

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Approved Minutes for Select Board Meeting
November 14, 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. Mr. Kemp led the meeting.

STAFF: **In Person** – Junie Esslinger, Transfer Station; Kim Kercewich, Fire Chief; Jesse Moore, Ambulance Chief; Steve Murrell, Police Chief; Steve Reynolds, OEM Director; Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Admin; Prescott Trafton, Road Agent. **Google Meet** – Bobbie Wilson, Ambulance Lieutenant.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: **In person** – Jeanne Brooks, Bindy Curtis, Glenn Elsesser, Joe Levesque, Rich Nalevanko, Marge Noonan, Barb Viegener, Judith Willis. **Google Meet** – None.

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 the Transfer Station team.

GUESTS: 2024 budget presentations: Transfer Station budgets (Sanitation Administration and Solid Waste Disposal) – Bindy Curtis and Junie Esslinger

Transfer Station budget – Ms. Curtis outlined the 2024 proposed budget for the Transfer Station, which amounts to \$82,800 for Sanitation Administration and \$128,300 for Solid Waste Disposal. The Sanitation Administration line items that saw increases are Wages, Phone, Training, Supplies, Maintenance & Repairs, and New Equipment; Equipment rental and Vehicle Repairs both decreased slightly. The Solid Waste Disposal line items that saw increases are Hazardous Waste, Compactor, and Paper disposal and Trucking. The Fluorescent bulb, propane, tires, electronics, and freon lines all decreased. When the floor was opened for questions, Mr. Trafton suggested that if the anticipated backhoe replacement warrant article does not pass, the vehicle repairs line might need to be increased because the existing backhoe is aging and already has repairs that are needed. Mr. Kemp suggested that the Equipment Rental line seems low if we are going to need to rent a skid steer. Mr. Levesque noted that there is no line item for glass disposal and that the 2023 number might be used. Mr. Elsesser asked about figures for the Capital Improvement plan, citing the existing entry for a Compactor and requesting updated figures and replacement timeframe. Mr. Reynolds noted that during the recent safety inspection the cement pad on which the dumpsters are parked was flagged as needing replacement and safety fencing is needed to prevent people climbing between the dumpsters. Mr. McCarty asked about projected revenue for 2024. The current YTD revenue for 2023 is 94,700 (including the Langdon share). Mr. Nalevanko asked whether the increased wages was from increasing the number of people (no, increased hours or pay rate only). There was additional discussion about calculating the Langdon number, where recycled glass goes, and the state as a purchase source for a skid steer if purchasing.

ACTION ITEMS: Signed the Bills Manifest (\$49,293.40) for the 11/14 billing cycle. Signed the Payroll manifest (\$31079.76) and the Payroll Tax Liability manifest (\$6213.45) for the 11/17 payroll. Signed one solar tax exemption application and response (M11L117). Signed two pay rate increases (highway department). Signed one Vilas Pool expenditure for Liberty Utilities (\$55.02).

MINUTES: Minutes from November 7, 2023; Minutes from November 7, 2023 NPS re: Hiring. Mr. Reynolds requested that the phrase “...reports were provided” be changed to “...reports will be provided” in the Emergency Management department report on page 2. On a motion from Mr. Saxton that Mr. Kemp seconded, ***the Board voted unanimously to accept all sets of minutes as corrected.***

