

MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD MEETING

Hope Select Board
Tuesday, October 10, 2023

6:30 p.m.
Hope Town Office

Board Members Present:

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

Others Present:

- Samantha Mank, and Vern Zeigler (by phone)

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Sarah.

Agenda Adjustments/Approval:

- Charlie made a motion to approve the agenda as written. It was seconded by Wayne.
Motion passed 5-0

Public Comment:

- None

Board of Assessors:

- Suspend as Select Board/Convene as Assessors: Charlie made a motion to suspend as the Select Board and to convene as the Board of Assessors at 6:38 p.m. It was seconded by Mike.
Motion passed 5-0
- Abatement Request for Jeffrey Connon, RE Acct 35 on Loon Lane \$706.23: Vern explained that TRIO had again created a tax bill for property that had been deleted in the system. Mr. Connon's assessment and tax bill were sent in error. Charlie made a motion to grant Mr. Connon an abatement in the amount of \$706.23 for account #35. It was seconded by Wayne.
Motion passed 5-0
- Abatement Hearing for Lynn Thomas, 10 Bryan Lane \$311.52: Vern noted that Ms. Thomas has not provided any information regarding her abatement application. However, the Code Enforcement Officer and Town Administrator went to the property and took several photos of the structure. Vern offered to reduce the assessed value of the property based on the photos. The Board of Assessors wanted to ask Ms. Thomas specific questions regarding her property and wanted her to provide the items necessary as evidence of the claims on her application. Charlie made a motion to deny the abatement at this time because there was not enough information to make a decision and to send a letter via first class and certified to Ms. Thomas granting an extension of one day to October 27, 2023. The letter will request she contact Vern via phone or email and to attend the October 24, 2023 meeting to discuss her application. It was seconded by Michael.
Motion passed 5-0

- Suspend as Assessors/Reconvene as Select Board: Charlie made a motion to suspend as the Board of Assessors and reconvene as the Select Board at 7:05 p.m. It was seconded by Wayne.

Motion passed 5-0

Minutes:

- September 26, 2023: Charlie made a motion to approve the September 26th minutes. It was seconded by Michael.

Motion passed 5-0

Warrants 24, 25, 26:

- Charlie made a motion to approve warrants 24, and 26. It was seconded by Mike.

Motion passed 5-0

- Charlie made a motion to approve warrant 25. It was seconded by Wayne.

Motion passed 4-1 (Michael)

New Business:

- None

Old Business:

- None

Other Business:

- None

Town Administrator's Report:

- There have continued to be emails and phone calls and social media contact regarding the animal control complaint that has its origins in the town of Union. The complainant has been emailing and calling the town office with regular updates of all of the movements or non-movements of our ACO. Heidi has since blocked him from her social media as a way to slow down some of the issue. As of yesterday, twenty-two of the cats have been trapped and taken to local shelters. Unfortunately, between P.A.W.S. and Pope Memorial, she must wait for at least a week and maybe more before trapping anymore because the shelters are overwhelmed. They are feral cats but they are still being fed, and they are still located in the Town of Union.
- I did reach out to all of the other towns that the Animal Control Officer works with. So far, I've heard back from two of them. The response from both of those towns was positive in nature. I have asked all of the towns to send me a copy of their most recent agreement and/or job description for the animal control services they are receiving. To date, I haven't received any yet. In addition, Heidi told me that she has received a letter from the State telling her that the investigation has concluded, and they have found that she has properly performed her duties. I've asked for a copy of that letter, so has Union, but neither Town has received it yet.
- I contacted Lincolnville and Appleton to see how their FY 24 first quarter is going. Lincolnville still does not have a completed FY 22 audit. He was quite frustrated and it doesn't sound as if much is changing. We discussed the possibility of having another joint

meeting with the three Select Boards to discuss whatever legal measures we have in order to make sure the Towns can have proper financial oversight of what's happening with our school departments. I have again, for a third time, asked to have a first quarter financial meeting, Jude is willing to meet, but works during the day and said she can only meet after 4:00. The Superintendent thinks having a meeting after 4:00 would be fine except that none of her staff would be able to attend and she has publicly stated that she doesn't have any kind of knowledge regarding the finances. I have offered that the Hope's Bookkeeper, and I would go to the Central Office during business hours, in order to have a meeting with the actual finance team, and to review the revenue, expense, and all activity reports, as well as to develop some kind of main stream strategy to make sure we don't find ourselves in the same position as in prior years. Nothing has been scheduled yet.

