

**MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD MEETING**  
**Hope Select Board**  
**November 12, 2024**  
**5:30 p.m.**  
**Hope Town Office**

**Board Members Present:**

- Sarah Ann Smith, Charlie Weidman, Wayne Luce, Crystal Robinson, and Joe Tassi

**Others Present:**

- Samantha Mank, John Monroe, and Jon Powers

**Call to Order:**

- The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Charlie.

**Agenda Adjustments/Approval:**

- Charlie made a motion to take agenda items out of order to accommodate those present at the meeting. It was seconded By Wayne.

**Motion passed 4-0**

**Public Comment:**

- None

**Minutes:**

- October 22, 2024: Charlie made a motion to approve the 10/22/24 minutes as written. It was seconded by Wayne.

**Motion passed 4-0**

**Warrants 33, 34, 35, & 36:**

- Charlie made a motion to approve and sign the Treasurers and Payroll warrants 33, 34, 35, and 36. It was seconded by Crystal.

**Motion passed 5-0**

**New Business:**

- North East Ambulance Update, Jonathan Powers: Jonathan Powers is the division chief for NEMHS. He is trying to meet with the Towns individually since there is no longer a quorum for the Performance Review Committee. He said that staffing is good at the moment, and they are utilizing a paramedic fly car instead having a medic on every call. There have also been several upgrades to the base which has helped with morale. Rockport is planning on beginning their service in December. There are some requirements they still need to complete before being issued a transport license. Jon said that the NEMHS ambulance service is planning on staying in the area and continue providing EMS services to the remaining three communities as long as they are wanted. The towns will be given updated cost assessments sometime in January or February for budgeting purposes.
- Risk Reduction Grant: The Town was awarded \$3,000 which is the full amount. Wayne made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to accept the Risk Reduction Grant and to contract

with Pro-Tech Security for the purchase and installation of the security cameras. It was seconded by Crystal.

**Motion passed 4-0**

- Resignation Deputy Clerk, Sarah Chapman: Joe made a motion to accept the resignation of Sarah Chapman as the Deputy Clerk, with thanks. It was seconded by Wayne.

**Motion passed 4-0**

**Old Business:**

- Crystal wanted to discuss the Resilient Communities Survey as she feels it was misleading by calling it a Maine program when their alignments to the UN's Agenda 2030 and no other red flags were mentioned. The Town Administrator told Crystal that a workshop was scheduled for November 19<sup>th</sup> in order to get more information and to have a question-and-answer time as well.

**Other Business:**

- Sarah wanted everyone to be aware of spam emails to be sure to look at the extensions to verify the emails are actually from town email addresses.

**Town Administrator Report:**

- There are 1,458 registered voters in the Town of Hope. Hope had a 79% voter participation for the Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> election with 1,148 ballots being cast. Of those, 518 were absentee ballots. There was a steady flow of people throughout the day. The Knox County Sheriff Department had deputies stopping by the Town Office several times throughout the day and into the evening. Everything ran very smoothly. Unfortunately, because of the way the thumb drives were programmed in order to enhance security, there was an issue that required every ballot to be rescanned after the polls had closed. Staff remained until 2:30 a.m. completing the counting and reporting.
- I received an email from the Pen-Bay Soccer Club regarding how pleased they have been with how well True Park has been maintained by Brandon Fuller. The email contains several comments from coaches and supporters.
- Mid Coast Solid Waste Board of Directors will have a meeting next Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the Camden Town Office, John French Conference Room.
- The full school board had appointed a subcommittee to conduct the search for the next superintendent as Kate is retiring in June. The next meeting is on Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom. The agenda is on the website.
- The FY23 school audit has been started. We are still waiting to hear when the municipal portion of the audit will be started. The auditing firm is greatly understaffed at the moment. There has not been any discussion regarding the FY24 audit. It definitely will not be ready in time for the next budget and town meeting cycle. The Select Board may choose to proceed with the regular schedule without the audit next year. There is a shortage of auditing firms as several municipalities don't have an auditor and are unable to hire one. In some instances, towns are still waiting for their FY21 audits.
- The deadline to complete the Resilient Communities Survey was today. The Task Force will meet tomorrow evening at which time they will review the survey results, select a top priority action or actions, use the top priority/priorities as the basis for the Town's Community Action Grant project, and begin designing the project proposal. There will be a "Community Workshop" to discuss everything with anyone from the town who is interested, on Tuesday, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>. The

final project proposal will be submitted to the Select Board for approval at the next SB meeting on November 26<sup>th</sup>.

- There are several vacancies on a few boards and committees. Whenever vacancies occur, it is the responsibility of the Select Board to appoint someone to fill them until either the term ends or an election is held. Current vacancies include: 3 vacancies on the Appeals Board. Two of them have terms that expire June 2025, Planning Board 1 vacancy. This can either be for the remainder of the term until June 2025 or can begin a new term until June 2030; one vacancy on the Budget Committee. Since this an elected position, the Select Board can only appoint until June 2025.
- The new website is progressing nicely. I have a two-part training scheduled for the end of November and beginning of December to learn how to properly use it. If everything goes well, we may be able to go live sometime in January.
- There were 7 building permits, and 5 plumbing permits issued since the 10/8/24 Select Board meeting:
  - Kristoper Schuman                      67 Meadow Ln                      Tree Cutting in SZ
  - Oliver Perkins                              103 Smith Dr                        Barn
  - Heidi Baker                                 258 Alford Lake Rd                Bathhouse
  - Noah Kleiner                                589 Barnestown Rd                Accessory Structure
  - Deborah McSweyn                         77 Barretts Hill Rd                Home Occupation
  - Wayne Luce                                 68 Luce Ln                            Deck
  - James Tobin                                 29 Orchard Ln                        Barn
- There are 1,011 RE accounts with remaining balances for FY2025, totaling \$1,858,168.99. The first half of taxes was due on October 1, 2024. The second half is due on April 30, 2025.
- There are 22 RE accounts with remaining balances for FY2024, totaling \$42,538.09. Unpaid 2024 real estate taxes will automatically be foreclosed on February 20, 2026, if those accounts are not paid in full.
- There are 8 RE accounts with remaining balances for FY2023, totaling \$24,167.98. Unpaid 2023 real estate taxes will automatically be foreclosed on February 1, 2025, if those accounts are not paid in full.

**Executive Session:**

- Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405 (6)(A)(1) - Personnel Matter: Charlie made a motion to enter executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405 (6)(A)(1) to discuss a personnel matter at 7:14 p.m. It was seconded by Crystal.  
**Motion passed 5-0**
- Charlie made a motion to exit executive session at 7:51 p.m. It was seconded by Crystal.  
**Motion passed 5-0**

**Adjournment:**

- Sarah made a motion to adjourn at 7:52 p.m. It was seconded by Wayne.  
**Motion Passed 5-0**