

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Hope Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, December 26, 2017
6:00 PM
Hope Town Office

Board Members Present:

- Brian Powers Jr., Wendy Pelletier, Dick Crabtree, Sarah Ann Smith, and Mike Brown

Others Present:

- John Monroe, Bill Brewer, Valerie Behrens, Chris Pinchbeck, Elsie Pinchbeck, and Clarence Keller

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by Brian.

Public Comment:

- None

Minutes:

- Dick made a motion to accept the 12/12/17 minutes as written. It was seconded by Mike.
Motion passed 5-0

Administrator's Report:

- There are currently **1,006** - 2018 real estate accounts totaling \$1,424,947.74.
- There are **24** outstanding 2017 real estate accounts totaling \$47,794.82 with liens that will automatically foreclose in January 2019 should the accounts remain delinquent. This remains unchanged since the last Selectmen's meeting.
- There are **9** outstanding 2016 real estate accounts totaling \$18,811.10 with liens that will automatically foreclose on January 26, 2018 should the accounts remain delinquent.

New Business:

- Sand/Salt Shed – Valerie Behrens: Valerie Behrens was present to ask about the lack of accessible sand for town residents, saying she was now getting her sand from Lincolnville and Camden for her 500-foot driveway because sand is no longer available in Hope, but that this action did not feel right. She asked about neighborliness and if there had been any consideration from going from one extreme to the other on access to the sand. She suggested an "easy access hut" similar to the one in Camden. Dick noted that this debate/discussion has gone on for years. The primary concern is the huge liability for the town regarding access to the town shed. He noted that people from other towns were coming to take the sand, and that individuals were taking truckloads of sand and salt from the un-monitored building. He said that a couple of years ago the Town of Hope imposed a limit on what town residents could take: two 5-gallon buckets per event, but that this restriction was totally ignored by those coming to partake of the sand. He said that a small shed had been discussed, but there were problems with that as well, such as:

- 1) Where to put it given the constraints of the location,
- 2) who would police the shed and keep folks from taking too much, and
- 3) who would refill it if/when a towns person showed up and there isn't any sand and they want more.

Valerie observed that Camden refills their shed daily. Brian noted that the town didn't actually go from one extreme to the other, but had the intermediate step of the two 5-gallon buckets per event, but that unfortunately too many people had taken advantage of/abused the open policy. Mike raised the cost of constructing a shed, that the town plowing is contracted out and we would need that contract expanded to include refilling such a shed, and that the option had indeed been considered before adopting the current policy. Valerie said she wish we as a town could talk about more alternatives. Dick noted that the drainage from that lot goes into Hobbs Pond, so any structure would have to have a cement slab and walls due to regulations concerning run-off, and that the town would—if they had such a structure—have to hire someone to fill it. Brian noted that in Camden, they have a town road crew (unlike Hope), so there are people to observe the shed and make sure no one is going against the rules. He said Hope buys 2000 yards of sand each year, and in the past two years we've had to buy more because of theft. Valerie asked if we could vote on this policy at a Town Meeting. Brian said it is possible and we could discuss the policy again. Sarah added that should we raise the issue at the Town Meeting for a vote, we should have available estimates of how much it would cost to build, maintain, refill, such a shed so town residents would know the cost/impact on their taxes. Valerie thanked the Board for their time and consideration.

- Accept Donation from Coastal Opportunities: Brian raised the \$300 donation from Coastal Opportunities to the Town of Hope which had no restrictions on its use. After a brief discussion, Sarah made a motion to accept the \$300 with thanks to Coastal Opportunities and to allocate the funds to The Hope Chest to help those in need. Mike seconded the motion.

Motion passed 5-0

Old Business:

- None

Other Business:

- Donation to The Hope Chest: Chris Pinchbeck and his daughter Elsie were present and asked to speak to the board. Elsie and the Pinchbeck's school have an annual "Market" and raise funds for various causes. This year Elsie wished to present \$40 raised at the Market to be donated to The Hope Chest. The Select Board members thanked her for her very thoughtful generosity. The Selectmen told her that they appreciate so much how much Elsie and the school's gift would help those most in need in Hope. This gift represents the best of Hope, and is welcomed and gives us hope for the civic spirit and caring here in our town. Dick made a motion to accept the Pinchbeck Donation of \$40 to the Hope Chest, with gratitude and appreciation for this civic-minded gift and generosity of spirit from our youngest citizens. It was seconded by Sarah.

