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SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES

April 10, 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, Craig Cashman, DPW Director, Dane Darcangelo and Tim Robinson from Eversource, Roland Veaudry, Dustin Franco and approximately 8 other members of the public.

Chairman Pitt opened the public hearing at 10:00 am by stating, pursuant to NH RSA 231:158, the Marlborough Board of Selectmen is holding this public hearing at the request of Eversource who is looking for permission to cut trees on Old Dublin Road, a scenic road. The hearing notice was published in the Keene Sentinel and posted on the bulletin boards at the Town Office and Post Office on March 28, 2024, and April 1, 2024.

Eversource is proposing the relocation of poles and wires currently located off-road. The new poles and wires would be located along the side of Old Dublin Road. To do the project, they will need to clear a path 8 feet away from the sides of the wires, 15 feet above, and 10 feet below. The trees to be removed are marked with blue and white ribbons. Eversource needs permission from both the town and the property owners to complete the tree work.

Ahead of today's meeting, TA Smith posed a series of questions to Eversource:

Q: How many power outages occurred in the area over the past couple of years due to the wires and poles in their current location?

A: There have been 7 outages in the last 3 years due to issues in the current location. The average duration of these 7 outages was 19 hours each. Just this week, they experienced a 35-hour outage.

In contrast, there has only been 1 outage related to damage along the road in the last 3 years.

Q: Number of trees to be removed?

A: 96 Trees need to be removed for this reliability project. Tree trunk diameter ranges from 6 inches to 29 inches with the average tree trunk diameter being 15 inches. Trees that are in bad shape will also be trimmed or removed.

Q: The number of poles to be added.

A: 20 Poles will be added

Chairman Pitt asked for a more detailed map of the project area.

Dane explained that the project's purpose is to provide more reliable service. The project is estimated to take 2.5 months to complete. Once poles are put in, Eversource will relocate their wires. CCI will need to relocate their wires then the old poles will be removed.

Chairman Pitt asked if Eversource looked at alternatives because the road will look very different when the work is completed. Eversource stated that the current pole locations are wet and off-road. With the apparent wetlands, they most likely would not be permitted to do work in the current areas. Dane noted that once the line was relocated as planned Eversource would be more likely to pay for future tree removal and maintenance.

Selectman Paight asked how many homeowners would be affected as far as poles go. The answer was three.

Selectman Nelson noted that the poles in the woods are in bad shape, but he also understands the scenic road issues.

Sanford Johnson stated that he has lived on Shaker Farm Road for 30+ years and has lost power maybe six times as a result of off-road wires/poles. He counted the number of marked trees to be 103. This will radically change the character of the road and the project will have a significant impact on the area. He is opposed to the project.

Phil LaClaire, a resident of Old Dublin Road, said that he is in favor of the project. He currently has wires and poles on his property. The workers have to climb poles and are unable to use bucket trucks. It seems wise to put the poles and wires along the road for access and safety.

Bonnie Johnson has concerns over moving the poles as the roads are dead ends. If wires and poles were downed they would block the road and prohibit emergency response.

Tim Knapp, a resident of Porter Lane said that the wires on his road are buried, is that a possibility for Old Dublin Road? Also, does Eversource grind stumps? Eversource will go back and discuss the underground option with their team. The board and Craig have concerns with underground service as it would be more disruptive to stone walls and culverts. They would not allow the wires to go beneath the road. Eversource noted that trenching close to trees would cause additional damage and more tree loss. Eversource will arrange for stump grinding.

Another resident on Old Dublin Road favors anything that shortens the length of time without power.

The board would like to schedule another public hearing, in the evening, so more residents can participate. Chairman Pitt asked Eversource to go back, look into the zig-zag installation option, and see if there are ways to minimize tree removal. We are looking for the best proposal you can give the town.

Members of the public also noted that the letter from Eversource requesting the public hearing only said one tree would be removed, not the 100+ proposed. Dane apologized for the error.

Chairman Pitt stated that they are not allowed to continue the public hearing so once Eversource has had a chance to review other options, another hearing will be scheduled, and letters will go to all residents on Old Dublin Road. Eversource will use different colors/types of stakes and ribbons to show the alternative plan. There will also be a site walk scheduled before the hearing.

With no other questions or comments, Chairman Pitt closed the public hearing at 10:50 am. All those in attendance for the public hearing left the meeting, Dustin and Roland remained.

George Haskell joined the meeting at 10:55 am. He believes he was unfairly charged for the replacement of frozen water meters. TA Smith wrote Mr. Haskell a letter in December 2023 explaining that the Water Ordinance specifically states that it is the property owner's responsibility to keep meters from freezing and that the Water Operator even explained how to build an insulated box. The Ordinance also states that if a meter is to be replaced due to owner neglect, the entire meter would be replaced. We do not have the staff to troubleshoot meters. Mr. Haskell showed the board that meters have frost protection plates, the purpose of which is to crack when frozen to protect the rest of the meter, requiring just the plate to be replaced.

The board reiterated that he is responsible for keeping the meters from freezing. They urged him to go back and build the insulated box so this does not happen again.

Mr. Haskell left the meeting at 11:25 am.

Selectman Nelson moved and Selectman Paight seconded a motion to approve the April 11, 2024, Payroll Check Register in the amount of \$ 92.35, Direct Deposit Register in the amount of \$13,466.57, and the Accounts Payable Register in the amount of \$11,427.98. The vote to approve was unanimous.

Selectman Paight moved and Selectman Nelson seconded a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 25, 2024, March 27, 2024, and April 3, 2024. The vote to approve was unanimous.

The board reviewed and signed 24-287-01-E Notice of Intent to Excavate Map 05-071 and the Michael Petrovick contract, he will take over as architect for the library project as Weller & Michal have retired.

The fence at the town office needs to be rebuilt. The existing posts can be used, and cedar or hemlock boards will be used. The materials should be about \$2,000 and the DPW will do the work. The board approved the project. Craig will call the owner of the next-door neighbor and let them know about the project.

There will be no meeting next Wednesday as there is a CDFA Webinar. The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 18, 2024, at 10:00 am.

Selectman Nelson moved and Selectman Paight seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:20 pm. The vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted, Ellen Smith, Town Administrator