

MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD MEETING

Hope Select Board

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

6:30 PM

Hope Town Office

View the meeting in its entirety at

https://townhallstreams.com/towns/hope_me

Board Members Present:

- Sarah Ann Smith, Dick Crabtree, Wendy Pelletier, Mike Brown, and Bruce Haffner (*Zoom*)

Others Present:

- Samantha Mank, Damon McClure, and Paul Smith (*Zoom*)

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order by Sarah at 6:31 p.m.

Agenda Adjustments/Approval:

- Wendy made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. It was seconded by Mike.
Motion passed 5-0

Public Comment:

- None

Minutes:

- January 11, 2022: Dick made a motion to approve the 1/11/22 minutes with a minor edit. It was seconded by Wendy.
Motion passed 4-0-1 (Bruce)

January 18, 2022: Dick made a motion to approve the 1/18/22 minutes as written. It was seconded by Wendy.

Motion passed 3-0-2 (Bruce & Mike)

Warrants 54, 55, 56 & 57:

- The Select Board reviewed the warrants. Mike made a motion to approve, and sign warrants 54, 55, 56, and 57. It was seconded by Bruce.
Motion passed 5-0

New Business:

- New Liquor License Application for Hope General Store – Peter McClure: The Select Board reviewed the application submitted by Mr. McClure as the owner of Hope General Store. Dick made a motion to approve and sign the liquor license application. It was seconded by Mike.
Motion passed 5-0
- Application for Appointment to Budget Committee – Michael Shultz: The Select Board reviewed the application submitted by Mr. Shultz expressing interested in serving on the Budget Committee until the June election. Mike made a motion to appoint Michael Shultz to the Budget

Committee until the June 2022 election. It was seconded by Dick.

Motion passed 5-0

- Roads Update – John Monroe: All States did the paving last year. They were asked to produce weigh slips at the end of each day for each time a truck delivered material in order to keep track of the actual tonnage being used on Hope roads. Those slips were never provided. Once the work was completed. There were several issues with All States including beginning the work much later than contracted and poor communication and lack of accountability with materials. The Town has paid All States approx. \$125,000 in November for approx. 1,719 tons. In February, All States has contacted the Road Commissioner stating they have now found some more weigh slips for 70 additional tons and would like payment. John doesn't think payment should be made without documentation from the company. He has concerns about where additional slips were "found". The Select Board agreed to not make any more payments until or unless appropriate weigh slips can be produced.

John reported that the roads budget is around \$107,000 over budget. State law allows the Town to spend 15% of the entirety of the roads budget in overages before requiring a special town meeting. He reported that there is still approx. \$20,000 of work related to the October 31st storm still to do. There are some projects they may be able to be put off until the next fiscal year in order to avoid a special town meeting. He just wanted to make sure the Select Board was fully aware of the roads budget.

The Select Board has asked John to provide a list of items that could reasonably be put off. The Board is also waiting for the audit to be completed in order to see what is in the undesignated fund, as the school has repairs to be considered, and the roads can't go more than 15% over budget. There may not be enough left over to reduce taxes in the same way as has been done in the past. John will report back in four weeks and the Select Board will reassess the need for a special town meeting.

High St. is the next road that is scheduled to be paved. A large culvert needs to be replaced before the road can be paved. However, the Town can't get the culvert until October by which time it is too late to pave, The Road Commissioner would like to do the middle section of Alford Lake Rd. this year and then do High St. the following year after the culvert has been received and replaced. Bruce asked if the State could provide any grants or other monies for a bridge rather than a culvert. Also, wanted to know if there were any state requirements from the state in order to replace that culvert and if a fish friendly culvert is needed. John said he will look into what is entailed in dealing with High St.

- 2nd Quarter Financial Report: Samantha presented the financial report for the second quarter. Mostly everything is tracking around the 50% mark as expected. The exception is the roads budget. The emergency roads reserve is currently negative \$83,000. The Road Commissioner addressed this in his update.
- NEMHS December & 4th Qtr. Activity Report: The Select Board reviewed the December ambulance reports from North East Mobile Health Services (NEMHS).

Old Business:

- None

Other Business:

- Bruce thinks the Town could save money by purchasing a truck and the sanding equipment to do the plowing of the Town Office, both Fire Stations, and the Hope Elementary School, and hiring the seasonal labor to operate the truck and to shovel/sand the walkways.

The current contract for the three municipal buildings is \$14,850. The contract may be extended for another two years at an increase of 5% for each year (\$15,593 & \$16,373 respectively).

The Select Board has asked Bruce to put together some numbers and present an alternative to see if there is a potential savings to the town.

Town Administrator Report:

- A correction from the last Administrator's Report regarding the yellow trash bags. The price per bag is not changing. It will remain at \$2.50 per bag. The change is the number of yellow bags in each large package has been reduced to five per roll making the total \$12.50. There is no change to the small bags.
- Paula from the SU69 Central Office has filed an extension with the Dept. of Education for the FY21 audit. It was granted until Feb. 28, 2022.
- No building permits were issued during the past two weeks. One plumbing permit was issued. There has been a lot of activity happening with the CEO/LPI. Mostly questions about upcoming projects.
- Automatic foreclosure for the 2020 property taxes is in 15 days. As of today, there are still 6 properties that have an outstanding balance. Phone calls will be made to the property owners the beginning of next week.
- I received an email from Atty. Kristin Collins regarding Doug Kelly's consent agreement. She said that she has been cleared to start the work on his case and has requested some information get sent to her. She further stated that she will be back in touch within a week.
- The Town Clerk has been out since last Thursday. Jenn (and I) have been covering the counter in her absence. She is expected to return next Tuesday.
- There are 6 RE accounts for 2020, totaling \$10,617.41. Unpaid 2020 real estate taxes will automatically foreclose on February 10, 2022, if the accounts are not paid in full.
- There are 18 RE accounts for 2021, totaling \$37,535.64. Unpaid 2021 real estate taxes will automatically foreclose on February 3, 2023, if the accounts are not paid in full.
- There are 970 RE accounts for 2022, totaling \$1,498,040.82. The second half of taxes is due on Tuesday, May 3, 2021.
- The cash has not been out of balance since the last Select Board meeting on January 11, 2022.

Executive Session:

- Pursuant to 36 M.R.S. §841(2)(E) – Hardship Abatement and Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405(6)(A)(1) Personnel Matter – Town Administrator Annual Performance Evaluation: Wendy made a motion to enter executive session pursuant to the above citations at 7:34 p.m. It was seconded by Mike. Bruce had voluntarily left the meeting.

Motion passed 4-0

- Wendy made a motion to exit executive session at 8:51 p.m. It was seconded by Dick.
Motion passed 4-0
- No action was taken as a result of either executive session.

Adjournment:

- Mike made a motion to adjourn at 8:52 p.m. It was seconded by Dick.
Motion passed 4-0

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