

## MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD MEETING

Hope Select Board  
Tuesday, December 27, 2022  
6:30 p.m.  
Hope Town Office

### Board Members Present:

- Sarah Ann Smith, Dick Crabtree, Charlie Weidman, and Mike Brown

### Others Present:

- Samantha Mank, John Monroe, and Melissa Hall

### Call to Order:

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

### Agenda Adjustments/Approval:

- Dick made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. It was seconded Charlie.  
**Motion passed 4-0**

### Public Comment:

- None

### Minutes:

- November 22, 2022: Dick made a motion to approve the 11/22/22 minutes. It was seconded by Sarah.  
**Motion passed 3-0-1 (Mike)**
- December 13, 2022: Mike made a motion to approve the 12/13/22 minutes. It was seconded by Dick.  
**Motion passed 3-0-1 (Charlie)**

### Warrants 43, 44, 45, & 46:

- The Select Board reviewed the warrants. Charlie made a motion to approve and sign warrants 43, 44, 45, and 46. It was seconded by Dick.  
**Motion passed 4-0**

### New Business:

- Roads Update – Road Commissioner, John Monroe: John reported that it was a busy Fall. He has been working on keeping up with the planned repairs and maintenance as well as finishing the work from the 2021 Halloween Storm damage.  
John said he wasn't aware of any damage or many downed trees from the big storm last Friday. 66% of homes in Hope were without power for quite awhile but nothing more than a few blocked culverts from debris.

He also noted that the cost of everything is much higher than usual increases in just one year. The cost of salt has risen from \$52/ton to \$83/ton. Because of such a difference it is important for him to know where he stands with his budget. He said he is a bit behind with the finance department. He hasn't been able to finalize his worksheets after the final approval of the budget from town meeting. He is scheduled to meet with Tina this Friday.

The plowing contractor has changed the truck list for the 2023 season. It appears to have older stock. John is concerned that the vehicles he is planning on using could tear up the dirt roads. Jake does have several vehicles so a breakdown shouldn't be an issue because there is enough stock to be able to pull something if needed in Hope. John said that the contractor seems to be doing pretty well so far. As the Road Commissioner, he doesn't have any complaints.

There was discussion about the plow trucks using the wings to push back the snow more in order to prevent large banks of hard snow and ice so close to the roads.

- Donation to Fire Department from Camp Bishopswood: Charlie made a motion to accept the donation in the amount of \$750 and to put it in the Firetruck Replacement Reserve Account. It was seconded by Mike.

**Motion passed 4-0**

- Schedule Executive Session for Town Administrator Contract Renewal & Annual Eval: The Select Board will proceed with the evaluation process over the course of both regularly scheduled meetings on January 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Discussion – Special Town Meeting: The Town Administrator will provide the Select Board with a timeline of possible dates for the special town meeting at the next Select Board meeting. Depending on the dates, the Select Board will determine if calling a special meeting versus waiting until the regular annual meeting in June is the better option.
- Resource Protection, Mr. Leppanen – Next Steps Discussion: Tabled until next Select Board meeting.
- Ground Penetrating Radar: Beth provided the Select Board with an updated estimate for the ground penetrating radar work from Topographix. Dick said the town has the responsibility to know where the graves are and the people who have purchased plots have a right to know where their plot is actually located.

Samantha will contact Beth and ask her to check into other possible companies doing the same work including the Maine Old Cemetery Association and the University of Maine and to make her recommendation to the Select Board.

**Other Business:**

- None

**Town Administrator Report:**

- RJD Appraisals sent three inspectors to Hope in order to conduct the second round of property inspections and update the property cards. The inspections began last week and will

continue throughout the remainder of this week as well. Notices were put on the town website that included photos of the inspectors. This was a good verification tool as the Town Office has received a couple of calls from residents inquiring about the legitimacy of the inspectors who have gone to their houses.

- The annual audit still hasn't been completed. I received a call that the auditor's had not received the anticipated materials from the school in order to finish the audit. As a result, I sent an email to the Select Board, School Committee, Superintendent, Principal, Town Finance, the Town's accountant, and Central Office Finance outlining the scheduling difficulties with having the delay, especially after they had declared they were ready. Kate sent an email on Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> stating she had filed for an extension to complete the audit with the Dept. of Education.
- The 2023 Knox County Budget has been approved. Copies are available. Hope will have to pay \$341,099 which is an increase of \$47,481 from this year.
- The applications for the property tax stabilization program were due on December 1<sup>st</sup>. 155 applications were received. Based on the 2022-23 tax year change to the current mil rate of 17.15 the town wide savings would be \$6,900. The program will actually begin with the 2023-24 tax year.
- We are still trying to wrap the last details from the October 2021 storm with FEMA. I believe they only have one more form needed in order to close out Hope's project claims. I have a message in to our FEMA Coordinator to see if we can have everything completed by the end of this week.
- The septic system for 4 Shore Rd. has been installed and all of the peripheries of the project have been completed, with the exception of the new grass growth which will happen in the Spring. The contractor is expected to submit an invoice within the next few days. Matt has completed the inspections. Once I have the invoice, I will submit all of the paperwork to DEP for authorization to have a payment made to the Town. In the meantime, payments will be made to the various vendors for the work beginning on the next A/P warrant.
- Matthew issued a second Notice of Violation to Doug Kelly for work he has continued to do even after he was ordered to stop all work on the property. The Town Attorney is aware of the incident and has reviewed and approved the new orders. The restoration plan for the original set of violations is nearly complete and once reviewed by Mr. Kelly and his attorneys. Once the Town receives the proposed plan, the Select Board will determine if it is acceptable or not. This will determine the next steps.
- Matthew met with Nathan Durant from the DEP last Tuesday to review four additional shoreland zone violations within the town. Two of them will be relatively easy to remedy by obtaining after-the-fact permits with the town and the state. The remaining two will have Notice of Violations and a need for a remediation and restoration plan.
- There were 3 new building permits and 4 plumbing permits issued since the 11/22/22 Select Board meeting:

- Aileen Studd                    50 Hatchet Mountain Rd.            Accessory Structure
- James Dunham                 0 Sandy Point Rd.                    New Constr. (Camp)
- Lawrence Rich                 27 Rocky Cove Ln.                    Addition & Deck

- There are 3 RE accounts for 2021, totaling \$4,380.01. Unpaid 2021 real estate taxes will automatically foreclose on February 3, 2023, if the accounts are not paid in full.
- There are 10 RE accounts for 2022, totaling \$25,755.62. Unpaid 2022 real estate taxes will automatically foreclose on February 27, 2024, if the accounts are not paid in full.
- There are 988 RE accounts for 2023, totaling \$1,547,218.10. The second half is due on May 2, 2023.
- The cash has not been out of balance since the Select Board meeting on 11/22/22.

**Adjournment:**

- Dick made a motion to adjourn at 8:32 p.m. It was seconded by Charlie.  
**Motion passed 4-0**