

## **MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD MEETING**

**Hope Select Board**

**January 9, 2024**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Hope Town Office**

### **Board Members Present:**

- Sarah Ann Smith, Charlie Weidman, Wayne Luce, and Mike Brown

### **Others Present:**

- Chelsea Summers, John Monroe, Matthew Deane, Ben Cameron, and Brian Swan

### **Call to Order:**

- The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Sarah.

### **Agenda Adjustments/Approval:**

- Charlie made a motion to approve the agenda as written. It was seconded by Mike.  
**Motion passed 3-0**

### **Public Comment**

- None

### **Minutes:**

- December 12, 2023: Wayne made a motion to approve the 12/12/23 minutes with a minor amendment to a grammatical error. It was seconded by Mike.  
**Motion passed 3-0-1 (abstain vote due to meeting absence)**
- December 21, 2023: Charlie made a motion to approve the 12/21/23 minutes. It was seconded by Mike.  
**Motion passed 4-0**
- December 28, 2023: Charlie made a motion to approve the 12/28/23 minutes. It was seconded by Mike.  
**Motion passed 4-0**

### **Warrants 53, 54, 55, & 56:**

- Charlie made a motion to approve warrants 53, 54, 55, & 56. It was seconded by Wayne.  
**Motion passed 4-0**

### **New Business:**

- IT Services provided by Harbor Digital – Ben Cameron: Mr. Cameron attended the meeting to discuss the IT services provided to the Town by Harbor Digital, a small business of 7 employees operating out of Brunswick. He described the services provided to the Town at a monthly cost of \$470, including annual remote evaluation of hardware life expectancy, biannual hardware checks, quarterly server updates, biweekly Microsoft patch updates, year-round offsite data backup, and disaster recovery (should the need arise). Additional IT services are currently available at the rate of \$150 per hour. Mr.

Cameron explained that the cost of business is increasing and that the Town's rates for these services will also increase. Sarah inquired about the possibility of a lower cost monthly plan and whether it still made sense for the Town to invest in a physical server rather than a cloud-based server. Mr. Cameron replied that a cloud-based server could be a preferable option, especially considering Trio (municipal software) is planning to move toward cloud-based operations. More discussion took place regarding the details of the monthly service bill and Charlie inquired again about the Town receiving a better rate. It was unclear in the response whether this could be a possibility. Sarah brought up the topic of changing the Town's website address to end in ".gov" rather than ".org", citing guidance from an article in the November 2023 edition of *Maine Town & City*, a monthly publication of the Maine Municipal Association. Mr. Cameron replied that it is possible to make that transition, but not without some difficulty and cost.

- Tree Cutting Complaint and Restitution Request, 46 Beverage Rd. - Stephen Boerger: The Board reviewed two of the three requested contractor quotes gathered by Mr. Boerger for repair to his deck. The quotes each described costs associated with a newly constructed deck to replace Mr. Boerger's original freestanding deck. The original deck had been pulled apart by a dog cable attached with one end to the deck, and the other end attached to a tree standing in the Town's right of way. The cable's attachment to the tree was unbeknownst to the Roads Commissioner and the Town until after the tree had been tended to during routine roadside maintenance. After a brief discussion, the Board directed the Town administration to research the matter further.
- Tree Cutting Complaint and Restitution Request, 0 High St. – Brian Swan: Mr. Swan read a prepared statement with photos attached describing how the roadside maintenance completed on High Street this past fall affected trees he had planted on his property line. Mr. Swan's specific complaint surrounded the removal of the branches on his trees that extended into the Town's right of way. His primary concern was the impact on his property due to the reduced buffer between his land parcel and the road by the branch removal. Mr. Swan expressed concern that Hope residents may not be aware of the implications of routine roadside maintenance unless notified by the Town prior to the work being completed. His statement also mentioned that his metal entrance culvert may be compromised due to its age. The Board reviewed the photos and discussed current maintenance protocols with the Roads Commissioner. Although the removed branches were found to be in the Town's right of way, all parties agreed that notification improvements could be made regarding roads maintenance via an inclusion in the annual tax bill mailing. The Roads Commissioner assured Mr. Swan that he would continue to monitor the entrance culvert for points of failure.
- Amendment to Town Boards and Committees Policy: The Board reviewed the proposed amendment to the Town Boards and Committees Policy. Charlie made a motion to approve and adopt the Town Boards and Committees Policy as presented. It was seconded by Mike.  
**Motion passed 4-0**
- Change Select Board Meeting Time: The Board considered changing their official meeting time from 6:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. After a brief discussion, Charlie made a motion to move the Select Board meeting time to 5:30, beginning at the next meeting. It was seconded by Wayne.

**Motion passed 4-0**

*(Please note that the Hope Select Board meetings will now take place at 5:30 p.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month beginning on Tuesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024)*

**Old Business:** None

**Other Business:** None

**~~Town Administrator Report:~~**

- The Town Administrator was absent due to her necessary attendance at a Town public hearing occurring at the same time. She will report to the Select Board at the next scheduled meeting. Absent of the written report, and with the Roads Commissioner present at the meeting, the Board requested a brief update regarding the status of the sand and salt shed following the entrance work recently completed by the State. Discussion followed, including the suggestion of having Town property on Barnestown Road professionally surveyed.

**Executive Session:**

- ***Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405 6(A)(1) Town Administrator Annual Performance Evaluation:***  
Charlie made a motion to enter Executive Session at 8:15 p.m. It was seconded unanimously by the rest of the Board.

**Motion Passed 4-0**

Charlie made a motion at 8:25 to exit Executive Session. It was seconded by Sarah.

**Motion Passed 4-0**

**Adjournment:**

- Charlie made a motion to adjourn at 8:26 p.m. It was seconded by Wayne.  
**Motion Passed 4-0**