

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Approved Minutes for Select Board Meeting
November 1, 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: Chief Kercewich re: presentation of Fire Department budget for 2024

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

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: In person –Glenn Elsesser, Joe Levesque, Marge Noonan, Barbara Viegner, Judith Willis. **Google Meet** – Bindy Curtis.

CALL TO ORDER: After the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, Mr. McCarty called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:00 PM and yielded the floor to Chief Kercewich.

PRESENTATION: Chief Kercewich presented the 2024 Fire Department and Forest Fire budget requests.

Department	2024 Request	2023 Budget
Fire Department	\$63,556 (includes an FD Grant line with \$1 in it) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased wages anticipated • Equip – 3 sets turnout gear Discussed a WA for SCBA breathing equip	\$51,826
Forest Fire	\$6075 Increased wages, mileage, and the grant line. (Most wages this year were for training. The FF grant is for \$2800 to replace hoses, not notified yet; must spend the money to get half of it back). New equipment for FF might include hand tools backpack and portable pumps, and chainsaws. Discussed forest fire hoses.	\$2595

There was extended discussion about stored SCBA tanks in Village Station, the 4% cap and how to calculate it under the new simplified policy (Total amount being spent minus revenue), and the mechanics of the budget process. Mr. McCarty asked for a photograph of the stamps on the stored SCBA bottles and the information be recorded in a spreadsheet, as a means of tracking what is in inventory and deciding what needs to be bought in any given year. There was extended discussion about the frequency with which to replace the SCBA units, the useful life of the bottles versus the useful life of the packs, an appropriate replacement frequency, and whether an accurate inventory is available. The Board is reluctant to request additional purchases without sufficient supporting documentation in the form of a spreadsheet and agrees that information needs to be cataloged. Mr. McCarty will support the development of that information. Mr. Elsesser gathered information about the fire department vehicles for the Capital Improvement Plan (2003 Pierce, \$900 thousand; 2006 International Tanker, 30 years, \$600 thousand; 2016 Pumper, 25 years, no figure now). Chief Kercewich made one last point about the bottles and their expiration dates, which is that DOT sets those expiration dates because the tanks are carried on roads. Mr. Kemp asked about mental health training required for first responders and asked whether the Fire Department members were meeting that statutory requirement. It is online training and Chief indicated that all members were asked

to take it, but there is no enforcement in place and no verification. There was lengthy additional discussion. *On a motion from Mr. Kemp that was seconded by Mr. McCarty, the Board voted unanimously that the Fire and Ambulance Chiefs to order their teams to complete the RSA 21-p:12-g mandatory online PTSD training and supply proof of completion to the Office Admin before year's end.*

ACTION ITEMS: Signed the payroll and tax liability manifests for the 11/3 payroll (\$28,564.52, \$5822.38). Signed the bill manifest for the 10/31 and 11/1 payables (\$40,971.47). Signed one timber tax bill (M27 L3).

MINUTES: Minutes from October 24, 2023; Minutes from October 27, 2023 re: resume review; Minutes from October 24, 2023 NPS re: welfare. Minutes from October 24, 2023 NPS re: Hiring a public employee. No changes were requested. On a motion from Mr. Saxton that Mr. Kemp seconded, *the Board voted unanimously to accept all sets of minutes as submitted.*

OLD BUSINESS: **Washed-out glass** – Mr. McCarty reported that those he spoke to in Concord on this subject have not responded to his Friday request for an update. Efforts continue. Some concern was expressed about waiting too long to respond. The Board noted that ideas about how to respond are sparse, thus the good faith effort to get advice about what's appropriate from Concord and other sources. **Flood repairs** – Mr. Trafton reported that he is working with FEMA to discuss July flooding and visited the Thayer Brook site to discuss how much will be required to fix that site. Advice from FEMA was to move forward with the 406 grant opportunity. There was a lengthy discussion about which grants to seek, what studies to do, what permits are needed, and what can be reimbursed. **Broadband** – Mr. Kemp reported that he contacted the state and received no concrete information about when Alstead work will commence; he will continue to monitor. **Bridges** – nothing new to report. Mr. Kemp indicated that he had the Office Admin add a notation to the account description for the bridge expenditures to include the 2022 bridge capital reserve warrant article to help remind where that money is coming from and he added that at the informational meeting where the bridge solutions were presented, unanimity was achieved on the selection of options. The only change was to add paving to the Comstock Road bridge. **Dams** -- nothing new to report; no news on the Spaulding letter. **Sale of town-owned properties (Corbin Rd, Caldwell Pond Rd)** – Two realtors have information about the properties being sold and the Office Admin is doing deed research. **Property status for M11 L2** – Mr. McCarty contacted NHDES to ask about soil testing and contractors who offer it. **Village Station Lighting** – Director Reynolds noted that the lighting issues with Village Station have been noted on the Safety Inspection report for the Village Station. Pricing for LED upgrades will be explored and Mr. Levesque will investigate USDA grant opportunities. Technology changes make it likely that only a few LED fixtures will be able to replace the many fluorescent or incandescent fixtures. Mr. Kemp noted that an air dryer is needed on the Village and East Station air compressors to address water going into the truck. **Transfer station pricing** – Mr. Levesque noted that residents are missing a document that explains the charges for dropping certain items at the Transfer Station. In addition, Mr. Levesque suggested posting an informative letter about the do's and don'ts of plastic recycling on the Transfer Station page of the town web site. There was extended discussion about baling, plastics, current procedures, and the confusion level. **Model T** – Mr. McCarty is waiting on a response from Mike Kercewich, who is seeking a second appraisal. **2012 Dodge** – There was discussion of the impact of the presence of pollution control components on the private sale price. Mr. Kemp is seeking advice about whether it is legal for a municipality to remove the pollution control components from a town vehicle. **Disposal of barrel of chemicals @ East Station** – Chief Kercewich heard from Clean Harbor and has provided them with information about the contents of the barrel; Clean Harbor is seeking a disposal location for it.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS: **Fire** – Chief Kercewich reported 85 runs to date; school inspections begin Friday 11/3; and he is looking into a debriefing for the serious accident that occurred on route 12A early this week. **Ambulance** -- Chief Moore noted that an evaluation will be conducted next Tuesday at 5 PM for radio-over-

phone technology, which can save money on expensive radios given that everyone carries phones. He reported 143 calls to date and indicated that the ambulance team will attend the accident debriefing. The old ambulance is inspected but the garage cannot take it in for repairs until next year. The squad is maintaining their relationship with the current paramedic provider but has not had to use it much because they've been able to get one of our own paramedics when called for. Expecting to bill for our paramedic services beginning first of the year. **Highway** – Mr. Trafton reported numbers for his “2024 paving menu,” which includes paving Drewsville Rd., Homestead Road, the Cobb Hill apron, North Road, and the Corbin Road apron at Thayer Brook for a total of \$453,126. There was discussion about the Town Hall and Town Offices not being included in these estimates because of the need for re-sloping and drainage and to do that as one job. Grading is still in progress; it's been hard to grade the dirt roads now because of leaves and rain. Hoping to grade Pine Cliff again before it freezes. Low on cutting edges right now because the dirt roads are so much harder due to packing caused by rain. The dredge permit for in front of Vilas Dam is now expired but it was in effect when the flood happened. When asked if there is any money available for dredging, FEMA indicated that there is but only if the buildup has been carefully documented. Snow is coming. The department has not yet returned to the 5-day schedule, probably Thanksgiving time frame. Mr. McCarty noted that for Lake Warren Dam RFP, will need a traffic count with school in session and before snow, plus estimated speed versus reality, and would like speed signs be placed to gather data. Mr. Kemp suggested making the paving menu paving warrant article for 2024. There was discussion of the Pratt Road apron at the intersection with 12A and whether it should be modified for safety; this was added to the agenda for future discussion. Mr. Trafton noted CIP costs for the grader (\$450K with wing, no trade) and the backhoe (\$189K-\$190K no trade) and observed that truck prices are going up. Finally, Mr. Trafton noted that department heads purchasing supplies from LaValley or CarQuest should ask those vendors to note what department it is for so that when it is delivered to the Highway Barn he knows whom to notify. **Emergency Management** -- Chief Moore noted that the overhang posts over the doors are rotting again at both stations and he has asked for replacement quotes; Director Reynolds noted that those are on the Safety Inspection report. Director Reynolds also noted that the East Station and Village Station aprons should be paved and striped and he asked that the Office Admin contact the Irving service rep and ask that when the East Station furnace is serviced later in the month, the overhead heating unit also be included in the servicing. In addition, Director Reynolds noted that the Transfer Station inspection will take place on the coming Saturday and that the only remaining locations to inspect are Bragg Lane and the Library. Chief Moore passed information about a grant for East Station exhaust vent repair to Mr. Levesque.

BOARD REPORTS: Tax payment agreement – Mr. McCarty indicated that the Tax Collector is working on a more comprehensive payment agreement for taxpayers wanting to work with the town to get their tax bills current. **Petition warrant articles** – Mr. McCarty observed that there are three petitions circulating – one for RSA 49-b to change to the Town Manager government model; one to legalize cultivation of the coca plant; and one to legalize cannabis. **Debris buildup in watershed areas on private property** – In response to an email from a Comstock Road resident who sent photos of debris building up into dams in Darby Brook, Mr. Saxton reported that he contacted the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service). The service is happy to talk with and provide information to residents. The Highway department cannot do anything about these problem areas because they are on private property. Additional discussion followed about similar problems developing in landslide areas. **Beaver dams** – Mr. Kemp reported that he is planning a meeting at 4:30 PM at the beaver dam on Cobb Hill Rd and that interested parties are welcomed to attend. He is following up on Moose Plate Grant paperwork and candidate job interviews are planned for Thursday and Friday. Mr. Kemp further requested that the Langdon transfer station fee be added to the agenda for next week.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Snowmobile bridge – Mr. Reynolds reported that the snowmobile bridge that was falling into the river was removed and re-set over the weekend. Mr. Elsesser asked if there was a contract Minutes for Select Board Meeting of November 1, 2023

for the Historical Society steeple per the 2023 warrant article; Mr. Saxton will follow up. Then he asked if the town had taken delivery of the new dump truck per the 2023 warrant article and Mr. Trafton reported no news. Mr. Elsesser then suggested that it is time to pay attention to revenue predictions for 2024 and how much will penalties and fines drop since taxes are being so fully paid. The Board plans to focus on the hiring situation first and then begin the budget workshops.

There being no further public business, on a motion from Mr. McCarty that was seconded by Mr. Kemp, ***Mr. McCarty recessed the public meeting at 8:10 PM for five minutes to allow the room to clear for one non-public session.***

On a motion from Mr. Kemp that Mr. McCarty seconded, the Board voted by roll call (McCarty – Y, Saxton – Y, Kemp – Y) to enter non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A: II (b) at 8:14 PM. The Board reviewed and approved the minutes from the session before returning to public session.

On a motion from Mr. McCarty that Mr. Kemp seconded, the Board voted to return to public session at 8:20 PM.

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

INFORMATIONAL:

Next regular Select Board meeting:	Tuesday, November 7 th , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main St.
FM School Board meeting:	Monday, November 12 th , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, High School.
FM Budget Committee meeting:	Wednesday, November 15 th , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, High School.
Next 5-Town Select Board meeting:	TBD -- reschedule in progress

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator