

**TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**Approved Minutes for Regular Select Board Meeting**  
**September 26, 2023 at 6:00 PM**  
**Town Hall, 9 Main Street, Alstead, NH 03602**

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

**GUESTS:** None scheduled.

**STAFF:** Ahmad Esfahani, Planning/Zoning Administrator; Junie Esslinger, Transfer Station; 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** – No staff.

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS:** In person – Bindy Curtis, Rosemarie Dowling, Glenn Elsesser, Joe Levesque, Rich Nalevanko, Marge Noonan, Barbara Viegenger, Judith Willis. **Google Meet:** Martha Heidl

**CALL TO ORDER:** After the group recited the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. McCarty called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:00 PM with a brief update on missing member Matt Saxton’s progress after recent surgery.

**ACTION ITEMS:** Signed three Vilas Pool expenditures (Bellows Construction for \$3,196.19 and Erik Wasklewicz Plumbing for \$300.00 and \$622.90).

**MINUTES:** Minutes of September 19, 2023 regular meeting. No changes were requested. On a motion from Mr. Kemp that was seconded by Mr. McCarty, ***the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes as submitted.***

**OLD BUSINESS: Washout glass deposits** – Ms. Schoppmeyer reported on Mr. Saxton’s behalf that no quote has yet been received from the vacuum truck owner. Mr. Kemp suggested posting a public meeting at the Cobb Hill site to view the extent of the problem. **Flood repair update** – Mr. Trafton reported that the road crew is wrapping up repairs on Cobb Hill Road. He has been unable to bring in a part timer to help due to the favorable haying weather, they’re in good shape with grading, and he is still waiting on numbers for paving Thayer Brook and North Roads before winter. **FEMA meeting** – Mr. Kemp attended a meeting with FEMA where he learned that because this storm did not occur during the pandemic, the federal reimbursement 75% instead of 90%. In addition, he learned that the town can report volunteer time so he reported his time attending that meeting. FEMA recommends doing a Hydraulics and Hydrology study on Thayer Brook Road to improve chances of getting funding for that bridge. The study would also be needed for obtaining permits on that project. **Broadband** – Nothing new to report. **Bridges** – Mr. McCarty reminded those present about the meeting that is scheduled and posted for Tuesday, October 24<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM to hear the engineering firm present solution options for both the Comstock Road and Hill Road bridges. **Dams** – Mr. McCarty reported that a \$2000 sole-source proposal is in hand from a vendor recommended by Hoyle Tanner. The proposal is for writing the Request for Proposals for the work needed to address the Vilas Dam Letter of Deficiency and the Warren Dam Reclassification Letter. Mr. McCarty stressed that while this is a sole-source proposal, the vendor comes recommended by the bridge engineering firm and urges taking that into consideration. Additional discussion took place about the trees near the dam, the qualifications of the vendor, misgivings about not soliciting more proposals, the process, and the deliverables. Multiple motions were fielded and withdrawn during the discussion until, on a motion from Mr. McCarty that Mr. Kemp seconded, ***the Board voted to sign the proposal if the Dam Bureau gives a favorable opinion of both the proposal and the vendor.*** [The Dam Bureau approved and the Board Chair signed the proposal the next day.] **Grant Extension Deadline** – Mr. McCarty provided Mr. Levesque with a letter from Southwest Region Planning Commission that indicates that the submission deadline for Complete Streets grant applications has been extended. **Sale of Town Real Estate** – Nothing to report. **Fire Department bylaws, policies & procedures** – Mr. Kemp reported that work continues. **Village Station lighting** – Mr. Kemp reported that Jack Fuller of SWNH Electric & HVAC determined that the power entrance to the Village Station could be repaired without replacing the wire from the pole and made the repair at no cost to the town. The Board expressed their gratitude for Mr. Fuller’s donation of his time and talents. Mr. Trafton reported that he contacted New England Electrics, a state-sanctioned company that offers energy audits and is waiting to hear back about recommendations for retrofitting the fire station and possibly other buildings with more energy efficient lighting. **Sign trailer maintenance agreement** – nothing to report, the agreement will be revisited in October. **Plastic recycling** – Work in progress. Switching to new sorting procedures has introduced some confusion. Ms. Viegenger wondered if the idea could be discussed at the 5-town Select Board meeting and maybe all five towns could benefit from hearing what the other towns are doing. There was extended

