

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – March 18, 2015

Selectmen James Cleary, Jeffrey Rose and Steven Osienski were present as well as Administrator Denise French. Also attending the meeting was Monadnock Ledger-Transcript reporter David Blumenthal. The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m.

Deputy Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante met with the Selectmen and discussed the following:

- The tax collection software has been installed and seems to be very efficient. The server conversion is problematic but seems to be largely due to the BMSI DOS programs. IT work continues on improving the server's efficiency.
- Provided an overview of the Hazard Mitigation Project which provided funding for replacing the Bible Hill Road culvert:
  - The total project cost came in \$12,024 over budget
  - Grant allocated \$53,000 of "soft match" (in kind)
  - The project actually provided \$15,130 of "soft match" (in kind) which was mostly gravel
  - Grant allocated \$23,175 of "hard match" (dollars)
  - The project costs \$73,331 of "hard match" (actual dollars)
  - Funds for the "hard match" included \$62,650 from the Road Rehabilitation CRF and \$10,682 from the Operating Budget
  - Not included in the Town's project costs were time spent for overseeing the project and administrative time trying to reconcile the project with the Road Agent, Landsite Corp., FEMA, Auditors and Trustees of Trust Funds. It is estimated that the probable cost, including untracked wages, was approximately \$93,000.
- The Hazard Mitigation Plan was updated by the Committee and is now ready for Public Hearing.
- Kristie will assist Peter Martel with grant paperwork for a solar project.
- Kristie will work on grant paperwork for VFW building renovations in a few months when administrative and tax collection tasks should not be as time consuming.

From 6:20 p.m. until 6:32 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(c). Present were Selectmen Cleary, Rose and Osienski, Administrator French and Deputy Administrator LaPlante. The group discussed the upcoming vacancy of Emergency Management Director and identified a potential resident for appointment to the position.

From 6:33 p.m. until 6:36 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(a). Present were Selectmen Cleary, Rose and Osienski, Administrator French and Deputy Administrator LaPlante. The Selectmen approved a request from Kristie that she convert the voter approved 2.25% COLA to time off rather than receive the wage increase.

From 6:36 p.m. until 6:42 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(d). Present were Selectmen Cleary, Rose and Osienski, Administrator French and Deputy Administrator LaPlante. The group discussed the questionable ownership status of a real estate parcel acquired many years ago. No decisions were made.

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State Representative and Conservation Commission member, Jon Manley met with the Selectmen and discussed the following:

- HB145 which he sponsored that would have allowed the legislative body to allocate timber tax revenues to the Conservation Commission (similar to Current Land Use Penalties). The sense of the Hearing was that provisions already exist under RSA 31:35b.
- Railroad Trestle Bridge:
  - The Trestle is considered a bridge and is included in the NHDOT red-list bridge inventory
  - The bridge is chained closed except for snowmobile use
  - Last summer new decking was put down by volunteers with approval from the NH Bureau of Trails
  - NHDOT has provided special privileges for exclusive snowmobile use – rather than the NH Bureau of Trails
  - Peter Leishman owns the freight rights
  - The Railroad Trestle Bridge is owned by NHDOT
  - The Town needs to apply for year-round use through Michelle (Shelly) Winters at NHDOT
- April 18<sup>th</sup> is designated Earth Day with the annual Town cleanup scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m. from the VFW. The Administrator will seek a gag gift for the most unusual found treasurer.
- Recommended, after the fact, a sketch for TEP2 improvements at the Bible Hill Road intersection.
- The need to adequately address code enforcement issues at condominium complexes.

From 7:09 p.m. until 7:13 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(a). Present were Selectmen Cleary, Rose and Osienski, Administrator French and Highway Department/Fire Chief Michael Roina. The Selectmen approved a request from Mike that he forfeit his 2.25% COLA in exchange for an additional one week of vacation time.

In other matters the Selectmen took the following action:

- Reviewed and approved the Selectmen's February 26, 2015 and March 10, 2015 Minutes.
- Reviewed and approved the March 12, 2015 Accounts Payable Register as well as the March 18, 2015 Payroll and Accounts Payable Registers.
- Reviewed expenditures for the period January 1 through March 10, 2015 (Town Meeting).
- Reviewed the 2014 National Advisors Trust Company Tax Statement which reflects all of the Town's investment activity.
- Tabled consideration of a Fireworks Ordinance until after the Police Chief transition.
- Voted the following appointments for a one-year period unless otherwise noted:
  - Fire Chief - Michael Roina
  - Capital Reserve Funding Committee – James Cleary, Peter Eppig, Joseph MacGregor, David McKenzie, Steven Osienski and Jeffrey Rose
  - Conservation Commission (each three-year terms) – John Baybutt and Valerie Germain
  - Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee – Bret Sullivan, Kristie LaPlante, Joseph MacGregor, Richard Reed, Michael Roina and Gary Russell

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- Highway Safety Committee – Bret Sullivan, James Cleary and Gary Russell
- Newhall Park Board Trustee (three-year term) – Brian Whittemore
- Solid Waste Committee – Jeffrey Rose, David Parker and Gary Russell
- Emergency Management Director – tabled until a candidate has been identified to fill the vacancy created by Police Chief Steve Campbell’s impending retirement
- Received an apology for consternation from Monadnock Ledger-Transcript Reporter David Blumenthal. The Selectmen voted to continue written communications with the Press rather than verbal responses to their inquiries.
- The amended Equalization Ratio has been set at 103.1%.
- Authorized the Administrator to sign the annual Tri-Town Landfill Engineering Contract with Stantec.
- Heard a report that costs associated with refurbishing the VFW foundation could be eligible for award under the Moose Plate Grant criteria.
- Voted not to change the Selectmen’s meeting start time.
- Received a Training Report from Chief Campbell which validates progress in the upcoming transition of Police Chief duties.
- Voted to remove tax credits and exemptions associated with M7/L76 due to the uninhabitable status of the real estate.
- Agreed with the Fire Chief that “Road” should be removed from the Whittemore Beach sign since the access to the lake is not via a road. This change is needed to reflect NH E-911 records which state the access is at 325 Greenfield Road.
- Reviewed and approved Veteran’s Tax Credits for M12/L9 and M18/L12A.
- Reviewed and approved the following Intent to Cut Wood for M11/L16, M6/L6 and M5/L6 & 2.
- Reviewed and approved an Intent to Excavate M11/L12.
- Reviewed and approved a Building Permit for M7/L109A.

From 8:43 p.m. until 8:55 p.m. the Selectmen met in Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3II(c). Present were Selectmen Cleary, Rose and Osienski as well as Administrator French. No decisions were made.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Denise French  
Administrator