

Minutes of the Selectmen October 3, 2023

Members Present: Lynn Sweet, Chairman, Chris Garcia, Brian Monahan

In Attendance: Dan Howard and Joe White, Building Inspectors; Hammond Brown and Mimi Jost

The business portion of the Selectmen's Meeting was called to order at 5:30PM. The Selectmen reviewed and approved payroll and the payment of bills. Minutes of September 19th Meeting were considered and approved. The Selectmen read a letter from a property owner stating her intent on use of her property for the winter months. Other miscellaneous correspondence was read and discussed.

The Building Inspectors were in attendance to discuss with the Board future improvements to the building permitting process. Currently, the Town does not offer an online fillable application or a payment option. The Selectmen agreed that this should be something the Town offers in the future. It was also suggested that all the building files be digitized and for the Town to provide Surface Pros for the Building Inspectors to take with them to job sites. The idea of the Town providing the Building Inspectors with dedicated cell phones was floated and will be looked into. The Selectmen requested that the Building Inspectors take a look at their budget numbers for next year and include these items on their "wish list" to present to the Selectmen at their future budget meeting in November.

Hammond Brown and Mimi Jost were in attendance to discuss forming a "Strafford Energy Committee" with a long term goal of it becoming a "Strafford Energy Commission". Mr. Brown stated that Energy Committees/Commissions are being formed in several towns around the State. One of their tasks would be to negotiate with utility vendors to get the best possible rates on behalf of the property owner. The Town Administrator recalled and found in the 2007 Town Meeting minutes a request that the Town appoint a voluntary energy committee. Since there was an existing committee, and due to Mr. Hammond and Ms. Jost's willingness to serve, the Board was in agreement that they be the newest members of the voluntary energy committee. The Board also suggested they reach out to a prior member asking if he wanted to continue his efforts on the committee.

Operations and safety at the Recycling Center were discussed. The State would like to see more of a barrier in front of the dumpsters. Selectmen Garcia has looked into the tube-like barriers and the cost of such. After the Board discussed, it was agreed that this be purchased and are hopeful that this will be the solution the State will accept.

The Selectmen also want to ensure that the maintenance on the backhoe be done periodically. Dan Conway will be contacted to confirm that this is being done.

The Selectmen read and considered attorney's correspondence for a fire-ruined property in Town. The attorney will be contacted to request corrections on the complaint before the affidavit is signed.

Consolidated Communications has reached out to the Town about a potential partnership for a Broadband Matching Grant Initiative (BMGI) Application. The BMGI program is a \$25 million state program that is offering grants to towns and providers across the state to get high-speed internet to

unserved parts of the town. Consolidated would like to include Strafford as part of their application. Their application would cover 1,336 Strafford addresses with their Fidium Fiber internet service, offering speeds of up to 2 gigabits per second. All of this would be done at no cost to the Town. The only thing Consolidated needs from the Town is a vote from the Board of Selectmen saying they support Consolidated's application and a copy of the meeting minutes reflecting that vote. The deadline for the program is October 20th.

The Board reviewed information provided by Jeffrey McIver of Consolidated Communications, and a recent conversation with Barrington's Town Administrator. Selectman Jean Cappiello contacted the office to express her support for moving forward and confirmed that the Barrington Select-board has voted to support the project.

After discussion, the Board voted in the affirmative to support Consolidated's application. A letter of support confirming the vote, along with a draft of tonight's meeting minutes, will be provided to Consolidated Communications.

The Board discussed a request for special consideration from an employee. After review of information available, the Board was unable to grant the request.

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made, seconded, and voted on to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:00PM.