

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Public Hearing and Select Board Mtg.

Unapproved Minutes for Meeting of July 22 , 2025 at 5:00 PM

Town Hall, 9 Main Street, Alstead, NH 03602

SELECT BOARD PRESENT: Joel McCarty, Chair, Gordon Kemp, and Joe Levesque.

STAFF PRESENT: Misty Gratacos, Town Office Administrator; Jesse Moore, Director of EMS, Sanitation & Grounds; Quinn Mitchell, Interim Recording Secretary; Bobbie Wilson, Supervisors of the Checklist/ Ambulance/ Vilas Pool Committee Chair; Bruce Bellows, Trustee of the Trust Funds

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: **In person:** Barbara Viegener, Marge Noonan, Judith Willis; Glenn Elsesser, Donalin Rock, Jerry Blake, Gaylie Blake, David Konesko, Sarah Webb, W. Whittemore. Karen Schwabe, Ed Reller, Carol Reller, Charlie Pratt, Mary Pratt, Julianna Stevens, Ellen Chase, Brenda Johnson, Scott Johnson, Rich Danzer, Cathay Danzer, Bob Brown, Craig Scherschel, Sarah Scherschel, David Moody, Sara Hamilton, Lee Pearson, Rees Acheson, Barrett Bellows, Kate Budeman, Alexander Nalevanko, Joy Nalevanko, Andrew Monahan, Bindy Curtis, Peter Renzelman, Ame Adate, Ann Acheson, Ann White

Google Meets: Nicole S

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. McCarty called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:32 PM and then proceeded with leading the agenda-based discussion.

Public Hearing:

Mr. McCarty begins the hearing by stating that the purpose of the hearing is for the selectboard to educate itself on what the public believes they should be doing. He states they will go over several items and hear the public's opinion on them.

1. Newell Property in Question

- The first item on the discussion is the Newell Property in Question. To start, Sarah Webb, a former member of the conservation commission, stands up to give her opinion. She proposes to the commission in August to make a warrant article to describe the piece of land and sell it, so a plan is in the works.
- Mr. McCarty calls up Mr. Levesque, who asks Charlie Pratt if they have ever gotten those trees down. Mr. Pratt responds, stating that on Thursday night, there was a windstorm, which caused a large tree (with a hole in it) to come down. The tree took down the power

lines, causing the power company to work and restore the lines to power. Additionally, he states that the road crew removed the tree on Tuesday, July 22nd, using dump trucks.

2. **210 Gilsum Mine Road**

- Mr. McCarty states that Mr. Kemp has been working extremely hard on trying to figure out what to do with the land along Shadowland and Gilsum Mine Road.
- Mr. Kemp states that originally, he was considering making a building lot to sell, but in reviewing state law and jurisprudence, it has become more complicated. He declares that now, the plan is to sell the small lots individually and let the buyers decide if they want to merge them later. Furthermore, he says we are having the lots surveyed, and looking into whether any have water access rights, which could affect their value. Lastly, he states that he is eager to hear the public opinion on this topic and is open to suggestions.
- A member of the public asks for clarification about what Mr. Kemp means when he says small lots. Mr. Kemp responds and states that we are discussing a 0.11-acre lot, a 0.15-acre lot, a 0.39-acre lot, and a 12-acre lot, which is located at 210 Gilsum Mine Road. Furthermore, he states that none of them make a legitimate building lot under current zoning unless they are bundled together.
- Mr. McCarty states that if a single buyer purchased all three or even four of the lots, they could apply to the planning board to merge them into a single property. Mr. Saxton responds, stating that if the combined lot meets the land requirements, such as a minimum of 2 dry acres, room for setbacks, and room for a septic system, it could potentially become a buildable lot. However, Mr. Kemp notes the planning board can't give a formal ruling unless the property owner submits an application.
- Mrs. Curtis states that these properties are behind her house and are an utter mess.
- Mr. Elsesser wonders if there has to be a lot line adjustment to accommodate any additional property buildings or anything else within the setbacks from the piece of land. Additionally, he states that nothing has been surveyed on the land, which Mr. Kemp clarifies, stating some land has been surveyed.