- I have been working on getting the documentation together for all of the required FEMA reporting for both the May-Day storm and hurricane Lee. Although we have very good records, the way FEMA wants the items reported, it has turned into a much more time-consuming process than anticipated. It was also my hope that because we had completed 100% of the work, that we would be able to move through the process sooner. It does not appear that that will be the case as they have set dates for each step of the process and we cannot move on until those deadlines have passed.
- The Town Office front door is also having a locking mechanism issue. There is a part on order that we are hopeful will be here this week. As of right now, we are able to secure the building just fine, however, if the door were to fail, we have already established a Plan B with the lock company who will make an emergency call to implement that. In the meantime, it does not look very good, but it is functional for now.
- The damage that was done to the kitchen earlier this year, because of the deep freeze, has finally started. The contractors actually worked over the weekend to get the remainder of the flooring in. There are only a few more things to do before that job is complete and we will be able to close out that insurance claim. I did discuss the heat tape and he said he would get that put in place so that we are not caught off guard by an early cold snap.
- We have been attempting to get the roof at the sand and salt shed repaired, we've called the manufacturer of the roof, and it turns out they no longer make those panels. These are the type of panels that go from the ground all the way to the center beam and two panels make up the building. In the meantime, we are trying to locate someone who can fabricate a patch to go over the large holes in order to try to keep things dryer in there than they have been in years past. This is another case of things taking much longer than anticipated.
- I had planned on having an executive session this evening with the Town Attorney to discuss the Consent Agreement for the violation on Highfield Rd. Upon closer examination of the plans and just making sure that everything would pass a straight face test, we noticed that on one of the plans submitted by Gartley and Dorsky, that it only required a sustainability of the vegetation for two years. The DEP under chapter 1000 requires that a minimum of 80% of vegetation is sustained and survives for at least five years. Therefore, we requested Gartley and Dorsey amend the plans to reflect this. The amended plans aren't ready yet and Doug Kelly and his attorney, Cam Ferrante, have to be notified of the change before we can move forward with the Consent Agreement. It appears that this could happen in two weeks or may

be pushed off until November depending on how quickly we can get those plans and the other party signs off on it.

- There is an MMA training offered for newly elected officials, I've sent out the brochure to you. I've also included it in the packet. If you would like to attend, it will be held via zoom on November 28. You just need to let me know so that I can sign you up. It has to be signed through the E business account so unfortunately each individual cannot sign themselves up.
- I will be on vacation beginning tomorrow for up to 3 weeks. Chelsea will be handling things in my absence.
- There were 4 new building permits and 0 plumbing permits since the 9/26/23 Select Board meeting:
 - Jonathan Eno 31 Winning Way Addition
 - Scott Young 30 Church St. Addition
 - William Griffith 394 Barnestown Rd. Accessory Structure
 - Lance Wolin 8 Bryan Lane Veg. Clearing in SZ
- There are 4 RE accounts for 2022, totaling \$19,339.37. Unpaid 2022 real estate taxes will automatically foreclose on February 27, 2024, if the accounts are not paid in full.
- There are 19 RE accounts for 2023, totaling \$41,237.10. Unpaid 2023 real estate taxes will automatically foreclose on February 11, 2025, if the accounts are not paid in full.
- There are 997 RE accounts for 2024, totaling \$1,775,636.65. The first half of the 2024 taxes were due on Tuesday, October 3rd. The second half is due on April 30, 2024.

Adjournment:

- Charlie made a motion to adjourn at 8:06 p.m. It was seconded Mike.
Motion passed 5-0