OLD BUSINESS: Washout glass – Upon hearing that someone suggested that the town should notify the state Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), Mr. McCarty reported that this is already done and there is a case number. In addition, he reported that he is convening a meeting with the case manager, her boss, and her boss' boss to discuss solutions. Ideas are welcomed. The problem affects fields and woodlots, public and private, in two towns and two counties. There was some additional discussion about vacuuming, staking off areas, cost, and options. **Flood repairs** – The Road Agent reported that the Thayer Brook bypass and North Road flood-damaged locations are now paved and additional skim-coat work was done on Corbin Road and North Road. There is frustration associated with lost emergency permit paperwork and FEMA. Mr. McCarty suggested that the same engineer that did the Dams RFQ could also do the Hydraulics and Hydrology study for the Thayer Brook reconstruction project. Mr. Saxton reported that work is in progress to obtain a letter of permission from the owner of the property where the Thayer Brook Road emergency bypass was done, which is needed for FEMA documentation. **Broadband** – Mr. Kemp reported no updates on new broadband progress, and Mr. McCarty reported that he has an appointment to discern the issues associated with the Comcast Franchise Agreement on Wednesday 11/15. **Bridges** – Nothing new to report. **Dams** – Mr. McCarty reported that the Request for Qualifications from Stephens Engineering is in hand, blessed by DES, and ready for posting. Further, Mr. McCarty sent photos of logjams on Bell Hill to the Dam Bureau, explaining that there are several of these in town and asking for permission to allow private landowners to volunteer to go in and remove the logjams without a permit. The concern is a building threat to public infrastructure. Dam Bureau suggested speaking to Wetlands, which has not yet offered a contact or referral. Mr. Elsesser suggested contacting the Acworth Office Administrator, who has been researching same. **Sale of town properties** -- One realtor declined the opportunity to list and the other is researching deeds prior to writing a listing agreement. **M11 L2 acquisition (adjacent to town hall)** – Mr. Kemp reported that conversations continue and he provided information about donating property as a tax deduction, which requires an independent appraisal. Mr. Saxton observed that before accepting the donation the Town would need to know what is in the dirt on that property given that the site has hosted a machine shop and other businesses over time. Mr. McCarty noted that he has contacted the Solid Waste people at DES and is awaiting a reply. Mr. Levesque offered to contact the brownfields committee at Southwest Regional Planning Commission to see if any information is available. **FD Bylaws, Policies & Procedures** – nothing to report, more to come after a meeting to take place next week. **Village Station lighting** – Ambulance Chief Moore reported that after talking to peers at the Town of Walpole, he has reached out to contacts at New Hampshire Energy Conservation Grant which has a program where the Town pays up front and gets reimbursed for 50%. He is arranging for a visit. **Sign trailer agreement** – Chief Murrell suggested that since we don't need the traffic reporting perhaps consider the programming-only 1-yr option for \$1500. Mr. Elsesser suggested a warrant article for the three-year contract, which offers substantial savings. Mr. Kemp suggested that if money permits, the Board commit to a one-year contract to get what is needed in the near term and then float the warrant article for the three-year contract at the budget hearing. **Plastic recycling** – Mr. Saxton confirmed that people can take 1-7 plastics to the Transfer Station for collection. **Model T** – Mr. McCarty reported no progress, still waiting for an appraisal. **2012 Dodge repurposing** – Discussion ensued about the need for cost estimates for repurposing the Highway Department vehicle to a Fire Department brush truck, whether to restore the emission control equipment, the fines for removing the emission control equipment, trailering, where to store the vehicle once repurposed, and who will write the warrant article. Mr. Reynolds is gathering new numbers. **East Station chemical barrel** – Chief Kercewich reported that Clean Harbors is looking into where to dispose of the chemical but has not returned a cost until a location is identified. **Overhead door opener replacement, East station doors** – Chief Kercewich reported that Champion quoted \$2295 per door installed; Keene Overhead Door quoted \$1055-1140 plus installation; Garage Door Rescue quoted \$1375 per door installed. The current openers cannot accept the sensor,

hence the replacement. Garage Door Rescue also quoted on fixing the Village Station damaged panel in the Engine 1 door at \$850 (has sensors). Ambulance door does not have sensors; quoted replacing the opener at \$1375. Further discussion took place about insurance and priorities. Need Certificate of Insurance from the vendor, Fire Chief will obtain. On a motion from Mr. Kemp that Mr. McCarty seconded, the Board voted unanimously that the Village Station doors be repaired for a total of \$2225, the East Station opener replacements be deferred, and Chief obtain an insurance certificate. **Pratt Road/12A intersection apron safety** – There was extended discussion about this apron and its sight lines. Mr. Kemp indicated that he spoke with a civil engineer who indicated that it was not safe and it would be preferable to re-align the angle of the north fork and close the south fork. The presence of a utility pole in the apron adds additional complexity. Southwest Regional Planning also offers safety audits of intersections and this was discussed further, including a historical fact about members of the Chase family walking to the old schoolhouse that sits at that intersection from the brick house at the other end of Camp Brook Road. **Langdon Transfer Station Fee** – Another extended discussion about how this fee is calculated took place. **Comcast Franchise Agreement** – There are questions about why this agreement is coming up now if it is a 10-year agreement, whether other cable companies have franchise agreements with the town, and what it covers (cable only, not internet). Mr. McCarty will take these questions to his conversation scheduled for 11/15.

