

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Select Board
Approved Minutes for Meeting of July 25, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Town Hall, 9 Main Street, Alstead, NH 03602

SELECT BOARD PRESENT: **In person:** Matthew Saxton, Gordon Kemp. **Conference call:** Joel McCarty.

STAFF PRESENT: **In person:** Junie Esslinger, Transfer Station; Kim Kercewich, Fire Chief; Mike Kercewich, Assistant Fire Chief; Ben Kercewich, Fire Department; Hans Mayer, Fire Lieutenant; Jesse Moore, Ambulance Chief; Stephen Murrell, Police Chief; Steve Reynolds, Emergency Management Director; Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator; Wendy Underwood, Police Corporal. **Google Meet:** Bobbie Wilson, Ambulance Lieutenant.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: **In person:** Jim Gordon, Joe Levesque, Marge Noonan, Barb Viegner, Judith Willis; Ann Hess, Lake Warren Association President; Lisa Tusveld, Lake Warren Association Vice President. **Google Meet:** None.

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Saxton called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:00 PM because Mr. McCarty is traveling and attending remotely.

ACTION ITEMS: Signed 7/28/23 payroll manifest (\$35,362.77). Signed 7/28 tax liability manifest (\$7407.53) and accounts payable manifest (\$31,5274.25). Considered one timber tax intent (M52 L2A); have questions, will follow up. Signed two Veteran tax credit applications and PA-35 response forms (M26 L4C, M10 L21A). Signed 10 Solar Exemption applications and PA-35 response forms (M11 L110, M66 L3, M36 L1, M22 L7A, M22 L7, M22 L13, M54 L24, M66 L10, M10 L21A, M26 L4C). Signed letter for the Trustee of Trust Funds requesting withdrawal of \$250,000 from the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund for use on engineering phase expenses for the MOBIL bridge projects, per 2022 warrant article #18.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: Minutes of June 18, 2023 regular meeting. On a motion made by Mr. Saxton and seconded by Mr. Kemp, *the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as written.*

OLD BUSINESS: Flood update – On the Road Agent’s behalf, Mr. Kemp reported that reps from various agencies (FEMA, NH Homeland Security Emergency Management), have toured the affected the flood damaged areas. The 2021 flood reimbursement paperwork is back in FEMA’s hands for approval processing. Roads in the worst areas are passable but it will be weeks or months before full repairs are made. Attempts are being made to make repairs in the most cost-effective way possible but it’s still not clear how extensive the impact is on the 2023 budget. **Broadband update** – Mr. Kemp reported that the scheduled informational meeting is delayed a couple of months. Working with Chief Murrell on improving the Cobb Hill communications tower capabilities. Alstead is still one of the first four towns on the list. **Bridge update:** Mr. McCarty has nothing new to report. **Dams:** Mr. Saxton reported that upon removing the one stop log Mr. Brown discovered that repairs were needed. A new log has been made and it is ready to be reinstalled. The lake level is good. **Ambulance housing:** A space has been created for the new ambulance and this item is completed. **Realtors for selling town property:** Mr. Saxton has nothing to report for this item. **East Station cleanup:** The Board is satisfied with the ongoing progress of clean-up efforts at the East Station. The UTV is now inside. There is fresh paint. Assistant Chief Kercewich explained why the best place for the backup gas-powered rescue tool is on Engine 3, as a means of avoiding calling Mutual Aid for a second tool. Engine 3 needs some reconfiguration before the tool can be stored on it; work in progress.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS: Police Department – Chief Murrell reported that year-to-date calls are at 585. The top 5 categories are mental health assistance 57; Phone assistance 43; Follow-up on open/existing cases 38; Other agency assistance 38; Animal complaints 24. Call volume per month for last 3 months - May, 109; June, 121; July, 55 - the slowest since February’s 35 calls. The department continues to monitor for residents in need and refer them to necessary services. Chief asked Mr. Levesque to help him write a grant request for body armor, which costs about \$1300 per set. The armor expires after a period of time but expired armor can be used as backup. Chief’s armor expires this year and Corporal Underwood’s armor expires next year. **Transfer station** – Mr. Saxton spoke with Dayton Duncan about Hazardous waste. In the past, towns have paid a population-based fee for their residents to bring own hazardous waste items to the Keene collection center (0-10 gal/vehicle \$100, 10-20gal/vehicle \$200, 20-50 gal/vehicle \$500). Alstead at one point paid the fee, but few participated. Alstead’s fee would be about \$2500 next year. Residents who want to participate can then bring their receipt to their town clerk and get reimbursed. Mr. Esslinger reported that

