

ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes
September 16, 2019
6:00 PM
1 Monument Square
Alton, NH 03809
Approved: October 7, 2019

Chairman R. Wentworth convened the meeting at 6:01 PM and P. Wittmann led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence. The following staff members were present:

Reuben Wentworth, Chairman
Virgil MacDonald, Vice Chairman
Cydney Shapleigh, Selectwoman, Excused Absence
Philip V. Wittmann, Selectman
Paul LaRochelle, Selectman
Elizabeth Dionne, Town Administrator

Agenda Approval

V. MacDonald made a motion to approve the agenda as presented and P. Wittmann seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Announcements:

- The Town Auction for Tax Deeded Properties will be held at Town Hall on Saturday, September 21, 2019 at 10:00 AM, Registration begins at 9:00 AM

Public Input I *(limited to 3 minutes per person on agenda items only)*

None

Appointments:

- Library Annual Status Update

H. Brown, Librarian and BJ Muelenbroek, Library Trustee Chair addressed the Board giving an overview of the Library. H. Brown distributed a welcome packet to each member, which is the same that would be given to any potential interested person or new member. H. Brown encouraged the Board to join if they were not already and provided a current survey along with information regarding Friends of the Library. A new service was implemented in May called Check-a-Tech for tech education; very well received. J. Monaco offers it on Thursdays from 11:00 AM to Noon and 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM; he works outside of his current schedule at Town Hall. His time is paid for by the interest accrued from the Library Trust Fund therefore no tax dollars are being used. Sue Gatton just joined the staff as the Library Assistant. The Inter-Library Loan Program is a statewide reciprocal borrowing system between libraries throughout New Hampshire and will be upgraded with training next week. R. Wentworth inquired if there had been any increases to patronage from last year with a responses of “yes, approximately twelve (12) new issues”.

New Business:

1. Merrymeeting Watershed Assistant Grants, Fred Quimby

Fred Quimby approached the Board to speak about the Merrymeeting Watershed Assistant Grants. A Watershed Management Plan was drafted this year; once approved by DES it will allow us to apply for federal funds to remediate sites where there is roadside erosion or shoreline erosion problems; these are called Section 319 grants. They are submitted to DES who is a conduit for the EPA funds. You must abide by all of the federal rules with record keeping etc. F. Quimby began writing the grant over two (2) months ago which was not enough time with things not always within his control. He anticipates that Alton will be putting a grant together soon and offered to

assist with the process but wanted the Board to be aware of what they will be up against. One of the critical issues is you must have letters of commitment from all abutters of the project encountering private homeowners, DOT and Fish and Game. He had contacted DOT over a year ago to discuss and gave them five (5) weeks to write a letter that they would agree to it, he has still not received any correspondence. Likewise, Fish and Game had the same notice, it was sent off immediately to the District Attorney for the letter of support, that letter never came through. Sometimes the work will require trespassing on private properties however; it may consume some of that private property which is a huge issue. As part of the Water Management Plan, there will be two (2) Engineer drawn concept designs of the projects, on Horne Road and School Street. Unless the job is very simple, the concept plan will not be acceptable as the sole engineering plan. You will need to have a hired Engineer review the concepts and draw engineering plans that can be bid upon so if your own town is not going to be doing the work you will likely need to hire an Engineer; the grant will pay for it. In addition, the grant requires many things that an Engineer would need to perform with federal requirements. It will be highly unlikely that DOT will do any of the work on their own, according to DES, the Town will need to be the prompt to get DOT to do anything. DOT may match using their equipment and their labor with a possibility of using their Engineers. F. Quimby suggested when the grant is written that authority be granted to DOT to use their Engineers. Additionally it is not possible to complete all the work in one (1) year. If the money is granted it will probably be in April and it is unlikely that the work will be started until after the vacationers leave on Labor Day because it will require closing the road or making it one (1) lane. If you wait until after Labor Day to perform the work you cannot submit another grant. A decision that was made at the last Cyanobacteria meeting with New Durham was having us write the grant this year and that we alternate years between Towns until we no longer want to submit grants. The benefit to this is we won't be competing against each other. By using Town labor and equipment, the job will complete far under the estimated cost in the Watershed Management Plan, which was estimated based on commercial operators performing the work. Also approved was adding to the Watershed Management Plan is the Lakes Loading Response Model Analysis for Mill Pond and the Mill Pond drainage area. Discovered were several culverts leading into Mill Pond from Route 11 that are very problematic putting tons of phosphorus and sediment into the pond. We have already requested that the analysis be done called LLRM and should be received within the next three (3) months. It would be nice if there were a write up of the anticipated fix for these culverts. If there is any money left over in the Watershed Management Plan budget, he will focus on getting that piece of the actions done so Alton will have everything in hand to put in the grant to fix those culverts. F. Quimby has all of the photos of all of the sites in his possession and he will provide as requested. He encouraged the Board to read the final Watershed Management Plan noting that once reviewed if all of the culverts and erosions are 100% fixed you will not be able to get close to the number we want to be at to get phosphorus levels low in Alton however the reason for that there are a few things that have been done in New Durham which are easy to do. New Durham was asked to do a shoreline survey for erosion around Merrymeeting Lake, which is very easy to do, F. Quimby has been trained and offered to train anybody in Alton, all you need is a canoe, there are five (5) parameters scoring them between 1 & 3 then you add the scores and if the score is over 14 whoever owns that property gets spoken to for remediation. There are 78 action items in the Watershed Plan that are recommended to do some are a painful, there are 14 that are expected to be done in one (1) year. It is very complicated and unless there is guidance other than what is in the report it will be like reinventing the wheel. It is the intention to get a bid out of the Watershed Management Planners then come back to hold a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen with New Durham and Alton bringing in the Road Agents, Code Officers, Zoning and Planning Boards to go through these things and let them tell us how other towns have done this. R. Wentworth voiced appreciation and questioned the State taking control of the Mill Pond, it will be everything that it was thought to be. The good thing about Mill Pond is it doesn't appear that there is internal loading of phosphorus from the bottom up. Fish and Game has pushed ahead with their big plan and by October 1st the EPA should have their final word for the discharge permit. They have already hired the leading engineering group that deals with fish hatcheries wastewater and once the permit is in place they will be drafting the engineering plan. They have transferred 50K in salmon out of the hatchery and have reduced the phosphorus in the food from 1.2% to .9% and have installed a wastewater septic system onsite. As soon as that was installed it showed a measurable effect on the river. The Route 11 culverts would need to be initiated by the Town with hopes that the Town would force DOT to use their staff and equipment. One of the culverts on Route 11 empties into a dry well. L. Dionne questioned in regards to the Route 11, Mill Pond issue with DOT; regarding the engineering costs F. Quimby feels that all that would have to be done is have the engineers look at it and how he wants to spend the remaining funds from the Plan. He would like to see the engineers come back, look at each site and write a narrative description to direct engineers on how to fix the problem; this should be what you would need to do to get the plan in motion, this would be the responsibility of DOT. There are a few culverts that do run off into the pond.