3. **52 Mechanic Street**

- Mr. McCarty states that regarding 52 Mechanic Street, Mr. Kemp conducted an asbestos test, which came out positive. Mr. McCarty elaborates that we do not know what this means, other than the property has a defect, affecting its price.
- An individual states she understands the asbestos issue, but this property has immense historical value, as the only example of Italianate architecture in the town. She suggests selling, but focusing or tailoring it to a target audience that understands the historical value.
- Mrs. Adare, commenting on historical significance, wonders what is going on with the Alstead Center Common. Mr. McCarty states that it is whatever the voters want, with the purpose of the meeting to understand that opinion. Mr. Saxton says we should talk about the house further before jumping into a discussion regarding the Alstead Center Common.
- An individual who lives on 42 Mechanic Street states she heard there was a problem with the lien on the property. Mr. McCarty responds and states that there is no problem with the lien, according to legal advice we have received.

- Mr. Saxton says it will take a visionary to restore the house, as it is extremely degraded, with no roof and holes in the floor, you can fit a barrel in. Additionally, he discovered that there are no objects of value in the house. In conclusion, he believes that it is a dumpster situation, and an auctioneer will be of no use.
- Mrs. Reller notes that there are no trespassing signs up there and questions whether the town has insurance to cover people who could trespass and get hurt. Mr. McCarty responds and says he had Derek from Primex come over and assess that threat.

4. Alstead Center Common

- Mr. McCarty notes that people in the room are almost unanimous in their strong belief that Alstead Center Common should stay in public ownership.
- Several individuals express confusion on why the Alstead Center Common staying in public ownership or not is even on the agenda. In response to this anger, an individual suggests permanently preserving it to prevent discussion on this topic ever again.
- Mrs. Webb states that, in understanding budget problems, it is important for the selectboard to notify members of the church whether they can or cannot mow the common when a request is made. She says there has been inadequate communication regarding this. In response, Mr. McCarty says there are two variables impacting grass cutting: weather (obvious) and the extreme increase in ambulance calls this year, which has required Director Moore to be elsewhere. Director Moore says he is very sorry about this, but he is doing the best he can with what he's got in an extremely demanding role.
- Mr. Saxton suggests hiring somebody to keep the common area mowed so we don't have to rely on a job that is too big for one person. In response to this, an individual states that whatever the common earns by renting itself out could go towards paying for maintenance.

5. Flags being removed from graves in Charlestown

- An individual states she has heard that flags are being removed from graves in Charlestown and wonders if the same will be done in Alstead. Mr. McCarty promptly responds and says the selectboard has absolutely no intention of removing flags from graves to save money.

6. Bragg Lane

- Mr. McCarty states that Bragg Lane is 16 acres of land that we have not found a use for in 20 years.
- An individual suggests that we put it on the market and sell it.
- Ms. Willis states that there is a wonderful walking trail at Bragg Lane.
- An individual states that Bragg Lane is not an economically viable town property except for one building site.
- An individual calls in and states that someone told her there were 7 building lots up there. Her concern is that the increased congestion on Bragg Lane could lead to safety issues regarding traffic. Mr. McCarty clarifies and says there are no building lots on Bragg Lane today. He says Bragg Lane is a 16-acre land and has not been subdivided.
- Mr. McCarty states that he believes more time should pass before dealing with Bragg Lane again, as we've tried several different things with nothing sticking.

7. Sidewalks

- An individual declares that there needs to be a sidewalk in town. Mr. McCarty states that it is a project in the works, and Mr. Levesque has dedicated 2 years of his life to making it happen. Although the funding from Washington is uncertain, Mr. Levesque has made great progress with key connections at Southwest Regional Planning, according to Mr. McCarty.
- Mr. Levesque states that the first phase of the sidewalk project is extending the sidewalk from the entrance of the Primary and Vilas Schools down to the library. The second phase includes adding a sidewalk from the Cold River Bridge up to the post office. He says we should learn by the end of this month or early next month whether we will receive federal funding. Additionally, he elaborates that this is likely the last opportunity to gain funding for sidewalks, as future federal infrastructure money will only cover roads and bridges. The grant would cover an estimated 80% of the \$1,000,000 cost, and the remaining 20% would need to be covered in a warrant article by the town next March.

