



TOWN OF DEERING

762 Deering Center Road
Deering, NH 03244

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes – 5 January 2023

Approved – 19 January 2023

Members present: Chairman Roy Watson, Vice Chair William Whisman, Selectman Jill Smith

Also present: Interim Town Administrator Peter Flynn, Minutes Taker Elizabeth Kirby

6:30pm: Non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II

Regular meeting called to order: 7:00pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Item 1: Action on Consent Agenda

- Employee Payroll - 19 December, 26 December, and 30 December 2022
- Accounts Payable Manifest - 19 December, 26 December 2022 and 3 January 2023

Mr. Watson moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Mr. Whisman seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 3-0.

- Public Minutes - 15 December 2022, Non-Public 15 December 2022

One correction noted. Mr. Watson moved to approve minutes as amended, Mr. Whisman seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 3-0.

1st Public Comment

None.

Item 2: Betsy Holmes - Library Trustee - presentation of Library Warrant Article proposal

Betsy Holmes confirmed the selectmen all had copies of the proposal.

Proposed Warrant Article - 2023 - Library Building Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund:

The town shall raise and appropriate the sum of TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$2000) for the purpose of providing funds for the maintenance and renovations of the Library Building, to be paid into the Library Building Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund.

Betsy Holmes: Painting, exterior and interior, soonish and seems a reasonable request.

Mr. Watson asked what do we do?

Interim TA Flynn: Proceed and make it part of the warrant article. Then you have an actual vote when the budget is considered.

Ms. Holmes noted there was a typo in the copy sent to the interim TA.

Mr. Watson: Make a motion to add the warrant article with amended language, remove one of the letter I's in Building.

Mrs. Smith asked Ms. Holmes if she wanted a separate warrant article openly discussed or to be grouped in with the chart that includes several articles.

Betsy Holmes: I'm not familiar with either I'm happy with whatever is most transparent to the town.

Discussion ensued how that warrants work singularly or grouped.

Mr. Watson moved to include the proposed Library Warrant Article in the town grouping chart. Mr. Whisman seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 3-0.

Interim TA to include with all warrant articles to be reviewed during the public hearing.

Item3: Donn Mann III - Seeking guidance re: new Patriotic Committee.

Selectman Whisman put together a charter but didn't print out so he read it off his phone and said he would send the proposed charter via email to Donn Mann, Elizabeth Kirby, Chairman Watson, Selectman Smith, and Interim TA Flynn. Mr. Whisman read through his notes. See attached from email.

Mr. Whisman: I would like to see on Veteran's Day we find a Korean or Vietnam Veteran and present them with a flag.

Mr. Watson: Push it out to the Selectboard after Mr. Mann has reviewed. Mr. Mann to review, note changes, decide meeting dates, find members, etc.

Mr. Whisman: This is just a starting point to help get the charter started.

Mrs. Smith: Typically the Board would provide charter or mission statement but not necessarily outline the details.

Mr. Watson: Charter back to the TA by 12 January 2023. The week before next meeting.

Kay Hartnett, Cemetery Trustee: Will the Patriotic committee be handling the flags for the cemeteries?

Donn Mann: The Legion handles the cemeteries.

Item 4: Elizabeth Kirby: Request for complimentary use of Town Hall meeting room.

Usage for a country line dance night for Valentine's Day, February 18th from 6:30-10:30. Proper paperwork to be filed with the interim TA.

Mr. Watson moved to wave the rental fees for the dance on 18th February subject pending the paperwork is completed.

Mrs. Smith: Questioned alcohol. Discussion followed.

Mr. Watson restated the motion to wave the rental fees for the dance on 18th February, with no alcohol, subject to forms being completed and provided to the interim TA. Mr. Whisman seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 3-0.

Betsy Holmes: Asked about a candidate using the opportunity to meet people. Asking that it's just a dance and no campaigning. Wants to make sure it's just a social event.

Elizabeth Kirby: We charge a fee to cover costs of the professional line dance instructor to come and teach dances and other expenses. It's not a money maker.

Item 5: Meagen Kerris: Deering Finance Coordinator – Discussion to request to obtain Town Debit Card from TD Bank for emergency use for Town Hall purchases

Mr. Whisman: We have goods and services that don't accept our current payment methods.

Meagen Kerris: The alternative would be to have an employee use their card and get reimbursed.

Mr. Watson: I don't have a problem with the TA and finance coordinator utilizing a debit card as there's not another method.

Mr. Whisman: How many cards?

Meagen Kerris: Just one.

Mr. Whisman: Where will it be stored? How are we going to have accountability with the card?

Mr. Flynn: We'll secure it under lock and key. Just one card under my supervision and Meagen will approach as needed. It's really needed for one particular service. It's required.

Mrs. Smith: Would you generate a PO, get approval, and then use?

Mr. Flynn: I would want to use immediately, and the service will be held up. It could take up to two weeks for authorization from the board.

Mrs. Smith: Could there be a purchase limit?

Meagen Kerris: It would be limited.

Stephen Fogelson: As debit's are posted immediately, if there's a delay in processing the PO there could be a gap with the reconciliation. Would it be possible notify the treasurer to go and initiate the reconciliation process?

Mr. Watson: Just a one off. Pre-do this for the treasurer, so they have a heads up to what's going to hit their invoices.

Stephen Fogelson: If the treasurer sees 6 debits in a row it could raise concern.

Mr. Watson: Monthly service for only one company.

Mrs. Smith: Can you put together policies and procedures, these are the control measures?

Mr. Flynn: Yes, that can be done easily.

Steven Diers: Why a debit card and not a credit card?

Meagen Kerris: More control over a debit card. It's easier for a smaller, local company to flag, than a corporate company. With a credit card you're shuffling around money and there's less checks and balances.

Steve Diers: Something linked to a debit card that if something went awry and it's linked to an account. With a credit card, you can dispute it. With a debit card the money is gone. Maybe you get it back. With a credit card you're guaranteed your funds. That's my understanding.

Mr. Whisman: My recommendation is we authorize the debit for this one company and get us the information before the next transaction.

Mrs. Smith: I disagree. I believe we have a fiduciary responsibility to put the controls in place first.

Mr. Whisman: OK

Mr. Watson: I don't know if we lose that much time. If we have to draw this out for another meeting would we lose anything by taking this up next session. I agree with Selectman Smith. Gives us a couple of weeks to put together a framework of controls. We can figure out which makes more sense debit or credit card.

Mr. Flynn: Peterborough is a good example.

Item 6: Highway Department Hiring

Mr. Watson: We'd like to reiterate the action of 15 December 2022 meeting and publicly announced the hiring of Greg Chlapowski as a part-time Deering Highway Department employee.

Mr. Whisman: Welcome aboard.

Item 7: Fire/EMS recommendations RE: facility, equipment and staffing as discussed.

Mr. Flynn: I've been sitting here for several meetings with a public hearing and in October there was a big crowd with a lot of statistics and numbers, a lot of ideas, and nothing has come of it. I just need to get a brief discussion of where this might be headed as a board. We have to talk about it.

Mr. Watson: I agree.

Mrs. Smith: As I'm looking at this I'm listening to the people and the concerns. We're going into the budget season. What is the short-term, over the next year as we continue to plan, is our long-term overall goal. Right now we're trying to do all and we need to shorten our scope.

Ambulance

Mrs. Smith: Currently the cost is \$375,000 is what he's hearing, the updated ETA for delivery is 18-24 months out. We have the ability with the police cruiser, if we get a year in and don't have a need, we can back out because there is such a need out there. We need to get a quote. If we do have the ability to back out I recommend at this stage putting in a warrant article to add funds to the fire department vehicle maintenance so we can make that purchase at a future date. I don't recommend putting it in for a new ambulance, because that would earmark it specifically. Verified with Stephen that the Ambulance Revolving Fund balance is \$225,000. Recommending \$150,000 add to the Fire and Rescue Vehicle Replacement Trust Fund. It can be used for something else - engine, tanker - if we don't use it for an ambulance.