2. Water Department; 2020 Proposed Water Rate Increase

Courtney Mitchell, Water Superintendent addressed the Board to present a proposed water rate increase. Due to the amount of repairs that have been made this year and the tank inspection report she feels that it might be the time to increase the rates. The last rate increase was in 2015; there is an increase in block rate structure, which means the more you use the more you pay. With this type of rate structure, it usually promotes water conservation. We are continuing to work to keep costs down and work efficiently. Our rates are not just to ensure that people are getting water today, we need to make sure that people are getting safe and reliable water twenty (20) years from now. The goal is to be more proactive opposed to reactive, we need to begin looking at our seventeen (17) miles of pipe and the infrastructure that needs improvement. Regulations of water safety and quality is changing with more unfunded mandates and the need to take on more detailed and expensive testing. The proposal is based on the 447 customers that are year round, the summer residents have already had an increase. The last increase went from \$100 per 1000 cubic feet (cu. ft.) with 10 cents per cu. ft. thereafter. V. MacDonald voiced that this increase should cover all water department users; the summer users were the only ones previously that were hit with a substantial increase in 2016 and the Semi-Annual have not been raised since 2015. The basic rate structure is based off of the 447 year round customers, minimal only and feels that the rate should go from \$100 per 1000 cu. ft. to \$110 per 1000 cu. ft. All but 68 of the 447 customers have meters. The base increase would be \$17,880 per quarter. The average increase per household is roughly \$92 per year. No new meters have been installed with the department still working on general repairs with existing meters being replaced. The meters being used are the original type that will support the new computer systems, if we go that route. The meters are still being read by hand. The total gross revenue would be \$196,680, which will support the capital improvement. C. Mitchell met with a contractor regarding the tank, sometime in the near future the tank will need repairs and with an underground tank with layers of concrete there are cracks. The only way to repair is to take the tank offline, get other storage tanks so you are not pumping from the wells directly or stressing them. ICM epoxy needs to be used, it is sprayed from the inside, repair all the cracks; the costs will be between \$100K to \$200K to repair the tank we currently have, replacement would be in the \$300K range. The tank would be offline for more than months. Other options would be finding another location, building it on the side of the existing tank etc. The proposed rate increase is not substantial; this is to prepare for future infrastructure needs. Currently the wells are running ten (10) hours per day, which hasn't been seen for a long time however the system is boosting its pressure, and it is finding the weak links, feeling the worst is yet to come. R. Wentworth asked if there was any grant money available. The \$100K is good for 30+ years, new tanks are not lined they are reinforced and are supposed to be maintenance free. We need to build a plan for the future. There is money out there to borrow but as far as grants, there is currently nothing. We missed the leak detection grant, which is being done in-house. We are not ready to move forward with any grants, they want detailed documentation all done through DES; we are not there yet. The well loan will be perfected in 2023 with roughly \$42K left and will be down to \$38K. R. Wentworth feels that a Public Hearing needs to be set on the water rate increase (not required) with thirty (30) days' notice for justification for why we need to do this. In addition, R. Wentworth inquired about funding for the School Street and Church Street water lines, which possibly could be dependent upon the Highway Department's road reconstruction; C. Mitchell responded "yes, if Highway is okay with patches".

3. Police Department; Highway Safety Grant Contract 2020

Police Chief Ryan Heath and Lieutenant Todd MacDougall addressed the Board to discuss the Highway Safety Grants for 2020. These grants are annual for DWI Enforcement, Speed Enforcement and were briefly explained. These grants are utilized to augment the patrol shifts and boost coverage on big weekends, holidays and prime times throughout the busy summer periods. Separate grants were done in the past however the state is combining them all into one. In car computers (MDT) are included within this grant and came in at \$10,000. Cameras are not included within this grant and the department has not had cameras for the last ten (10) years. The soft matches of \$7,726.75 consist of administrative time, court time associated and a basic figuring for gas for the patrols. The match could be taken from the Revolving Funds, which currently has a balance of \$242K with no cost incurred by the taxpayers. P. LaRochelle asked about how many years the grants have been applied for with a response of "at least ten (10)" with the programs being the same, now streamlined into one grant application. The current cruiser computers are not being supported and are outdated. The total grant is \$20,907 with a soft match of \$7,726.75. This is an approval just for applying for the grants.

V. MacDonald made a motion to approve the Highway Safety Grant Agreement 2020 and P. Wittmann seconded allowing L. Dionne, Town Administrator to sign on behalf of the Selectmen with all in favor of the motion.

