



TOWN OF DEERING

762 Deering Center Road Deering, NH 03244

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes – 2 February 2023

Members present: Chairman Roy Watson, Vice Chair William Whisman,
Selectman Jill Smith Also present: Town Administrator Peter Flynn, Minutes
Taker Elizabeth Kirby

Regular meeting called to order: 7:00pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Item 1: Action on Consent Agenda

- Public & Non-Public Minutes – 19 January 2023

Mrs. Smith: Add mention that one item in the consent agenda was pulled out. Whisman: Looking for DD214 and make sure they have credible time in the military. Mr. Watson moved to approve the minutes with annotations noted. Mr. Whisman seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 3-0.

Action on Consent Agenda

- Employee Payroll – 23 January and 30 January 2023
- Accounts Payable Manifest – 25 January and 1 February 2023

Mrs. Smith had a question on a document and the Treasurer was not in attendance. Item moved to next meeting. Mr. Watson: motion to approve the consent agenda with exception of the Delegation of Deposit, Record Keeping and Reconciliation Functions. Mr. Whisman seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 3-0.

Mr. Watson announced the appointment of Michael Collins to the Office of the Solid Waste Management Board. Mr. Collins was not in attendance, so the document was signed and will be provided to Carol to swear him in.

1st Public Comment

Tom Copadis: I'd like to get the selectman's point on a non-resident having access to Deering residents and giving instructions to Deering employees. I was in the conference room this afternoon doing the accounts payable with Meagan and Jill's father came in with budgets and gave instruction to Meagen to print these in color. I question whether a non-resident has the right to be carrying Deering material. They were not in an envelope. They were open and I don't know what else was in there. I find it unacceptable that a non-resident is doing that. He was not serving as a courier. That is not acceptable. Mrs. Smith: I'd like to answer that. My father is a resident. He's a part-time resident. The document that you saw that he brought was the printout because it was on legal...

Tom Copadis: (shouting) He shouldn't have them. He's not a resident. Get that through your mind.

Mrs. Smith: Can you call him out of order please?

Tom Copadis: Non-residents in alternate section where they can't speak unless it's voted on by the town or by the people at the meeting.

Mrs. Smith: That is true at town meeting, yes.

Mr. Watson: Thank you very much. Anybody else have anything?

Tom Cavanaugh: Is he a registered voter? I didn't hear an answer. Carol Baker: He is not a registered voter.

Mr. Watson: Anyone else have anything?

Mrs. Smith: Is everyone aware this is a public meeting? So, the public can attend.

Geraldine Ferguson: I don't see the point of this gentleman speaking. If he has something that is going to improve us I feel it should go to you. You guys look it over and tell us what it is. I don't think anyone from any place else has any position to talk about our town. If it's important enough, I would go to you and say this is my thought. Do what you think with it. I don't think he has a right sit here all the time and he's not a resident.

Mrs. Smith: He's a part-time resident and lives in this town. If we were to go by what you're saying anybody that has a seasonal property would be unable to attend or speak at these meetings.

Geraldine Ferguson: He's a part-time resident? Mrs. Smith: He is.

Geraldine Ferguson: Where is he a part-time resident? Mrs. Smith: He lives with me.

Geraldine Ferguson: He lives with you. Mrs. Smith: Yes.

Geraldine Ferguson: That's something that has to be addressed then because we don't have part-time residents. If he's living with you and he's paying taxes here.

Mr. Whisman: I'm going to make a motion to end the public comment. Mr. Watson: I'll second that motion.

Mr. Whisman: all in favor, Aye. All in favor. What I'm going to say right now is we need to be respectful of each other regardless. With that being said, I am going to bring up the non-resident/resident issue because it's something we've been back and forth on. Watson: that's item# 5.

Mr. Whisman went on to explain his feelings on needing to be a registered voter in Deering to speak at public meetings.

Mrs. Smith: This doesn't have anything to do with voting.

Mr. Whisman: You have to be a registered town voter to be a resident.

Mrs. Smith: You're talking about voting and we're not doing any voting.

Mr. Whisman: I'm not talking voting. When we talk about the town of Deering.

TA Flynn: If it's under public comment the board can control it and you can make the rules as you go along and it's not illegal for you to stop anybody that's not a resident to talk. If we have an official public hearing that the RSA calls for we were under the impression from the NH Municipal lawyer that we have to more or less allow that to happen. I got a legal opinion this week that differs from that. It says that you can still control an RSA public hearing like we're doing next week and you can forbid any non-resident from talking. But he said It's not a good idea to do that. But you can control who speaks and who doesn't. I thought it for an RSA meeting that you had to let them speak but according to your legal counsel, Mr. Tanguay, he said you can make the rules up on all kinds of public hearings. It's not a good idea to cut anyone off on a public hearing like we're having next week that's advertised in the paper. I don't have it writing. I got it on a phone call but I can get it in writing to solve this once and for all.

Mr. Whisman: I don't think non-residents should have a say in our town dealings.

TA Flynn: You can make that rule at any time.

Mr. Whisman: I just want to get the residency matter out of the way.

Mr. Watson: I guess for my part I think I can agree that our bylaws do not have a lot of controlling language on how to conduct the meeting and who is allowed to speak. The public commentary is a recent addition. We weren't doing this before. There needs to be a function that limits the amount of people that can speak on any particular topic. Where that line is I'm not certain of that but it has to be

somewhere. Otherwise why have a line at all? Just say anybody can come speak on Deering matters. Is it in the town's vested interest to move business along with a smaller number of people that are closer to the town than to it would be to move business along with a larger number of people that are not as close to the town. I don't know if that's a debate we'll be able to solve today. This is a topic that we're working now. I don't know if I'd be willing to go along with a change in the format. As it is now it's up to the chairman who's controlling the meeting one who gets to speak and who doesn't get to speak. I don't know if at this time I want to formalize without getting something in print and then adding it our bylaws so the next board doesn't have to confront this same issues. That's what legislating is right? Try to build upon something so it's consistent all the way throughout.

TA Flynn: I have it all written. I'll be introducing it at couple meetings from now. I want to get the town meeting stuff out.

Mr. Watson: Anyone else have anything on this?

Mrs. Smith: I have a question. Bill, what are you worried about hearing from people?

Mr. Whisman: I'm not worried. I'm trying to be fair.

Mrs. Smith: You were trying to prevent people from speaking.

Mr. Whisman: I'm trying to prevent non-resident people speaking on town matters. And if we're going go that far, let's look at the one lady, Riche Colcombe when she tried to speak. We shut her down instantly. We were all good on that. Mrs. Smith: I was not. Whisman: But the point I'm trying to make, all of that, when it came up to your father speaking that's when everything came up. I'm not going to sit and argue about any of this. Quite frankly, let's just move on. As Roy said, he has the dictation of everything. I have no problem with residents speaking at a town of Deering meeting with reference to town matters. If we want to go public comment, then anybody can speak. I don't have a problem with that. But, I don't think I would have a in another's town matters if I'm not a resident of that town. That's just my thought.

Mrs. Smith: Something I would like to say. This hasn't been enforced in previous administrations. One example, Peter Kaplan. He was very active as a part-time resident.

Carol Baker: He's a registered voter. Has been for 30 years. You have to register to vote here to become a resident. You have to register your car here. You have to change your driver license. You have to do all of your business here to be considered a resident here in Deering.

Mr. Watson: I'd like to put a period on the end of this thing. We recognize we have a deficiency in the conduct of the meetings. We have proposed changes coming and an experienced professional to address it. I don't know what those changes are but as of now there is no change in the standing bylaws. The chair gets to decide who speaks. On to new business.

Item #2 – Annual report

a) Dedication Page

Mr. Watson: We have the passing of long-time favorite resident Nancy Cowan. We had tentatively set to honor her with our annual report. I think it's fallen to the wayside. The request is whether we want to make this a definite choice and then how we are going to the appropriate line up of her history in town.

Mr. Whisman: We decided to do it since she passed this past year.

Carol Baker: I believe JP has written up a write up on her last year. We should check with JP to see if he still has that. I'll be happy to add to it if he doesn't have anything about her Town Clerk time here. Maybe we need to reach out to JP.

Mr. Watson: I make a motion to delegate the responsibility of the reach out for the promulgation of the dedication letter for this town meeting's report to TA Flynn to coordinate with relative parties for the Nancy Cowan dedication. Mr. Whisman seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

b) Acceptance of Board of Selectman Town Report See attached.

Mrs. Smith: Suggested adding the Fire Department Study Committee to the list in the last line.

Mr. Watson made a motion to accept the BOS report with the addition noted. Mr. Whisman seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Item #3 – Selectman Budget Review for 2023 – Preparation for the Public Hearing on 9 February 2023 to include participation from Department Heads who have concerns regarding the (submitted) Town Administrator's budget figures.

TA Flynn: The posting for the public hearing required by law was posted to the local newspaper a week ahead of the meeting. If there are any concerns or anything needs to be addressed. The department heads wanted to discuss.

Mr. Watson: Should we go through the expensive ones first?

Mr. Whisman: Just go right down the list. If there's questions. If there's anything needs to be added.

TA Flynn: Before you do that. I want to talk about the administration. We had to make an adjustment on salaries. Mrs. Smith: explains the three columns. First column is what the Department Heads turned in. The second column is the BAC budget. The last column is the budget the BOS is considering. Notes are included and are color-coded. The ones in red are the BAC recommendations. The ones in blue are the ones that got changed between the BAC and this board, this is so you can see the differences. At the time this was being worked we didn't have the new Health Insurance rates, LTD/STD, and new hire data, etc.

Mr. Watson: I appreciate all the work you and the entire committee have done.

Mr. Whisman: Go through and ask the department heads if they have anything. Ask the Admin, do you have anything you want to add? Peter, you have anything you want to add? TA Flynn: No.

Mr. Watson: that's probably the quickest way to go. For Administration, you've already said your piece that you had to adjust some salaries around. Town Clerk, is that good?

Carol Baker: Yup. Everything pretty much looks fine except things that were expended were not put in the right line items. My retirement, life and disability, and healthcare wasn't split equally between town clerk and tax collector. That's under expended. It doesn't have anything to do with the budget for 2023 but I wanted to point it out that it was incorrect. It got split this past year.

TA Flynn: I'd like to add something to Carol's comment. We added \$300 for election day meals.

Mrs. Smith: Before moving out of Town Clerk I'd like to draw attention to the assessing line – Professional Services, line 79. Set at \$14,988 which was contract price for the year; there were cases where the assessors did work outside of the contracted services. It went about \$2000 over, suggests increasing the line. Also Intents to Cut was expended out of that. Discussion followed. TA Flynn: Leave it as is.

Planning/Zoning - Mrs. Smith: Planning same as last year except reintroducing having a Clerk. The Chair is currently both chairing the meeting and taking notes at the same time. \$600 is an estimate.

Mr. Watson: Zoning has never met - do we really need \$350 worth of postage? Mrs. Smith: Change to \$1. Leave Public Notices at current amount, everything else \$1.

Mrs. Smith: Raised at BAC, there are Legal lines for both zoning (\$1,500) and planning (\$2,000).

Suggested creating an expendable trust fund that we fund, put it in once, can be used as needed, and can be added to. That way we don't keep raising it each year in the budget and not using it.

Administration keeps its own Legal line.

Mr. Whisman: Peter do we need to do a warrant article for the change to the ETF? TA Flynn: A warrant article is not required.

Mr. Whisman concerned taking money from legal.

Leaving \$2000 in planning, zoning to \$1.

Government Buildings - Peter recommend leaving as is.

Mrs. Smith asked about the \$10,000 – money in there for a sound-proofing or microphones? TA Flynn: Yes.

Cemetery - Mrs. Smith asked TA Flynn if he's interfaced with the Cemetery Trustees. He has not. A housekeeping, check to see if there were any sales for lots and, if they did, was it turned over to the Trustee of the Trust Funds? And could you reach out to the Trustee of the Trust Funds and ask them to find out the disbursement amounts and to disburse the cemetery interest? There are few funds that are paid out. It's a small amount. Funds earned through interest.

Insurance - Property liability can't change. Set amount. Goes up each year. Advertising/Regional Association - nothing.

Police - Mrs. Smith: This budget was done some time ago before we had losses in the department and other things. My questions are: would you provide the number of budget hours you have built into this? The reason I'm asking is these numbers are based off of Officer Davy's wages and may not be enough if you get in an officer that makes more. I'm worried about a short fall. We need full time and part time hours. And the BAC had suggested moving the admin budget back into the Admin Assistant line where it was last year.

Trish Whisman: I remember that being mentioned at the BAC. From the discussion it made more sense to leave the admin wages in with the Chief's wages since it's already built in there through June. I'm only a temporary position. I just happen to come on board because the Chief got deployed. I remember for some reason if he gets sent home early then that money is still there. If he comes early, then the money won't be there.

Mr. Whisman: Her position was appointed. It was made up, we pulled it out the air because we were in a hurry to make something happen, and I know that Cavanaugh had asked hey we could bring in an assistant again that knows the system to help out again. So that's exactly what we did.

Mrs. Smith: It's not a wage change. It's moving it to the right line.

Mr. Whisman: We can't move it right now because that position does not exist. Mrs. Smith: The Admin Assistant role doesn't exist?

Mr. Whisman: We did not approve any money for that at Town Meeting.

Mrs. Smith: That was last year, this is this year. That's the point.

Mr. Whisman: Once the chief comes back. She's done. The admin asst job isn't there.

Trisha Whisman: I don't think we need to be getting any more money from the taxpayers to have money on a separate line. It was a big thing at the BAC meeting. Let's not have the taxpayers put any more money than they need to. To me it sounds like we're asking for money into the budget than is needed.

Mr. Whisman: Plus we don't know if the Chief is going to want an assistant. I can't answer for that. He's going to have to request, or Cavanaugh is going to have to.

Mr. Watson: I don't know if we gain anything by creating a line item for the position.

Mrs. Smith: For the hiring wage, if we were to consider increasing the wages to be competitive and people will want to work here, do you have a recommendation for wage range we should be considering? I'm afraid we're going to go up and have the same problem we had with Officer Davy and he was good and we lost him.

Trisha Whisman: In order to find an accurate wage and Captain Cavanaugh can speak on this as well, you have to look at the other towns. You have to be competitive to what's around us. Hillsborough is 10 minutes down the road. Officer Davy, it was a no brainer for him to go there. I can't just throw out a number and tell you what would be reasonable. It would have to be some research and look at surrounding towns. And right now, even having higher wages, are having a very hard time. There are so many full-time and part-time positions available. We're going to get the bottom of the barrel because we provide bottom of the barrel pay. I would have to do some research.

Mrs. Smith: Could you have it for the next meeting?

Trisha Whisman: I'd be happy to.

Mr. Whisman: Be sure to include experience and stuff like that because that's really going to play a part in that. You don't want some rookie coming on and making \$80K a year and a 5 year guy coming on making \$60K.

Trisha Whisman: I do know that when Chief Pushee was here, he used the step program. It wasn't successful. You have a brand-new officer making \$16.00 an hour. I'll be happy to look into it.

Mr. Watson: I think it's going to be a hot topic next week. Anything else?

Mrs. Smith: Do we need to increase anything with the Hillsborough PD contract? Are we using the services more with the absence of Officer Davy?

Acting Chief Cavanaugh: We are using their services a little bit more but Chief Parsons is basically doing it with the agreement that was signed at the lower amount.

Mrs. Smith: You feel comfortable with the numbers and that they'll hold? Acting Chief Cavanaugh: Yes.

Mr. Watson: Ambulance: Do we really think \$1100 is going to keep it running? Equipment maintenance.

Mrs. Smith: I don't recall why that was reduced and I don't see anything in my notes.

Mr. Whisman: Even on call wages were reduced.

Mrs. Smith: We asked for part-time numbers and he's been using the same numbers year after year he was increasing the on-call wages to get that funding. We let him know you can increase that number. Then he increased the per diem. There's not a lot of on-call left, it's more per diem.

Mr. Whisman: What about vehicle fuel? BAC reduced. I say we keep it at \$5000, not \$4500.

Mrs. Smith: If you look at the expended, and prior year as well. When he submitted it, it was at the height of the fuel price increases. We reviewed it two months later. That's why we reduced it.

Mr. Whisman: We can keep it at \$4500. TA Flynn: Leave it as is. Just my opinion. Mr. Whisman: We'll just leave it.

Fire Department - Mrs. Smith: budget numbers are based on business as usual. Public Safety - Mr.

Whisman: Police dispatch is staying the same this year?

Mrs. Smith: It increased it was \$22.2K last year and it increased to \$22.8K.

Highway - Mr. Whisman: So Brian, you're increasing the mechanic wage to \$30 an hour and no 8% increase for any of your guys?

Road Agent Brian Houghton: 8% wage increase is included in the full-time wages. No increase for the open mechanic position. The rest of it is changing verbiage, the increases are wages, salt, and culverts.

Mrs. Smith: Do you feel you can hire at the \$30hr for mechanic and are you still wanting to hire a mechanic vs an operator? Road Agent Brian Houghton: Yes. And that's going to save on Fire & Police as well. Changing oil, etc.

Requesting Crack Sealing line be updated to Crack Sealing/Chip Sealing as Chip Sealing is preferred.

Previously chip sealing was paid out of ETF, so moving it back into the budget with funding request of \$7200.

Mrs. Smith: Something that was mentioned, Line 221, the New Equipment line. Funds are put in there but they're not heavily utilized. This is another case where the BAC was recommending an ETF. It would build up funds. Police has an equipment ETF, Fire & Highway don't. I'd like to make a request those be created.

Mrs. Smith: Roadside mowing - do you intend to have that done this year? Road Agent: yes. Mrs. Smith: When is that typically done? Road Agent: Late fall - I'd like it late fall after the frost.

Solid Waste Management - There were questions on the solid waste management numbers. Peter to update solid waste management information from Hillsboro.

Direct Assistance and Welfare stayed the same. Parks and Recreation the same.

Library - Mrs. Smith: No one from Library here? In their other supplies they were requesting an additional \$500 to purchase new armchairs. Given the state we're in people having to choose between

paying for food and paying for taxes I recommend we put this off until the Library has regular hours.
Mr. Watson: It would certainly seem you wouldn't need an armchair if you're not able to get into the building. Mr. Whisman: Line 248 now \$1100.

Conservation - Mrs. Smith: The Conservation Commission requests \$5000 each year to be put into the Exotic Weed Control Expendable Trust Fund with the goal of reaching \$50,000 in the account. The trust fund as it was set up was for a single purpose and then modified later for a secondary purpose. The first purpose was to pay the costs of monitoring, so this was designed to have the Lake Host monitoring paid out of the ETF. At some point it got back into the budget. What I would like to recommend, because there have been years when they haven't used all of their funds. In this past year, a small amount of \$388 is still something. If this \$4900 had been put in the ETF they would have had that additional money in there instead it has expired. There is an advantage in using this ETF (Expendable Trust Fund). It allows it to grow.

He provided all of the calculations – the wage amount was calculated with his goal of having 600 hours, which includes adding Thursdays as a coverage day. Line 250, I would like to request that we remove the funding for the Lake Host wages only and move it into the ETF and decrease the budget line item to \$1500, and on the Additions to Trust Funds, increase from \$5000 to \$12,700.

Mr. Whisman: I think we need to talk to the Conservation Committee.

Mrs. Smith: Originally this money was put in the ETF. I'm suggesting putting that money back into the ETF. There's no short shifting of funds here. It's just moving where it gets allocated from.

Mr. Watson: We have enough time to invite someone from the ConComm.

TA Flynn: Next week is the public hearing. They could address it then. I would talk about getting a rep here. Mr. Samuels. He's very involved.

Mr. Watson: We don't have to do any motions. The town has already voted to have this. The only concern I have is paying the lake host. I just want to make sure the money is going to be in the account.

Mrs. Smith: It would be. NH Lakes bills us a set amount. NH Lakes pays the Lake Host. If the Conservation Commission want to increase coverage they can and if they want to reduce coverage they can. This allows flexibility.

Mr. Watson: The bottom line. It's more in line with what the Town voted for on the warrant article.

Mrs. Smith: During covid when the world shut down, all the money that was raised and budgeted expired at the end of the year. That could have been sitting in the trust fund.

Mr. Whisman: I don't have a problem as long as we're not taking money away from our Lake. Wait and see what Samuels says next week.

Debt Services - Mrs. Smith: in prior years the Fire Truck principal & interest was billed on one line. So, for this year, the interest is being put back into the interest line so that's why you see a positive and negative.

Mrs. Smith: 8% increase for salary across the board. I would like to request we do some research on that.

Mr. Watson: What do we need? Just a survey?

Mrs. Smith: Yes. Some folks are looking at Social Security but I'm looking at what are wages being raised at the national, state and municipalities level.

Mr. Watson: how do we want to approach?

Mrs. Smith: I can do whatever. The other question that goes along with this and I've been asked by many, many residents is how much is the 8% going to cost? What is that number we're looking at? Without having the detail on the police, I can't back it out to see what that is. Same with Fire.

Mr. Watson: I think you should be able to get those numbers before the meeting. It's a week. As long as it's coordinated. How about this? You can work with the department heads through the town administrator. For what their forecast is. I will figure out what we can get documented at the Federal and State level as far as wage increases if there is such a thing. The most accurate I can come up with for

next week.

Mrs. Smith: we also have an issue with the Personnel Policy, which we all know needs to be fixed, it has a maximum of 3% in it. We want to make sure we address it.

Mr. Watson: I'd like to address it now.

Mr. Whisman: The Board of Selectmen can make changes to it as we see fit.

Mr. Watson: I agree our policies could use some work. We'll get there.

Mr. Watson: Anything else on budget?

Mrs. Smith: Do you want to go through Additions to the Trust Funds? Mr. Watson: Sure.

A spreadsheet with information regarding Trust Fund additions and the Municipal Improvement Schedule

Mrs. Smith: To qualify this - this is a draft document for the CIP. It is not vetted by the Planning Board. So it's at best a guide. The blue section of the spreadsheet lists the additions to the funds, it includes adding funds for projects listed above as well as the regular ones where we add money every year that is not tied to a specific project.

Mrs. Smith: Brian, for your Expendable Trust Fund (ETF) for Road Reconstruction you typically request \$250,000 a year. Yes. Do you have the plan that backs up that number that shows us what is going to be worked on this year. Road Agent Brian Houghton: Not yet. Usually that's done after town meeting. My plan is Fisher Road, hopefully. After discussing with Peter and you guys. It's always been \$250,000. We expended \$95- or \$98,000 this year so I would hope that we would be able to put that money back in which brings it back it up \$250,000. Then if it's not used like last year.

Mrs. Smith: I don't think we should fund something before we have a plan. So, I know you have this old document, and it has these estimates that are probably low but...

Brian Houghton: That was done by college kids driving around town and never getting out of the vehicle. It was made more for pavement than dirt. That study they're giving you all sorts of options on anything that's done around the United States not just in NH or in this area and things are done a certain way. You know, some of those processes aren't done in the state of NH and to go off that kind of price of fixing things like that. That study is not anything I would want to go off from.

Mrs. Smith: If we throw that aside. In August, you said you had your own plan. Can we see that plan, or can you update that plan? Put the numbers to it so we can all track it? Community members are continuously talking about the roads. They want to know what the plan is. While it's important to fund it and make sure those things are done, it's also as important that we have a plan on the books. Do you think you could have that for the budget? Brian: No, not for next week.

Mrs. Smith: So the road that you're saying to do, Fisher Road, can you put together the estimates for what you plan to do? I'm not talking about the whole plan. Brian: Yes. Absolutely.

Mrs. Smith: Any questions on these, anything where we need more?

Mrs. Smith: To explain to the audience, this is a draft CIP, not vetted, not approved of by the Planning Board. What it is comprised of is, earlier this year Department Heads turned in their capital requests along with dates and amounts, we also have some longer terms ones such as our Assessing is a 5-year contract, so we break that out and add 1/5th each year to the trust fund. This is the map of - you need this by here, then this is the correct apportionment to get us to the goal that the Department Head has given us.

TA Flynn: Just for clarification, are you saying the CIP is not competed and this is just a draft?

Mrs. Smith: This is just a draft. This is the best we have to go on to know what to add to trust funds.

Mr. Watson: Anything else on item #3? Mr. Whisman: Nothing.

Mrs. Smith: For budget, the Municipal and Transportation Improvement Capital Reserve Fund. When it was created, it was supposed to be \$5 of every motor vehicle registration fee except for UTV's. That was supposed to be collected and then at the end of the year deposited into the Municipal Transportation Fund so Brian would have more money. Do we collect that \$5? Carol Baker: We do.

Mrs. Smith: Do you have a number? Carol Baker: Not with me right here but I can get you a number.

Mrs. Smith: If that number could be provided to the TA so that he can work with the TOTF and sync up so that this year we could make that transfer happen. I'm sure Brian could use the money. Carol Baker: Sure.

Item#4: After several weeks and months of discussion it sounds like there were many options and as I heard them, I got more confused as to the solution.

In the Department Head meeting on January 30th the Fire Chief thought maybe we could wait another year so I could have the time to contribute to the solution.

The big question is that it is hard to make the decision on whether to order a new ambulance this year.

TA Flynn: I came in at the 11th hour on this. I go back to 2015 where they had a professional study done. And then a new study this summer. I heard all kinds of versions. 24/7 fully staffed ambulance would be outrageous as far as cost goes. My idea is you could probably add some hours to the system you're using now or we had someone here last week that gave a talk on a private service, 24 hours a day for \$320,000 plus fees. He would collect also. That's why I say I'm confused. I don't know where the Board stands on this. I'd really like to see it put on hold for a year.

Mr. Watson: Jill handed out a running list of the options.

TA Flynn: I could start from scratch with the Fire Chief. Get some quotes. Get an architect. See what we can do to add space (is it Donovan station?) or make a meeting room. Make it more comfortable and usable and perhaps even add a bay onto it. I think might be a good idea. I would certainly like to get involved. And have the Fire Chief, I would work with him on staffing. He feels if we had some full time positions it might attract people. I was in some towns that had 2 full-time, 7-5pm. It took care a lot of the service calls during the day time. They have enough guys or females at night to go out in the middle of the night if they did have a call or had a mutual aid system set up with the next town. It is doable for a lot less than having 24/7 coverage. These are the things I have experience working with. It doesn't seem to have gotten anywhere.

Mr. Watson: if we're going to order a new ambulance for this year that won't be delivered for another 36 months, what happens to the future board that decides they would have much rather have gone with a contracted service?

TA Flynn: That's the easiest thing to do. It's pretty costly, too. It's gonna cost \$320,000 and that's just for the first year. I would suggest a 3-year contract with maybe a slight escalation. I think we need to all fix the station up. Then there was a question if they operated out of Hillsborough, just in the daytime hours. He can adjust that rate. I haven't seen anything come in.

Mrs. Smith: I wholeheartedly agree with you. One of the things we kept hearing over and over again from the Fire Chief, is they have done the vetting job and provided different scenarios but they have hit a wall, what does this community want and what do they need? And what are they willing to pay for. I think the next natural step is to do what he is saying - create a group, a community group, made up of residents and have them have their say on which way we go. Do you want contract services? It has a price tag. We'll get the feedback from the community instead of having our Fire Dept and our logistics leading that discussion. I think we have to identify that first.

TA Flynn: I'm willing to be part of it.

Mr. Watson: How does that work? Say I'm part of the ex-officio for that committee/group/ community involvement and we come up with recommendations and get them implemented, what happens to the other people that didn't want that? How do I know you wanted to do that?