Mr. Watson: I like your idea.

Mrs. Smith: Noted existing CIP requests for Fire/Rescue include replacement of Engine 2 (2025), Tanker (2027).

Donovan Station

Mr. Flynn: One of the other things that needs to be addressed is the maintenance of the Donovan fire station.

Mr. Watson: ARPA funds. Need to address as soon as possible.

Mrs. Smith submitted a spread sheet with numbers for suggested usage of the ARPA funds.

First Tranche - \$103,000

- Fire/EMS - Health & Safety Upgrades (2023) - \$75,000
- Admin - Update Town Finance Software (2023) - \$30,000

Second Tranche - \$103,000

- Highway - Exhaust Collection & Fan System Install - \$110,000

Mrs. Smith: We have the first payment - \$103,000. Second is in process or needs to be applied for.

Mrs. Smith: Ideas based on feedback provided. Everybody in the room – Donovan, health and safety needs to be taken care of. There was a suggestion to add an additional bay on the Donovan Station. This could house the ambulance without it needing to go Murdough at night. The bigger benefit of making Murdough not a manned station is, with 3 stations we need 3 engines, if we use Murdough for a different purpose such as cold storage, it doesn't need an engine any longer. Huge savings. Suggests putting a warrant article in to add funds to build that bay, important to put it forward to the voters.

Mrs. Smith: Initially put out there that they wanted \$150,000 to put into building as a bandaid for 3-5 years with vision of moving to a new station. Throwing money out the window. Important to look at the future use of Donovan. Our Police Dept is stuffed into a corner of the Town Hall. Their storage is limited. They had been looking at a safety complex to move to and store vehicles under cover. If planning to move to a new fire station at some point, suggests looking at these renovations with the eye to Donovan possibly being the new home of the Police Dept in the future.

Mr. Watson: Talking about 4 separate actions for the warrant article. 1) purchase an ambulance, 2) contract out with a 3rd party, 3) to provide the safety upgrades with ARPA funds, 4) to renovate Donovan and add a bay. Is there danger that we're lining these things up the wrong way – if we adding a bay at Donovan when we don't end up needing it.

Mrs. Smith: We add the funds to the Fire Dept Bldg trust fund. As long as we don't earmark it for a specific purpose, then if we need to pivot, those funds can be used towards other building needs or a future building.

Mr. Watson: What are our timelines?

Mr. Flynn: I'd like the board to delegate Jill and I to come up with concrete warrant articles. The historical stuff on these accounts is all over the place. I could use her help.

Mr. Watson: to Mr. Whisman, do you have any problem with Selectman Smith working directly with the Interim Town Administrator for crafting some warrant articles for the Fire Department.

Mr. Whisman: I do. The number one priority is the safety of our fire department. Whether we look at a safety complex or not. Are we going to wait 5-10 years for the safety of our people? A warrant article needs to be done for concern for fire department.

Mr. Watson: We've been talking about doing that out of ARPA. Warrant articles about a bay, contracting out, or an ambulance.

Mr. Whisman: Utmost priority is safety and well being. I don't have a problem with you sending ideas up to the TA, but you coming up to the office every day, I'm just not comfortable. Needs to be publicized.

Mr. Watson: Do you want to set this up as extracurricular meetings?

Mr. Whisman: It's perception.

Mr. Flynn: It's during a weekday.

Mr. Watson: No decisions are being made. We still have to approve everything. What's the alternative? I think we still have recourse information still has to go through a board vote.

Mr. Flynn: It's for research.

Mr. Watson: No motion, no action.

Wages

Mrs. Smith: I have one more thing, in terms of our short-term plans, the budget that was put together for Fire Dept included continuing the current wage scale. Noted many times during these public hearings that we are not in a competitive place. Not attractive to come here, not attractive to stay. I would like to consider increasing the wages up to a competitive place so when we start out this next budget year, we're not behind the eight ball again

and not having enough money to fund the changes. What I heard from public hearing is – want to continue the services we have, and want to know what an increase to services would cost.