4. Police Department; Proposal Higher Education Program, Kristen Guest

Memos were provided to the Board regarding the request for tuition reimbursement for SRO Kristen Guest. The proposal was initially brought to Chief Heath in 2018 however; the budget process was finalized so it was not acted upon and needed to be resubmitted in 2019. Officer Guest has a degree already and is pursuing her clinical master's degree in Psychology. Many of the subjects deal with things that she encounters with troubled youths in the schools, families, child abuse, sexual assault etc. Officer Guest is willing to sign a five-year training contract based on the support of the Town. The money is available in the career development line without adding to the bottom line of the budget. The total cost of the entire proposal is \$39,050, for the entire year it would be \$9,600 per year. R. Wentworth voiced as a taxpayer he cannot go for the entire amount requested. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the various submitted costs, compromises 2/3 - 1/3 with a 5-year contract, courses, criteria, budgets, career development, commitments, personnel manual specifications, shared costs, reimbursements, etc. It was the consensus of the Board to have the individual provide further clarification with total costs being requested.

Old Business:

1. Police Department; Traffic Safety Devices

Information was provided to the Board on various permanent pedestrian safety devices. A resident has offered to pay for half of one of the signs for a crosswalk in the Bay area. It doesn't make sense to make a proposal for only one crosswalk in an area that has three (3) others that are highly trafficked. The current signs that we have are believed to be approximately \$1,300 each. These are the different options that are available if the Board chooses to move forward; the costs vary on the different signs and range in price. R. Heath suggested a possible Warrant Article feeling that all crosswalks need to be considered opposed to just doing one or two crosswalks. R. Wentworth mentioned Safety grant money with R. Heath stating not for the crosswalks signage but possibly for the Your Speed Signs. L. Dionne believed that our insurance carrier would cover this if signs were vandalized. It was the consensus of the Board to look into this further and especially the speed lights for in Town and in the Bay area; they would be a great idea.

2. Grounds and Maintenance; Generator Service Bid Results and Award

We have been contracting for 2016-2018 with this current vendor. They are familiar with the Town departments and equipment. We have been happy with their services. L. Dionne recommends going with the Parks and Recreation Director's recommendation.

P. LaRochelle made a motion to award the 3-year Generator bid to Scherbon Consolidated of Amesbury, MA annual fee of \$1,850 per year and R. Wentworth seconded for discussion (no further discussion). The vote was 3 approved, 1 opposed; V. MacDonald.

3. Highway Department Bid Results and Award (Culverts, Guardrail, Frames & Grates)

K. Roberts was invited to the table to address the Board. This is in anticipation of road reconstruction being reinstated. K. Roberts noted that there were no bids for contracted plowing; different options were discussed and could be brought forward during budget planning. Mentioned was the potential of adding personnel and trucks in the future. Approximately 400 feet +/- of guardrail is replaced or placed each year.

V. MacDonald made a motion to approve the Highway Department bids for Culverts to Bryant's Pipe Connection, Guardrails to Vermont Recreation and Frames & Grates to Core & Main and P. Wittmann seconded with all in favor of the motion.

4. Highway Department Bid Results and Award (Catch Basins, HydroSeeding, Geo-Tech Fabric)

V. MacDonald made a motion to approve the Highway Department bids for Catch Basins to Shea Concrete Products, Hydroseeding to Rocky Mountain Farm and Geo-Tech Fabric to HD Supply and P. LaRochelle seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Selectmen Reports

P. LaRochelle will be meeting next week with the Water Bandstand Committee on Thursday.

P. Wittmann reported he met with the ZAC Committee discussing various amendments to streamline them down to a few items; naming a few.

V. MacDonald had nothing to report.

R. Wentworth had nothing to report.

Town Administrator Report by L. Dionne

L. Dionne urged the Board to seriously consider accepting the offer that was made by the Conservation Commission in regards to Cyanobacteria issues. It is a big project and working with the grant is quite involved. Other engineers will need to be hired. L. Dionne believes that the Conservation Commission will have the staffing, time and energy to put into this on behalf of the Board of Selectmen. The grant will be written for Pine Street and the two (2) locations on Horne Road. We were advised to hold off on Mill Pond location.

