

Minutes of the Selectmen's Meeting September 22, 2020

Members present: Scott Young, Chairman and Bryant Scott

Also in attendance: Dennis Lauze, Police Chief Mike Richard, Fire Chief Scott Whitehouse, Building Inspector David Copeland

Appointments: 6:00 – Dennis Lauze

The business portion of the Selectmen's Meeting was called to order at 5:25PM.

Payroll and bills were reviewed and approved for payment. Minutes from the August 25th Selectmen's Meeting were read and approved. The MS-535 was reviewed and signed along with 2 Land Use Change Tax bills. Board members reviewed and discussed the preliminary report of Revised Estimated Revenues to be sent to the State in preparation for the tax rate setting. An Estimated Revenues report is prepared in conjunction with developing the Town Budget, but it changes as actual revenues are received or anticipated. In Strafford, as in all NH towns, the Covid-19 situation has impacted nearly all departments by way of revenues as well as expenses.

Appointments

6:00 – Dennis Lauze was in attendance to discuss a concern he has about the location of a driveway on Drake Hill Road. After introductions were made, Mr. Lauze presented his concerns. A driveway permit for a house under construction has been granted by the State at the sharp curve near the Northwood town line. Visibility for both drivers and the owner of the property is not good and will decrease in poor weather conditions. He believes that the State and local emergency services will be often called upon. The sharp curve is already site of frequent accidents involving telephone poles, especially in the winter.

Mr. Young noted that he thought the State engineers were there recently reassessing the situation. He thought it looked like more trees have been cleared to create a better line of visibility. He confirmed that numerous accidents occur in the area, especially in the winter. The Selectmen explained that the Town has no authority to issue or withhold driveway permits on a State road.

Chief Richard had recently spent some time in the area, siting distances for safe visibility and noted other nearby driveways with inadequate visibility as well. He was happy to see they had adjusted the driveway a bit to the left. Mike reported that the same problem exists on other properties on that road. Reaction time for stopping at the site and was discussed.

Chief Whitehouse had also inspected the site and stated that the line of site to the right was a bit better.

Understanding that the Town cannot prevent the issuance of a driveway permit on a State road or restrict occupancy of the home, it was suggested that the Selectmen's Office write to NHDOT, expressing these concerns and offer some suggestions which might make the situation safer. The following were discussed:

- All agreed a reduced speed limit, perhaps even 25mph, would be helpful.

- A blinking warning light
- Signage warning of a blind driveway
- Something to alert the property owner of vehicles approaching from the right or left, but this would probably be the property owner's responsibility.

Any signage or speed limit reduction would be within State jurisdiction. Mr. Lauze expressed his concern that something is wrong with the process in that local emergency departments were not consulted in the issuance of the driveway permit. It was also suggested that the property owner and the Town's 2 State Representatives, Mike Harrington and Kurt Wuelper, be copied on any correspondence with NHDOT.

Old Business

Correspondence from the Town attorney regarding an ongoing legal matter was reviewed and discussed.

New Business

Upcoming budgeting and possible items that need to be addressed were briefly discussed.

There being no further business to address, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35PM.