



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
Hopkinton Town Hall – 330 Main Street
Monday, December 11, 2023
Approved**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Dunlap called this Public Meeting of the Select Board to order at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, December 11, 2023, and introduced the members of the Board.

Select Board

Members Present: Sabrina Dunlap; Ken Traum; Steven Whitley; Thomas Lipoma; and Jeff Donohoe

Staff Present: Neal Cass, Town Administrator; Anna Wells, Economic Development Director; and Cara Johnson, Administrative/Assessing Assistant

Public Present: Ian Hart, Economic Development Committee Chair; Byron Carr; Louise Carr; Bonnie Christie (via Zoom); Scott Clay; Loren Clement; Andrea Folsom; Amanda Gilman; Liz Gilmore; Bob LaPree; Pat LaPree; Katherine Mitchell; Tricia Morin, Chair of the Housing Committee; Jesse Morrill; Kirk Morrill; Alexander Pooler; and Michael Wilkey, Planning Committee Chair

II. POINTS OF PRIDE:

Mr. Cass thanked Dan Couture, of the DPW/Buildings & Grounds Division, for all his work on the construction project inside Town Hall; Kelly Henley, Finance Director, who, along with additional information provided by Christine Johnson, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, completed the annual pre-audit today with the auditors; and Cara Johnson, Administrative/Assessing Assistant, for work on minutes from the weekly Select Board Budget Work Sessions. Chair Dunlap and other Board members also expressed appreciation.

Mr. Traum and Chair Dunlap thanked Mr. Cass for arranging the presentation by representatives of the NH Municipal Association at the Budget Committee meeting. Chair Dunlap added that she found the presentation informative and helpful. Mr. Traum also thanked all those who attended the public hearing for Community Power, noting the very good turnout, both in person and via Zoom, and expressed appreciation to Mark Zankel, for leading the evening.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE:

- A. The Board reviewed documents for signature, and approved (5-0) the Consent Agenda of December 11, 2023, taking the following action on a motion made by Mr. Traum and seconded by Mr. Whitley:

TOWN OF HOPKINTON - SELECT BOARD			
CONSENT AGENDA			
DECEMBER 11, 2023			
ITEM	DATE	ACTION	COMMENT

AP MANIFEST			
AP MANIFEST DATED 12/11/2023	12/11/2023	APPROVE	\$4,068,648.83
PREVIOUSLY APPROVED - NO ACTION NEEDED			
AP MANIFEST DATED 12/4/2023			\$73,362.28
EMPLOYEE PAYROLL DATED 12/4/2023			\$108,621.24
DIRECT DEPOSIT: \$96,736.04			
PAYROLL CHECKS: \$11,885.20			
ENCUMBRANCE OF FUNDS			
FROM 2023 OP BUDGET TO BE EXP IN 2024 - PART OF LHS ASSOC CONTRACT - POLL PADS FOR ELECTIONS	12/11/2023	APPROVE	\$7,975.00
FROM 2023 OP BUDGET TO BE EXP IN 2024 - PART OF NOBIS ENG CONTRACT - ENG FOR LAGOON CLEANUP	12/11/2023	APPROVE	\$138,700.00
FROM 2023 OP BUDGET TO BE EXP IN 2024 - PART OF L.A. BROCHU CONTRACT - TREES FOR GEORGE PARK	12/11/2023	APPROVE	\$3,600.00
FROM 2023 OP BUDGET TO BE EXP IN 2024 - PART OF GMI ASPHALT CONTRACT - PAVING VARIOUS ROADS	12/11/2023	APPROVE	\$403,500.00
FROM 2023 OP BUDGET TO BE EXP IN 2024 - PART OF CROSS COUNTRY APPRAISAL CONTRACT - ONGOING CYCLICAL REVAL	12/11/2023	APPROVE	\$35,095.00
NOTIFICATION OF ABATEMENT			
258-013-000 - 1014 HOPKINTON RD - PREVIOUS VETERAN CREDIT RECIPIENT - 4 YEARS' COMPENSATION	12/11/2023	APPROVE	\$2,000.00
208-003-0A1 - A1 SANDY BEACH WY - REGISTERED CAMPER SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN TAXED	12/11/2023	APPROVE	\$259.00
VETERAN CREDIT APPLICATION			
258-013-000 - 1014 HOPKINTON RD - NEW APPLICATION FOR PREVIOUSLY APPROVED CREDIT	12/11/2023	APPROVE	\$500.00
258-013-000 - 1014 HOPKINTON RD - VETERAN SPOUSE OF ABOVE APPLICANT	12/11/2023	APPROVE	\$500.00
INTENT TO CUT			
245-003-000 - 750 E PENACOOK RD - OP #23-227-13-T	12/11/2023	APPROVE	