Mr. Watson: I wonder if we don't have a lot of time to work on this department specifically. Is there something we can do to standardize the track of what we're expecting the pay is going to be. We don't have enough time to tackle all departments.

Mr. Flynn: That's one of my projects.

Mrs. Smith: Discussion regarding wages for the Fire Department. Are we going to maintain our current service? 10 hours a day 5 days a week. Or if we upgraded to 10 hours a day 7 days a week, or what about 10 hours a day for 4 days and 20 hours a day for 3 days. Hate to show people at a public hearing and not show a competitive wage. This is the time to be doing these things.

Mr. Whisman: Each department requested 8% raises. To look to raise one over the other. Has to be across the board.

Mrs. Smith: Our wages for the Fire Dept are well below the average.

Mr. Whisman: \$15 to start.

Mrs. Smith: Starting wages for the Fire Dept on average for \$20-21 per hour.

Mr. Watson: Increase for the Fire Department would be more than 8%. You want to run numbers to show at a competitive rate for the next meeting.

Mrs. Smith: Yes, been showing the rate we have been paying knowing we need to increase the wages. Noted our Ambulance Revolving Fund was initially set-up so that the revenue generated, some of that was used to pay the responders. We could go back to using revenue to offset costs. An option might be to only go to 7 days if the revenue covered it.

Mr. Watson: Do we think other department would submit requests for raises? We do know the wages are going to change. I would take the expertise of the Fire Chief. I don't know if we lose anything or gain anything.

Item 8: Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Flynn: Need a minute taker. I believe we have it in our budget. It would probably cost \$18 hour. Could cost \$2000 or less annually. Can I pursue a minute taker?

Mr. Watson: I don't have a problem with that. Meetings should theoretically last 45 minutes to an hour. And the minutes the same time. The minutes have been more pedantic lately. I don't know if this is what we're going to be looking for.

Mr. Whisman: I argue the fact we buy a little recorder and the TA do up the minutes and save money. You can get a recording device.

Mr. Watson: I think if you generate a recording you must post it.

Mr. Whisman: Save money in the long run.

Mr. Watson: I don't have a problem with either. It's an additional thing to place on the Town Administrator.

Mrs. Smith: He's paid more than \$18 an hour.

Mr. Flynn: I'm listening.

Mrs. Smith: I'd like to make a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to advertise and seek an a minute taker up to \$18.00 hour. Mr. Watson seconded. Smith & Watson in favor; Whisman opposed. Motion Passed 2-1.

Review of Town Meeting Dates

The following calendar is suggested for the legal dates leading to and including the Town Meeting.

Mr. Flynn: I know you don't like extra meetings Bill but we're guided by statutes. Feb 9th. I reviewed some of these last meeting. Put them on your refrigerator, I guess.

1. 16 January or thereabouts – Town Report submissions by department heads
2. 26 January – All final budget requests must be submitted to the Town Administrator including Warrant Articles.
3. 27 January – Newspaper ad and public hearing postings for publication in local newspapers must be completed at least seven days prior to the Public Hearing
4. 2 February – Initial budget review by the BOS for submission for the Public Hearing

5. 9 February – Public Hearing per RSA 32:5, I & V
6. 14 March – Town Elections
7. 18 March – Town Meeting

Mr. Flynn: I'd like to go over the BAC reports.

Mrs. Smith: Could we have department heads at the February 2nd meeting?

Item 9: Selectmen's Report

Mrs. Smith: Something to put on the next agenda. At the prior meeting a vote was taken by the Board restricting who can speaking at Public Hearings. Believes vote taken conflicts with First Amendment. Because it's considered a public forum you can't limit who, you can limit time, place and manner. So I printed this out so you can review and put it on the agenda before the Public Hearing and reconsider the vote.

Mr. Watson: There's been some debate whether we should allow this or not. Public commentary is new for us. I would not be surprised if we have a few bumps along.

Mrs. Smith: Concerned about the HDSD meetings being on Thursday so residents are having to make a choice between meetings.

Mr. Watson: I've noticed that.

Mrs. Smith: It would be easier for us to change than the school.