GUESTS:

ACTION ITEMS:

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: 7/15 meeting minutes were reviewed, amended and approved as amended by the Board.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Washed-out glass** – No updates.
- B. Thayer Brook bypass** – No updates.
- C. Bridge projects** – No updates.
- D. Dams** – Mr. McCarty reports that it looks like Vilas Pool Dam will be reclassified as a high-hazard dam by the state.
- E. Status of property at M11 L2 (abuts Town Hall)** –
- F. Fire Dept Policies** – No updates.
- G. Pine Cliff Rd info/updates** – No updates.
- H. 210 Gilsum Mine Road land merger talks** – No updates.
- I. Complete Streets Information** – No updates.
- J. Newell property in question** – No updates.
- K. Library Key** – No updates.
- L. Highway Garage mold situation** – Mr. McCarty reports that he has been in contact with both the contractor and Mr. Trafton. He says Mr. Trafton will possibly remove additional walls to ensure they have gotten the extent of the mold and located the source of the water.
- M. Department & Board**

NEW BUSINESS: A resident donated a Communication Trailer for the use of the trailer as they see fit. Further discussion is needed before accepting.

OTHER ITEMS: Mr. Elsesser states that he wants to present the CIP to the Planning board. Discussion between Mr. Elsessor and Mrs. Gratacos followed on logistical steps to make that happen.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Fire Department – Chief Kercewich reports that they had two people on the Fire Department taking level one and level two class. He says one failed practical, but it was not her fault, but rather her partner's. The other passed. Additionally, he reports that he is still working on the grant for the radios with Cheshire County.

Highway – Regarding comp time discussions from other meetings, Mr. Elsessor stated that he raised a concern that full-time and part-time employees were given comp time instead of overtime pay, despite there being no official policy in place. Without a written policy, there should be something in writing that employees sign stating they agree with taking comp time versus overtime pay.

Supervisors of the Checklist – Mrs. Wilson reports they have finished all the state paperwork.

Town Office Administrator –Mrs. Gratacos reports that the office will be closed on Thursday and Monday, and she will return on Tuesday, July 30th

Transfer Station, Ambulance, and Parks – Director Moore reports that:

- Ambulance – Mr. Elsessor questions whether, since they will be going over budget, there is a game plan for where the money will come from. Discussion followed from Mr. Kemp and Mr. Elsessor about potential sources of this money.
- Parks –
- Transfer Station –

Vilas Pool – Mrs. Wilson questions the board: How much is the part for the repair when they close down? Mr. Kemp says the bracket part was around \$700, but the bigger issue is all the leakage around the main steel plate of the gate mechanism, for which he is unsure of the potential costs.

BOARD REPORTS:

Mr. Kemp –

- Reports that he is continuing to look into the dry hydrant maintenance requirements. While state law suggests permits are not needed for maintenance, DES rules have a section where there is a permit by notification process. The permit by notification fee has gone up by \$600, which he says he is investigating.
- *Mr. Levesque moved, and Mr. Kemp seconded, and the selectboard unanimously voted to dismiss the CPA for insufficient work.*

Mr. McCarty –

- Mr. McCarty reports that the assessors are looking for about a dozen taxpayers, and since he seems to know every single one on that list, the selectboard has handed it over to Mr. Kemp to continue that work.]
- States that the selectboard unanimously approves the Mill Hollow Historical Heritage Association for a limited water release from Lake Warren on Saturday morning at 9 am.

Mr. Levesque –

- Proposes adding further links on the town website, allowing more access to town information.
- Notes that there is a need to review engineering plans to ensure proper drainage is addressed before installing the sidewalk.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

INFORMATIONAL:

On a motion made by Mr. Levesque and seconded by Mr. Kemp ***the Board Chair adjourned the public meeting at 7:30 PM.***

Important Upcoming Events/Meetings

Date/Time	Subject	Location	Notes
July 29 at 5:00 pm	Selectboard Meeting	Town Offices; 15 Mechanic Street	
Aug 11 at 5:30 pm	FMRSR School Board Meeting	High School Library	

Respectfully submitted,

Quinn Mitchell

Interim Recording Secretary