this time.

Chair Smith said we will need to now post for a Finance Administrator and asked if the job description would need to be updated?

TA Kerris answered yes, it needs to be updated to remove the HR function which will now be part of the Town Administrator role. She said she would have a new job description for the Board to review at their next meeting.

The Board expressed their gratitude and appreciation for everything TA Kerris stepped up to do to perform two jobs since October.

OLD BUSINESS

Item 3: Status Update on Department Needs

Interim Road Agent Martin said he did not have new updates on his department needs.

Selectman Diers asked if a decision was made on the hauling of crushed stone?

TA Kerris suggested having Charlie do the trucking.

Interim Road Agent Martin said he could call Mount Williams and purchase the material and have them hold it for the Town to haul when needed or when they have availability.

Discussion around hauling ensued.

The conversation turned to posting a weight limit on the roads.

Interim Road Agent Martin said he feels the Town should post the roads for 2 weeks for a 5-ton weight limit.

Selectman Diers asked if other Towns had their roads posted?

Interim Road Agent Martin answered, he doesn't know of any but they have in the past.

Chair Smith said she is in favor of posting the roads with the exception that a document be posted of who to call for exceptions.

Selectman Diers agreed with clearly posting it on the website and in the local newspaper with a phone number for who to call for exceptions.

Selectman Watson reminded the Board he would like to look again at a messaging board for the front of Town Hall and that we should look to see what other Towns have.

Chair Smith looked at the NHMA Guidelines and it states the Town can decide when to post their roads.

Chair Smith made a motion to allow Interim Road Agent Martin to post the roads with 24-48 hours advanced notice to the public for a 5-ton weight limit for 2 weeks.

Discussion ensued.

Chair Smith rescinded her previous motion.

Selectman Watson made a motion to delegate authority to the Interim Road Agent for posting signs on the roads pertaining to weight limits to prevent extended costs to include a notice 24 hours to the Town Administrator for posting on the website and also to include at the earliest available opportunity to advertise in the local paper that the Deering roads may be weight restricted at certain points in the winter to prevent catastrophic damage due to erratic weather conditions. Seconded by Chair Smith.

Selectman Diers said he is concerned because spring posting is usually known but not this time of year and the potential for someone to load up their truck and get to town and see the weight restriction will put them in a tough situation.

Interim Road Agent Martin said he is always will to work with a contractor if they contact him.

Chair Smith said the Town has the flexibility to post seasonally or otherwise as it gives the Town protection if someone causes damage to any of the posted roads.

Selectman Diers said he would still like to see it on the website asap.

Motion Passed 3-0.

Chair Smith returned to the discussion regarding Department Needs and the remaining 2023 budget. She said after all adjustments and pending invoices the projected amount left is \$163,000 and there is \$94,000 in the que. She recommended the ventilation system for the Highway Department be removed from the que since we don't have a firm quote and use Trust Funds for it later.

Chair Smith recommended to move forward with the aggregate purchase of approximately \$20,000. She also said we can move forward on the other items listed below:

Augers: \$1,500

Tires: \$5,650

Tarp System: \$4,600

Culverts: \$8,000

Bulk Oil: \$3,800

York Rake: \$1,100

Sander parts: \$3,300

Chair Smith said there are two invoices from Everything Property for \$12,000 & \$7,500 and asked what were those for?

Interim Road Agent Martin said they were for hot patch for Clement Hill Road and Second NH Turnpike.

Chair Smith recommended moving that funding back to the budget and take it out of the Highway Block Grant, to leave that funding for something else.

Chair Smith asked if there are any other items that can be shifted from 2024 to 2023.

Interim Road Agent Martin answered the calcium budget could be reduced by \$5,000.

Chair Smith said that IT has identified 3 laptops that need to be updated for Town Hall and the amount should be under \$5,000.

Chair Smith would like to look into the ambulance revenue and use that to pay ambulance crew payroll to reduce the budget.

Interim Road Agent Martin said the salt budget could be reduced.

Chair Smith said projects that are still on the radar and have potential of using ARPA funds are, finance software, panic buttons and security cameras.

Chair Smith asked TA Kerris if there is anything that Administration could shift from the 2024 budget to 2023?

TA Kerris answered no, but she will check again.

Chair Smith made a motion to go into Non-Public Session at 7:55pm per RSA 91 A-3, II, (I). 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 8:16pm

Chair Smith made a statement regarding an update for the Special Town Meeting. She said after the petition was received, the Board agreed to seek advice from the NH Municipal Association and because this is a special case with no expenditures, NHMA advised the Board to seek advice from Town Counsel. Town Counsel returned a timeline of events according to the RSAs and while there may be some that don't agree with the advice/timeline, it is the Board's opinion to stand behind the advice from Town Counsel.

Chair Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:18pm. Seconded by Selectman Watson. Motion passed 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wendy Baker

Wendy Baker
Recording Secretary