

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

APRIL 7, 2020

### MINUTES

**PRESENT:** David Lage, Chairman; John Veaser, Shawn Talbot  
Town Administrator Scott Butcher, Land Use Clerk Lori Rautiola  
Ollie Niemi – Patriotic Purposes  
Via Zoom: Planning Board Chairman John Schaumlöffel, Marcus Rautiola, Walker Farrey

Chairman Lage called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm at the Town Office and reviewed the agenda.

#### **MEMORIAL DAY CELEBRATION**

Ollie Niemi discussed what impact COVID-19 would have on the Memorial Day celebration. Chairman Lage and Selectman Veaser felt that the events should be canceled since it would involve gatherings of large numbers of people. Selectman Talbot stated that it would be difficult to adhere to Governor Sununu's emergency orders limiting the size of gatherings, social distancing, etc., and the prediction is that the virus would be at peak levels at that time. Ollie said he would still be putting out the flags. He reviewed what the typical celebration consists of with visits to the cemeteries.

#### **ROAD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Town Administrator provided the recommendations from the Road Committee which were in order of priority putting the topcoat on Lower Ashby Road; reconstructing Binney Hill Road from Page Hill Road to the point it turns into a Class VI road; reconstructing Poor Farm Road from Binney Hill Road to Lower Pratt Pond Road; resurfacing a portion of Green Farm Road; and use remaining resurfacing funds from warrant articles to pave or chip seal roads as needed.

Chairman Lage stated that there was very little in common with the Selectmen's list and the Road Committee's list of priorities. The Selectmen's list was to pave Hubbard Pond Road to Pine Road; topcoat on Lower Ashby Road; and reconstruct and pave Collins Road to Smithville Road.

The Road Committee recommended focusing on maintaining existing paving roads rather than paving gravel roads first. Chairman Lage stated that it is expensive to maintain the gravel roads and the gravel roads the Selectmen are focusing on are feeder or collector roads. Selectman Veaser stated that he can understand not paving some gravel roads, but the heavily traveled feeder roads are taking a beating. Selectman Talbot said he wants to the Road Committee and the Selectmen to come up with a consensus of what should be paved. Chairman Lage said he wasn't for chip sealing roads and felt the research pointed to it being beneficial for Southern states, not New England.

Selectman Veaser asked about the age of Green Farm Road. Chairman Lage said it was about eight years old. John Schaumlöffel stated that the section of Green Farm in question is in poor condition. Chairman Lage said he felt that Green Farm Road should've been reconstructed by the builder prior to being accepted by the town as a public road.

Selectman Veaser also discussed his observations of the roads in question and said that Binney Hill Road and Poor Farm Road have some issues. He said he understands why the Road Committee wants them

addressed. Chairman Lage said he discussed Poor Farm Road with DPW Director Goewey and the reason they ended the paving on Poor Farm Road at a certain point the last time it was paved was because there was a major culvert that needs to be replaced and it will require approval from the NH DOT. That comes with a significant cost.

Walker Farrey stated that while he is in favor of paving gravel roads, he recommends focusing on resurfacing the paved roads first and revisit the gravel roads. John Schaumloffel agreed. Chairman Lage feels that there are more complaints from residents about the gravel roads. Marcus Rautiola felt taking the focus off the long-range plan to focus on the paved feeder/collector roads and start paving gravel roads now is a mistake.

Chairman Lage discussed his rationale for wanting to pave Collins Road and reconstruct the Class VI section out to Smithville Road to allow better access for residents and school buses by making it a through road. The Road Committee members don't see why Collins Road is a priority. Chairman Lage stated it would take a lot of effort and engineering to reconstruct it.

After further discussion, Chairman Lage said he wants the discussion to move forward. He suggested that the focus be on the topcoat for Lower Ashby Road, paving Binney Hill Road and Hubbard Pond Road. He instructed the Town Administrator to work with DPW Director Goewey to calculate the cost of that work. Selectman Talbot asked the Road Committee members how they felt about that list. They said it was fine. Selectman Veaser thanked the Committee for their time.

#### **COVID-19 UPDATE**

There was discussion about how to conduct meetings under the Governor's emergency orders using video conferencing tools such as Zoom and how to manage that process and still allow public access to meeting discussions remotely.

