

**TOWN OF NEW DURHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
May 23, 2023, 5:00 P.M.**

New Durham Town Hall, New Durham, NH 03855

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PRESENT

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

ALSO PRESENT

Nicole Zoltko, Town Administrator
Steve Hamilton, Whitney Consulting Group- contract assessor
JoJo ???, Whitney Consulting Group
Devan Atwell, Standard Power
Greg Anthes, Resident
Rudy Rosiello, Resident

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Swenson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

AGENDA REVIEW

Chair Swenson noted a few items were added to the agenda since the original agenda was posted: Under New Business – Contract Assessor; Department of Public Works – CRF Requests.

Public Input None.

OLD BUSINESS

Status of Tax Billing

Chair Swenson stated tax bills have been sent out; he stated at the last Board meeting, it was noted there were issues in December 2022 tax bills as well as the current billing. However, the Select Board made the necessary corrections in time for the bills to go out.

NEW BUSINESS

Contract Assessing

Chair Swenson stated notice was received in early March about a letter sent from New Hampshire Department of Revenue regarding New Durham's current ratio / valuation, etc.

Steve Hamilton, Whitney Consulting Group, explained the annual assessment-to-sale ratio done by NH DRA; he stated the Town has a 75% ratio, indicating the properties are not assessed at their full market value; he explained the tax rate is based on this ratio. Mr. Hamilton stated that between now and the next budgetary process is a good time to consider advancing the reevaluation by one year and having an update done in 2024 to bring values to market values. Chair Swenson stated the Town is currently on a five year cyclical valuation schedule. Mr. Hamilton explained the various attributes they look at when considering valuations.

Chair Swenson asked Mr. Hamilton how New Durham's ratio compares with other surrounding Towns. Mr. Hamilton indicated that New Durham is in better ratio than several other NH Towns. Chair Swenson stated that is good information but wants to see New Durham closer to the desired 100% level. Selectman Veisel asked the estimated percentage for a "good view". Mr. Hamilton explained there is documentation on how it is calculated but can't answer right now. However, he will provide a chart that is utilized.

Chair Swenson stated there are concerns by residents who have expressed interest in understanding how various properties are valued and asked that the Whitney Group do a public presentation over the summer.

Community Power – Devan Atwell

Devan Atwell, a representative from Standard Power, stated Community Power is a local energy consulting company and works to help towns, businesses, and schools to save money on electric bills through third-party supply. He stated in 2020, HB315 was passed in the State of New Hampshire which allows for community power in the state; he explained four towns have been launched community power initiatives with another seven scheduled for 2023. Mr. Atwell explained how the program works: Standard Power purchases electricity on behalf of the residents through a third-party supplier so the only thing that changes is the supply line on an electricity bill. He stated the power comes from the same supplier as the utility companies use but they have the advantage of market timing as a broker. He presented information showing historical rates they were able to obtain for their customers. Mr. Atwell explained the renewable energy certificate (REC) options. He stated they are able to provide more stable pricing with contracts; they can add energy programs through add-ons to the bills and the funds are for full use by the town. He stated residents will have the option of which rate they want to pay, whether through Eversource or through Community Power. Chair Swenson asked how long it takes to get the program going. Mr. Atwell stated it could be done in eight weeks. Selectman Veisel asked what the criteria is for "qualifying customers". Mr. Atwell stated the automatic enrollment applies to residents not already covered by a third-party supplier; anyone else is automatically enrolled.

Gravel Tax Levy

The Board reviewed the application for Intent to Excavate. Chair Swenson confirmed the business is already in operation; it was noted approval is also needed from the Planning Board. Selectman DeCoff stated he has not seen anything come through with the Planning Board yet.

MOTION: To approve the Notice of Intent to Excavate for Map 219, Lot 005 for up to 18,000 cubic yards: 5,000 yards of gravel, 3,000 yards of sand, 6,000 yards of loam, 4,000 yards of stone, with the condition that approval is received from the New Durham Planning Board as well as all State permits are obtained. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Seconded by Selectman Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

88 **Timber Yield Tax Levies**

89 The Board reviewed the requests for property tax exemptions. It was noted the application for Map 244,
90 Lot 3 and 4 is not clear whether it is for a Solar Exemption of Veteran's Tax Credit and was tabled.

91

92 **MOTION: To approve the request for a Solar Exemption in the amount of \$31,200 for Map 259,**
93 **Lot 009. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Seconded by Selectman Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

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95 **MOTION: To approve the request for a Solar Exemption in the amount of \$28,600 for Map 206,**
96 **Lot 013. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Seconded by Selectman Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

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98 **MOTION: To approve the Excavation Tax Assessment for Map 219, Lot 005 for Operation**
99 **#22325-01-E for taxes due of \$6.12 for gravel, \$0.00 for sand, \$88.22 for loam, \$8.20 for stone**
100 **products and for other \$226 for a total of \$104.80. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Seconded by**
101 **Selectman Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

102

103 **MOTION: To approve the Timber Tax in the amount of \$538.07 for Map 248, Lot 036, and Map**
104 **245, Lot 027. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Seconded by Selectman Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

105

106 **MOTION: To approve the Timber Tax yield due in the amount of \$27.12 for Map 261, Lot 007,**
107 **008, and 010. Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Seconded by Selectman Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

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109 **MOTION: To approve the Timber Tax yield due in the amount of \$560.68 for Map E53, Lot 038.**
110 **Motion by Selectman DeCoff. Seconded by Selectman Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

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112 **Comments From TA on Primex Conference – Information Learned / Benefit**

113 Town Administrator Zoltko gave an overview of the training conferences she attended recently. She
114 stated there is a need for creating a policy addressing social media use by employees; they also need to
115 work on updating Material Safety Data Sheets.

116

117 **Manifest – TA / Finance Manager**

118 Postponed.

119

120 **MOTION: To enter nonpublic session pursuant to RS 91:A-3II, (a) *The dismissal, promotion, or***
121 ***compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any***
122 ***charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests***
123 ***that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted; (c) Matters which, if discussed***
124 ***in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the***
125 ***public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any***
126 ***application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability***
127 ***to pay or poverty of the applicant; (e) Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation***
128 ***which has been threatened in writing or filed by or against the public body or any subdivision thereof,***

or by or against any member thereof because of his or her membership in such public body, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled. Any application filed for tax abatement, pursuant to law, with any body or board shall not constitute a threatened or filed litigation against any public body for the purposes of this subparagraph; Motion by Chair Swenson.
Selectman Veisel seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Selectman Veisel – aye; Selectman DeCoff – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

The Board entered non-public session at 6:08 p.m.

The Board reentered public session at 6:37 p.m.

MOTION: To seal the minutes of the non-public session of May 23, 2023 for reasons it may adversely affect the reputation of one other than the Board. Motion by Chair Swenson. Second by Selectman Veisel. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Chair Swenson stated while in nonpublic the Board discussed CRF requests for a police cruiser and DPW truck; he stated there may be opportunities to sell equipment that is no longer being used and a meeting will be held to discuss the options as well as bids for the vehicle purchases.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Riel

Jennifer Riel, Recording Secretary