



# Town of Hopkinton

Office of Select Board

330 Main Street, Hopkinton NH 03229-2627 - (603) 746-3170 - [www.hopkinton-nh.gov](http://www.hopkinton-nh.gov)

## SELECT BOARD PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2019 DRAFT

### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman O'Brien called this regular meeting of the Select Board to order at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, November 25, 2019, in the Dunlap Room at the Town Hall. Chairman O'Brien introduced the members of the Board.

**Members Present:** Jim O'Brien, Ken Traum, Steven Whitley and Anna Wells.  
Absent: Sabrina Dunlap

**Staff Present:** Neal Cass, Town Administrator, and Robin Buchanan, Administrative Assessing Assistant, Police Chief Steve Pecora, Carol Harless, Town Clerk Tax Collector and Donna Dunlap, Library Director

**Public Present:** Janet Krzyzaniak, Bob LaPree, Rob Knight, Ron Klemarczyk, Elaine Loft, Emilie Burack, Peter Gagnon and John Greabe

Police Chief Steve Pecora led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### ADMINISTRATIVE

The Board reviewed documents for signature and approved (4-0) the consent Agenda, taking the following action on a motion made by Mr. Traum and seconded by Mr. Whitley.

#### Consent Agenda 11-25-2019

#### ACCOUNTS PAYABLE MANIFEST

\$1,486,886.80

\$30,306.25

#### PAYROLL MANIFEST

\$76,071.13

#### BUILDING PERMITS

Peter Holmes 725 Hatfield Rd Map 214 Lot 4 shed

Centerline Comm 65 Farrington Corner Map 257 Lot 12.88 AT&T  
Harry Wetherbee 69 George Rd Map 264 Lot 3 Barn  
Glen Brehio 1365 Hopkinton Rd Map 251 Lot 46 Renovations  
Richard Stevens 1793 Hopkinton Road Map 239 Lot 46 Barn  
David Intret 111 Sugar Hill Rd Map 237 Lot 40 Renovations  
Hopkinton's Woman's Club Temp Even Sign Holiday Tree Lighting

**ABATEMENT**

40.77

James A Schoch III Map 209 Lot 102

**Intent to Cut**

18-227-03 NO CUT

The Board reviewed the Select Board Meeting Minutes of Monday, November 18, 2019. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wells, to approve the Public Meeting Minutes of Monday, November 18, 2019.

**VOTE:** O'Brien, Traum and Wells voting in favor of the motion;  
no votes against; Whitley abstaining, MOTION PASSES 3-0-1.

**APPOINTMENTS:**

**Carol Harless, Town Clerk/Tax Collector:** Ms. Harless stated she is here tonight to discuss the position of Deputy Town Clerk Tax Collector, noting that she had requested an increase in hours from 15 to 25. Ms. Harless had distributed information to the Board noting that she hoped this would help them understand that amount of money the office takes in, the workload involved with those payments and the amount of traffic the office generates. Ms. Harless explained the office takes in money through the mail, in person and some tax payments come through the kiosk. She noted the office is responsible for taxes, water and sewer payments, motor vehicle registrations, dog licenses, trash bags, and Fish and Game. She further noted there is no time saving as all the payments have to be inputted into the system. Mr. Whitley inquired as to how long it takes to input the payments. Ms. Harless replied it is a quick process, if you are not interrupted, which happens frequently. Ms. Harless reminded the Board that the Town Clerk Tax Collector's office use to have three (3) full time positions. Discussion ensued with regards to the water and sewer bills, nothing that the Office all does the bills for Contoocook Village Precinct, not Hopkinton Village Precinct.

Ms. Harless also wanted to speak to the Board about the salary for her position, she felt that the change in salary with regards to raises is unfair as there is no chance for an increase within her term. Chairman O'Brien explained the process and the rationale behind the change in salary for the position. He noted that it was changed last year in the budget process. He further explained that there is no supervisor for this position or oversight by anyone, there is no outlet for an employee evaluation because the position is elected. All town employees review a merit raise upon review, the position previously was getting the merit, without review. Chairman O'Brien

stated the Board agreed to a salary for a three (3) year term. Discussion ensued regarding vacation and sick time, which previously was accrued, however, the position is not a town employee but an elected official. Mr. Whitley noted as an elected official, Ms. Harless can decide how long and when she takes time off, can set the office hours and schedule. Mr. Whitley noted that the Board understands her frustration and it will need more discussion on the matter/ The Board thanked Ms. Harless for coming in.

**BUDGET WORK SESSION:**

**Land Use Change Tax percentage to Conservation Commission**

Chairman O'Brien noted that the work the Conservation Commission is funded by the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT), receiving 35% of the tax. He noted that the Commission has requested for several years that the Board put into the operating fund, money for office supplies, land cost, and professional dues. Chairman O'Brien stated we have always appropriated only \$1.00. He stated the Conservation Commission is requesting 100% of the LUCT as a way of fund without requesting funds in the operating budget.

Bob LaPree, a member of the Conservation Commission stated the Commission has several projects coming up and the funds are being used. He noted there are more opportunities for the Conservation Commission if we have money to leverage. He noted that there is still money in the Bond that they received several years ago, and that they periodically get funds from a forest cut. He noted the Conservation Commission works hard to get good deals.

Rob Knight, Open Space and Conservation Commission stated that the towns that do not have money for conservation, their projects go nowhere. He stated that we have done quite a bit of work, but the money is running out. He stated because we had funds, we were able to apply for grants that we would have not been able to get without start up funds.

Ron Klemarczyk, Open Space and Conservation Commission stated that he does not expect much income from forest cutting in the coming year. He stated the change they are requesting is pennies on the dollar.