discussion. **Old cruiser** – Chief Murrell reported that the vehicle has not been evaluated yet. **Model T disposition** – There was extensive refreshing of memory about the lack of progress on this issue. For the privately-owned antique vehicle to be stored in a town building, it must have insurance and a Memo of Understanding between the town and the Fire Department Association must be created. Attempts to insure it privately stalled because of the lack of a VIN on the engine. Mr. Elsesser recommended checking with Haggarty’s for insurance. Mr. McCarty will contact Fire Department Association President Mike Kercewich for follow-up. **Disposition of 2012 Dodge Repurposing** – The lack of a decision on this project means the JLMC will have to get new numbers for the work. For more memory refreshment, the reason for repurposing the truck was to provide a town-owned vehicle that could tow the side-by-side brush truck to a fire scene instead of towing it with a personally owned vehicle. The side-by-side is an asset that is still in use and has passed inspection and is registered with permanent plates but travels slowly; under its own power, it can respond only to local sites. Mr. McCarty proposes a Brush Truck warrant article for town meeting. Primex requires a memo of understanding for anyone undertaking towing it with a personally owned vehicle. There was extended discussion about mutual aid implications, the option to return it to the state if the 2012 Dodge is repurposed, and the differences between a memo of understanding and a memo of agreement. Pulling it on a trailer with a privately owned vehicle poses liability problems not for the town, but for the owner of the vehicle that is towing it. Multiple motions were proposed and withdrawn during the discussion until, on a motion from Mr. Kemp that was seconded by Mr. McCarty, ***the Board voted unanimously to disallow towing of the side-by-side brush truck by a personally owned vehicle without a Memo of Understanding that satisfies Primex.*** Mr. Kemp will contact Primex for advice on what the memo of understanding should contain.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS: Transfer Station** – Busy and working to smooth out plastic sorting changes. Mr. Kemp made a motion to accept only #1 and #2 plastics at the recycling center. Mr. McCarty clarified that all other plastics would go to the compactor. There was additional discussion about the complexities of compacting plastics that the covers are still on, and the motion was tabled for a future discussion. The department is gathering its budget details. **School Board** – Mr. Levesque reported that the Board was reviewing recent hires, and is studying a request to become an anchor district for a community. Further he reported that the new superintendent would be at Vilas School Thursday 9/28 at 5 PM for a meet and greet. Mr. McCarty reported a bloody fracas on a school bus in Alstead on Monday 9/25, to which our emergency teams responded and received high marks for their performance. **Capital Improvements** – Mr. Elsesser asked department heads to please bring their capital improvement requests to their scheduled budget presentation appointments. He also suggested not having a cost of living increase this year, but to instead have department heads to proposed merit raises for their personnel. He asked whether any employee reviews have been done (no). Mr. Elsesser asked whether the 2022 audit reports were completed, he would like access to the reports. He asked about encumbering the funds to complete the shoulder work on Gilsum Mine Road, but that was addressed at the last meeting to be completed this year. **Emergency Management** – Director Reynolds reported that the state was ending its relationship with the Code Red emergency alert system vendor as of December 31. The relationship with the new vendor takes effect on January 1, 2024. The Director reiterated his question from last week about the hydrant on the green – Chief Kercewich indicated that the hydrant is known to function at a reduced flow rate because of the height of the pad, so it is not used as a primary water source for the pumper. Director Reynolds then asked about several items on the Primex report, such as the safety sensors on the overhead doors, the vehicle exhaust system, and the disposal of long-stored unused chemicals. Chief Kercewich plans to contact Clean Harbor or Safe T Clean to determine how to dispose of it. The Board asked Chief to get pricing for disposal for next week. The Director requested that the JLMC Safety Committee be advised of the status of the work at East Station and requested a report in writing. The Office Administrator is tasked with forwarding the report sent by Primex on August 2. **Police department** – Chief Murrell reported that his cruiser repair bill came to one thousand three hundred ninety-five dollars and sixty-four cents for brakes and a rear wheel bearing. Trunk or Treat sign-ups commence this week. Chief asked the Board for permission to personally make changes to the evidence room to comply with state standards requiring a lockable area for firearms and drugs to be held away from other areas; he would like to pay for the materials out of the Repairs and Maintenance budget. The Board asked him for a number and to give Mr. Kemp an opportunity to donate some materials. Chief is working to No Trespass someone from Town Property and wants to know if he should do it on his own authority or as a shared responsibility with the Board. Mr. McCarty indicated it is probably best as a shared responsibility but requested more information from Chief via email in order to submit an inquiry to NHMA legal inquiries to determine best practice. Finally, Chief reported seven hundred fifty-one calls to date, which is approximately 140 more calls than last year at this time. Mr. McCarty thanked Chief again for PD support during the previously mentioned bus incident and there was a short rumination about the benefits of cameras on the busses. Chief reported that he and his son and some people from the Ambulance and Fire teams, as well as others from other towns, participated in some “really excellent” swift water rescue training delivered by Rescue, Inc. on the Millot Green on Saturday 9/23. There was discussion about how to pay for that training. **Ambulance** – Chief Moore reported seven calls this week so far and that