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probably 30 people have asked him about it recently. There is a scheduled day for the different towns. Mr. Saxton will pursue. Chief Murrell noted that the Town Clerk notified him about someone who inquired about getting permission to pan for gold under the bridge. Chief noted that the water is owned by the state but Alstead owns the land beneath the water, and his research indicates that the town should do some kind of permitting process, associated with mineral collection laws. Mr. Saxton will investigate; meanwhile, inquirers will be invited to attend a Select Board meeting and told that panning is not yet allowed pending development of a policy. **Fire Department** – Chief Kercewich reported a call level of 65 calls year-to-date. The department has been busy working on the action lists from the Board, the department, and the Safety Committee. There have been no recent brush fires. There is no information from the Fire Department Association about insurance for the Model T; the antique has no VIN number so no companies were willing to insure it. The inclination is to sell it to the Town so that it will be covered by the town insurance. The concern is that a future board might decide to sell it. No Memo of Understanding between the town and the FD Association is needed if the town owns the antique. **Emergency Management** – Mr. Kemp read Director Reynold's email report for the group: Efforts continue to gather all necessary information for NH Homeland Security and FEMA; The Director is working on a Walmart Community Grant to purchase water rescue equipment for the fire department; A retiring town truck could be refurbished as a brush truck for no more than \$35,000 and the team would like that much of the remaining ARPA money for the project; Primex considers use of a personally-owned vehicle to tow the brush truck an inappropriate risk. He proposed selling the gas-powered rescue tool. (Previously discussed - was purchased with grant money and one of the stipulations was that it could not be sold, it will be stored as backup on Engine 3 instead.) OEM meeting is Thursday 7/27 at 6 PM at the Town Offices; the agenda is to prioritize the Mitigation List problem areas for presentation to the Board. The Safety Committee has a partial list of items that need addressing at East Station and is waiting on the list from the Fire Department (now in hand) so they can create a master list to work from. Mr. Jasmin has stepped down from the Safety Committee due to work conflicts; the Director thanked him for his work getting the project started. Lieutenant Mayer inquired as to who is developing the specs for the brush truck and pointed out that normally the Fire Department is responsible for determining the requirements for its equipment. The Fire Chief observed that he has not been involved in the brush truck conversion project at all and the proposed number includes no input from the Fire Department. Mr. Saxton observed that no firm decision has been made about the conversion project. Mr. Kemp noted that someone had an idea and it's just being explored; nothing is written in stone. Mr. Esslinger asked about a generator stored in the Village Station that he has never seen used and wants to know what to do with it. Lt. Mayer offered to meet with him after the meeting to discuss. Mr. Levesque asked whether there was interest in adding a fourth bay to East Station and if so, the Hazard Mitigation Grant could be applied for to that end. Other possible grant projects are Thayer Brook culvert, Vilas Pool Spillway, and Complete Streets planning.) There followed some discussion about desired sidewalks and using volunteer effort with contractor oversight as solutions to some of these projects. **Incident report** – Ms. Schoppmeyer indicated that she received an incident report for damage done to a third-party vehicle at the Transfer Station and she will file an incident with Primex. **Gilsum Mine Road:** Paving is complete. Corporal Underwood noted that speeds have increased correspondingly along with warnings. Work on shoulders will be completed soon. **Glass deposits:** Mr. Kemp reported that he contacted several organizations seeking advice about getting funds to clean up the waste glass deposited by recent washouts, without success. The general opinion is that the Town should own the problem. Further discussion took place about the scope and extent of the problem, possible solutions, the original decision, disposal, a general digression into the complexities of recycling. The Board concluded that the issue needs to remain on the agenda until resolved. **Vilas Pool** – Mr. Kemp reported that events scheduled prior to the flood are still being held since they involve using space other than swimming and boating. He noted further that the Department of Environmental Services allowed him to re-use the original shoreland permit since it had not yet expired, so this has eased the effort somewhat. He is waiting on a cleanup estimate and FEMA has toured the site. He will work up a list for Primex of items to be replaced. **Real estate swap** - nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS: Sign trailer contract – The Board discussed whether to enter into a maintenance contract for the sign trailers. Highest amount is \$3000/year; there are other lower options. Mr. Kemp noted that the contract requires an escape clause. Mr. Kemp expressed reluctance to spend this money now because of the state of the budget, especially since it's not an emergency. They can still be used, but not necessarily optimally and there are a few unknowns. Could

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consider using ARPA money this time and budget for it next time. Mr. Saxton observed that we might want to conserve the remaining ARPA money for culvert expenditures. The item will be kept on the agenda as old business and periodically revisited.

BOARD REPORTS: Building permit – Mr. Saxton reported that he learned about a new zoning rule that considers not just distance to property line, but also how much pre-existing structure by square foot is close to the property line, and was able to grant a building permit he originally thought he would have to deny as a result.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Disaster declaration status - Mr. Levesque asked what the status of the disaster declaration is; the answer is things are still in the information gathering phase of the process. **Dam reclassification** - Ms. Hess of the Lake Warren Association expressed her pride in the Alstead community with the work being done to address flooding issues and is inspired to see the lessons learned from the 2005 flood integrated into the response. She also expressed concern about the relationship between the town and the association and would like to see more partnership and cooperation to accomplish community goals as pertains to the lake and the dam. Mr. Saxton apologized for wry humor that fell flat during last week's discussion and for not making progress on the appeal of the dam reclassification. The Board thanked Ms. Hess for being present and keeping the conversation on the front burner; he urged people to get involved. Ms. Hess noted that association membership is open to all residents, not just lake residents. There was extended discussion about the reclassification report and its contents. Mr. McCarty agreed to arrange visit by a Dam Bureau representative in August to explain and inform. **Community Power** – Mr. Levesque inquired if there is any interest in joining Community Power, observing that the effort is introducing competition that is inspiring Liberty Utilities to lower prices. Walpole offers residents 4 options. To participate, the Board needs to act. Mr. Levesque will seek someone who can provide more information to come present at a meeting.

INFORMATIONAL: The next regular meeting of the Select Board is scheduled for Tuesday, August 1st, 2023 at 6:00 PM. The Fall Mountain School Board next meets on Monday, August 14th, 2023 at the high school (2nd Monday of each month). The Fall Mountain Budget Committee next meets on Wednesday August 16th, 2023 at 6 PM at the high school (3rd Wednesday of each month). The next Five-Town Select Board meeting, originally scheduled for July 21st in Acworth, is rescheduled to October 25th, 2023 at 4 PM in Acworth. A public meeting to solicit input from and share information with interested parties re: the MOBIL Bridge projects will be held Tuesday August 22, 2023 at 6 PM at the Town Hall.

On a motion made by Mr. Kemp and seconded by Mr. Saxton, ***the public meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.***

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator