

Selectmen's Meeting

February 23, 2021

Selectmen in attendance: Scott Young, Chairman, Bryant Scott, Brian Monahan

The meeting was called to order at 5:25PM.

The Selectmen reviewed and approved payment of bills and payroll.

At this time a motion was made by Bryant Scott and seconded by Brian Monahan to enter into a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (e). Roll call was taken as follows:

Scott Young - Aye, Bryant Scott – Aye, Brian Monahan – Aye

The Board entered non-public session at 5:28PM.

A motion was made by Bryant Scott to leave non-public session and seconded by Brian Monahan to return to public session. Roll call was taken as follows:

Scott Young - Aye, Bryant Scott – Aye, Brian Monahan – Aye

Public session reconvened at 5:40PM.

No votes were taken or decisions were made during the non-public session.

A motion was made by Bryant Scott and seconded by Brian Monahan to seal the minutes of the non-public session.

Roll call was taken as follows:

Scott Young - Aye, Bryant Scott – Aye, Brian Monahan – Aye

The one arm of the backhoe at the Recycling Center has broken right off. The backhoe is an essential piece of equipment at the Recycling Center. The Selectmen authorized its repair and acknowledged several expensive repairs in the past year. They briefly discussed an alternative piece of equipment, but there are not nearly sufficient funds in the CRF established for that purpose.

The meeting recessed to the Conference Room at 5:55 for the public hearing on the SB2 Petition Article.

Public Hearing on SB2

February 23, 2021

Selectmen in attendance: Scott Young, Chairman, Bryant Scott, Brian Monahan

Also in attendance: Ashley Rowe, Genny Rizotti, Mike Harrington, Police Chief Mike Richard, Fire Chief Scott Whitehouse, Judy Dupré, Kurt Wuelper

Selectmen Young called the Public Hearing to order at 6:00PM, stating that notice of the public hearing notice was published in Foster's and posted on the Town website and at the post office. He explained that as a measure to address Covid concerns, the meeting is being broadcast using an FM Transmitter on FM 88.1. Cars are able to listen in the parking lot and may speak using an outside microphone. Mr. Young announced that this set up is a "dry run" for using this equipment at the Town Meeting and thanked Ashley Rowe for his technical assistance. Mr. Young read the article as it appears in the 2021 Town Warrant.

*"By petition of 25 or more eligible voters of the town of Strafford to see if the town will vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the Town of Strafford on the second Tuesday of March of each year." (by Petition.)
(3/5 vote by ballot in the affirmative required for passage)*

Genny Rizotti, as author of the petition, was asked if she would like to speak on the petition. She addressed the assembled group, stating that she started the petition because she thought more people would vote on Town

issues if they didn't have to go to the meeting. People have suggested to her that it will bring out lots of "NO" votes, but she didn't think that Strafford residents would do that and that is not her intention. She is just trying to get more people to vote.

State Representative Mike Harrington, Canaan Road, spoke to the article reminding those in attendance that this article only addresses Town business, not the school. He agreed that not many people attend Town Meeting. He briefly explained the process and the implications of a 'NO' vote. He stated that making Strafford an SB2 town has been put forth before and hasn't gone far. He acknowledged that it would likely bring out more voters. Mr. Young stated that his concern is that voters are uninformed and Mr. Harrington agreed with that assessment. Mr. Harrington added that there is no real way to get information out to a majority of people, with the newspapers no longer a source of information regarding matters pertaining to small towns and Facebook and social media an unreliable source.

Chief Whitehouse added his opposition to SB2. He stated that people who do come to Town Meeting do ask questions and have the right to vote no. He cited several nearby towns whose budgets and obligations are suffering under repeated years of uninformed 'NO' SB2 voting.

Judy Dupré asked for clarification about a default budget. Mr. Harrington addressed her questions stating that contractual obligations and certain adjustments can be accommodated in a default budget.

Mr. Young referenced an article from the Concord Monitor which stated that 45% of SB2 towns have tried and failed to return to traditional town meeting. He voiced his opposition to the passage of SB2

Chief Richards spoke against SB2. He stated that he enjoys explaining his budget to the Town Meeting attendees. He believes people really show up when a big issue is presented, but generally don't because they trust the Selectmen.

State Representative Kurt Wuelper, Parker Mountain Road, via outside microphone, also expressed his opposition to the adoption of SB2.

With no other statements or questions Mr. Young closed the public hearing on SB2 at 6:28PM.

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The Selectmen's Meeting reconvened at 6:30PM.

Some details of Election Day and Town Meeting were discussed. Parking for voting day will not be permitted at the Post Office. All agreed that the FM transmitter had worked well. The Selectmen did not feel it will be necessary for the Town attorney to attend Town Meeting.

Town Clerk Terri Marsh requested that the Town Office could have its own Facebook account for posting announcements only (no comments permitted) on the Community Page. The Selectmen were in agreement.

The Selectmen reviewed pricing information and the cost effectiveness of purchasing a container for tires at the Recycling Center, rather than renting it. A unanimous vote to pursue the purchase was noted. The purchase is not considered in developing the 2021 budget and the Board was reluctant to use the CRF funds which have been set aside with a backhoe in mind. It was decided to amend the Recycling Center CRF Warrant Article at Town Meeting from an appropriation of \$5000 to an appropriation of \$8500, so that the container can be purchased using that fund.

Information about the legalities and fees of the repurchase of town owned property were brief discussed and noted. Authorization was given for the Town's legal counsel to handle the matter with his fees being included in the repurchase price.

There being no further business to discuss, it was moved, seconded and voted in the affirmative to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:08PM.