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the Paramedic Service state inspection is scheduled for 9 AM Wednesday 9/27, with the expectation that the vehicle could go into service by Noon that day. Ability to bill Medicare and Medicaid to follow within 30-60 days. When the new vehicle goes into service, the older ambulance will go into the shop for repair and servicing and should be out of commission for about three weeks. Chief commended his crew for replacing the battery in the ambulance very quickly last week. The Board thanked the Ambulance department for all of their efforts toward achieving Paramedic Service status. **Highway** – Mr. Trafton reported that Cobb Hill Rd. work starts tomorrow and they are still working on administrative paperwork associated with the 2023 flood. There were a couple of service calls, and there was trouble with an area on Pine Grove near the lake that had been graded recently and there was additional discussion about the lack of road base in that area, dust control chemicals, the wish to pave that area, other problems there, and some of the proposed solutions. Mr. Trafton further reported that he responded to a Homestead Road resident who attended the last meeting to ask about flooding that occurs on that road and he spoke to a landowner complaining about flooding on his property due to inadequate culverts. Finally, Mr. Trafton reported that vehicle inspections are in progress and the 2012 Dodge is getting a new leaf spring. **Vilas Pool** – Mr. Trafton reported that he plans to open the Vilas Dam gate to inspect for debris in the coming week. Mr. Kemp reported that some people have offered to help clean up silt at the park using their own equipment. Mr. McCarty asked Mr. Kemp to please check with Primex about use of privately- owned equipment on town property. Mr. Kemp will contact Primex. Mr. Kemp is investigating an insurance claim for Vilas Pool for this year’s flood damage, and reported that most things that are covered by insurance cannot be claimed for FEMA reimbursement. **Fire Department** – Chief Kercewich reported 80 calls to date and asked if the Board would consider putting the VFA Grant money back in the Forestry budget. Mr. McCarty indicated that the budget line is present and has one dollar in it, and he should go ahead and apply for the grant. It is a matching grant and the town has to lay out the money first. Mr. Elsesser asked what the grant would be used to purchase; Chief indicated that he plans to finish purchasing some protective clothing and replace some twenty-five-year-old hose. **Administrative** – Ms. Schoppmeyer reported that the Health Insurance premiums will increase by 15.6 percent this year. Mr. Trafton asked whether this issue can be investigated by the Five-Town Select Board meeting with an eye toward increasing our group size to save money. Mr. Elsesser asked how many candidates have applied for the Office Administrator position (three). There was additional discussion about the hiring process, candidates, divisions of labor, and an exploratory trip to Lyndeboro made by Mr. McCarty and Mr. Nalevanko a few years ago to investigate hiring a Town Administrator that had a positive outcome.

**BOARD REPORTS: Grading** – Mr. Kemp reported that he received some complaints about the Walpole Valley Road area of Alstead and requested that the Road Crew grade that area when they have time. **Beaver Dam damage** – Mr. Kemp reported that he visited Mr. Hancock Jr.’s property and has submitted a question to NHMA legal inquiries about beaver dams, and would welcome additional visits by other town representatives. There was additional discussion by others who have witnessed those dams let go, both this year and in 2021, and how much money has been spent on repairs in that area in recent years. **NRRA pickup issues** – Mr. Kemp looked into this Transfer Station problem and spoke to NRRA about it. They have no control over the bidders who win the business and the trucking arrangements they make, so there is not much that can be done about it. Work in progress. **Camp Brook Road trees** – Mr. Kemp spoke with Liberty Utilities about trees on Camp Brook Road and will arrange to meet with the Road Agent to find out if there are any trees near the power line area that should be prioritized. **IRS Letter** – Mr. Kemp reported that, having received no letter from the IRS confirming the town’s tax-exempt status, he contacted them again and requested another letter on 9/25. Another letter should be sent within 10-14 days; the office will be on the lookout for it.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Mrs. Dowling asked how to go about getting Pine Cliff Road paved. Mr. Elsesser suggested that the Road Agent bring some numbers to the table so that it can be put in the Capital Improvement Plan and prioritized among other road and bridge projects. Mr. Levesque pointed out that Alstead can have only one FEMA grant application per year. There was additional discussion about grants, how much it might cost, the capital improvement plan, the fact that paved roads cost less to maintain, the challenges of getting a dirt road paved in the first place, the effects of inflation on capital reserve savings, and the need for an engineering study and design. The conclusion was that everyone should buy more lottery tickets.

There being no further public business, on a motion from Mr. Kemp that was seconded by Mr. McCarty, **Mr. McCarty recessed the public meeting at 7:57 PM to allow the room to clear for two non-public sessions.**

On a motion from Mr. Kemp that Mr. McCarty seconded, the Board voted by roll call (McCarty – Y, Kemp – Y) to enter non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A: II (b) at 8:07 PM. The Board reviewed and approved the minutes from the session before returning to public session.

On a motion from Mr. Kemp that Mr. McCarty seconded, the Board voted to return to public session at 8:10 PM.

On a motion from Mr. Kemp that Mr. McCarty seconded, the Board voted by roll call (McCarty – Y, Kemp – Y) to enter non-public session RSA 91-A: II (a) at 8:11 PM. The Board reviewed and approved the minutes from the session before returning to public session.

On a motion from Mr. Kemp that Mr. McCarty seconded, the Board voted to return to public session at 8:15 PM.

There being no further business, on a motion from Mr. Kemp, **Mr. McCarty adjourned the public meeting at 8:16 PM.**

**INFORMATIONAL:**

<b>Next regular Select Board meeting:</b>	Tuesday, October 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main St.
<b>FM School Board meeting:</b>	Monday, October 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, High School.
<b>FM Budget Committee meeting:</b>	Wednesday, October 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, High School.
<b>MOBIL Bridge solutions meeting</b>	Tuesday, October 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main St.
<b>Next 5-Town Select Board meeting:</b>	Wednesday, October 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 @ 4 PM, Acworth.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator