

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

June 13, 2023

MINUTES

Present: Shawn Talbot (Chair), Jason Somero, Lou Alvarez and Debbie Deaton (Town Administrator)
Also in attendance Fire Chief-Meredith Lund, Deputy Fire Chief-Gary Somero

5:00 Open Meeting in the Town Office with the Pledge of Allegiance at 5:00

5:05 Fire Chief Lund retirement, appointment of new Fire Chief:

Shawn read Meredith's retirement letter (attached) and thanked her for her dedication and service. She recommended Gary Somero be appointed as interim Fire Chief and added he has the full support of the Fire Department.

Meredith added Gary is also doing the Building Inspector position so it will be a good gauge if the Board decides to move forward with the combined full time position of Fire Chief/Building Inspector.

Gary added he will be available until July 30, 2024. The Board agreed the position should be posted in January.

Meredith offered to stay on as Forest Warden until the end of the year (which is an appointment by the State).

Jason thanked Meredith for putting this transition together.

Shawn made a motion to accept Chief Lund's resignation effective July 3, 2023 at 11:59pm and to appoint Gary Somero as Fire Chief effective July 4, 2023 effective 12:00am. Jason seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Gary mentioned the Fire Department would be hosting an informal send-off for Chief Lund on Friday from 3pm-6pm at the Fire Station.

5:25 Round Table Discussion:

- Lou mentioned he had gone to the staff meeting last Wednesday and there was a discussion about the Board of Selectmen reviewing Policies/Procedures and Ordinances. He said Chief Abel mentioned all of the money from the tickets the department writes, goes to the State. If we had enforceable ordinances, he could write tickets and the funds would go to the Town.

Debbie said she had emailed Chief Abel to see if he would be willing to have some input with the Board regarding the ordinances.

6:00 Resident Discussion:

Present: Emilee Spiller, Robert Neal, Victoria MacDonald

Jason said he invited Emilee to the meeting so she could explain the events that happened at the State Police Barracks on 10/13/21. Another reason is because the Board had talked about being more involved in what is going on outside of our Town-Constitutional things.

Emilee said she had gone to a meeting in October of 2021 as part of a peaceful protest regarding a contract the governor was going to sign. This contract for 27 million dollars had verbiage in it stating the State of New Hampshire would have to comply with federal mandates (mask wearing, vaccinations, quarantines, etc.). This contract was regarding Covid. There were a lot of concerns about complying with the mandates.

She said there was break in between the sessions and 2 people (protestors) had gone to chat with the officials and were very loud. When the meeting resumed, the public official decided to cancel the meeting because

they were in fear of their lives. She witnessed the whole thing and didn't see or hear anything that would make sense for them to cancel it.

The next meeting was to be held on 10/13/23 and the location of this meeting was not disclosed until the day before. The meeting was going to be held at the State Police Barracks which was an intimidating location and it was assumed this was intentional. The protest was very peaceful. The only thing that was loud was everyone cheered when they were saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board and audience watched a video taken at the meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpgGHQTcfgg>, by YouTuber Absolute Defiance). At one point, the Governor was texting on his phone and then a couple of people being led out of the room by State Police. After a minute, you hear the man yell "why am I being arrested?" at which point the crowd got upset and yelled "they didn't do anything". A few more people were led out, one of them being an elderly woman dragged out in handcuffs. Emilee continued by saying she was one of the last people to get arrested. The group believes one of the women arrested was thought to be someone else. At this point, that woman is the only person to have the charges dropped. Emilee and others have asked for the cases to be dismissed and have been denied. Their bail conditions state they cannot be within a certain amount of feet from the governor so essentially they can't go to any protests.

Emilee said the whole situation was a total shock. The governor weaponized the State Police against the protestors. No one had any idea why they were being arrested, even after asking the police. Most people were arrested for disorderly conduct. They all feel this was pre-planned by the governor's office.

To this date, the cases are still being continued and there have been no resolutions. Jason added the Constitution says we have a right to a speedy trial. Almost 2 years seems excessive for disorderly conduct.

Jason said people have the right to protest and disagree with the government. Shawn agreed and added this is a scary time, to think people can be arrested for peacefully protesting.

Emilee stated she stopped going to protests.

There was a lot of conversation and discussion about the situation, Constitutionality, etc.

Emilee will keep the Board informed of any progress in the case. Shawn said we will try to see if there is anything the Board can do (possibly write a letter).

7:30 Round Table Discussion (continued):

- Lou informed the Board a letter has been sent from the DES to a resident on Timbertop regarding a wetlands crossing stating the resident had made the situation worse and instructing him how to remediate this. If he doesn't do this, the DES turns it back over to the Town and the Town can put a lien on the property for the remediation cost to the Town.

- Lou also mentioned 455 Turnpike Road. He said he received a letter from a concerned resident stating they have concerns about them running a business out of the property and disturbing wetlands. Shawn stated this has been going on for a few years. The resident had checked with DES prior to doing any work. The Code Enforcement officer has looked into this several times and no violations were found. He added if Lou thinks this should be looked at again, he should run it by the Code Enforcement officer. Debbie added there should be a file on this. Jason & Shawn stated the claims on this have been exaggerated in the past.

- There was some discussion regarding ordinances. Debbie will send a Dropbox link to Chief Abel so he can view the existing ordinances so he can review them. The Board would like the input so ordinances can be enforced.

- Shawn will call Affinity Lighting regarding the bill for the additional 5 streetlights.

- Lou said he feels we are doing a disservice to the residents by not having the Board of Selectmen meetings recorded and live-streamed. There should be someone to record if Ron and Becky are unable to do so. There was additional conversation regarding trying to recruit the video committee at Mascenic. Shawn will speak to Becky and Ron.

8:15 Non-public RSA 91-A:3, II (c):

At 8:15 Shawn made a motion to go into non-public session. Lou seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. At 8:32, Shawn made a motion to return to public session. Lou seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Shawn made a motion to seal the minutes. Jason seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

At 8:32, Jason made a motion to adjourn. Lou seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Deaton
Town Administrator

Minutes approved by BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Shawn Talbot, Chairman:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'STalbot', written over a horizontal line.

Jason Somero:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JSomero', written over a horizontal line.

Lou Alvarez:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LAlvarez', written over a horizontal line.



Town of New Ipswich, N.H.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Meredith Lund
Deputy Chief Gary Somero
Deputy Chief Ben Hatcher

FIRE CHIEF'S OFFICE

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Tel: (603) 878-1364
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June 13, 2023

Shawn Talbot, Chairman
Board of Selectmen, Town of New Ipswich
661 Turnpike Rd
New Ipswich, NH 03071

Dear Chairman Talbot,

Please accept this letter as official notification of my retirement on July 3, 2023. On this date I will have served thirty (30) years and it is time to pass on the responsibility of running the Fire Department to someone else.

I joined the department with very little knowledge of the fire service and worked hard to obtain as much knowledge as possible to improve both myself and the department. Through this process I gained not only the knowledge, but also the confidence necessary to lead the department as Fire Chief. There have been many successes and challenges but, through them all, I am proud to say that the New Ipswich Fire Department continues to be one of the most progressive call and volunteer departments in the state.

I have enjoyed my time on the department and have enjoyed working with you as the Fire Chief for the past seven (7) years. I ask for your continued support of the Fire Department as they move forward under new leadership.

Thank you and...

Stay safe,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Meredith D. Lund".

Meredith D Lund, MS.ED, CFO
Fire Chief
New Ipswich Fire Department
603-562-4441
firechief@townofnewipswich.org

REMEMBER SMOKE DETECTORS & SPRINKLERS SAVE LIVES