

TOWN OF NEW DURHAM

**July 25, 2023, 4:00 PM 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
Dorothy Veisel, Select Board Vice Chair
Marc DeCoff, Select Board Member

ALSO PRESENT

Nicole Zoltko, Town Administrator
Cathy Orlowicz, Boodey Farmstead Committee
Judy Purington, Admin. Ass't. DPW
Kathleen Blaney, Finance Manager
Duane Hyde, Southeast Land Trust (SELT)
Debbie Goard, SELT
Charlie Bridges, SELT
Cecile Chase, Resident
David Bickford, Resident
Shawn Bernier, Police Chief

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Swenson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Roll Call & Pledge Allegiance Roll call was taken for Board members present. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Public Input

Cathy Orlowicz, Boodey Farmstead Committee, thanked the community for a successful Hometown Revels event. She informed the Board the barn assessment is scheduled for July 27 and 28 with a rain date of August 3 and 4, 2023. Ms. Orlowicz stated the necessary Town departments have been informed and an invitation has been offered to the Heartwood Timber Framers School and the Timber Framers Guild.

Ms. Orlowicz stated the septic permit renewal has been approved.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Town Administrator Zoltko stated the Town was notified by the Emergency Management Director that Jones Pond splash boards have failed at the dam; the State has been notified. She stated the Downing Dam is holding up at this time and they are in contact with the New Hampshire Dam Bureau to keep them informed. She stated the water has gone down about 2 feet in the area.

Town Administrator Zoltko gave a follow-up on the major rainstorm that recently affected the Town and neighboring communities; she stated the Emergency Management group, including the Department of Public Works, Fire Department, and Police Department have provided information and concerns which were submitted to the State of New Hampshire. She stated they reached out to Weston and Sampson to discuss engineering plans regarding stormwater management for North and South Shore Roads.

Chair Swenson stated he discussed the dam issue with State Representative Mike Harrington and NH DES will be visiting sites of concern and various dams in the area.

Agenda Review

Chair Swenson added under New Business: Police Department Tasers Update; Town Hall Officer Hours; Town Hall Mowing.

Announcements

Chair Swenson stated the Town Moderator, Town Clerk, and Board of Selectmen would be in Concord on August 2, 2023 for a demonstration on voting machines; he stated it will not be an official Select Board meeting but all are attending a demonstration of three different voting machines being considered by the NH Department of State.

Chair Swenson stated in a follow-up to a recent presentation from the New Hampshire Public Deposit Investment Pool, there is an opportunity for a cash-back return credit card. The Board agreed to discuss at the August 8, 2023 meeting. Chair Swenson stated they will also need to discuss the possible purchase of additional equipment for the 2024 elections.

Chair Swenson stated there will be a 1772 Meetinghouse event on August 26; more information is available on the Town website.

Chair Swenson stated the Public Safety Facility Site group has been formed and charged with looking at various sites throughout Town for the location of a facility; the recommendations are due to the Board of Selectmen by August 15, 2023.

NEW BUSINESS

SELT Update – Duane Hyde, Debbie Goard & Charlie Bridges

Mr. Bridges stated the community forest is funded in part by a grant from the US Forest Service along with other grants and private donations; he explained the purpose of the forest program to protect the land and provide community benefits. He stated the Birch Ridge Community Forest was purchased by Southeast

Land Trust in June 2019; he gave an overview of the community members involved with the management committee as well as the uses that are permitted within the forest.

Ms. Goard gave an update on the plans for the community forest in conjunction with the Collins Family Forest which equates to about 3,000 acres in Town. She stated over the last few years they have focused on trails for recreation at the Birch Ridge Forest as well as management of future forests and wildlife habitats.

She stated there are over 17 miles of trails at this point with plans for additional trails. Ms. Goard stated they have an agreement with the local snowmobile club for doing maintenance on trails. She stated SELT has staff that are also working on wildlife and habitat management with the Natural Resource Conservation Service which provides funding.

Cecile Chase, resident, stated she lives on Merrymeeting Road and since the work has been done on the parking lot and trails there has been a huge increase in stormwater runoff; the Highway Department has been notified about the runoff which runs across her property, into the fish hatchery. She asked if work is being done is it being supervised by an engineer and is there any way to mitigate the stormwater runoff. Ms. Goard stated the trail that goes up from the parking lot does not have an engineer. Work has not been done in about two years but they are happy to take a look at what is going on.

Mr. Hyde stated he is the Land Conservation Director for SELT and manages acquisitions of land; he distributed maps of the community forest and outlined current projects as well as future initiatives. He stated 35% of Merrymeeting Lake's watershed is currently in conservation and with future projects, it will be 49%. Projects include the connection of Moose Mountains to the Birch Ridge Community Forest; the acquisition of 600+ acres and a conservation easement on 27 acres. Mr. Hyde stated they will be initiating a community meeting to gather input and support over the winter.

Town Hall Office Hours

The Board reviewed and discussed current office hours for Town Hall employees. It was noted hours had been changed in 2020 by the Board to comply with federal regulations regarding COVID restrictions. Vice Chair Veisel stated it seems to be the desire of the community to have Friday hours. A member of the public raised concerns she has regarding the hours the offices are open to the public; Vice Chair Veisel suggested the posted hours need to be adhered to and ensure there is coverage for the office during those hours. Town Administrator Zoltko stated she would discuss set hours with the staff; she clarified set hours are posted and have been for the last two years. She stated the hours do often fluctuate with some employees due to various reasons such as bank runs, site visits, inspections, presentations, meeting, and childcare issues, etc. Chair Swenson suggested they consider accommodating seasonal residents during the summer and early fall, with Friday availability. The Board agreed. It was the consensus of the Board to have the Town Administrator come back to the Board with recommendations at the August 8, 2023 meeting which would potentially include Friday and Saturday hours for key transactional functions.

Central Fence, Transfer Station Safety Rails – Judy Purington

Ms. Purington stated the safety rails are broken at the SWF location and she contracted three companies for quotes on repair and replacement; only one would consider the job. An estimate from Central Fence was presented for review by the Board.

MOTION: To approve the purchase from Central Fence for \$4,320 for the purposes of safety fencing at the disposal area of metals and glass at the Solid Waste Facility with the funds to come from the newly established Capital Reserve Fund. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Synergy, Transfer Station New Hopper Can – Judy Purington

Ms. Purington presented three quotes for the replacement of a “can” that is used to haul away compacted materials; she stated it has structural damage and haulers are no longer willing to pick it up. They researched having it welded however it is too damaged; Ms. Purington also explained a third “can” is needed, particularly on weekends.

MOTION: To approve the purchase of a 40-yard compactor container for the Solid Waste Facility Equipment from Synergy Waste Management, Littleton, MA, in the amount of \$11,900 with funds to come from the newly established Public Works Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Selectman Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Jalbert Contracting, Library Roof – Judy Purington

The Board reviewed and discussed the quote for removing and replacing the shingles on the Library roof. The Board requested the vendor address questions on their quote with DPW returning to the Board once response is received from vendor.

Selectman DeCoff stated there is a 2010 10-wheel dump truck for sale in Pittsfield; it has a sander and setup for a plow. The Board agreed to have Ms. Purington look into it.

The Board discussed the mowing being done at Town Hall. Chair Swenson stated there is an issue with having someone do it and being paid from the Town while also being a member of the Select Board; it was agreed to have DPW have another entity do this mowing.

Special Event Application

The Board reviewed a Special Event Application for a volunteer celebration BBQ event with Parks and Recreation to be held August 26, 2023, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

MOTION: To approve the Special Event Application for a volunteer celebration BBQ event with Parks and Recreation to be held August 26, 2023, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Authorization Updates

MOTION: To approve the Deposit Delegation Authority as presented to the Board on July 25, 2023 with the notation typo corrections will be made. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: To approve the authorization to accept electronic payments with the document presented to the Board on July 25, 2023. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Town Hall Improvements

The Board reviewed a request for building improvements at Town Hall. Town Administrator Zoltko stated there have been problems with noise in offices behind the glass and customers cannot hear staff and vice versa; she stated the Town Clerk gathered information to resolve the issue and Town Administrator Zoltko suggested it could be a facilities maintenance expense. The Board agreed the funds for the replacement of the glass windows would be not an operational expense but could come from the Town Buildings Improvement ETF.

MOTION: To approve the withdrawal and expenditure of \$1,130 to Granite State Glass for the installation of Town Clerk and Tax Collector windows in the Town Hall with the funds to come from the ETF Town Buildings Improvements. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Veterans Tax Credit

The Board reviewed requests for Veterans Tax Credits.