Mrs. Smith: It doesn't empower the committee to do anything. It empowers them to gather together, share their ideas, and come up with the vision of where they want Deering to go.

Mr. Watson: How is that any different than the mailbox out front?

TA Flynn: Nobody is ever going to agree on one idea. You'll never get anyone to agree on one idea.

Mrs. Smith: I can point out, this board has been criticized for all of us being new to town, I think it's

really important that we create this committee that has a blend of new people and people who have been here forever to guide us into the future. I am uncomfortable with it just being us. I would really like to get that feedback and if you (TA Flynn) wouldn't mind being involved in helping guide that.

Mr. Whisman: the problem you're going to run into is the same problem we run into. Look at who we have here tonight. This is just a small sample of our community. Where do we get most of our people? Town Meeting. I wish there was something we could bring up at town meeting and say this is what we have going on, if you're interested show up. I think we should put something out there to have as a starting point. That is where we have the majority of our people. We don't have to vote on this today. We have something in the works. And if you're interested we're going to meet on this day at this time at the Town Hall to discuss these options please come forward to voice your opinion. Something.

Mrs. Smith: Or even a survey. I like that idea, because you've got an audience there that wants to share their thoughts and ideas.

Mr. Watson: What if I call another meeting of the Fire Study Committee? How would that Fire Study Committee not duplicate the function of what you're proposing?

Mrs. Smith: Because the Fire Department is looking at what the Fire Department needs, they were looking at the study that was done about the FD needs. We need to know what this community wants. It's an entirely different conversation. It doesn't have anything to do with regulations for this or hiring things. We need to hear what the people want because they're the ones that are going to pay for it.

Mr. Watson: are we talking about making it a permanent committee?

Mrs. Smith: it can be a temporary one just like this one was which expires 2023. It could be the Fire Department Community Study Committee or something like that.

Mr. Watson: I don't know if we necessarily lose anything by instantiating a hit like that. I don't know that we're going to lose anything because we're putting this off for another year. And it would give people time to give input. It doesn't answer the question are going to buy an Ambulance.

Mrs. Smith: We have a question out there about the ambulance, if it could be like the police cruiser where we can back out with no penalty. I wouldn't call this not doing anything this year. We have health & safety issues that we need to address, and we have the ARPA funds for that, we can be working on that. And then, Donovan Station, if it's the station we're going to look at using that for the next 5-10 years, we should look at doing those additional upgrades and fix the building.

Mr. Whisman: Why don't we do a warrant article for the ambulance?

Mr. Watson: Safest option – it's far from the board.

Mr. Whisman: Put it in front of the people for a vote and let them decide. Make the recommended repairs.

Mr. Watson: The other stuff like the exhaust and we have the funds to do that. Mr. Whisman: ARPA funds.

Mrs. Smith: When the chief is talking about pushing things out is he talking about full-time Fire or contracted services? Or does he want to push out meeting?

TA Flynn: I'm the one that got him on that subject. He had nothing to offer on what decision would be made. I talked about waiting a year. We could have the discussion we're having now.

Mr. Whisman: Push out a survey at town meeting. We can formulate a meeting after and invite everyone. I think it's the safest best. Let the people choose.

Mrs. Smith: It is a direction. It's not like we're holding off. We are moving in a direction, with a plan.

Mr. Whisman: I don't think we should wait a year. I think right after town meeting. That's why we mention it town meeting. Here's what we're going to meet to discuss and maybe they'll come.

TA Flynn: Is there a warrant article directive you're giving me for an ambulance only? Mr. Watson: Yeah.

Mrs. Smith: No, I would caution against labeling it ambulance only. We could say that's it's the intention at this point but if we label it ambulance only then those funds can only be used for an ambulance. But if we say we're going to put \$125,000 into the Fire Department Vehicle Replacement Fund that makes it

so it can go to an ambulance or it can go to a future fire vehicle.

Mr. Whisman: Let's do that.

Mrs. Smith: When we bring the discussion, we say that's the intention. That's why it's not written that way.

Mr. Watson: Do we really want to do that?

TA Flynn: So it doesn't necessarily mean we want to order it right away but we want to have the funding in the ETF.

Mrs. Smith: Yes, we don't have any quotes. We don't know if we have any backout clause. So until we know if that's even an option...

Mr. Watson: I was just going to ask if we want to word it like that so the language would make it 'oh we'll start an ETF to buyout apples or oranges or grapes.

Mrs. Smith: We already have the ETF. The ETF we have is a generic vehicle replacement fund. We haven't named any of the vehicles.

Mr. Watson: We wanna talk about we want to replace the pickup truck. But this is purpose built for asking taxpayers to hand over hard earned money for what?

Mrs. Smith: You can do a warrant article that's not necessarily tied to money to ask if they would support the purchase of an ambulance. You can have it be a yes or no question.

Mr. Watson: I don't know if I like the idea of talking to townspeople to ask for a bunch of money to buy non-descript vehicles.

Mrs. Smith: You do that every year when you add money to these trust funds.

Mr. Watson: Said fire truck.

Mrs. Smith: That's to authorize the purchase. Town meeting has to authorize expenditures if it doesn't come from a trust fund. This was specific because leasing was involved, and Town Meeting had to approve it.

Mr. Watson: Buy a police cruiser

Mrs. Smith: They only buy police cruisers. Like highway has - they need a loader, then they need a Ford 350, dump truck. Every year we put money in there and we never say what it's going to be used for. Because the needs can be changed.

Mr. Watson: How did we buy the grader?

Mrs. Smith: Same way. We added the funds to the trust funds.

Brian: I got three prices. You guys determined the warrant article. We prepared for it.

Dennis Cavagnaro: We knew it was going to be a grader from day one. Brian: Yes.

Dennis Cavagnaro: Not to be used for a dump truck. Dennis Cavagnaro: Glenn Road

Mrs. Smith: We are running into an issue with our ambulance and these contract services. If for whatever reason, say hypothetically we flip the switch, and we had sleeping quarters. Say we decide we're going to go contract services right now, the ambulance revolving fund is written in such a way that is questionable if that could be used towards it. Because the funds are earmarked for specific purpose that fund could be hung up until we do something to change the purpose. So part of not putting in what it's specifically for is making sure it doesn't get locked. Depending on what we want to do here, if anybody thinks we're going to go contract services then the recommendation might be to take the funds from the ambulance fund we have now to pay for the interim services that we have now to deplete that because that's what it's used for. It's like a coconut game where you're trying to figure out the appropriate places to put money so it's available but also not locked up so that if need disappears...

Mr. Whisman: The people make the determination not us.

Mr. Watson: I've got to think that I want the nomenclature in there stating it's for an ambulance. You can put nomenclature in there that says if the ambulance thing doesn't work then we...

Mr. Whisman: Even at that we take it to the people anyway. For a warrant Article. We just did that last

year for the funds for the diversion program.

Mr. Watson: We're talking about a warrant article to do what precisely?

Mr. Whisman: To purchase an ambulance and outfit it?

Mrs. Smith: We also need a quote, because we don't know how much it is.

TA Flynn: That's where the chief has to come in and help. I'm not the chief.

Mr. Whisman: Peter will you get with Jeff and have him get a couple, few quotes next and then send them out? We can put that language into a warrant article. And give it the people to let them vote on it.

Mrs. Smith: Question. If we have a warrant article and it says to purchase an ambulance and we're looking for approval for that, but we already have the money for that – so we have it in the Ambulance Revolving Fund and we have it in the Fire Department Vehicle Replacement Fund, does that money get tied up in that vote for a warrant article?

TA Flynn: You have to put it in the warrant article to withdraw funds from the account you're talking about. And that seals it. You can't use that money for anything else. You have to that money in there. If it's in there you're ahead of the game as far as costs. I don't know how much you have in there.

Mrs. Smith: \$150,000.

TA Flynn: Well you might have to add some money to the warrant article.

Mrs. Smith: it's projected at \$375,000, and the Ambulance Revolving Fund has \$225,000 in it.

Mr. Whisman: Let's get the quote first and we go from there. I say we put it in the warrant article for an ambulance.

Mrs. Smith: How do we undo it if we decide to not buy an ambulance?

Mr. Whisman: We have to bring that as another warrant article to the people.

Mrs. Smith: So the next year we rescind it?

TA Flynn: Yes. So that's what we're doing with the ambulance and then we're gonna try regroup the public to decide the service we'll provide.

Mr. Whisman: Let's do that Peter.

Mr. Watson: Anything else on the trust funds?

Item# 5 - Legal opinion from Counsel – Public Hearing (Authority to speak)

I'm getting it written and more precise. The moderator is in charge next week.

Item# 6 - Town Administrator's Report

- The police department has been spread pretty thin and talking at our department head meeting this week I was told they have received about 5 inquiries for part-time position and only 2 resumes for full-time positions. Chief Cavanaugh is following through with that.
- I met with Laura Bono, Hillsborough TA, on Monday and discussed the contracts in place between Hillsborough and Deering. Those include Solid Waste, Police Mutual Aid and the Recreation Contract. I don't have the Police yet. I want to have them on record and to know what our obligations are. It was a very fruitful meeting.
- I have a solicited three quotes from auditors. I received one in writing this week and another 2 companies are responding. One is definitely right in returning with a proposal. The third one is pretty booked for the year.
- I received some training this week. Without the Treasurer active I had to get more involved in the banking end of it. And especially to service the accounts of the Town Clerk's office with TD Bank. I now have the authority and the secret code to transfer money and keep the office going over there.
- I communicated with the Town Moderator and he's requested time with the Board in March to go over Town Meeting protocol. Annual visit.
- I received and processed Town Hall rental agreements. Betsy Kirby submitted. Betsy Holmes submitted one. She's renting the library sometime in March.

- TA Flynn: I want to thank Jill very much for helping me out on this, she did a great job and the explanations. I wasn't privy to any of the preparation before I got here. One day a week didn't give me much time to catch on. I'm anxious to get the ambulance thing. At least we didn't drop the ball completely. I think that's important for the town to know.

Possible Non-Public RSA 91-a:3,II, (a), (c) and (d):

TA Flynn: No reason to deal with it tonight.

Mr. Whisman: We can address at our next meeting after the public hearing.

Selectman's Reports

Mr. Whisman: Peter I want to formally welcome you aboard as Town Administrator. Just keep trudging on. What I would really like to see here that I brought up with the past two Town Administrators. Like a recognition award type thing for the employees and volunteers. We're so quick to admonish someone or reprimand. I never see people given certificate of achievement or formally recognized. Speaking of that Cynthia Gidley.

TA Flynn: it's a good idea.

Mr. Watson: Picture outstanding Employee of the Quarter or Month. Mrs. Kirby: Limit it to employees or include volunteers?

Mr. Watson: Employees and volunteers. They need to be recognized.

TA Flynn: I would recommend Non-public before making it public.

Mrs. Smith: 2 things. Heritage Committee, do you need any budget funds? Whisman: Are we going to put the quincennial under this? Mrs. Smith: That was my next question, have they (250th Celebration Committee) met yet?

Mr. Watson: I do not believe that any committee has met yet. I have not heard of it. We had planned on doing something for the 250th. I would like to have that tagged onto old business until we have that flushed out.

Mrs. Smith: If I could suggest that you call the meeting, then the officers can be elected, and they can take it from there. I believe you were the ex-officio on that, if you can instigate it, and gather everybody, then you can start that ball rolling.

Mr. Whisman: You can get Laura Bono from Hillsboro and she can direct you to the people in Hillsboro that can help you.

Mr. Watson: Can you arrange a meeting with myself and Laura Bono in Hillsboro?

Mrs. Smith passed out an estimate sheet. After removing excess detail and focusing on the EMS portion, the blue column is what we have now and what we'd pay if we increased wages to a more competitive \$20/hr. When you look at 10x4, 20x3, which is a lot more coverage but still not 24hrs, the cost is \$0.65 versus \$0.78 for 24/7 contract services. So the make or break point, depending on what services that you want, if it's anything close to or above the (10x4, 20x3), then it's less expensive to go to the contract services.

Mr. Watson: I'm going to submit to the Town Administrator as far as wage increases for federal, state and town wages.

Mr. Whisman recommended getting rid of the first public comment and just leave the one at the end.

Mr. Watson concurred. No objections.

Public Comment #2

Mr. Whisman: Please be respectful of each other because if you're not I'll throw you out.

Elizabeth Kirby: I do have some concerns when people shout out at people and are disrespectful that it's not getting reined in by the board. I'd like you to rein these people in a little tighter because sometimes they're screaming and they're rude and they're not at all these meetings. Can we just tighten it up?

Steve Diers, Clement Hill Road: First off I want to compliment the Board I have not seen before a posting

in the Messenger for the Public Hearing on the budget. You were pointing out Roy there aren't enough people here. Anything you can do to get that information out. Second thing, I want to compliment you on this Fire Department issue and it's been ongoing. I like the direction you're going. I'd like to ask if you reinstate a committee that you put in some definition there. I think that's what we're missing from the Fire Study - what is the outcome we're looking for? If you look at the history of the Warner's Fire Study Committee they gave the board a multi-page dissertation of what they did, what they talked about, and what their suggestions were, it was very thorough. Maybe model after that. In regard to public comment, I would also reiterate what Elizabeth said, we've got to somehow stop the shouting out thing. In regard to public comment, it's an important thing. I'm not going to try to decide who do it, residents, non-residents, people who own property, people who don't own property. I was very upset at the Fire Committee where someone just ranted on and on and on and they weren't a resident, so I kinda agree with that part of it. Please don't do away with that. It makes you think. You don't have to respond, as Peter said, the board can make the decision if they want the comment or not. There's no rule that says you have to respond. One other thing, we should add maybe in the opening of the meeting, ask people to be respectful and not have these side conversations going while you're talking. We have a hard enough time hearing what's going on.

Carol Baker, Clement Hill Road: Last day for filing period for open offices is tomorrow between 3-5pm. Positions that have not been signed up for: Selectman, Supervisor of the Checklist 6-year, Treasurer, and a Trustee of the Trust Funds.

Joanne Cobb, Tubbs Hill Road: I'm not trying to be rude. And we had an article to fix some of the fire stations with the ARPA funds and now we're going back. Is there a reason?

Mr. Watson: 2 separate things. We were talking about using the ARPA funds for getting some type of temporary exhaust systems into the fire stations to increase their health & safety. We did also talk about trying to use some of the ARPA funds for rehabilitating the thing but those things, on recommendation of the Fire Chief, can probably be put off for another year until we get a new committee. I do believe we have enough juice to get the exhaust system in there with the existing ARPA funds. The purchase of the ambulance is way lacking. That decision needs to be far away from the board and made by the people.

Mrs. Smith: I had a different take away from our discussion. I was under the impression that we were holding off on contract services, changing the structure of the fire department, those things, but that we were going to work on the infrastructure things that we needed to do. Health & safety, ARPA funds, continuing to move to rehabilitation so we're ready to flip the switch we're ready.

Mr. Watson: I think that is all off the table now.

Mrs. Smith: Putting insulation into the building or possibly putting on another bay for the ambulance so it doesn't have to be housed in Murdough at night.

Mr. Watson: Is that something we're going to put on a warrant article?

Mrs. Smith: That would have to come from the community. We can fund that from the building fund. The community can tell us what direction they want to go.

Mr. Watson: I think that is an interesting line. I think that politically you very well eat the cost. What happens if you say during using the ARPA funds I'd like to add a bay and rehabilitate with new bunks and a new bathroom, stuff like that. In anticipation, of going to a full-time contract or full-time fire ourselves. Is that what are you're talking about?

Mrs. Smith: Looking at the whole use.

Mr. Watson: It looks like we want to move on this year.

Mrs. Smith: We don't have any quotes. We don't have designs.

Mr. Whisman: What we should do. Let's take care of our people. Let's get the safety stuff done that is federally mandated.

Joann Cobb: I'm asking are you going to take care of the health and safety issues.

Mr. Whisman: Yes, that's gonna happen. We'll take care of the firefighters.

Road Agent Brian Houghton: Update on our grader. It arrived in Baltimore from Brazil. It's in customs. Shipping to Vermont to get the front plow and wing on after that. We're looking at a couple more weeks. We have to make sure we have funds in the ETF to pay for it when it arrives. I have one question - has anyone put any thought into emergency housing? In the past we've gone to Hillsboro. With that, the generator out here - that thing hasn't run in a while. Is there some way we can have some company check on it.

Carol Baker: I heard it come on.

Mr. Watson: If we want to check the generator it would come out of the building maintenance fund.

Mr. Watson make a motion to close this meeting at 9:17pm. Mr. Whisman seconded. All in favor.

Motion passed