The Town Administrator reviewed ten new emergency orders from the Governor's office and the impacts to the community and town government. There was relaxation of some statutes to allow town government to function remotely and/or by electronic means since public gatherings are restricted. The Town Administrator also stated that employees would be getting information this week on what their rights are under the CARES Act signed by the President. Personal protective equipment has also been made available to employees to protect themselves against exposure to the virus.

#### **DPW SALT SHED BID SPECIFICATIONS**

Chairman Lage asked about the status of the RFP for the salt shed for the DPW. He was concerned about the diagram of the proposed design. He felt it might confuse potential bidders on what they were bidding on. He asked that the document be sent to him electronically.

#### **NEW POLICE STATION FLYER**

The Selectmen discussed the information flyer for the new police station that needs to be set out. Selectman Veaser felt sending this information out would be valuable in keeping the public informed. The Town Administrator suggested that the Selectmen review it prior to it being mailed. He expressed some concern about sending it out too soon before a public information session could be held given the COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings. Selectman Talbot feels it should be sent out immediately. Chairman Lage and Selectman Veaser agreed and requested that the Town Administrator mail them.

### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Lage discussed the restoration of the Wachusett fire engine and who should be involved. Selectman Veaser said remaining money from the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration could be earmarked to cover some of the costs to restore it. He said he would check with the Fire Chief on putting together a list of names of volunteers that would be interested in participating in the effort to restore.

Chairman Lage brought up the RFP for the LED Street Lights and asked the Town Administrator what the progress was. The Town Administrator said he was working with the Eversource representative but was unable to find the list of the current street light inventory. There was also some discussion about the specifications outlined in the draft RFP.

Chairman Lage asked about a demolished mobile home in the Vaillancourt Trailer Park. The Town Administrator stated that a demolition permit had been requested. Lori Rautiola confirmed that a permit had been requested but that the Building Dept. was waiting for the asbestos survey to be completed and submitted first. Selectman Veaser recalled that the trailer park had asked for some assistance in removing the unit because it was unsafe.

There was discussion about the status of tax deeded properties and when they might be able to be sold. Chairman Lage also asked about the status of the 11 Temple Road property that was sold with specific conditions to rehabilitate the house. There have been numerous delays by the current owner. Chairman Lage asked the other Selectmen if they should insist on a specific start date and end date for the project. Selectman Talbot stated that there had been many delays by the owner and a lack of communication keeping the town informed about the progress.

Chairman Lage asked about the status of the individual offered the Emergency Management Director position and whether the offer has been accepted. The Town Administrator stated that she has the offer letter but has not yet accepted formally.

Chairman Lage stated that he discussed the broken front-end loader with DPW Director Goewey and what the solution was. The Town Administrator stated that Director Goewey had been looking at a used replacement and the town is currently renting a unit that could become a "rent-to-buy" arrangement. There is enough money in the Capital Reserve Fund to make a purchase. The brand being rented is a Doosan, a Korean company. The Town Administrator stated he did some research on the company and the dealer network to ensure service and support was available. Other quotes provided on used equipment was discussed for competitive comparison.

Chairman Lage inquired about the status of the DPW dump trucks that need repair. The Town Administrator stated that one of them will need a new diesel engine at an estimated cost of \$20,000. He will provide more detail to the Selectmen as it becomes available.

Selectman Talbot asked about the Governor's emergency order that allows the town to consider waiving/abating interest on property taxes allowing property owners to defer paying their taxes without penalty. The Town Administrator expressed concern that waiving the interest and possibly encouraging people to not pay their taxes in a timely manner will create cash flow problems for the town. The Town Administrator also expressed concerns about what revenues would be coming from the state given the

drop in revenues as a result of COVID-19. The Selectmen discussed the implications and decided that rather than having a broad policy on waiving interest that it should be done on a case-by-case basis. Selectman Veaser MOTIONED to abate interest on a case-by-case basis. Selectman Talbot SECONDED the motion and the vote was unanimous.


At 7:54 pm, Chairman Lage entertained a motion to adjourn. Selectman Veaser MOTIONED to adjourn. The motion was SECONDED by Selectmen Talbot and the vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,  
Scott Butcher, Town Administrator

Minutes approved by:  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

  
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David S. Lage, Chairman

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John Veaser

  
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Shawn Talbot