MOTION: To approve the request for a Veterans Tax Credit in the amount of \$750 per RSA 72:28 for Map 258 Lot 033. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: To approve the request for a Veterans Tax Credit in the amount of \$750 per RSA 72:28 for Map 102 Lot 024. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: To approve the request for a Veterans Tax Credit in the amount of \$750 per RSA 72:28 for Map 259 Lot 024. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Solar Exemption & Revision

MOTION: To approve the request for a Solar Energy Exemption in the amount of \$62,400 per RSA 72:62 for Map 250 Lot 002. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: Approval is conditional on approval by the Contract Assessor for the Solar Energy Exemption in the amount of \$62,400 per RSA 72:62 for Map 250 Lot 002. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Selectman DeCoff. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: To approve the revised request for a Solar Energy Exemption in the amount of \$33,800 per RSA 72:62 for Map 264 Lot 007, which was originally \$41,600. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Selectman DeCoff. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Cyclical Monitoring Results – Abatement Recommendation

Chair Swenson stated the New Hampshire Department of Revenue conducted an audit of the cyclical work done by the Contract Assessor, Whitney Consulting Group, and 12 properties were visited with 1 property found to be missing information. The Whitney Group did not assess the generator on 1 property, the other 11 properties were reported by DRA as “no errors found”.

MOTION: To acknowledge receipt of the memorandum received at the July 25, 2023 Board of Selectmen meeting from the Whitney Consulting Group that they have reviewed the DRA properties and agreed with DRA to make modifications in the tax records. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Selectman DeCoff. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Warrant For Land Use Change Tax

The Board reviewed current use changes.

MOTION: To approve the land use change for Map 270 Lot 017-003 in which the 5.22 acres coming out of current use, leaving 64.7 acres in current use for a total use change tax due of \$9,500 plus a recording fee of \$20.66. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: To deny the land use change for Map 235 Lot 020 in which the 4.15 acres coming out of current use, leaving 9.06 acres remaining, which does not meet the current use requirements of a minimum of 10 acres. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

The Board reviewed an abatement request for Map 108 Lot 010-067; it was noted the original assessment did not have the correct number of bedrooms and bathrooms; the building was also not complete at the time of the original assessment.

MOTION: To approve the abatement request for Map 1108 Lot 010-067 with an original assessment of \$622,100 and a revised amount of tax year 2022, \$435,000 for a reduction assessed value of \$187,100 and a refund of \$3,453 plus interest. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Future Meetings:

August 8, 2023, Regular Business Meeting

August 9, 2023, Meeting with Budget Committee, 6:30 p.m.

Accounting Questions 4310, 4312, 4210

Chair Swenson explained mistakes were made in charges expenses to incorrect accounts as the 4312 Police Department was incorrectly charged for a Town Hall / DPW event expense. Town Administrator Zoltko confirmed the corrections have been made.

Police Department – Tasers

Police Chief Bernier he stated he does not agree with the presentation given at a recent meeting and believes a different device should be purchased. Chair Swenson stated the Board had requested comparison of multiple products, which was done, but a formal quote hasn't been submitted yet. Chair Swenson stated he discussed product options and the Farmington department policies with the Farmington Police Department. Police Chief Bernier stated he agrees with the rationale for the taser product used by Farmington. The Board agreed to have the Police Department provide a complete comparison listing for review at the next Board meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 9, 2023 – Edits were made. **MOTION: To approve the minutes as amended. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

May 12, 2023 – Edits were made. **MOTION: To approve the minutes as amended. Motion by Vice Chair Veisel. Second by Selectman DeCoff. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

May 30, 2023 – Edits were made. **MOTION: To approve the minutes as amended. Motion by Vice Chair Veisel. Second by Selectman DeCoff. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

June 13, 2023 – Edits were made. **MOTION: To approve the minutes as amended. Motion by Vice Chair Veisel. Second by Selectman DeCoff. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

June 19, 2023 – Edits were made. **MOTION: To approve the minutes as amended. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

June 27, 2023 – Site Walk Meeting– Edits were made. **MOTION: To approve the minutes as amended. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

July 11, 2023 – Edits were made. **MOTION: To approve the minutes as amended. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

June 24, 2023 – No edits were made. **MOTION: To approve the minutes as presented. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

Town Administrator Zoltko stated there were problems with TownHall Streams in recording the June 27, 2023 meeting but they hope to have the recordings available on the website soon.

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;* (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 inability to pay or poverty of the applicant; (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 6:48 p.m.

The Board reentered public session at 8:25 p.m.

MOTION: To seal the minutes of the non-public session of July 25, 2023 for reasons it may adversely affect the reputation of one other than the Board. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Vice Chair Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Riel

Jennifer Riel, Recording Secretary