

TOWN OF NEW DURHAM
Board of Selectmen Meeting
October 24, 2023, 2:00 P.M.
New Durham Community Room, New Durham, NH 03855

Disclaimer: If technology fails, the meeting physically occurring will continue at the location above. Town of New Durham offers no security assurances to those connecting via PC to a third party software and hardware not configured or controlled by our IT Service provider.

PRESENT

David Swenson, Select Board Chair – via Zoom
Dorothy Veisel, Vice Chair Select Board
Marc DeCoff, Select Board Member

ALSO PRESENT

Cecile Chase, Interim Town Administrator
Ellen Phillips, Resident
David Bickford, Resident
Cathy Allyn, Resident
Fred Quimby, Resident
Colin Lentz, Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Corey Clark, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
Judy Purrington, Highway Department
Will Cardinal, Road Agent
Shawn Bernier, Police Chief – via Zoom
Terry Jarvis, Resident – via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Swenson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

PUBLIC INPUT

None.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Interim Town Administrator Chase stated they are continuing with the reorganization at the Town Hall; she is working with the Finance Officer and the Administrative Assistant to organize the Finance Office.

Report from Chair

Chair Swenson commended Interim Town Administrator Chase for her work in Town Hall and implementing department reports again.

Agenda Review

Chair Swenson added Strafford County Payment; Speed Limit Recommendations from the Police Department.

Announcements

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Transportation Improvement Projects – Colin Lentz, SRPC

Colin Lentz, Strafford Regional Planning Commission, outlined transportation projects that are on file for the Town as well as the prioritization. He stated they will be hiring a consulting firm to review the engineering plans and develop cost estimates. Mr. Lentz stated he is also willing to meet with department heads to discuss the details of concerns and potential projects. Vice Chair Veisel stated the intersection of Tash Road is very dangerous. Mr. Lentz explained the NH DOT has funds for corridor studies and areas which have had increased crashes; they will be looking at different areas throughout the state and Route 11 is on the list with numerous projects.

Jones Pond Elevation Changes – Corey Clark, NHDES

Corey Clark, NHDES, stated Jones Dam, Merrymeeting Dam, and Alton Power Dam, are owned by New Hampshire Fish and Game with the operations of the sites the responsibility of the Dam Bureau. He stated Jones Dam was built in 1924 for hydropower production and was purchased by the State in 1940s; he stated the last repairs were done in the 1980's and 2005. He stated the dam is currently a high hazard dam with concerns to the area and Route 11 and explained the requirement is that the dam passes 1,000 year event standards. Mr. Clark stated the dam is inspected regularly; there are concerns about leakage around the dike and the volume of water coming through the area. Mr. Clark stated there was limited success with the repairs made in 2015. He stated that with this summer's significant rainfall the flashboards, which are designed to bend over, occurred in July; there was not the required minimum of free board before the water overflows. The flashboards have been kept off and the pond will likely remain about 2 feet below the usual level. The State received ARPA funds to conduct studies but it could be a few years before any construction work begins. He stated that currently the leakage is minimal. He stated the future report will have a holistic view of the dams in the area.

A resident asked if dams would be removed. Mr. Clark stated its possible; he stated with multiple dams being classified as high hazard the dam owner will have to consider the costs for maintaining and reaching the 1,000 year threshold. A resident asked if the costs will include remediation of the stumps and pollution in the water. Mr. Clark stated it will be looked at.

There were concerns expressed by residents about the protection of the wildlife. Mr. Clark stated they are trying to consider all the various factors but they also need to reduce the inventory of dams owned by the State. He explained that the river would still flow through if dams are removed and the habitat would return to how it was before the dam was placed. He explained survey work will be needed to get a good idea of how it will change.

A resident expressed concerns about the Town being left with the responsibility of cleaning up milfoil and contaminations if the dam is removed. Mr. Clark stated they would be looking at that issue as well as how to remove contaminants. He stated a comprehensive report is expected in 2026.

OLD BUSINESS

Meetinghouse

Ms. Phillips stated the planned event for October had to be cancelled; she presented donations for acceptance by the Board.

MOTION: To accept the donations of \$170.82, to be deposited into the 1772 Meetinghouse Charitable Checking account. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Roll Call Vote: Selectman Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Ms. Phillips presented questions for the Board which the committee would like some direction.

MOTION: To allow the 1772 Meetinghouse Committee to sell the wooden chairs and deposit the money into the 1772 Meetinghouse Charitable Checking account. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: To have the Board of Selectman Representative to the Meetinghouse Committee, Selectman DeCoff, be the contact on information for the grant application. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Selectman DeCoff. Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

The Board reviewed and discussed funding sources for the grant matching. It was agreed the grant application would be prepared and presented for review to the Board by November 3, 2023. Ms. Phillips stated they will need a letter indicating whether funds are intended to come from a warrant article. Chair Swenson asked Interim Town Administrator Chase to draft the letter needed for the grant application.

Kings HWY Contract / M.A Bean – Culvert Discussion Middleton Road

The Board reviewed the contract for snowplowing services in the Kings Highway area. Edits were made to the effective dates, etc.

The Board reviewed and discussed the culvert replacement project. The Board noted that this is a needed project but believes work will need to be in 2024 by placing this funding on the 2024 Warrant.

FY24 Budget – Select Board Review Complete

Chair Swenson stated the Board completed the FY24 budget review and outlined some adjustments which were made such as insurance. The Board agreed to provide the information to the Budget Committee.

Information from Strafford County

Chair Swenson stated the amount due in taxes for FY 2023, is \$1,509,018 and is due December 17, 2023. He stated the amount due to the school will also be due in early December.

Interim Town Administrator Chase stated she was notified by Copple Crown Village District that they are working with their CPA and will hopefully be filing the necessary documents to DRA soon to be able for the Town to do tax rate setting.

Speed Board Discussion / Action

The Board reviewed cost estimates for the speed boards; it was noted the source of funding would be ARPA funds. The total price per unit is \$4,708.17; that does not include the poles for mounting. It was clarified the signs will be mobile.

Debbie Geer, resident, asked about the details of the sign and appearance. Police Chief Bernier stated there will be red and blue lights to indicate when someone is speeding. Ms. Geer suggested just adding some additional speed signs.

MOTION: To purchase speed board in the amount of \$4,708.17 with funds to come from ARPA. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – no; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 2-1-0.

Speed on Town Roads Discussion / Action

The Board reviewed recommendations from the Police Department for speed limit changes on selected Town Roads.

MOTION: To set speed limits per the list read by Selectman DeCoff. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Roll Call Vote: Selectman Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: To set the speed limit recommendations just passed to be effective 10/30/23. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Selectman DeCoff. Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Tax Credits / Exemptions

MOTION: To approve the Veterans Tax Credit for Map 259, Lot 028 per RSA 72:28 in the amount of \$750. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: To approve the Veterans Tax Credit for Map 119, Lot 005 per RSA 72:28 in the amount of \$750. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: To enter nonpublic session pursuant to RS 91:A-3II, (a) *The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted; (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee; (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on the inability to pay or poverty of the applicant; (d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community; (l) Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally, to one or more members of the public body, even where legal counsel is not present.*

Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Selectman DeCoff. Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Veisel - aye; Selectman DeCoff-aye; Chair Swenson-aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

The Board entered non-public session at 9:16 p.m.

The Board reentered public session at 10:12 p.m.

MOTION: To seal the minutes of the non-public session of the October 24, 2023 meeting for reasons it may adversely affect the reputation of one other than the Board. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Selectman DeCoff. Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: To make a wage adjustment in the hourly rate for Administrative Assistant Stephanie Lundy to \$20.00 per hour effective October 30, 2023. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Selectman DeCoff. Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: To make a wage adjustment in the hourly rate for Administrative Assistant Judy Purington to \$18.50 per hour effective October 30, 2023 and assign her also the responsibility for Welfare contact for the Town. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Selectman DeCoff. Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: To make a wage adjustment in the hourly rate for Land Use Susan Stillwell to \$20.00 per hour effective October 30, 2023. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Selectman DeCoff. Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

223
224 **MOTION: To adjourn. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Roll Call**
225 **Vote: Selectman Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Roll Call**
226 **Vote: Vice Chair Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion**
227 **passed 3-0-0.**

228
229 The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 p.m.

230
231
232 Respectfully Submitted,

233 *Jennifer Riel*

234 Jennifer Riel, Recording Secretary