

MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD MEETING

Hope Select Board
Tuesday, September 26, 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, Chelsea Summers, Bill Pearse, Vern Ziegler (via phone), Heidi Blood, Jeremy George

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:33 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. It was seconded by Michael.
Motion passed 5-0
- Abatement Request Robert & Donna Winslow, 1 Head of the Lake Dr. \$44.25: Charlie made a motion to approve the abatement for 1 Head of the Lake Dr. in the amount of \$44.25. 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 6:44 p.m.as they are awaiting a call from the Assessors Agent regarding another matter. It was seconded by Michael.
Motion passed 5-0

Minutes:

- September 12, 2023: Mike made a motion to approve the 9/12/23 minutes as written. It was seconded by Wayne.
Motion passed 4-0-1 (Charlie)

Warrants 19, 20, 21, 22, & 23:

- Charlie made a motion to approve warrants 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23. It was seconded by Wayne.
Motion passed 4-0-1 (Michael)

New Business:

- Approval for Town Attorney Assistance with the Affordable Housing Ordinance Creation & Review (up to 4 hours): A new law was recently passed requiring every municipality to amend or update all ordinances that pertain to land use and housing density. Bill spoke to the Select Board both as a resident as well as to provide insight as a contractor for low income housing developments or other multiple unit housing agencies. He gave a brief explanation of what the law requires. However, it was written as an “one size fits all” legislation which may make it more difficult for smaller communities to review and propose the amendments sufficient enough to be in compliance with the law. Therefore, he agrees with the Town Administrator and Planning Board to have the Town Attorney assist the Planning Board with these changes. Funds were included in this year’s budget for legal fees for this type of need. After some additional discussion, Charlie made a motion to approve using funds for up to four hours, plus any additional costs associated with this project. It was seconded by Mike.
Motion passed 5-0

Old Business:

- None

Other Business:

- 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 7:02p.m. It was seconded by Mike.
Motion passed 5-0
- Written Request for Abatement Hearing Scheduling & Letter: Vern called in and spoke with the Assessors regarding a written request for an abatement. It has been typical that residents speak with Vern, and he can prepare the paperwork for the Assessors. However, when a request is made in writing, it requires an abatement hearing. Vern prepared a letter to send as a notification that the hearing would be scheduled for October 10th. The Assessors just needed to agree to hold the hearing on that date and authorize sending the letter. The Assessors approved the hearing date and sending the letter by consent.
- Adjourn as Assessors/Reconvene as Select Board: Charlie made a motion to adjourn as the Board of Assessors and reconvene as the Select Board at 7:16 p.m. It was seconded by Wayne.
Motion passed 5-0

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) for a personnel matter at 7:17 p.m. It was seconded by Mike.
Motion passed 5-0
- Charlie made a motion to exit executive session at 9:19 p.m. It was seconded by Mike.

Motion passed 5-0

- There was no action taken by the Select Board as a result of the executive session at this time.

Town Administrator's Report:

- Prior to the storm last week, which was predicted to be a Hurricane hitting the Maine Coast, there was a Presidential Declaration of disaster in advance of the storm. The Town of Hope has approximately \$4,200 of storm damage to claim as a result of Lee.
- We have been working toward having a Consent Agreement to present to the Select Board during the October 10th meeting. However, the attorney for Mr. Kelly has changed some of the terms that we submitted, and they are what the CEO and I consider to be nonnegotiable. Hopefully, we will be able to come to some kind of consensus within the week.
- The Central Office was asked to scan the invoices and email them to the Town Office in addition to giving us the hard copy and warrants in order to prepare the disbursements. Once the scans were received, I did a quick comparison and noted that the information in the scans did not match the hard copy information. After making a note of the many discrepancies, I sent an email to the entire HES and Central Office Finance Team (Kate, Superintendent; Chris, the Finance and Operations Specialist; Paula, the bookkeeper; and Jude & Nick who serve on the HES finance team) outlining what I had discovered and asked if the scans could be made and sent after any corrections or changes had been made so that that all of the books could be matched up. I requested a quarterly financial report meeting and gave a selection of dates. I also indicated that I'd like to discuss strategies that we could use to make sure that we were making sure we were aligning on a monthly basis but to at least be sharing accurate information every two weeks would be a great start. Jude was very accommodating and willing to meet. I expressed a desire to attend School Committee meetings once in a while, and possibly the Finance Sub Committee Meetings just to make sure everyone had all of the same information at the same time. Unfortunately, I was not met with a cooperative response from the Central Office Bookkeeper, who did not want the communications to be in writing and also suggested that I recheck all of the school's work before asking questions. Kate, however, quickly thanked me for the update. A date to meet with the finance team has yet to be set. I will be a bit more insistent this week. A quick note, after reviewing all that had been sent, it appeared that everything was in proper order and that items had been corrected after the scans were sent.
- Additional work is being done on the sand/salt shed. Unfortunately, it isn't exactly what we wanted but none-the-less- forward progress is happening.
- The repairs in the kitchen are expected to be completed before the end of October. Once the new flooring and ceiling tiles have been replaced, I will be able to close out that insurance claim.
- Pam has returned from vacation and is quite happy with her new title of Mrs. Jordan. Sarah has steadily been attending various training courses and did a good job covering for Pam

even though she's only been serving in the position for a short time.

- Wendy is recovering from her second hip surgery and has expressed a desire to return to work within a few weeks. I told her we'd take it very slow and be sure to follow her physician's recommendations.
- There was 1 new building permit and 3 plumbing permits since the 9/12/23 Select Board meeting:
 - Chris Southworth 9 Birch Lane Excavation
- There are 4 RE accounts for 2022, totaling \$19,299.00. Unpaid 2022 real estate taxes will automatically foreclose on February 27, 2024, if the accounts are not paid in full.
- There are 21 RE accounts for 2023, totaling \$44,008.70. Unpaid 2023 real estate taxes will automatically foreclose on February 11, 2025, if the accounts are not paid in full.
- There are 1,071 RE accounts for 2024, totaling \$2,576,856.98. The first half of the 2024 taxes are due on Tuesday, October 3rd.

Adjournment:

- Charlie made a motion to adjourn at 9:38 p.m. It was seconded by Wayne.
Motion passed 5-0