P. LaRochelle made a motion to accept the offer from the Conservation Commission to assist the Board of Selectmen with the Grants for Cyanobacteria project moving forward and V. MacDonald seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Approval of Minutes

Non-Public Session September 9, 2019

V. MacDonald had an issue with #4 and P. LaRochelle has an issue with the date. L. Dionne noted that #1 and #4 were not divulged and #2 and #3 were already released. L. Dionne recommends keeping #1 & #4 sealed. V. MacDonald voiced that #4 was not an all "yes" vote and it doesn't explain half of what was discussed.

R. Wentworth made a motion to table the Non-Public Session September 9, 2019 until we go into Non-Public session due to it dealing with a legal matter. It was explained that the "no" vote was reflected further into the minutes. The date needs to be changed from December 22, 2019 to September 9, 2019.

R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the minutes of Non-Public Session, September 9, 2019 as amended (date) and P. Wittmann seconded. The vote was 3 approved, 1 opposed; V. MacDonald

Approval of Consent Agenda

None

Public Input II (limited to 5 minutes per person on any Governmental/Town Business)

Ray Howard questioned if there was regular session minutes on September 9, 2019. The minutes were not available as of the meeting. He asked for clarification on if his son is pursuing a career as a Physical Engineer and gets a job with the Highway Department as a truck driver does that mean he can get free education through the Town. He feels that the Career Development has been overused.

Paul Lewis, Frohock Brook Road addressed the Board stating that he appeared before the Board two (2) years ago asked permission to repair a culvert on the Class VI portion of his road; it was granted. In doing so another problem has occurred because of the Class VI road down from where the water drains off the mountain; it is tearing up the new asphalt. He showed the Board a photo on his phone he feels it needs ditching on the edge of the road so the water will run to the next culvert. If this is not fixed the road will deteriorate. His driveway is directly across and

could be impaired with the excess water. He is asking for ditching to be done but all he got was a patch job. This issue is on the Class V portion of the road. K. Roberts added that there is a work order for the repair; it is waiting on the arrival of the new backhoe, then it will be done. In addition, on the roadway by Shibley's the maple trees are in trouble with dead limbs with mushrooms attacking them eventually this will create a bigger issue; they need to be properly trimmed and are unsightly. R. Wentworth stated that possibly UNH Cooperative can come look at them.

Richard Shea, Roberts Cove Road addressed the Board stating he recently moved to Alton. This being his first meeting that he has attended. After listening to the discussion regarding the compensation adjustment for an individual who would like to have educational costs funded by the Town. It has raised questions in his mind. Other Towns that he has been involved with there have been departmental or individual limits on the amount of educational reimbursement in a years' time and often there will be limits at the expense to the Town on their daily tasks. Usually there is a provision about the classwork pertaining to the current job. He likes the idea of funding an education for advancement in exchange for an agreement to remain in employment for an extended period. The discussion regarding partial payment, which seems like a good idea but urged the Board to be careful because it could actually establish a precedent that someone else could use for an appeal. He feels it was a good decision to table the issue rather than making a hasty decision.

Discretionary Action on Requests for Appointments (No discussion, majority vote required to allow/not allow appointment)

None

Non-Public Session:

R. Wentworth made a motion to enter into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c) and (e) at 8:12 PM and V. MacDonald seconded. The Board was polled in the affirmative by roll call with all in favor of the motion.

P. LaRochelle, yes
P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes
R. Wentworth, yes

Adjournment:

R. Wentworth moved at 9:02pm to exit nonpublic session. P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

V. MacDonald - yes P. Wittmann - yes
P. LaRochelle - yes R. Wentworth - yes Roll call vote carried unanimously.

R. Wentworth moved to "not divulge" the minutes because divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board and render the proposed action of the board ineffective. P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

V. MacDonald - yes P. Wittmann - yes
P. LaRochelle - yes R. Wentworth - yes Roll call vote carried unanimously.

R. Wentworth moved at 9:02pm to adjourn. V. MacDonald seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary K. Jarvis

Mary K. Jarvis
Recording Secretary