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

B. The Board reviewed the Select Board Budget Work Session Minutes of Monday, November 20, 2023. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whitley, to approve the Select Board Budget Work Session Minutes of Monday, November 20, 2023.

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

- C. The Board reviewed the Select Board Budget Work Session Minutes of Monday, November 27, 2023. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whitley, to approve the Select Board Budget Work Session Minutes of Monday, November 27, 2023.

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

IV. PUBLIC APPOINTMENT:

Economic Development Committee: Ian Hart, Chair, began by recognizing and thanking the members of the EDC present at the meeting, as well as Economic Development Director, Anna Wells.

- A. Potential Additional TIF District – Along with a slide presentation, Ms. Wells explained the definition of a TIF District. Discussion ensued among Ms. Wells, Mr. Hart, several Board members, and EDC members Louise Carr and Amanda Gilman, regarding the two current TIF Districts, which were established in 2018; the impact of next year’s revaluation on the TIF Districts; details of TIF Districts, and information regarding the Request for Expressions of Interest option for development of Town-owned land within the Hart’s Corner TIF District. Regarding the proposed new TIF District, the following was noted:
- Would be located in west Hopkinton, near the current Hart’s Corner TIF District, and would encompass the property of the old paper mill site, go across Maple Street, north across the river, and include the Kast Hill gravel pit. Although the gravel pit cannot be developed, there may be opportunities for recreational use.
 - Potential for commercial or mixed-use development, which is the highest value per acre type of development.
 - Opportunity for energy generation; solar panels may be installed, despite location in the flood plain, and there is existing infrastructure for energy generation.
 - Numerous potential uses for TIF funds, including environmental assessment and cleanup; road and intersection improvements; utility development, poles, and lines; development of various public amenities; and acquiring property for public purposes.
 - Concern was expressed about adding a third TIF District given the lack of progress in the two existing districts.

Mr. Hart highlighted that the EDC is interested in helping Hopkinton businesses in multiple ways, such as remaining sustainable; in growing, if they choose to do so; and inviting new businesses to town. He provided an overview of some of the ongoing and planned EDC activities, including:

- Business outreach and needs assessment, which has gone from creating a list of Hopkinton businesses and distributing a business survey to developing a business retention plan and inviting guest speakers for next year’s meetings.

- With labor shortages being experienced by many of the town’s employers, the committee has explored and discussed the existing challenges. Although they were withdrawn for additional work, the committee drafted some proposed zoning changes, and is committed to increasing learning and idea exchange around the issues of labor shortage and workforce housing.
- Focus on infrastructure improvements, including water and sewer improvements; roadway safety for business equipment, workers, and customers; and pedestrian walkways and access for customers.
- Other accomplishments in the areas of supporting local commerce; addressing business needs; and securing almost \$350 Thousand in outside funding to enhance the town’s economy.

Returning to the discussion about the RFEI, the Board expressed that they were in agreement that it makes sense to pursue commercial development of the Town-owned land in the Hart’s Corner TIF District. After another brief discussion, Mr. Donohoe made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lipoma, to encourage the EDC to create an RFEI for the two Town-owned parcels at Hart’s Corner.

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

Regarding the proposal for the additional TIF District, more discussion ensued. Ms. Wells explained that this new area could not easily be added to the Hart’s Corner TIF District because if a TIF District is modified, the base valuation has to be reset. After a brief discussion of TIF funds and details of the proposed district, it was agreed that the proposed additional TIF District would be added to the agenda for the next Board meeting.

Before discussing the role of the EDC, Chair Dunlap introduced the concept of strategic governance for future discussion by the Board. She briefly explained that strategic governance is about creating a vision for the town, with input from residents, business owners, and other stakeholders, so there are goals and a plan. She highlighted that Hopkinton is fortunate to have numerous services and amenities that many small towns do not have, and they are supported by a portion of our property taxes. It was later noted that increasing the non-residential tax base is an incremental, long-term process.

