

Minutes of the Selectmen's Meeting March 17, 2015

Members present: Jim Andersen, Lynn Sweet, and Bryant Scott

In attendance: Scott Whitehouse, Don Clifford, Judy Dupré

The meeting was called to order at 5:53PM.

New Selectman, Bryant Scott was welcomed to the Board. The first order of business was the election of the Chairman of the Selectmen. Lynn Sweet made a motion to nominate Jim Andersen for the position. It was seconded by Bryant Scott. A vote was taken as follows:

Jim Andersen – Aye, Lynn Sweet – Aye, Bryant Scott – Aye

The next item on the agenda was the selection of the selectman to serve as ex-officio Planning Board member. Jim Andersen nominated Lynn Sweet to be the Selectmen's representative to the Planning Board. Bryant Scott seconded the nomination. A vote was taken as follows:

Jim Andersen – Aye, Lynn Sweet – Aye, Bryant Scott – Aye

Jim Andersen will serve as the Selectmen's liaison with the Transfer Station. The Selectmen will get a quote on the repair of the fence at the Transfer Station and complete the purchase of uniforms for Transfer Station employees. A suggestion for some safety coloration on the jackets will be taken into consideration when ordering uniforms. Jim will investigate the repair of the backhoe.

Lynn Sweet will replace Steve Leighton as a Safety Committee member.

Bills and payroll were reviewed and payment was approved. The Selectmen reviewed and addressed correspondence as necessary. NHDOT notified the Town of the upcoming repair of Route 126 from Mousam Road easterly to the intersection of Route 202A (Roller Coaster Road).

Don Clifford, Tasker Hill Road, had several items to discuss with the Selectmen. He asked about contracts for new recruits for whom the Town provides training. The pros and cons and legal standing of such an agreement were discussed. Scott Whitehouse outlined the current procedure for hiring, training and equipping new recruits. Don further elaborated concerns about the fire department in regard to long term planning. He questioned the choice of the current fire chief who was not entirely certified at the time of hire, and the insurance liability of the Chief taking home the first responder vehicle. The liability question had been previously investigated by the Selectmen's Office, and they reassured him that the insurance followed the vehicle wherever it was. The Board explained the hiring process and their decision and answered other questions. They expressed their gratitude for his concern and encouraged him to come to Selectmen's meetings.

Emergency Management Director, Scott Whitehouse is applying for Emergency Management grants. As part of the process, it will be necessary for the Board members to take a free online Incident Command Course. Scott will notify them about the website and timing required. He will be working to get a grant for a generator for the elementary school as it can be used as a shelter in an emergency. He is working with an outside agency for assistance in writing the grant.

Discussing Fire Department matters, Scott also outlined the anticipated timing for the completion of his required certifications as Fire Chief. He is currently taking an EMT class with ten other members of the department. Scott's EMT practical exam is scheduled for May 9th and the written exam for May 11th and 18th. Results of the exam should be available by the end of May. He is also taking and Inspector I class which starts on March 27th. It meets several times in April, with the final exam on April 30th. Scott reported that Engine 3 will be out of commission for repairs by Lakes Region for a few days.

Chief Whitehouse explained to the Board members his plans for Fire Department members to do special detail for the UNH bike race on Sunday, April, 19th. He is hoping to have a tent for triage and to make use of the ambulance and forestry truck as well. His rates were discussed and he was asked to check with Barrington, Barnstead and Northwood for comparable detail rates. The Selectmen asked Scott to work with the race committee to have better signage around Town.

Scott reported that he continues to work on establishing a pay rate schedule. Newly approved pay rates will not go into effect until that is completed.

The Selectmen received a letter from SAU 44 expressing thanks for the work Scott did in clearing snow away from the windows of Strafford School, allowing egress from the school. The letter will be placed in his personnel file. Scott reported that the department had received commendations for the handling of a recent chimney fire. The Selectmen gave Scott a copy of a letter from NHDES concerning their inspection of installation of wood furnace inside a structure. Along with notification of its improper installation were suggestions for improvement.

The Selectmen outlined with Scott the intended use of the First Responder Vehicle by him, the deputy chief, or officer on coverage. It is permissible for him to take the truck home and to use it for fire department business. Having it at his home gives him the ability to arrive at a scene quickly, to assess the incident before all emergency vehicles arrive, and to offer immediate assistance if possible.

Tax Collector, Judy Dupré, spoke with the Selectmen concerning the status of several properties with overdue taxes since 2012. Judy outlined the payment arrangements that had been made and reported on the status of those payments. The Board was unanimous in their decision to begin the tax deeding process on several properties where the owner was not fulfilling the payment obligation. They also instructed Judy to notify other property owners of a firm July 1, 2015 deadline for payment in full of 2012 taxes.

The Town has owned 2 lots for a sufficient amount of time that they can be put up for sale. Lynn made a motion to put both lots up for sale. Bryant seconded the motion. A vote was taken as follows:

Jim Andersen – Abstain, Lynn Sweet – Aye, Bryant Scott – Aye

The Selectmen asked Judy to calculate the minimum bid to cover the taxes, liens and fees for those two properties and to research other Town owned properties with road frontage as well as Town owned back lots for the March 31st meeting.

The Selectmen's Office will check with New Hampshire Municipal Association regarding contracts for fire and rescue employees. The Selectmen also discussed some items that came up at Town Meeting. Per request of several residents, the Selectmen's Office will do further research on the vote counting machine which was approved at Town Meeting before it is purchased. With the upcoming 2016 Town revaluation, the Selectmen will seek bids from 3 assessing companies for the contract to do that. Other future projects discussed at the Town Meeting were mentioned and will be the subject of further discussion.

The Selectmen signed COLA pay rate increases to be effective March 29, 2015.

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, a motion was made, seconded, and voted to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:32PM.