



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
Tuesday, January 21, 2020
Approved February 3, 2020**

5:30 pm Tour of Hopkinton Rescue Squad Building:

Select Board Chairman O'Brien called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. at the Hopkinton Rescue Squad building on Pine Street. Rescue Squad member Jake Schoch led all those assembled in a tour of the building and review of the equipment. He answered questions from the group.

CALL TO ORDER

Upon returning to the Hopkinton Town Hall, Chairman O'Brien called this regular meeting of the Select Board to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 21, 2020, in the Dunlap Room at the Town Hall. Chairman O'Brien introduced the members of the Board.

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

Staff Present: Neal Cass, Town Administrator, and Robin Buchanan, Administrative Assessing Assistant, and Fire Chief Jeff Yale.

Public Present: Janet Krzyzaniak, Candice Youngman, John Pianka, Sean Weldon, Tammy Clay, Leigh Bossie, Tom and Mary Congoran, Richard Schoch, Jake Schoch, Rita Blanchard, Sarah Mullens, Ken Soucy and David Jensen

Fire Chief Jeff Yale led the Pledge of Allegiance.

POINTS OF PRIDE:

Mr. Cass noted that it was nice to have Robin Buchanan back at work. He also noted Deb Gallant as she is working through the process of closing for 2019 and beginning 2020. Mr. Cass also noted those departments that work through the storms, the Highway Department, Police and Fire.

ADMINISTRATIVE

The Board reviewed documents for signature and approved (5-0) the consent Agenda, taking the following action on a motion made by Mr. Traum and seconded by Ms. Dunlap

Consent Agenda 01-21-2020

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE MANIFEST	\$59,719.60
	\$109,060.86
	\$6,701.30

PAYROLL MANIFEST	\$73,456.98
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BUILDING PERMITS

Adam Fredette 622 Rollins Rd Map 259 Lot 9-1 shed
John Greene 513 Gould Hill Rd Map 241 Lot 11 repairs, framing, drywall
Nicholas Larochelle 1564 Hopkinton Rd Map 105 Lot 37 roof mt solar

TRANSFER OF FUNDS

Sewer Fund Account to General Fund	\$9,853.32
Public Safety Revolving Fund to General Fund	\$738.17
Recreation Revolving Fund to General Fund	\$2,983.76
Kimball Cabins to General Fund	\$12.50
Slusser Center Donations to General Fund	\$150.00
Human Services Donations to General Fund	\$1,204.84
Human Services Energy to General Fund	\$3,904.50

APPLICATION FOR PAYMENT FROM CAPITAL RESERVE FUND ACCOUNTS

Recreation Facilities Capital Reserve Fund to General Fund	\$1,006.50
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2019 EQUALIZATION CERTIFICATE

Veteran's Credit

Lawrence Boynton 67 Deer Path
Philip Johnson 96 Autumn Ridge
Cynthia Johnson 96 Autumn Ridge
Edward Sullivan 106 River Grant

Intent to Cut

S&M Forest Trust Map 253 Lot 33 & 37
David & Elisabeth Untiet Map 237 Lot 40-1
David & Kathleen Dustin Map 224 Lots 29 & 29.1

ELDERLY DEFERRAL

Gaskill, Luciele 127 Maple St

ABATEMENTS

Armstrong Map 223 Lot 1-6 interest not paid by previous owner
Steve & Tina Alton Map 208 Lot 3-H5 camper is registered

Abatements due to decrease in value, apply to unpaid bills
Abatements due to campers leaving Sandy Beach prior to 3/31/2020

Refunds due to decrease in value resulting in overpayment of taxes

The Board reviewed the Select Board Meeting Minutes of Monday, January 6, 2020. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wells, to approve the Public Meeting Minutes of Monday, January 6, 2020.

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

The Board reviewed the Non Public Select Board Meeting Minutes of Monday, January 6, 2020, Session I. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wells, to approve the Non Public Meeting Minutes of Monday, January 6, 2020, Session I

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

The Board reviewed the Non Public Select Board Meeting Minutes of Monday, January 6, 2020, Session II. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wells, to approve the Non Public Meeting Minutes of Monday, January 6, 2020, Session II. Discussion ensued with regards to unsealing these minutes. The Board agreed to wait at least 6 months to see if the issue is resolved, and then review this again.

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

The Board reviewed the Non Public Select Board Meeting Minutes of Monday, January 6, 2020, Session III. Ms. Dunlap made a motion, seconded by Mr. Traum, to approve the Non Public Meeting Minutes of Monday, January 6, 2020, Session III. Discussion ensued with regards to unsealing these minutes.

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

Mr. Traum made a motion to unseal the Non Public Selectmen Meeting Minutes of Monday, January 6, 2020, Session III.

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

APPOINTMENTS:

Rita Blanchard and Mary Congoran RE: Hopkinton Rescue Squad:

Mary Congoran thanked the Board for their work. She noted that she wanted to know when it was discovered that the Rescue Squad was not on the Town's insurance. She further stated that we need to rectify it. She further noted that the Rescue Squad members are our neighbors and we appreciate all their hours and hard work. Mrs. Congoran stated they have expertise in water/ice rescue, search and rescue, as well as extraction from vehicles. She further stated that they contribute to our community in many ways and are woven into the fabric of the community.

