

## MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD MEETING

Hope Select Board  
Tuesday, August 8, 2023  
6:30 p.m.  
Hope Town Office

### Board Members Present:

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

### Others Present:

- Samantha Mank, Chelsea Summers, Vern Ziegler, Sarah Chapman, Clarence Keller, and Chris Farley

### Call to Order:

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

### Agenda Adjustments/Approval:

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

### Public Comment:

- None

### Board of Assessors:

- Suspend as Select Board/Convene as Assessors: Michael made a motion to suspend as the Select Board and to convene as the Board of Assessors at 6:34 p.m. It was seconded by Mike.  
**Motion passed 4-0**
- FY 2024 Tax Commitment: Vern explained the process and paperwork of committing the taxes. He gave them three options for the mil rate. After reviewing the documents, Michael made a motion to sign all of the documents required to commit the taxes and set the FY 2024 mil rate at 17.70. It was seconded by Charlie.  
**Motion passed 4-0**
- Adjourn as Assessors/Reconvene as Select Board: Charlie made a motion to adjourn as the Board of Assessors and to reconvene as the Select Board at 6:42 p.m. It was seconded by Michael.  
**Motion passed 4-0**

### New Business:

- Tax Abatement for Elizabeth O'Haverty (541 Camden Rd) - \$77.78: Vern explained that this account had been deleted in 2009. However, TRIO created a 2023 tax bill for the deleted account. He said that he called TRIO and nobody could explain why or how this had happened but that he has experienced the same phenomena in his other towns. Because this tax bill and the assessment is wholly illegal, the amount needs to be abated. He has gone back into TRIO and deleted the account again. Michael made a motion to abate the taxes in the amount of \$77.78. It was seconded by Mike.  
**Motion passed 4-0**

- Confirmation Deputy Town Clerk - Sarah Chapman: The Town Administrator has recommended the confirmation of Sarah Chapman as the Deputy Clerk. Sarah introduced herself to the Select Board. Charlie made a motion to confirm the appointment of Sarah Chapman to the Deputy Clerk position. It was seconded by Mike.

**Motion passed 4-0**

- FY 2022 Annual Audit - Bill Brewer: Bill provided a variety of remarks regarding the June 30, 2022 audit. He offered a few suggestions on oversight of the school's finances as ultimately the Select Board is responsible because a school union is a town department which is a different form of school district. Other communities may have districts that are RSU's like Rockland or CSD's like Camden. These school districts operate differently and are somewhat separate from each community. The School Union, however, is quite different in that all finances must be paid by the town. This is why the Select Board must sign the warrants in order to release funds. In the past, the School Committee and the Select Board have relied on the certification of the Superintendent to accurately inform them of any overages or costs that may not have been approved by the voters. The process of the FY 2022 audit has revealed that her certifications were false and that she did not accurately report the status of the finances, which resulted in a large overage.

In addition, the Town had to subsidize all of the spending of ESSR funds because the bills were being paid but the reimbursements weren't being submitted. This could put a huge burden on the Town's ability to have cash on hand.

The Central Office has the ability to print an All Activities report at any time and give it to the Town for review. The Select Board also has the authority to refuse to sign warrants if there is evidence of an overage. Having the reports should help with knowing how the "actual to budget" finances are.

The Town was in good shape for the audit other than the school using over \$200k of the cash without reimbursement. We are hopeful that the money will begin to trickle in over this next fiscal year.

- Memorandum of Understanding for First Responder EMS Administration between Towns of Camden and Hope – Fire Chief Clarence Keller & Fire Chief Chris Farley: Chief Keller and Chief Farley explained that Camden holds the First Responder non transporting license. They will be the administrative entity handling that part of the program. Currently, Hope has three trained First Responders and anticipates having more in the near future. Camden and Hope will work cooperatively much like mutual aid does. In order to move forward, the Town Attorney drafted a Memorandum of Understanding between the two towns in order to begin this program in Hope. Charlie made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Hope and Camden for First Responder EMS Administration. It was seconded by Michael.

**Motion passed 4-0**

- Fourth Quarter Financial Report – Chelsea Summers: Chelsea presented the unadjusted fourth quarter financial report. The reason it is unadjusted is because the end of year final journal entries have not yet been made. The accountant will in Hope working with Chelsea in September to determine what those adjustments should be as well as to begin preparing for the FY 2023 audit for the municipal side. She noted two areas that have overages. The first is in Public Safety, Fire Department. This is due to the fuel depot in Camden closing and the

increased cost of fuel for the fire trucks. The second is for Emergency Road Repair Reserve. This is due to the May Day storm that caused severe road damage. The Town is expecting an approximate 90% reimbursement from FEMA for the storm-related damage. Otherwise, all other expenses were well within the budgeted parameters.

**Old Business:**

- None

**Other Business:**

- None

**Minutes:**

- July 25, 2023: Charlie made a motion to approve the July 25, 2023 minutes as written. It was seconded by Mike.

**Motion passed 4-0**

**Warrants 8, 9, & 10:**

- The Select Board reviewed the warrants. Mike made a motion to approve and sign warrants 8, 9, and 10. It was seconded by Charlie.

**Motion passed 4-0**

**Town Administrator's Report:**

- The new computers were purchased for the Town Office. Installation will be scheduled for after tax commitment.
- Many of the ongoing issues are still pending. The Select Board will be apprised of any changes.
- There were 7 new building permits and 3 plumbing permits since the 7/11/23 Select Board meeting:

○ Marco Bavo	87 Bull Hill Rd.	Single Family Dwelling
○ Ian Robertson	27 Old Lane	Addition
○ Fred Payne	16 Dereks Way	Vegetation Clearing in SZ
○ Jay Wilson	1 Dereks Way	Vegetation Clearing in SZ
○ Karen Methlie	114 Luce Ln.	Structure Leveling & New Posts
○ Anna Queen	44 Soaring Eagle Dr.	Excav./Fill & Veg. Clearing
○ Walter Lamont	276 Camden Rd.	Vegetation Clearing in SZ

- There are 4 RE accounts for 2022, totaling \$19,157.72. Unpaid 2022 real estate taxes will automatically foreclose on February 27, 2024, if the accounts are not paid in full.
- There are 38 RE accounts for 2023, totaling \$80,309.40. Unpaid 2023 real estate taxes will automatically foreclose on February 11, 2025, if the accounts are not paid in full.
- The cash has not been out of balance since the Select Board meeting on 7/25/23.

**Adjournment:**

- Charlie made a motion to adjourn at 8:34 p.m. It was seconded by Mike.

**Motion passed 4-0**