Chairman O'Brien inquired as to how the Board would like to proceed. Mr. Traum stated that he appreciates the work that the Conservation Commission does, however, he would like to know if those other towns also have bonds. Mr. Knight replied Concord has a bond. Mr. LaPree replied that we have used some of the bond, but we do not overuse it; there is still money there, we are trying to avoid using the bond. Discussion ensued with regards to the bond being a separate issue from the fund or if it is part of the funding. Mr. Traum noted that the purpose of the money is the same. Chairman O'Brien noting that the bond is specific to land; town funding and LUCT money can be used for other purposes as well as land.

Mrs. Wells inquired as to what else the money is spent on. Mr. LaPree replied the Conservation Commission works to have accessible and usable land, which at times requires appraisals for possible purchase. He noted the network of trails that they maintain and the new bridge over the Little Tooky Trail. He noted most of the work is done by volunteers, the Commission does outreach, and is developing and maintaining the infrastructure of the trail system in Hopkinton.

Discussion ensued with regards to a possible split, being a percentage and a fixed amount. Mrs. Wells stated that fixed amount would change very year as we can only estimate what the LUCT will be and the percentage seems less arbitrary.

Mr. Whitley stated that he is surprised that there are so many towns that give 100%. He noted that he is very supportive of the Conservation Commission and he believe that percentage should be raised however, not to 100%. Mrs. Wells stated that she is also supportive of the work done but feels that 100% is too high. She noted that it could be changed at Town Meeting. Mr. Whitley feels 50% is good; Chairman O'Brien stated if we use the 100%, we can always cut it back before we submit the budget. Mr. Whitley replied he is okay with that however; it feels like a big jump.

Mr. Whitley left the meeting at 6:30 pm. The Board decided to go with 100%.

Chairman O'Brien recognized Police Chief Pecora and inquired if he was here for a specific issue. Chief Pecora replied he was here to listen and to speak to any item in his budget if the Board had any questions. Donna Dunlop, Library Director, stated she and the Library Trustees were here for the same purposes. It was noted that there were no changes made to either budget, however, it was noted that the painting for the outside of the Library was not transferred from one budget sheet to the other. Mr. Cass was corrected.

#### **CIP Information and Review:**

Mr. Cass noted that no purchases for 2020 were changes. There were adjustments made to Recreation with regards to George Park, the purchase of a Highway Vehicle and the Transfer Station is getting a vertical bailer not a horizontal one. Mr. Cass noted that the police department carpet and driveway have not changed.

Mr. Traum stated that in regard to Sewer/Sludge, he believes that the customers of the sewer system should pay and not the whole town, noting it is only for the benefit of those that receive it. He also believes that the Contoocook Village Precinct should contribute to the processing and printing of the Water and Sewer bills. Chairman O'Brien stated if the only ones paying for the sewer system are those that are on the system, their bills will double. Discussion ensued, with regards to the users only payer vs the whole town paying. Chairman O'Brien stated we need to have many more conversations on this topic before doing anything and it will not happen for 2020. If we are going to shift the cost, we need to do it slowly. Discussion ensued, with regards to the Sewer Commission and its function. It was noted that there would need to be a public hearing to set new rates. The appropriation was changed to \$30,000 for 2020.

Discussion ensued with regards to Town Hall renovations. Mr. Cass noted we have no concrete numbers at this time. Chairman O'Brien stated we would like to see as much of the room preserved as possible, however, we need more room and kicking it two years out is not a good idea. He stated maybe a warrant article giving us permission to sell the Bates Building and use the money for Town Hall Renovations. Mrs. Wells stated she would like the opportunity to think that through as she has some concerns. Mr. Cass reminded the Board that town hall renovations were in the works before the Town Clerk/Tax Collector moved into the Town Hall. Mrs. Wells suggested that we leave some money, \$25,000, in and do the Warrant Article for \$50,000.

**Bonding of Road Project:**

Discussion ensued with regards to bonding out culvert work. It was noted that \$30,000 remain in the operating fund for engineering and there is no federal or state aid. If bonding, it was noted we should continue to put money into the Capital Reserve Fund to build it up. The Board agreed on a bond, but it was a general discussion with no details.

Discussion ensued with regards to the request for Rescue Equipment due to the Rescue Squad no longer operating. Chairman O'Brien stated we are currently covered by mutual aid with other towns and that will continue. Discussion ensued with regarding the type of equipment to be purchased and the condition of the current equipment. The Board asked Mr. Cass to have a conversation with Fire Chief Yale on the condition of the equipment. Chairman O'Brien also suggested the Board has a future conversation with the Rescue Squad members. It was decided to reduce the line from \$365,000 to \$265,000.

**Health Insurance Costs:**

Mr. Cass stated that he compared the Town's current health insurance plan with the School's current plan. Discussion ensued as to the differences in the plan and the Board realizes it would not be a cost savings to switching.

Chairman O'Brien noted that with regards to the Town Clerk/Tax Collector salary we are not bound by last year's choice, however, it hesitates to change it now. Chairman O'Brien inquired what other towns are doing. Mr. Cass replied they are all over the place. Mr. Traum inquired if Ms. Harless received health insurance. Mr. Cass replied yes. Mrs. Wells stated that she understands the rationale and the decision was made, we should keep it as it is. There was no changed to this line item.

The agreed to change the part-time position to 25 hours per week at a rate of \$16.89 per hour.

Discussion ensued regarding the Shimming and Paving line. Mr. Traum reminded the Board that they committed to that 5% last year.

The Board agreed to meet on Monday, December 2, 2019 at 5:30 to vote on the final budget and to discuss the Contoocook Village Precinct making payment to the Town Clerk's office for the printing and mailing of the water and sewer bills. Also, Mr. Cass will speak with Fire Chief Jeff Yale with regards to the Rescue Squad equipment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Buchanan  
Administrative Assessing Assistant