Rita Blanchard stated that she has lived in Hopkinton for 30 years. She stated she has spoken with Fire Chief Jeff Yale, Town Administrator Neal Cass and several members of the Rescue Squad. She noted that the Rescue Squad has run successfully, without any accidents, since 1965. She inquired as to the cost for the Village of Hopkinton and Contoocook in taxation to provide the services and equipment that was previously provided by our Volunteer Rescue Squad.

She further noted that the cost that the Town "donates" to the Rescue Squad is negligible when the hours of training, the equipment in their possession and the time spent on calls are added up. She noted they were strictly a volunteer group that has successfully serviced our community. She questioned the benefit to our town when the town eliminates this volunteer group.

She further noted that the Rescue Squad was given an award by the Governor for their participation in helping with the mass casualties that occurred at the Hopkinton Fair grounds.

She also stated that she believes there is an issue with leadership, noting there is animosity and discord.

She also requested copies of town policy and/or any regulations currently governing the Hopkinton Rescue Squad.

Chairman O'Brien thanked Mrs. Blanchard for her comments, and he noted that they could not answer all the questions tonight, but would be working to get answers and copies of what she requested.

Chairman O'Brien read a letter from the Hopkinton Rescue Squad that stated:

HRSI, Inc has been diligently addressing the specific items noted in your correspondence dated December 9, 2019

We know you will understand that we are dedicated unpaid volunteers with employment commitments, families and long workdays. The materials requested is complex, extensive and extremely time consuming. It will take additional time to document.

We have requested of Chief Yale whether the same information requested by the Board/Fire Chief in the December 9th communication is on file with the Town of Hopkinton from each Mutual Aid department called to assist in emergencies in the Town of Hopkinton. We have not been provided with that information as requested.

HRSI, Inc. is seeking professional assistance in outlining/designing a “proper certification/standard” that would be acceptable as an alternate to Firefighter 1.

Thank you for your patience.

Mrs. Wells inquired if all the public information is available to the residents. Mr. Cass replied it is on the website, under the Hopkinton News.

At this time, Chairman O’Brien stated that it appears that there are many people who wish to make a comment or have questions; however, this was an appointment not a public hearing. Chairman O’Brien stated that we are late for our 7:00 pm appointment, so we will go through that and then come back for questions and/or comments regarding the Rescue Squad.

Sean Weldon, Snomad Trails:

Mr. Weldon stated that TDS has closed down the snowmobile trail on their property. Mr. Weldon has contacted HR Clough and has received permission to use their property to get to Pine Street and from there to Kearsarge Ave. He is in tonight to inquire whether the Board will give them permission to use the sidewalk from HR Clough to Kearsarge Ave allowing them to bypass the TDS property. Mr. Weldon stated that TDS told him it was a business decision to close the trail. Mr. Weldon stated the club will put up signage, so that everyone is aware of the change in the trail. Mr. Weldon stated that he will be hand delivering letters to those along the new route. Discussion ensued, with regards to using the sidewalk.

Mr. Traum made a motion to allow the Snomads to use the sidewalk from HR Clough on Pine Street to Kearsarge Ave to access the trail to Bow for one season only. It is to be revisited next year. Mrs. Wells seconded the motion.

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

Chairman O’Brien opened the meeting up for comments and questions regarding the Rescue Squad.

Sarah Mullens stated that no one doubts the Rescue Squad. She stated certifications only make people feel better and the only way to get there is through Firefighter 1. She noted that members of the Rescue Squad have certifications, but they are not recognized by the State of New Hampshire. She further stated that requiring Firefighter I is unfair to Rescue Squad members, that you are requiring a level of responsibility that they do not want, just trust them to do their job. She further stated they have dedication and training. Ms. Mullen stated we have a good group of people, police, fire, rescue and ambulance, and everyone needs to put aside their egos and sit down and talk for the betterment of the Town.

David Jensen, former Selectman for Hopkinton, noted that friction between the Rescue Squad and Fire Department is not a new issue. He stated there was always concerns between the two groups, but you need to work out a relationship and get a conversation going.

Mr. Traum stated that wants the public to be aware that the issues go way back.

Mr. Whitley thanked the members of the Rescue Squad for the tour of the building and information about the Rescue Squad's services. He noted that he has learned a lot. Although he is not prepared to answer any questions tonight, because the Board is continuing to wait for documents that have been requested. He stated that all public information will be available to the residents, so that everyone will be well informed. Mr. Whitley asked for patience as we work through the process with the Rescue Squad, noting there are legitimate issues to discuss.

Mr. Traum agreed with Mr. Whitley noting that the tour and information received at the tour is helpful, but we also need the requested documentation.

Ms. Dunlap also agreed with Mr. Whitley's statements. She stated the issues have been on-going and it is not helpful to have a them vs. us atmosphere. She noted that all interaction that she has witnessed has been respectful. She stated we have asked for information, it is not a criticism of the Rescue Squad. She also noted that accusations and incorrect statements on Facebook are not helpful. She further stated that the Board is required to look out for the Town's liability in all areas and events. She further stated that this Board has been transparent and respectful.

Mrs. Wells stated the Board looks out for the liability of the Town in all matters. She stated that the Rescue Squad is often placed in scary situations and they were out there with no insurance. She stated we are trying to protect the Town and the Rescue Squad. Mrs. Wells stated we are still waiting for information from the Rescue Squad.

Chairman O'Brien stated this is not personal and it is not an attempt to shut anyone down. He noted that as a town, we need to understand and appreciate who is responding to the scene. He noted that we have requested, but not yet received a roster. He also noted the Board would like to know the training that those members have received, we are missing key pieces of information. He noted that the relationship between the incident commander and the responders has been strained and it needs to be restored from both sides. He noted that he has spoken to Jake Schoch, about how to signal to the department that the person you are sending out is correct. Chairman O'Brien stated that Mr. Schoch said he just knows he is sending the correct person out. Chairman O'Brien stated that the Board needs to know more than just that. He further stated that the Board needs something to show that.

Jake Schoch inquired about Mutual Aid response, noting how do we know that they are qualified, are you asking them for the same information.

Mrs. Wells stated that no other group besides fire or police are providing mutual aid. There are no local independent rescue squads.

Dick Schoch stated that the Rescue Squad has an insurance policy.

Mr. Whitley replied that we have only received some information, but need to see the policy. He further noted that if insurance were the only issue, it is solvable.

Chairman O'Brien stated that we have received a response from the Rescue Squad, they are working on getting the information together. He further noted that perhaps someone should take a walk across the parking lot that sits between the Fire Department and Mr. Schoch's repair shop and have coffee and have a conversation. He also noted that the lack of communication and leadership works both ways and we need to work together as we are striving for the same things.

Signing of the Beyer Conservation Easement:

Mr. Whitley stated that he has not had the opportunity to read the easement and would like to postpone signing it until the next meeting. Mr. Cass stated he will add it to the next agenda.

OLD BUSINESS:

2020 Town Meeting Warrant:

Finalization of money related articles:

Mr. Cass noted that the money items are complete.

Review of Exemption Updates: Mr. Cass stated that the proposed updated exemptions are in the packet, which contains all counties in New Hampshire. Also, in the packet is a comparison of Merrimack County exemptions. Mr. Cass stated we are proposing an increase in the income and asset level of the elderly exemption, as well as a higher exemption amount. He stated that at this time, we have no disabled exemption, and we are proposing one, with asset and income levels.

Discussion ensued, regarding the solar exemption and commercial solar farms.

Bond Hearing Date:

Mr. Cass noted that the public hearing for the Road Bond will be held on February 18, 2020 at the Town Hall beginning at 6:30 pm.

TIF District Language Update:

Mr. Whitley asked Mr. Cass to track the changes made to the language. Mr. Cass noted that a public hearing on the amendment on February 18, 2020.

79-F Farms:

Mr. Cass informed the Board that a resident came forward to inquire about the adoption of 79-F, which is similar to the Barn Easements on for farm buildings.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Cass noted that a copy of the bill for the new ambulance was handed out. He noted that the total due is the maximum it would be. Mr. Cass would like authorization to pay this bill.

Mr. Traum made a motion to approve the bill from Professional Vehicle Corporation, which is not to exceed \$217,903.00, and the Board authorizes Neal Cass to sign off on it. Ms. Dunlap seconded the motion.

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

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:

Mr. Cass noted that he has been in contact with Granite Apollo, noting that there were interconnection issues where PSNH and Unitil come together. Mr. Cass noted there is a possibility that the project will have to shrink, however, they are hoping that it will all work.

Mr. Cass noted we have received a Letter of Compliance from the NH Department of Environmental Services, with regards to Cross Road.

Mr. Cass noted the year-end financials. Everything looks good. They will be finalized soon

Mr. Cass noted the filing period for local elections is now open until Friday, January 31, 2020 at 5:00 pm. Sign up is at the Town Clerk's office.

Mr. Cass noted that Economic Development Committee will me meeting on February 20, 2020 at the Hopkinton Town Hall beginning at 6:00 pm. Mr. Cass stated that the Henniker Select Board will also be attending.

OTHER:

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

Mr. Traum 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.

VOTE: Select Board Members O'Brien, Traum, Dunlap, Whitley, and Wells voted in favor, and the Chair declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5-0).

The Board and the Town Administrator went into nonpublic session, as recorded separately, at 9:00 p.m. The Board returned to public session at 9:11 p.m.

These minutes were not sealed.

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VOTE: Select Board Members O'Brien, Traum, Dunlap, Whitley, and Wells voted in favor, and the Chair declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5-0).

Select Board Meeting, January 21, 2020

The Board and the Town Administrator went into nonpublic session, as recorded separately, at 9:11 p.m. The Board returned to public session at 9:21 p.m.

These minutes were not sealed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Buchanan
Administrative Assessing Assistant