

Minutes of the Selectmen's Minutes

August 15, 2017

Members Present: Lynn Sweet, Chairman, Bryant Scott and Scott Young

In attendance: Don Coker, John Hall, Glen Foss, John Hall, Donna Reed, Scott Clark, Erla Abbott, Laurence R. Smith, Bill Booth

The meeting was called to order at 5:31.

The Selectmen reviewed bill and payroll and approved payment. Two abatements were reviewed and signed. Minutes of the August 1st meeting were read and approved. The Selectmen signed resolution acknowledging sale of Metrocast to Atlantic Broadband and transferring the franchise to Atlantic Broadband. The Town has been assured that business will continue as usual. The Board approved the reappointment of Don Coker as a Strafford Regional Planning Commissioner.

Glen Foss, John Hall, Donna Reed, Scott Clark, Erla Abbott, and Laurence Smith representing the 3 active cemeteries in Town spoke with the Selectmen at length about the cemeteries' background, operations and current fiscal situation; the 3 cemeteries being Center Strafford, Caverly and Crown Point. There are also numerous family cemeteries. All 3 active cemeteries are privately run by non-profit associations; none are associated with or funded by churches. Each has its own budget, but all have the same problem, that being funding for maintenance. They estimate that each year about \$3000 per cemetery is spent on maintenance, mowing being the biggest expense. Per RSA, only the interest on investments held by the associations may be used to pay for maintenance. With investments yielding little, they are left with a shortfall in funds to operate. Crown Point cemetery does not have an investment fund, but relies on donations. Some thoughts were discussed about how funding might be incorporated into the Town budget while maintaining the private ownership and management of the cemeteries. Neither the cemetery representatives nor the Selectmen want to see the cemeteries fall into disrepair. In the next month or so, the cemetery representatives will present a proposal for consideration in the 2018 budget.

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

Lynn Sweet – Aye, Bryant Scott – Aye, Scott Young - Aye

The Board entered non-public session at 6:38PM.

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

Lynn Sweet – Aye, Bryant Scott – Aye, Scott Young – Aye

Public session reconvened at 6:55PM.

No votes were taken during the non-public session.

A motion was made by Lynn Sweet and seconded by Bryant Scott to seal the minutes of the non-public session. Roll call was taken as follows:

Lynn Sweet – Aye, Bryant Scott – Aye, Scott Young - Aye

The Board discussed the recent SB38 grant the Town received and its permissible uses. Board members suggested that preliminary engineering work on the red listed Barn Door Gap bridge would be an appropriate use. The Selectmen's Office is in contact with NHDRA for clarification.

The Selectmen approved a request for the use of the Town Hall parking lot on October 28th for a Trunk or Treat event planned by a local resident. Both the school and BLCC are planning Halloween events as well; the school on the 28th and BLCC on the 30th.

Upon the recommendation of the State Auditor, the Selectmen approved a 50 cent increase to the Town portion of car registrations, effective August 1st. The Town receives the increased revenue.

Residents may notice the "TOWN OF STRAFFORD TOWN HALL" lettering on front of the Town Hall. The work was organized and completed by Town Clerk, Chris Bane, and her husband Vince. The Selectmen expressed their appreciation for her initiative in planning and executing the project.

Building Inspector, Bill Booth brought several matters before the Board. As a follow-up on a discussion from a previous meeting, he has sent a letter to the owner of a home on Deer Lane which had been damaged. To date he has gotten no response. He will contact the Town attorney for clarification about how to proceed.

Mr. Booth visited a house is under construction on Parsons Hill Road. The property has previously been of some concern to neighbors. All building paperwork is in order. As with all new construction, Mr. Booth will follow it and conduct inspections as progress is made.

A structure on Browns Pasture Road which was permitted as a shed is being used as a camp. As a living space it is in violation of building codes as well as Town ordinances, Mr. Booth will contact the owner by letter outlining how the situation is to be remedied.

The Selectmen asked Mr. Booth if he could simplify the online fee schedule and regulations for the Building Department.

Board members reviewed and discussed a situation brought to their attention by way of complaint concerning an apparent code enforcement violation. They approved letters to be sent to both the property owner and those who voiced complaint.

There being no further business to transact, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:44PM.