



OFFICE OF SELECTMEN

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SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES

February 14, 2024

Chairman Pitt called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Selectman Paight and Selectman Nelson were present. Also in attendance were Ellen Smith, Town Administrator and members of the Energy Committee, Marge Shepardson, Trent Boehmler, and Ted Mead.

Last time the Energy Committee was in to discuss in-home energy audits the board had several questions and asked that some additional research be done. Marge explained that the purpose of the program is to help residents take advantage of energy savings available through NH SAVES. The proposal would include someone for residents to get more information from and a preliminary, exterior inspection of the home to gather basic information needed for the application. Interested parties would then be referred to a licensed professional who would perform an energy audit.

Drew Cullen joined the meeting at 10:05 am.

NHSAVES has qualified, licensed contractors prescreened that work with the program. The committee will ask the moderator if they can set up a table at town meeting. Not entering residences and instead gathering information from the exterior is preferred. Volunteer agreements are necessary. If entering the home, background checks will be required.

Marge and Ted left the meeting at 10:20 am.

The board reviewed the draft warrant, recommending all the warrant articles they are putting forward. NHDRA requires the board to make recommendations on petition warrant articles if funds are being appropriated. Selectman Nelson is concerned about the impact of the school tax rate increase and the state of the economy, he does not feel comfortable supporting the two petition warrant articles. The library project is worthwhile and the bell tower project does clean up the area but now is not the time to raise taxes. Focusing on critical infrastructure is the goal and were able to propose increases to several of the capital reserve funds while still coming in under last year's town tax rate. The library project was represented to the taxpayers from the beginning as not needing any taxpayer funds, Chairman Pitt and Selectman Nelson are not willing to go back on that commitment. Selectman Paight is

concerned about the library project and continued delays. What will happen to the private donations?

Andrew Cullen stated that the “town is dying” and he had moved to Marlborough so he didn’t have to pay Keene tax rates. He would like to see the town present the full tax rate at the town meeting. He also asked how much water rates would increase due to the McKinley Circle bond. TA Smith explained that it would depend on the terms of the bond. The best preliminary estimate is about \$85 per year for two years. It will be a step increase.

Selectman Paight moved and Selectman Nelson seconded a motion to recommend warrant article 20 – Frost Free Library. The vote to recommend the article was 1-2, the motion failed, and the warrant article will not be recommended by the board of selectmen.

Selectman Paight moved and Selectman Nelson seconded a motion to not recommend the Bell Tower project. The vote to not recommend was unanimous.

Trent and Drew left the meeting at 11:25 am.

Selectman Nelson moved and Selectman Paight seconded a motion to approve the February 8, 2024, Accounts Payable Register in the amount of \$92,110.59, the February 15, 2024 Payroll Check Register in the amount of \$95.13, Direct Deposit Register in the amount of \$12,844.68 and the Accounts Payable Register in the amount of \$50,932.17. The vote to approve was unanimous.

Selectman Nelson moved and Selectman Paight seconded a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 7, 2024, the vote to approve was unanimous.

Chairman Pitt moved and Selectman Paight seconded a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 5, 2024, the vote to approve was 2-0-1 as Selectman Nelson was not at the meeting.

The Payment in Lieu of Tax Agreement with Ashuelot River Hydro expired on December 31, 2023, and was extended until March 31, 2024. TA Smith will forward a draft agreement template for review and set up a time when the new management can meet in person.

The Gates House auction will take place on Saturday, April 20, 2024, at 10:00 am.

Selectman Nelson moved and Selectman Paight seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:10 pm. The vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted, Ellen Smith, Town Administrator