Motion passed 5-0

- **Town Auditor's Report:** Bill Brewer, the town auditor, also attended the meeting. He apologized for not being able to attend the previous meeting due to hazardous driving conditions that evening. He wanted to make sure we received the audit (the Selectmen had). Samantha Mank had asked him for estimates on the cost of doing the audit with Mary Tolles and without her working for the town in anticipation of her eventual retirement. Mary's background and the work she prepares for Bill make it a better report and much easier for him. Bill noted that it would be close to impossible to replace Mary with someone of her experience and ability, and that the cost of audits without her (both town and school audits) would be about double for each audit. Overall, Bill said the town is in good financial shape. The goal is to have 9% of the budget as surplus and we are slightly over that 9% goal. He has no recommendation for any improvements needed. If anything comes up due to legislative or other changes on how things are done, he simply calls Mary. Pension liability is done a certain way based on the assumption of teachers staying at Hope School until retirement. Regarding the school budget, Gayle at the school is learning to do tie-ins, Mary is teaching her. Bill observed that Hope doesn't have an investment policy, and brought several samples of such policies from Damariscotta and Phippsburg which he gave to Dick to evaluate. He said the town needs to invest surplus funds. Brian asked Bill how did auditors not catch the problems in Camden, including with the Snow Bowl. Bill observed that not all auditors catch everything. He said Mary does quarterly reports that go to Bill. Bill said the school is now using QuickBooks, so that provides more timely information. He encouraged the board to meet regularly with the School Board. Dick and Brian noted that we are taking steps to work with them more closely, and that a School Board has been trying to come to Select Board meetings as well. Dianne is doing a good job controlling the fund balance. Dick said the school board didn't always know the right questions to ask, but that they are asking questions which is good.
- **Road Commissioner – John Monroe – Roads Update:** The Board recapped the earlier discussion about the Sand policy with John, noting that the Town Office had received about 25 calls complaining about the policy. John said that we have used a lot of sand, but it is because of the multiples storms we have had early in the season. He said also that the number of people showing up at the Sand shed has slowed down, and that he thinks the new policy is working well. The new plowing contractor is plowing per the board's recommendations, and John wanted to know what the Board thought. Dick said on a trip in the very heavy snow on Christmas Day he travelled to Friendship, and Hope's roads were in better shape than any others on his route. John said that on the 25th all four of the contractor's trucks were out and working, and they were thinking about how and when and where to use sand, reducing waste. There was a discussion of sanding more heavily in some areas, lighter in others. Brian noted that the previous contractor was "Get the job done," while this crew appears to be thinking about what they are doing and how they are using the sand, which is a good thing. John noted that communication with the contractor has been great, that John has had to be more "hands on" than he has wanted to be, but that appears to be tapering down as the contractor learns the job and what is needed. Clarence Keller observed that after Farley took over, accidents went down, so we want to continue to have safe roads and minimize the potential for accidents.
- **Draft Policy on Municipal Building Use:** Clarence came to discuss the next version of the draft policy for use of Hope's Municipal Buildings, specifically the Fire Department

structures. He agreed that the South Hope Fire Station should not be open to the public, but expressed concern over the draft restrictions on the meeting room at the Hope Corner Fire Station. Clarence noted that if “personal use” of the station for a birthday party or baby shower were no longer possible, that people would be upset, and it could reflect poorly on the Fire Department from a PR point of view. He said he didn’t think current usage was a problem, and asked if there was a specific reason the board is evaluating eliminating that option. Dick said that has been our toughest area, that we have discussed this for months, there have been no decisions yet, and what it comes down to is liability issues for the Town. He explained the TULIP insurance policy available with our town insurance through the MMA. The concern has been where and how to limit usage. There was a long and wide-ranging conversation among the entire Board and Clarence. One option was to ask Samantha to check with insurance about how much it would cost to simply increase our town insurance to cover such use. Sarah mentioned her research about the cost for TULIP for individual events. After about an hour, Brian said we should wrap up this discussion for now. Clarence will talk to the fire department folks for their input and suggestions, so we can work on this together.

Review & Sign Warrants #'s:

- The Selectmen reviewed the warrants. Dick made a motion to approve and sign warrants # 44, 45, 46, and 47. It was seconded by Mike.

Motion passed 5-0

Adjournment:

- Mike made a motion to adjourn at 8:02 PM. It was seconded by Sarah.

Motion passed 5-0