



Town of Hopkinton

Office of Select Board

330 Main Street, Hopkinton NH 03229-2627 - (603) 746-3170 - www.hopkinton-nh.gov

**SELECT BOARD
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
Monday, December 20, 2021
Approved**

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Sabrina Dunlap called this meeting of the Select Board to order at 5:32 p.m. on Monday, December 20, 2021. With the meeting being held at Town Hall, Chair Dunlap introduced the members of the Board.

Select Board

Members Present: Sabrina Dunlap, Ken Traum, Anna Wells, Jeffrey Donohoe, and Steven Whitley

Staff Present: Cara Johnson, Administrative/Assessing Assistant, and Karen Robertson, Planning Director

Public Present: Kirk Morrill and Jesse Morrill

POINTS OF PRIDE:

Mr. Traum thanked Dan Blanchette and the Public Works Department crew for their great job with keeping the roads clear and cleanup of the tree that came down during the recent snow event. Chair Dunlap seconded Mr. Traum's expression of appreciation.

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.

Town of Hopkinton - Select Board Consent Agenda December 20, 2021			
<u>Item</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Comment</u>
AP MANIFEST			
AP Manifest dated 12/20/2021 ch #s 67352 - 67386	12/20/2021	Approve	\$67,748.54
PAYROLL			
Employee Payroll	12/20/2021	Approve	\$84,574.64
FUND TRANSFER			
From Gen. Fund Acct. to TIF Dist. Exit 6 & Hart's Corner	12/20/2021	Approve	\$126,401.00
From Pay-by-Bag Fund to Gen. Fund Acct.	12/20/2021	Approve	\$114,275.81

Select Board Meeting December 20, 2021

YIELD TAX ABATEMENT			
242-021-000 834 Penacook Rd.	12/20/2021	Approve	\$31.63
LAND USE CHANGE TAX			
208-088-001 Pine St.	12/20/2021	Approve	\$8,500.00
INTENT TO CUT			
256/017/000 Jewett Rd. Op. # 22-227-01-T	12/20/2021	Approve	
OTHER			
Property Agreement 102-050-000 (Mark L. Winzeler Rev. Trust)	12/20/2021	Approve	
Property Agreement 102-050-000 (Mark L. Winzeler Rev. Trust)	12/20/2021	Approve	

VOTE: Dunlap, Traum, Donohoe, and Whitley voting in favor of the motion, no votes against; **MOTION PASSED 4-0.**

The Board reviewed the Public Meeting Minutes of Monday, December 6, 2021. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whitley, to approve the Public Meeting Minutes of December 6, 2021.

VOTE: Dunlap, Traum, Donohoe, and Whitley, voting in favor of the motion, no votes against; **MOTION PASSED 4-0.**

The Board reviewed the Session I Nonpublic Minutes of December 6, 2021. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whitley, to approve the Session I Nonpublic Minutes of December 6, 2021, and noted they were not sealed.

VOTE: Dunlap, Traum, Donohoe, and Whitley, voting in favor of the motion, no votes against; **MOTION PASSED 4-0.**

The Board reviewed the Session II Nonpublic Minutes of December 6, 2021. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whitley, to approve the Session II Nonpublic Minutes of December 6, 2021, and note they were not sealed.

VOTE: Dunlap, Traum, Donohoe, and Whitley, voting in favor of the motion, no votes against; **MOTION PASSED 4-0.** (Ms. Wells arrived after vote.)

PUBLIC APPOINTMENT:

Police Chief Hennessey began by expressing his appreciation to the Board for meeting with him regarding officer retention in the Police Department. He pointed out how unfortunate it is that police are portrayed so negatively by social media but noted that the Hopkinton Police are well respected and have a good relationship with the community. Unfortunately, it has still been challenging to hire and retain officers. Chief Hennessey pointed out that it takes about a year to get a new hire working independently, in addition to the expenses associated with the hiring process, which includes extensive background investigation, testing, and training. Focusing on how to attract and retain officers, Chief Hennessey suggested multiple possibilities, such as a vacation buy-back program, in which officers

could get paid for vacation time not used; sick time pay, in which officers could get pay for half of the sick time accrued, once they have reached the maximum; longevity pay increase after 3 years; an increase in medical coverage opt-out; increased pay for varying levels of education completed; and take-home cruisers for those officers living in Hopkinton. He noted that encouraging officers that are or become Hopkinton residents could have many plusses, in addition to the potential option of take-home cruisers, in that the officers would have a vested interest in the town, potentially have children in Hopkinton Schools, be active in the community, be more familiar with the Town residents, and have that sense of pride that comes with serving the community in which the officer lives. Mr. Traum inquired if there are enough cruisers in the fleet to offer Hopkinton resident officers the take-home option. Chief Hennessey noted that while there are not currently enough cruisers, there are numerous advantages to potentially investing in such a benefit, including the health of multiple officers not sharing the same vehicles, extending the life of a vehicle when only one officer drives it, and the increased likelihood of a local officer on his/her way to/from work responding to a call while off-duty.

Chief Hennessey added that he had researched current ads for other area Police Departments, noting their offered pay and other incentives, and Chair Dunlap pointed out that it seems there are recruitment challenges among Police Departments everywhere. A discussion ensued among the Board members and Chief Hennessey, regarding the possibilities that were introduced, as well as the potential for a current officer referral program. Mr. Traum and Mr. Donohoe questioned whether some of possible programs and incentives could be offered only to Police Department candidates and officers, or if such programs would need to be offered to all Town department employees and candidates.