- B. Role of the EDC – Chair Dunlap praised the work of the EDC, and added that she feels community development is part of economic development, and that there are multiple facets to economic development, which all take time, work, and support. Discussion ensued regarding the minimal business development in the current TIF Districts; the State’s decision on traffic control at Hart’s Corner; and residential and commercial tax base. Although other Board members agreed that community development is integral to economic development, there was also concern expressed over there being too much emphasis on community development and related grants, with little focus on economic development. It was suggested there be more marketing of the town, as well as more conversations with real estate agents and property owners. It was noted that:

- For now, the Economic Development Committee and the Economic Development Director will continue to function as they have.
- There are more conversations to be had regarding this evening's topics of discussion.
- There are no right or wrong answers; whether or not there is agreement among all people, the members of the Board are listening to people.
- Consensus is that there needs to be improvement in communication and coordination among the EDC, Housing Committee, and Planning Board.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

A. 2024 Budget Update – Mr. Cass noted the Budget Committee meets Wednesday evening at 5:30 to discuss the budget.

Before proceeding, Mr. Cass announced that the Webster Select Board was originally scheduled to be at tonight's meeting, but was unable to make it.

B. Meeting with the Fair Board – A brief discussion ensued regarding scheduling a meeting between the Select Board and the Hopkinton Fair Board.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Transfer Station – Mr. Cass pointed out that this was the discussion that was scheduled for the meeting with the Webster Select Board in attendance, noting that the draft Ordinance update and Fee Schedule are among this evening's meeting documents. He added that, after discussing with the Webster Select Board, the Ordinance and Fee Schedule will be presented at a Public Hearing. Discussion ensued, and the following was noted:

- Fee updates were primarily based on recommendations by the NRRA; only other change was based on the previous discussions of tipping fees, other towns' fees, and the NRRA report.
- New fees for green bags should be decided soon; Webster does not need to be part of this decision, which is made by the Hopkinton Select Board.
- It would be helpful to provide the current fees along with the proposed new fees at the meeting with the Webster Select Board.
- Meeting date with Webster Select Board is to be determined, but it may be January 22.

B. Year-to-Date Financials – Mr. Cass noted the following:

- In Revenues:
 - Still one quarter's worth of Land Use Change Tax funds to be transferred to Conservation.
 - PILOT payments are being received.
 - Everything is in good shape.

- In Expenses:
 - In Executive, there is a grant in the figures, which is causing it to look over-expended.
 - Cemetery Trust Funds came in after the figures were compiled.
 - Everything is in good shape.

C. Budget Committee Training Update – Mr. Traum noted again the great presentation by the representatives from the NH Municipal Association, regarding the role of the Budget Committee.

D. Job Description Review – After reviewing the job description for the new, part-time Executive Assistant/Grant Coordinator job, Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whitley, to approve the job description, with the one typo correction as discussed.

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

It was also noted that this position may now be advertised.

VII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:

Mr. Cass noted the following:

- He was asked to participate on the interview panel for a new Town Administrator in Warner.
- Focus has been on the budget, in preparation for this Wednesday's Budget Committee presentation.
- Wrapping up the year and today's pre-audit went well.
- Clarification on scheduling the discussion and/or possible Public Hearing regarding vehicle weight limits on Gould Hill Road.

VIII. PUBLIC FORUM:

The following residents, some of whom are members of the EDC, provided their suggestions and opinions or asked questions related to TIF Districts, including the possibility of a Forest Carbon Sequestration TIF District; the EDC, the Economic Development Director, and the charge to the EDC; the vitality of planning and the role of the Planning Board as it relates to changes in the town; the Select Board's involvement with groups and clarity of charges to committees and other groups; conservation; taxes; and the importance of communication among groups: Byron Carr; Bonnie Christie (via Zoom); Loren Clement; Andrea Folsom; Katherine Mitchell; Tricia Morin; Alexander Pooler; and Michael Wilkey.

IX. OTHER:

There was no other discussion.

X. NONPUBLIC SESSIONS:

There were no nonpublic sessions.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Donohoe moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Whitley seconded the motion. All members voted in favor and the meeting was declared adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cara Johnson
Administrative/Assessing Assistant