

## Minutes of the Selectmen's Meeting November 5, 2019

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

Appointments Scheduled: 6:15 - Greg Messenger and Matthew Messenger

The business portion of the meeting was called to order at 5:35

Bills and payroll were reviewed and signed. Minutes of the October 22, 2019 Selectmen's meeting were reviewed and signed.

There was no attendance at the Citizen's Forum which was open for public discussion at 6:00.

### **Appointments**

6:15 – Greg Messenger was in attendance to discuss his upcoming budget as well as long term planning. In an effort to attract plow truck drivers, the State has increased its pay rate by 10%. The Town of Strafford has made it a practice of matching the State rate; Greg is recommending that rate increase in the 2020 budget. Some suggestions were made for changes to his budget which Greg will consider.

A CRF was established several years ago for the purpose of replacing reflective signs. It is recommended that \$3500 be added to that fund in the 2020 budget for the continuation of sign replacement.

A culvert is in need of replacement on Province Road, but to date, the property owner refuses to allow the Town to do the work. Ms. Sweet and Greg Messenger will try to persuade him of the need to permit the culvert to be installed.

Greg has an estimate for the paving he hopes to complete as Capital Improvement in 2020. He hopes to pave a section of Province Road to the Northwood line and part of Second Crown

Greg will order a "Dead End" sign to be placed at the end of Garland Road. Some GPS programs have recognized Garland Road as a through road.

The CRF for future bridge repair will be discussed more fully as budgeting continues.

Matthew Messenger discussed progress on his Senior Project with board members which involves some long term planning for the future of the Town's road maintenance as well as mechanical work to a vehicle owned by Radford Messenger, Inc. Matthew reported that he has retrofitted a new plow truck. He has been investigating the actual cost of running a Road Maintenance Department in towns similar to Strafford. Strafford has the unique and cost

effective situation of hiring an independent contractor for the Town's road maintenance. As that may not always be the case, Matt has been asked to investigate other similar towns and learn what kind of equipment the towns own, the actual cost to run the department, and how the oversight of the department is managed. Matt presented some initial findings, and took home suggestions for other aspects to investigate. As part of the process he will investigate the cost of equipment, in particular a 1 ton plow truck. With the help of the Selectmen's Office he will write a Warrant Article proposing the establishment of a CRF for that equipment and assist in the presentation of his findings to the town.

### **Continuing Business**

The Selectmen reviewed progress on several matters currently before the Board. They reviewed photos of the house on Deer Lane which is to be repaired due to fire damage. Initial progress was promising, but no recent progress has been made, and the current situation does not meet the stipulations set forth by the Board. Photos will be set to the Town attorney who will advise how to proceed. It was noted that another property in a similar situation should also be addressed.

Deadlines for compliance or appeal have been set for situations involving 2 properties. Property owners have been notified via certified mail.

The Selectmen's Office will notify Chairmen and secretary of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeal as well as the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Road Agent and Building Inspector about the tri-board work session to be held on Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup>. Members should be notified and encouraged to attend if at all possible. Roles of each board will be discussed as well as some suggestions for amendments to the Town zoning in an attempt to make enforcement more effective. Chairmen have been asked to bring forward suggestions for subjects to be discussed. Upon the advice of Town counsel, no cases under litigation or currently before any board will be open for discussion.

The Selectmen's Office will send a reminder to a property owner on Parker Mountain Road to remove 2 trailers from the front of the property as had been agreed upon in a recent settlement.

### **New Business**

The Federal government has established COLA to be 1.6% for the upcoming year. Department heads will be notified to include that in their budget preparations.

The Selectmen noted correspondence from the Town Clerk informing them of the expiration of Windows 7 in 2020 and State's recommendation for the use of Windows 10. A new computer with Windows 10 whose purchase was authorized at the 2019 Town Meeting has been ordered for the Town Clerk Office and 2 other offices. It is expected that it will be installed before year end.

The State requires the Town to have a septage agreement in place, though we have never used it. We do have an agreement with Allenstown. They have been contacted to see if we might extend it.

At the recommendation of the auditor, there will be 27 2-week pay periods in 2020. Departments will be notified to adjust proposed budgets accordingly. In 2021, the Town will revert back to 26 2-week pay periods.

The Town Offices will be closed on Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup> in honor of Veteran's Day. The Recycling Center will be closed on both Christmas Day, Wednesday, December 25<sup>th</sup> and New Year's Day, Wednesday, January 1<sup>st</sup>.

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting, with a unanimous vote in the affirmative. The Meeting adjourned at 7:13.