BOARD REPORTS: Tracking Spreadsheets -- Mr. Kemp reported that he asked Bindy Curtis to assist with spreadsheets for the rest of the SCBA equipment. **Compressors** – Mr. Kemp asked whether the compressors need air dryers, or water separators; Mr. Elsesser indicated that water separators are what is needed. **Storm water storage permitting at Vilas Pool** – Mr. McCarty indicated that he is having discussions on this subject and will report further next week.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS: Hiring – Mr. McCarty reported that the Board has completed the hiring process and secured a replacement for the departing Office Administrator. The start date is November 22. The incumbent will remain available to assist after the January departure date. **Highway** – The Road Agent reported that after Thursday's snow he requested an emergency delivery of salt and produced an after-the-fact purchase order for it. The 2008 International has needed repairs that they performed in-house. There is no news about when the town will receive the new truck from the 2023 warrant article; the newer truck had an air leak so it was down until Monday. The team has been filling potholes at the lake and working to grade wash-boarding out of Cobb Hill Road. The department expects to return to the five-day work schedule the week after Thanksgiving. Shoulder work on Gilsum Mine should commence after Thanksgiving, working on the details of supporting that work. **Police Department** – YTD calls is at 883, compared to 736 in 2022. Trunk or Treat hosted 134 kids, fewer than last year, perhaps explained by the cold temperatures. Winter parking ban begins Wednesday, November 15th. Tree lighting is scheduled for Friday December 8th and donations of lights are requested by the 30th. Chief and the PD Admin attended a training program about sex offender registration on November 1st. The old cruiser has been stripped and inspected and is ready for posting on Municibid once the phone-link system is factory reset. Chief received a second quote for the body-worn camera system with storage, with a significant discount. There is a large up-front payment followed by four years of a lower annual amount. The company gives you equipment at the beginning, swaps it out halfway through, and new equipment at end, on the theory that you will re-up your contract. This contract never restricts access to the data, which some programs do. Chief will evaluate the two systems and talk to peers to compare/contrast and bring recommendations. **Ambulance** – Chief Moore reported 15 calls in the last week and that both ambulances were called out three times in the same time frame. Billables are higher than ever at \$54,776. YTD calls are at 156; biggest ever is 164, Chief expect to easily exceed that number. Of the last 15 calls, 12 were paramedic calls. The team has a handshake agreement with Dartmouth Hitchcock for paramedic services and a contract is expected next week. He extended his thanks to the team for their performance and to the Fire Department for assists on several calls this week. Mr. Kemp asked for an update on no-transport billing; he answered that research is still in

progress. Chief gave a not-very-brief overview of the First Net meeting from the previous week, which is a potential replacement for first responder cell phone communications. First Net offers a solution that augments the portable radio system and eliminates zones with no cell signal, and phones are free to first responders. The team currently pays for a US Cellular wi-fi system that works in two places – the fire station parking lot and the hospital; this system offers a similar feature for the same price that works everywhere. More research is needed to demo/confirm that the offering is better than what we have now. More information is needed before making a decision. Chief will instruct his team to complete the mandatory mental health training once they figure out where to find the correct video. Finally, Chief Moore reported that his quartermaster is doing a complete inventory on all ambulance supplies and that person might be available to help Chief Kercewich with inventory tasks. **Emergency Management** – The Primex rep will send reports for the Village Station and Transfer Station safety inspections. Inspections for the Library and Bragg Lane are scheduled for Tuesday 12/5, no time set yet; these last two meet the goal of completing the safety inspections in 2023. After the first of the year, the focus will shift to evaluating what recommendations have been addressed so far. Mr. Kemp asked that Vilas Pool be added to the inspection list. The committee will meet and look at recommendations for changes to the employee policy manual. **Fire Department** – Chief Kercewich reported that YTD calls are at 91 and the department is preparing for the cold weather by winterizing the antique vehicles. Ambulance Chief Moore reported that Mr. Levesque has contacted the MagnaGrip people about the exhaust safety grant for Fire Stations and learned that they write the grant for you and install the system, then reimburse for fifty to sixty percent of the cost. Mr. Reynolds indicated that upon reviewing the SCBA tanks in storage, some were not tested and have been added to the testing rotation; the rest were expired and will be appropriately discarded. Chief reported that he completed the mandatory mental health training and has instructed his team to do the same. He provided information to the ambulance team and showed his completion certificate. **Hose testing** – Chief Moore also serves in the town of Acworth, and reported that Acworth does hose testing that includes inventory information at \$.34 per foot. Acworth uses that service because it's Fire Department is privately run. Mr. Kemp asked Chief Moore to get information about that program. **Transfer Station** – Mr. Esslinger asked about a previous contract with Ruggiero because trucking prices have gone up. Ruggiero visited earlier in the year and explained that prices were going up but no new contract was entered into at that time. Mr. Esslinger is working to obtain a copy of the operating permit from the State. There is a chance of getting a used pellet stove to heat the shed where the scale is. Currently a space heater is in use and donations of insulation and other materials have been coming in. Ms. Curtis has accumulated information during her research efforts and provided printed copies; the Office Admin will request electronic copies.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no additional public comments.

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 8:11 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 8:13 PM. The Board reviewed and approved the minutes from the session before returning to public session.

On a motion from Mr. McCarty that Mr. Saxton 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. Saxton seconded, Mr. McCarty adjourned the public meeting at 8:21 PM.

INFORMATIONAL:

Next Select Board meeting:	Tuesday, November 21 st , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main St.
FM School Board meeting:	Monday, December 11 th , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, High School.
FM Budget Committee meeting:	Wednesday, December 20 th , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, High School.
Next 5-Town Select Board meeting:	TBD -- reschedule in progress
Public Hearing to accept Unanticipated Funds > \$10,000:	Tuesday, November 21 st , 2023 @ 6:00 PM, Town Hall, 9 Main St.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator