

**Selectmen's Meeting**  
**Monday, February 13, 2023**

Selectman Ernie Day called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Present were Selectmen Ernie Day and Melissa Florio, and Ellen White, Town Administrator, who recorded these minutes. This meeting was held at the Town Hall. Chairman Les Babb arrived at 6:40 PM.

Also in attendance was Justin Brooks, Rob Cunio, Rich Ullrich, Jen Ullrich, Bill Elliott, Stacy Bolduc, Darwin Moulton, Jamie Mullen, and Don Johnson.

**Review of Mail, Sign Manifests, Approval of Minutes:**

The accounts payable and payroll manifests, and red folder including correspondence was reviewed.

Ernie noted the date needs to be corrected on the non-public minutes. *Melissa made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2023 Selectmen's Meeting and Non-Public Session, with corrected date. Ernie seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.*

**Department Head Updates:**

Fire Department – Chief Rob Cunio reported call volume including 5 medical aid, 1 fire alarm - extinguished microwave fire. The annual extinguisher and emergency lighting inspections to take place at all town buildings is scheduled for 2/28/2023. Rob will be attending a Chief's meeting next Monday. The CPR training class was well attended including 2 employees from the Transfer Station, and 11 from the Fire Department. CPR cards will be mailed to all attendees and will be good for 2-years. Tickets are available for purchase for the Rifle Raffle.

Town Office – Ellen reported focus has been on preparing the budget and warrant articles for Town Meeting. All are under review by the Town Attorney and Department of Revenue. The Town Report is also underway with a target date to get to the printer of 2/21/2023.

**Discussion:**

*Ernie made a motion to sign the contract with Horizon Engineering for up to \$3,500 to complete the surveying work needed at Sherwood Forest/West Bay Road. Melissa seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.*

Ernie questioned the status of an offer proposed as a settlement agreement. Ellen will check the status and report back to the Board.

Warrant Article assignments will be added as an agenda topic for the 2/27/2023 meeting.

Ellen questioned if the Board would like to proceed with having the railing installed on the handicap ramp at the Masonic Lodge. The Board is not in favor.

Ellen also questioned if they would like to proceed with having an alarm system installed at the Masonic Lodge. The Board is also not in favor.

Les recessed the Selectmen's Meeting at 7:00 PM to open the Public Hearing.

## Public Hearing – 2023 Municipal Operating Budget:

Les called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 PM. Attendees present include those in attendance during the regular Selectmen's Meeting.

Les proceeded to go through the operating budget by department noting changes and discussion as follows:

- Tax Collector position is moving from Elected Officials to a hired position within the Town Office budget.
- Zoning Officer has combined with the Building Inspector; these were previously separate budgets that have been merged.
- A proposed extension of the ambulance contract has been agreed upon by all 6-towns and will continue at a 3% increase until the year 2030. Darwin Moulton questioned if the regional agreement is working? Chief Rob Cunio and the Board of Selectmen responded in the affirmative. Les stated it is difficult in today's economy to keep costs down and they are happy Action Ambulance is investing in the area to continue the level of service.
- Discussion regarding gear and equipment for the Fire Department. Rob reported his gear is okay and anticipates minimal replacement however the cost of replacement has increased so his budget has been adjusted accordingly.
- Building Inspector budget has been merged with the Zoning Officer budget.
- Summer and Winter Highway is reflective of increases in all commodities. Budgets were originally presented at a 18.43% increase and the Road Agent was asked to keep with the average inflation rate of 8%. Reductions were made to reduce the percentage of increase but there may still be overruns for the unforeseen. Thanks were given to the Road Agent for his efforts. General Highway expenses were a nominal increase.
- Welfare budget has been reduced. Additional budgeted costs associated with an untimely death were carried forward to demolish a tax deeded structure, which is now complete. The budget was reduced to normal funding.
- Overall proposed increase of 5.9% in the operating budget.
- Quarterly meetings are now being held with the School Board which are deemed effective in combining efforts for cost savings.
- The School Board has approached Eaton and Albany for enrollment and is looking into high school options for the upcoming contract expiration.
- Don Johnson noted enrollment in the elementary school is up from 33 to 52.
- The school budget is reflective of \$271,420 increase. Last year the Town took advantage of the school's budget reduction to complete the sand storage building with no increase in the overall tax rate. The Town's tax rate went down by \$0.60 as a result and will level back out with an estimated \$0.07 increase. There is still much concern with the economy and unpredictable costs. The Board will continue to keep communication open with the school for overall impact.

Warrant Articles were reviewed:

- Watson Hill Road – culvert to be repaired as one out of three projects deemed necessary by the Road Agent. \$104,533 in revenue received in 2022 from Senate Bill 401 will be used to offset the cost of the replacement with only \$31,590 being raised by taxation.
- Milfoil – NH DES Grant funding will provide 50% of treatment costs this year and no chemical treatments were needed in 2022 so leftover monies were encumbered to reduce the amount to be raised.

- Library – Original budget request of \$128,127. The Selectmen requested the same as the Road Agent, to bring in line with inflation percentage. The revised request is in the amount of \$120,000.
- Hot Top – Being a petroleum based product, pricing is based on estimated price per ton.
- Sealing – Monies were encumbered from prior years as projects were delayed due to Covid. Budget figures are based on what is needed to upkeep.
- Town Office Advisory Committee - \$10,000 is being sought to cost an option for a new Town Office building at another location for comparison with said funds to be withdrawn from the Capital Reserve Fund.
- Road and trail repairs in the Town Forest along with Trail Forest maintenance to be funded through their Town Forest Maintenance Fund, donations and timber cutting proceeds.
- Fire Pond dredging at Watson Hill – Grant funding is being sought to offset the costs but are uncommitted at this time.
- Fire Department Tahoe – Les explained the use of the Zoning Officer’s personal vehicle including wear and tear and safety and security has brought them to consider the option of handing down the Chief’s existing Tahoe for use by the Zoning Officer while outfitting the Fire Chief with a new command vehicle.
- Capital Reserves funding all to come from Unreserved Fund Balance (surplus). The balance is noted at a healthy 16.16% retained, while 5-17% is the recommended.

Don Johnson commented that the Board has done a good job. Les commented that Scott Brooks was good about refiguring the Highway figures.

Darwin Moulton commented that the new sand shed has been worth every penny. There is no waste, very little crumble, and a capital outlay that will pay for itself in short time. Others commented on positive environmental impact and cost effectiveness.

Don questioned if there were any warrant articles submitted by petition? Les responded yes, but none requesting appropriation other than the Historical Society.

Being no further comment, the public hearing was closed at 7:22 PM.

### **Public Hearing – Winter Parking Ban:**

Les called the Public Hearing to order at 7:24 PM. Attendees present included those in attendance for the regular Selectmen’s Meeting.

The purpose of the Winter Parking ban is to restrict parking on public ways from 11/15-5/1. This would only apply to town roads.

Don Johnson questioned if this is due to an issue or problem? Les responded that it has been an issue for many years. More frequent parking on the sides of roads is making it difficult for snow removal during storms. They are looking to make it more efficient, and safer for those maintaining the roads as well as those traveling.

Don questioned where the vehicles in the village will be put? Jamie responded that the Village is State Road. There is an existing parking ban in effect for the Village since 1988. Don questions if we can regulate parking in the village? Jamie responded that it is a State ban the Town cannot regulate but the Police can enforce the State ban. This hearing is to address local roads only.

There have been more issues recently with town roads than on state roads. Darwin Moulton weighed in on some of the issues he has experienced.

Darwin suggested informing contractors as they are pulling building permits of the parking ban because a lot of the issue comes from properties under construction. Areas need to be cleared and plowed for parking multiple vehicles. Justin Brooks suggested handing out a copy of the Winter Parking Ban with the building permits.

A draft copy of the ban has been distributed but requires a fine to be implemented along with towing at the owner's expense. Melissa stated Bartlett has a similar ban with a \$50.00 fine that has been in place since 1976. Jamie stated that his approach is to seek compliance over fines and suggests \$50.00-\$100.00 would be appropriate. Ernie and Melissa agree that the fine should be \$100.00. Jamie reiterated his goal is for compliance stating that it could upwards of \$1,000 to collect \$100.00.

Being no further comment, the public hearing was closed at 7:36 PM.

Public session reconvened.

#### **Appointments:**

Not applicable.

#### **Department Head Updates Continued:**

Police Department – Chief Jamie Mullen reported that Corporal Will French has started full-time in Freedom this week. Patrolman Eric Diaz has moved back to part-time status. A department meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday at which time they will be taking a new department photo. Rob commented that Cpl. French is a good guy and good choice. Jamie stated that while he was helping out in Effingham, he purchased two firearms that have not been put into service and is working out an agreement to purchase them for Freedom. He is also working with Interstate Firearms to purchase the newly acquired Sigs.

#### **Old / New Business / Discussion:**

Ellen questioned if the Board has any interest in writing a letter of support for the Styrofoam recycling program proposed by Gilford and LRPC. Brief discussion ensued. Justin is concerned with collection and having it blow all over the place. All were in agreement to hold off at least until the program has been established and then they can determine how effective it is.

#### **Non-Public Session(s):**

Les made a motion enter into a non-public session at 7:45 PM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a), personnel. Ernie seconded. Roll call vote was taken: Ernie-yes, Melissa-yes, Les-yes. All in favor, the motion passed. Les made a motion to resume public session at 8:39 PM. Ernie seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

#### **Adjournment:**

Being no further input, Ernie made a motion to adjourn. Les seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

**Consent Agenda:**

Accounts Payable – Week ending 2/10/2023	Approved
Payroll Manifest – Week ending 2/8/2023	Approved
Minutes – Selectmen’s Meeting & Non-Public Sessions– 2/6/2023	Approved
Letter of Commitment – LRPC Household Hazardous Waste Collection 2023	Approved
STR Conditional Use Permit Renewal App – Andrew Roeder, 91 Deer Run Drive	Approved
Private Road Acknowledgement – Gary Grimes, 23A Milford Ave.	Approved

**Correspondence:**

Letter – LRPC re: Request for support of foam recycling program	Reviewed
Letter – Susan Harris re: Services provided at 3 Ossipee Lake Road	Reviewed
Report – Delinquent Tax Notice List	Reviewed
Report – Financial Statements for the year ending 12/31/2023	Reviewed
Newsletter – Ossipee Lake Alliance re: Meena, LLC Gas Station – 12/12/2023	Reviewed
Newsletter – NHMA Legislative Bulletin No. 7	Reviewed
Quotation – BMSI re: Hosted payroll support services	Reviewed
Receipt – Ricker Auto Salvage – metal recycling	Reviewed

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellen N. White, Town Administrator

Approved by the Board of Selectmen on \_\_\_\_\_:

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Leslie R. Babb

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Ernest F. Day, Jr.

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Melissa M. Florio