Mr. Watson: When the Interim TA came in he mentioned most towns meet earlier. If something isn't working. I won't stand in the way of changing the meeting.

Mr. Whisman: There was a conflict with another selectman, so we went from Tuesday to Thursday. If you want to move it let's do it Tuesday at 18:00. That's 6 o'clock.

Mr. Flynn: Other towns have it around 6:00. Would you like me to do research with Hillsboro? Hillsboro School District is the conflict.

Mr. Watson: Put it out there to those on committees, etc. Put on Old Business.

Mr. Flynn: We should have a policy on public hearings that are local public hearings, who speaks, who doesn't, etc. Public comment is just anything. Then there are public hearings that are controlled by the state that has specific legal rules. There are two kinds of public hearings. Those are those that are controlled by the RSA and those controlled by the board.

Mrs. Smith: Would like to see it, but would like to run it by legal to see if you can have a pseudo-public hearing. Doesn't want anyone's 1st Amendment rights violated.

Mr. Flynn: If a policy is changed you have to have a first reading, second reading and possibly a third reading. Then you'd vote if you're interested then you'd make a motion to the second reading. Then it would be for public input. I'd like to bring this to the town. I think you'd like it.

Mr. Watson: What is the difference between a public hearing that is dictated by the town and those determined by RSA's.

Mr. Whisman: Have legal look at this so we're not guessing.

Public Comment #2

Betsy Holmes: Question for Mr. Flynn – what is the date for the Town Meeting?

Mr. Flynn: The following Saturday, March 18th.

Steve Diers, Clement Hill Road: I'm a little confused. Is asking questions during the meeting - is that considered public comment or what? Is it allowed during the meeting?

Mr. Flynn: There's a difference. Public comment is for making a specific statement or concern. As for as chiming in that's up to the chairman to allow or not allow. Some town say no we're in the middle of a discussion we'll have public comment later.

Steve Diers: I'm excited to hear we're breaking down some of this fire department stuff. It's just too big of a bite. And it needs to be broken down so I'm glad you're going in that direction. The question I have is in regard to

exposure - diesel smoke. I did a bunch of research. At one point it was said we're in violation, we're not legal. There's no legalities there, they are some recommendations, some OSHA regulations mostly written regarding housing, sleeping quarters. What is the exposure? My question is, based on experience in work career - we had hazardous materials. We had different ventilation systems depending on the building. Our insurance tested it and determined safety. Have we had it tested? Or are we going by what somebody is saying? Not that I don't think we shouldn't protect employees. I question the exposure. If we're considering a new building but to be retrofitting is somewhere around \$30,000. I think we should determine the exposure before we start peeling off checkbooks.

Mrs. Smith: Ask Primex? It's a good point.

Mr. Flynn: I think the Fire Chief should weigh in on it.

Mr. Watson: Not aware of any air quality studies.

Steve Diers: I think our insurance covered it.

Mr. Watson: Mr. Administrator would you get with the insurance and ask.

Katie Lavoie, Fisher Road: Re: changing the time for the meetings, for me 6:00 would be difficult. For parents 7:00 works better with sports after school.

Katie Lavoie: As far as not allowing residents from out of town to speak. Maybe didn't realize how many people around the lake are not residents of our town and you shut them out by not allowing them to speak. I don't think you said taxpayers, you said residents. Worth a mention.

Katie Lavoie: Third thing: management letter for the audit. Do you have the management letter yet?

Mr. Flynn: We have a letter included in the audit. I'm in the process of getting them to say if that's what they're considering a management letter.

Katie Lavoie: I mentioned getting call numbers for the fire department.

Mrs. Smith: I have some info on that. We did get missed called data but not all calls. Will follow up.

Katie Lavoie: I just wanted to say thank you Jill for all the spread sheets. And all the work you're putting in is incredible. What you're doing for this town and not getting paid and the time you're putting in for every person in this room is incredible. Thank you.

At 20:33 – Mr. Watson moved to go into Non-Public per RSA91-A:3 (a) and (b) re: Town Administrator Position

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Kirby.