A brief discussion took place among Chief Hennessey, Ms. Wells, and Mr. Whitley, regarding why some of the officers have left Hopkinton over the past several years. Chief Hennessey pointed out that some of the likely factors include the significantly higher salary offerings of private sector employers, the increase in years to reach retirement, and the pervasive negative portrayal of police in so much of the media. He added that for some officers, the larger, more active, municipal departments have been more appealing.

Noting that they would like to do some research and discuss the information presented by Chief Hennessey, the Board suggested meeting again with Chief Hennessey in mid-January. With no further questions or information to present, the Board and Chief Hennessey exchanged thanks.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

I. To Accept and Expend ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds

There being no public comment, Mr. Whitley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Traum, that, per RSA: 3195-B, the Town accepts ARPA funds to use as they see fit.

VOTE: Dunlap, Traum, Wells, Donohoe, and Whitley, voting in favor of the motion, no votes against; **MOTION PASSED 5-0.**

II. Update to the Refuse Disposal Ordinance

After a short discussion among Board members regarding details of the Update, Mr. Whitley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Traum, to accept the changes in the Update to the Refuse Disposal Ordinance.

VOTE: Dunlap, Traum, Wells, Donohoe, and Whitley, voting in favor of the motion, no votes against; **MOTION PASSED 5-0.**

III. Update to the Planning/Building and Transfer Station Fees

A brief discussion took place among Board members and Ms. Robertson, regarding the new Planning/Building fees, and it was agreed that the fees should become effective immediately.

Mr. and Mrs. Morrill and the Board members engaged in a discussion regarding changes to the Transfer Station fees, when the changes would take effect, and whether Webster would be affected by the changes, as well. Mr. Donohoe pointed out that while Hopkinton pays through the green bag program, Webster pays through taxes. Regarding the green bag program, Mr. Morrill explained that green bags are not an option for his commercial customers, and they want to know why the cost is so high. He also noted that he would need to give his customers 30 days' notice of the changes. Mr. Whitley noted that Webster would need to have a Public Hearing, so Chair Dunlap pointed out that any changes would be dependent upon when Webster holds its Public Hearing, and said they would take the 30-day notice into consideration. At the conclusion of the Motion passing, the Board and Mr. and Mrs. Morrill exchanged thanks.

There being no further comments or questions, Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whitley, that the proposed Planning/Building Fee Structure take effect immediately.

VOTE: Dunlap, Traum, Wells, Donohoe, and Whitley, voting in favor of the motion, no votes against; **MOTION PASSED 5-0.**

Regarding the Transfer Station Fees, Mr. Traum made a motion, slightly amended and seconded by Mr. Whitley, that, with adjustment to the Septic Disposal Fee to \$65.00, the Fee Schedule will be effective 30 days after the later of the adoption by the Hopkinton and Webster Select Boards

VOTE: Dunlap, Traum, Wells, Donohoe, and Whitley, voting in favor of the motion, no votes against; **MOTION PASSED 5-0.**

OLD BUSINESS:

Regarding the Budget Committee Update, Chair Dunlap commended and thanked Mr. Traum, and she and Mr. Traum extended their thanks to Mr. Cass, as well. Mr. Traum noted that the Budget Committee had some questions related to the fence at George Park, pointing out that George Park is on the agenda to be discussed this evening. Regarding the use of ARPA Funds, Mr. Traum said there was very little discussion of whether the Town should move forward with the proposed use of funds, rather than opt for a one-time use of funds, and shared that the Committee seemed supportive of the idea of spending \$875,000.00 on the Houston Barn stabilization, then looking into fundraising for rehabilitation at a later date. It was noted that the question of whether any other buildings in town, specifically Town Hall, may be equally in need of work, and Mr. Traum indicated it would be best to wait until Mr. Cass is present to discuss Town Hall. Mr. Donohoe added that there needs to be more specific information on the proposed Houston Barn figures and Mr. Traum pointed out that it would be best to discuss further details at the next Select Board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Regarding year-to-date expenses, Mr. Traum noted that Mr. Cass had provided the Board with the expense packet and the expectation is that the Town will come in close to on-budget, even with the recent snowstorm. Moving to the fence at George Park, Chair Dunlap shared that Mr. Cass had noted that the fence is in bad shape and that the cost for replacement is approximately \$14,000.00. Discussion ensued among the Board members, and it was agreed that Mr. Traum's suggestion that the Town and the School District split the cost made the most sense. Continuing on to the Contoocook Snomads Snowmobile Club's request for access to an area near Bound Tree Road, the Board members discussed the request, noting that there are no sidewalks or homes in the immediate vicinity, and questioning why the Department of Environmental Services had not approved the request, as this was a condition for the Board's approval. It was agreed that the Board needs to obtain more information pertaining to the club's request to the DES, in order to schedule a Public Hearing.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION I-RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation

Chair Dunlap moved to go into a non-public session to discuss an issue which could affect the reputation of someone other than a Board member, under the provisions of Nonpublic Session RSA 91-A: 3 II (c). Mr. Whitley seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Sabrina Dunlap	Yes
Ken Traum	Yes
Anna Wells	Yes
Jeffrey Donohoe	Yes
Steven Whitley	Yes

MOTION PASSED 5-0.

The Board went into nonpublic session, as recorded separately, at 7:12 p.m. The Board returned to public session at 8:55 p.m.

These minutes were not sealed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cara Johnson
Administrative/Assessing Assistant