

MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD MEETING
Hope Select Board
November 26, 2024
5:30 p.m.
Hope Town Office

Board Members Present:

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

Others Present:

- Samantha Mank, John Monroe, Jake Esancy, Doug Kelly, Gabrian McPhail, Donna Winslow, Bob Winslow, & Jason Simms

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Sarah.

Agenda Adjustments/Approval:

- Sarah asked to add an update about Mid Coast Solid Waste for other business. Crystal asked to add a discussion regarding the invitation from the Morill Select Board for other business as well. Charlie made a motion to amend the agenda by adding two items to other business as requested by Sarah and Crystal. It was seconded by Crystal.

Motion passed 4-0

Public Comment:

- Crystal asked to speak as a private resident and not as a member of the Select Board. She feels that the Town is not being transparent. She said the website didn't have the Resilient Communities Partnership Grant information on it for Hope residents to read. She recently discovered that Hope was a member of Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG) and as such wanted to know why the membership dues have never been discussed as a part of the budget process even though tax dollars are paying the dues. The Town Administrator told her that all documentation was on the website under announcements on the homepage for several weeks. In addition, links to all of the documents were included on the survey which were mailed via first class postage to homes in Hope. Those surveys were also posted on the Town website, Town Facebook, Hope Happenings Facebook, and were on the counter at the Town Office for three weeks during the 2024 election cycle. Knox County pays the membership dues for every municipality within the county with the County taxes that are assessed. Those discussions are held at the county level.

Minutes:

- November 12, 2024: Charlie made a motion to approve the 11/12/24 minutes as written. It was seconded by Crystal.

Motion passed 4-0

Warrants 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, and 110:

- Charlie made a motion to approve and sign the Treasurers and Payroll warrants 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, and 110. It was seconded by Joe.

Motion passed 4-0

New Business:

- Resilient Communities Partnership Municipal Resolution: Charlie made a motion to approve and sign the Resilient Communities Partnership Municipal Resolution. It was seconded by Joe.

Motion passed 3-1 (Crystal)

- Amendment to Doug Kelly Consent Agreement dated November 28, 2023: Doug asked the Select Board to amend the December 4, 2024 payment schedule of \$10,000. He would like to extend the \$10,000 payments out until March 1, 2025. He has already paid \$2,500 toward that payment. So far, he has complied with all aspects of the Consent Agreement. The Town still holds the mortgage deed to his property as surety for any violation of the Consent Agreement until December 2026. Charlie made a motion to approve and sign the amended December 4, 2024 payment schedule for the Consent Agreement between Douglas Kelly Jr., The Douglas Wayne Kelly, Sr. Family Trust, and the Town of Hope signed on November 28, 2023. It was seconded by Crystal.

Motion passed 4-0

- Resignation Board of Appeals – Nancy Ford: Charlie made a motion to accept the resignation of Nancy Ford from the Board of Appeals, with thanks for years of service to the Town. It was seconded by Joe.

Motion passed 4-0

- Roads Update – John Monroe, Road Commissioner: John discussed the recent plowing bid that was received. In addition, he raised concerns about the readiness of the Towns current contractor to meet the contract obligations for the duration of his contract. He presented a proposal of the Town purchasing three (3) F-650 style trucks w/ equipped rigging, one 1 large Mack style heavy duty plow/spreader truck, one (1) used loader, and seasonal labor from November thru April. There was definitely a time when subcontracting the winter maintenance made economical sense. However, with the rising costs of everything, the scales have tipped, and it is now less economical and more of a potential hazard to contract the winter maintenance rather than handle it in house. It is important to determine if this is the route the Town would like to pursue because it takes several months to get the trucks ordered and geared up. In order to be ready for the next season, we should probably have the Special Town Meeting in February. John has obtained some quotes from dealerships. However next steps would be to contact the Budget Committee, solicit bids for the equipment, seek bond counsel, prepare for a Special Town Meeting. Charlie made a motion to proceed with the next steps. It was seconded by Crystal.

Motion passed 4-0

Old Business:

- None

Other Business:

- MCSW Update – Sarah Ann Smith: Sarah gave an extensive update on the items the Board of Directors are working through. She praised Dave St. Laurent for his innovative and forward thinking.
- Invitation from Morrill Board of Selectmen – Crystal Robinson: The Morrill Select Board sent an invitation to nearby surrounding Towns to discuss the hidden agenda behind accepting federal and state grant money. The discussion will include the UN land grab of 30% of our property. Crystal would like attend and wanted to know if anyone else wanted to go with her. Joe said he looked up the sites that were mentioned and that if what is being stated is true, then he would be upset. However, all he saw was statements without any facts to back them up. He would like some evidence to support the claims that at the local level, accepting the community resiliency partnership grant for our town projects is going to result in 30% of the property being confiscated by the UN. The meeting will be held on Thursday, December 12th @ 6:30 p.m. at the Morrill Community Center.

Town Administrator Report:

- I attended a meeting regarding the future of EMS for the three remaining Towns that still have a contract with NEMHS. Various scenarios were discussed in order to control costs while maintaining a good service. We will be meeting with NEMHS within the next few weeks to discuss those options as well as any change to contract standards with the departure of Rockport from the consortium.
- I submitted a letter to the Maine EMS Board on behalf of the Town regarding the financial impact to Hope taxpayers should Rockport be granted a transport license. Although, I believe Rockport has Home Rule Authority and should be allowed to do whatever their taxpayers and residents vote for, I also felt strongly that the Board should know how other smaller towns will be affected. Camden and Lincolnville also wrote similar letters.
- Interviews for the Deputy Clerk position have started. It may be possible to have the position filled by the beginning of the year depending on the pool of applicants.
- The Five Towns CSD will be having a referendum bond election on January 14, 2025 for a variety of projects. So far, we don't know what the projects are or how much the bond will be for. I will share additional information as soon as it becomes available.
- Christmas Eve is on a Tuesday this year. Would the Select Board consider closing the Town Office for both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day?
- There were 4 building permits, and 1 plumbing permit issued since the 11/12/24 Select Board meeting:
 - Julianna Pfeiffer 804 Hatchet Mountain Rd. Tree Cutting in SZ
 - Dan Ford 267 Camden Rd. Accessory Structure
 - Heidi Baker 258 Alford Lake Rd. Tree Cutting in SZ
 - Brandon Rapp 63 Robbins Rd. Accessory Structure
- There are 1,010 RE accounts with remaining balances for FY2025, totaling \$1,836,557.71. The

first half of taxes was due on October 1, 2024. The second half is due on April 30, 2025.

- There are 21 RE accounts with remaining balances for FY2024, totaling \$39,689.86. 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 \$24,202.81. Unpaid 2023 real estate taxes will automatically be foreclosed on February 1, 2025, if those accounts are not paid in full.

Adjournment:

- Sarah made a motion to adjourn at 7:52 p.m. It was seconded by Wayne.

Motion Passed 5-0