

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Approved Minutes for Regular Select Board Meeting
September 12, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Town Hall, 9 Main Street, Alstead, NH 03602

SELECT BOARD PRESENT: In person – Joel McCarty, Chair; Matthew Saxton, Vice Chair; Gordon Kemp, member.

GUESTS: Sarah Webb, Alstead Conservation Commission re: notifying residents of pending changes to recycling sorting rules

STAFF: Kim Kercewich, Fire Chief; Jesse Moore, Ambulance Chief; Steve Murrell, Police Chief; Steve Reynolds, Emergency Management Director; Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator; Prescott Trafton, Road Agent. **Google Meet** – Bobbie Wilson, Ambulance Lieutenant.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: In person - Jeanne Brooks, Marge Noonan, Barbara Viegner, Tim Roettiger, Joe Levesque & Judith Willis. **Google Meet** – Katy Haas.

CALL TO ORDER: After the group recited the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. McCarty called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:00 PM, and introduced the guest presenters.

GUEST TOPIC: Ms. Webb came to tell the Board that the Conservation Commission is willing to fund a mailing to Alstead residents when they are ready to formally communicate new recycling sorting rules. There is some confusion in the community and on the Board about whether new rules have actually been approved or not, and discussion ensued on that topic in an attempt to clarify what the intended changes are. Mr. Saxton continues to research and wants the conversation to continue because things are likely to change in the industry in the near future because new plants are being built. His goal is to make recycling as simple as possible and to avoid discouraging recycling. Mr. McCarty asked Mr. Kemp to distill his proposed plastic sorting changes to three sentences, and they would circle back to the proposal later in the meeting. The Board thanked Ms. Webb for the funding offer and for her time, and she departed.

ACTION ITEMS: Signed the payroll (\$32,657.20) and tax liability (\$6563.69) manifests for the 9/8 payroll. Signed the Bills manifest for the 9/5 billing cycle (\$57,867.89). Re-considered Mr. Levesque's volunteer grant writer application, set the time frame to 9/1/23 through 1/1/24 and signed it. Signed one supplemental timber cut intent and one timber tax bill (23-009-02-T, M63 L1). Signed the 2023 MS-535 auditor's report to the DRA. Signed the 2023 MS-1 report of valuation to the DRA. Signed one timber cut intent (23-009-11-T M15 L18). Signed two land use change tax bills (M49 L8, M24 L5). Reviewed a Letter of Support request for the Complete Streets grant effort, and signed it. Reviewed and signed a fire abatement application (M11 L62). Mr. McCarty invited the public to review all materials.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Mr. McCarty announced that the town has finally received all outstanding reimbursements from the state for the July 2021 flood expenses, in the amounts of \$369,864.10 for repair costs and \$14,364.82 for administrative costs. The group indulged in a round of appreciative applause for Mr. Trafton and his team for the exceptional work they did, not only in repairing the damage, but also in taking the extra time necessary to document and report their activities, which is key to achieving reimbursement approval.

MINUTES: Minutes of August 29, 2023 regular meeting. Minutes of August 29, 2023 Non-Public session. Mr. Kemp requested the following changes to the August 29 regular meeting minutes: 1. Page 2, paragraph 2, last sentence before the School Board report: Change "... moving away from the volunteer model for the squad." To "...hiring emergency workers into open town positions." 2. On page 2, paragraph 3, change "...farm equipment from the trail..." to "...farm equipment from the Cold River trail...". No other changes were requested. On a motion from Mr. Saxton that was seconded by Mr. Kemp, ***the Board voted to accept the minutes as corrected.***

OLD BUSINESS: Washout glass deposits – Mr. McCarty reported that the Board has received an additional complaint about waste glass being deposited on an Acworth property. Mr. McCarty and Mr. Trafton spoke with the resident. Mr. Trafton and Mr. Kemp visited the site, and described the extent of the deposit. The Road Agent wants to get on removal before leaves fall. There was additional discussion about the possible use of a vacuum truck and using excavator equipment to make piles for the truck to more easily evacuate. Mr. McCarty asked Mr. Kemp to arrange a meeting with all key players to brainstorm solutions. **Flood repair update** – Mr. Trafton spoke with a paving company about capping the Thayer Brook and North Road repair sites before winter, but hasn't yet heard back. Of top priority is getting

emergency vehicles through there in winter. The team is currently working on some undersized culverts in the North Road area and a Homestead Road site that floods. Culvert inventory for smaller sizes is good but need some 36" culverts and hoping for availability through the state for those. **Broadband** – Nothing to report. **Bridges** – Mr. McCarty reported that a consensus for 18 feet was reached for the Comstock Road bridge over Darby Brook. The bridge will remain one lane. The result was reported back to NH DOT and there is no change in liability, penalty, or cost with the narrower width, contrary to what was first believed. A meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 24th at 6 PM to hear the engineering firm present solution options for both the Comstock Road and Hill Road bridges. Mr. Saxton urged the public to attend and offer their input so that the character of the Comstock Road bridge location is preserved and the area remains the “lovely wooded glade that it is.” **Dams** – Mr. McCarty reported that he is working to issue a Request For Proposals to engineering firms to study both dams, using the same Qualifications-Based-Selection process used for the MOBIL bridge projects. He adds that he would like to accelerate the process for the benefit of 1) having a number for the January budget hearing, and 2) the opening of new funding in October. His goal is to post the RFP by 9/31 with a one-month turnaround, aiming for interviews around November 15th and a selection made by November 22nd. Stay tuned. **Sale of Town Real Estate** – Nothing to report. **Fire Department bylaws, policies & procedures** – Mr. Kemp asked to have this topic reinstated on the agenda going forward and reported that the first meeting with department officers was held and the next meeting is scheduled Thursday 9/14 at 6 PM in the Town Offices, public welcome. **Village Station lighting** – Mr. McCarty learned about a vendor who does work through state-supported program and asked Chief Moore to contact that vendor for more information. Mr. Kemp reported that he informed the vendor that repairs can proceed on the power entry to the Village Station. **Sign trailer maintenance agreement** – Mr. Trafton and Chief Murrell asked to have this item reinstated on the agenda because of the difficulty of programming the trailers without the maintenance support package that makes those services available through the web. Additional discussion of this need and the funds required to address it ensued. **Plastic recycling** – Mr. McCarty asked for Mr. Kemp’s sorting recommendations from the earlier discussion. On a motion from Mr. Kemp that was seconded by Mr. McCarty, the Board voted to modify the plastics collection process at the Transfer Station to request that people separate #1, #2 natural, and #2 colored whenever possible; however, there will still be a bin where people can continue to drop unsorted recyclable plastics if desired. **Glass recycling** – Mr. Saxton spoke with Alva Waste Services and explained where our recyclable glass goes. He noted that our glass must be audited to ensure that it contains no ceramic, no mirrors, no plate glass, no pyrex. There was more discussion about glass pulverizers that reduce all of those materials (including the offending ones) to a result that is basically sand. Mr. Trafton mentioned a plant that he heard of in the Swansey area that used to pulverize those materials and sell it back as usable material. Mr. McCarty asked Mr. Trafton to see if he could find out if that service is still available.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS: Transfer Station – Mr. Kemp reported on Mr. Esslinger’s behalf that the Transfer Station is experiencing difficulties with insufficient lead times for materials pickups, complicated by the lack of an arrival window. Mr. Kemp will follow up. **Administration** – Ms. Schoppmeyer reported that she has given 6 weeks’ notice and efforts are under way to hire a replacement. Two candidates have submitted applications since the position was posted on 8/31. A non-public session is scheduled on Wednesday 9/13 at 10 AM for an exit interview. **Police department** – Chief Murrell passed around a sample of the Narcan drop boxes that are available through the Life Safety Institute (See the link about Overdose Awareness on our Resources page, under Health and Wellness.) These are two-dose drop boxes that are available to anyone who asks for them. Every school has these drop boxes available and the Police Department has them on hand as well. Chief also reported that planning for Trunk or Treat has begun and the event is scheduled for Tuesday October 31st. Finally, Chief noted that the department has responded to 730 calls to date this year, compared to 582 calls at this time last year (previously the busiest year on record). Mr. McCarty urged the Chief to continue to think about the department’s needs and next year’s budget. **Fire department** – Chief Kercewich reported 75 calls to date including a house fire since the last meeting. That fire is being investigated by the state fire marshal. Chief indicates that the department has received the two much-needed SCBA air packs that were ordered via a 2023 warrant article. The department will partake in forestry training in Goshen this coming Sunday, 9/17, and in Charlestown next Thursday 9/21; and in swift water awareness training with RESCUE on 9/23. Mr. Kemp suggested that Chief be given a town credit card. On a motion from Mr. Kemp that was seconded by Mr. Saxton, **the Board voted to obtain a credit card on the town account for Chief Kercewich.** Chief plans to spend some money within his budget and warned the Board that he will be asking for a bigger budget next year. **Highway department** – Mr. Trafton reported that he has been trying to get the Gilsum Mine shoulder work done using the remainder of the Gilsum Mine paving budget (\$55,356 unspent). Bazin Brothers quoted \$34,200 plus materials, which the department will obtain from St. Pierre. He asked the Board to confirm that the work is considered part of the Gilsum Mine paving project. After seeking input from the public present at the meeting, the conclusion is that the work IS considered part of the paving project. On a motion from Mr. Saxton that was seconded by Mr. Kemp, **the Board voted to authorize completing the Gilsum**

Mine Road shoulders to the extent allowed by the remaining warrant article funds. Mr. Trafton reported that they are replacing culverts and grading when weather allows, and paying attention to the condition of the trucks, including Fire Department apparatus, as it is inspection season. The 2015 Dodge has a broken leaf spring; There's a credit at Keene Chrysler that can be used so there will be a purchase order for that plus an additional \$1500, hopefully the repair can be completed before snow flies. Other options being investigated. The Backhoe is due for replacement on the Capital Improvement Plan; looking at options there. We own all the CAT implements so looking at a CAT. Looking at the options through Clean Fleet grant program. Tina Nash offered to help with the Administration transition after her day job. Finally, Mr. Trafton reported that Tom Hancock Jr. contacted him about some materials that are available at Benson's and asked if the town could use it. There are some 30-foot I-beams that could be used to make a mezzanine in the grader shed for storing some equipment overhead. He accepted those materials and the team can build the overhead space when time allows. **Ambulance** – Chief Moore reported 114 calls year to date. He says that the drugs have been ordered for the new ambulance and the state is scheduled to inspect, hopefully next week. The team also encountered a situation that demonstrated the need for Community Medicine, and the squad was able to meet the need. The Ford ambulance needs a rocker panel and a fender before it can pass inspection. All of the equipment for the newer ambulance is on hand and installed. **Emergency Management** – Director Reynolds reported that there are five to seven projects in the air and he will have more updates on those at the next meeting. The landslide area at routes 123 and 12A is now much worse and material, including trees, is falling into the brook. It's clear that the state DOT and Right of Way people are looking at it and some tree work is being done. Our problem, but not our fix. The Board commended the Director for getting that slide area on the necessary state radars. The Road Agent indicated he had spoken with John Caufield, state engineer, about 123A by Vilas Pool Dam. Mr. Caufield indicated that the state is looking at engineering that road as a spillway. **School board** – Mr. Levesque reported that the State decided to raise adequacy aid (for a variety of complex reasons that he explained) from \$3700 to \$4100 per student, resulting in \$380,000 of unanticipated funds. The Board wants to take \$280,000 of that surplus to pave the parking lot, the access road, and the maintenance shed area, a project that was previously canceled because there was no contract in hand. A Public Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 9/14 at Fall Mountain auditorium to inform the public. A single-topic Special Meeting is planned for October 5, 2023 at 6 PM to vote on the project. In the end, there is a chance for a modest reduction in school taxes for Alstead in 2024. Mr. McCarty thanked Mr. Levesque for his service to the School Board. **Grants** – Mr. Levesque asked whether it was the BRIC grant that we intend to apply to for the dams, and noted that we have two dams but can only submit a grant request for one of them because you can only submit one grant application per year for those.

BOARD REPORTS: Planning & Zoning joint meeting – Mr. Kemp reported that after five years of hard work, a revised driveway permit form has finally been approved, and work is under way to revise zoning ordinances; input is wanted about zoning for manufactured housing, mobile homes, and other workforce housing options and seeks advice from Mr. Levesque and Southwest Region Planning Commission about this subject. There was ensuing discussion about the subject. Mr. Levesque suggested looking into a tool called Community Navigator and noted that other communities are exploring this topic as well, and we should reach out to towns in the pilot program to see if there is data there to plumb. **Benches** – Mr. Kemp reported that someone suggested that some benches would be nice on the Cold River Trail, and Mr. Kemp has offered to provide some rough-cut lumber for building benches, to which **the Board agreed with the donation by consensus.** **Tree work on Camp Brook Road** – Liberty Utilities is doing their four-year tree work on Camp Brook Road, Mr. Kemp will work with Prescott to identify any trees that are in the way for plowing or other reasons and get those trees prioritized for mitigation. **Admin transition** – Mr. Kemp noted that Ahmad Esfahani (planning/zoning administrator) has also offered to fill in or provide assistance during the administrative transition. **Vilas Pool** – Mr. Kemp reported that they are looking for someone to help close the Bell Tower at the park; takers can contact Mr. Kemp. The water will be shut off there this week for the season. **Building permit adjustment** -- The current building permit form has Melanie Marsden's phone number on it and that needs to be removed. **Budget discussions** – Ms. Schoppmeyer will schedule the Town Clerk/Tax Collector for the first budget discussion the first week in October.

NEW BUSINESS: DES Administrative Order questions - Tim Roettiger of Gilsum Mine Road raised the issue of a DES Administrative Order against an abutting property and wants to know the disposition of that order. His property line is in question and he wants to get a survey to clarify. When he purchased the property, he was told not get a survey because a survey would be done as part of the Administrative Order. He wants a survey to determine where his property line is. He has spoken to three surveyors and been told a variety of things but none of them is willing to do the work. The survey done by the abutting property owner is of questionable validity (performed by an unlicensed provider). Mr. McCarty suggested that he and Mr. Roettiger talk off-line about a way to get answers from DES and get

a survey done. **PTO policy clarification** – The Board decided to table this discussion for a future meeting and tasked the Admin to send the questions to the Highway and Police departments in case they can easily answer them.

There being no further business, on a motion from Mr. Kemp that was seconded by Mr. Saxton, **Mr. McCarty adjourned the meeting at 8:21 PM.**

INFORMATIONAL:

Next regular Select Board meeting:	Tuesday, September 19 th , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main St.
FM School Board meeting:	Monday, October 9 th , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, High School.
FM Budget Committee meeting:	Wednesday, October 18 th , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, High School.
MOBIL Bridge solutions meeting	Tuesday, October 24 th , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main St.
FMRHS Single Topic Public Meeting	Thursday, October 5 th , 2023 @ 6 PM
Next 5-Town Select Board meeting:	Wednesday, October 25 th , 2023 @ 4 PM, Acworth.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator