

**Board of Selectmen
December 30, 2020**

Present: Mark P. Duffy, Chair; Richard C. Edwards; Kenneth G. Fifield; Dino A. Scala, Town Administrator; and Toni Bodah, Secretary (joined the session at 6:30 p.m.).

Mr. Duffy called the posted meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. **Mr. Duffy moved to enter Non Public Session under RSA 91-A:3, II (b).** Mr. Edwards seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Fifield – ‘aye’; Mr. Edwards – ‘aye’; Mr. Duffy – ‘aye’. The motion passed unanimously, and the Board immediately entered Non Public Session.

The Board returned to public session at 6:40 p.m. During the immediately preceding Non Public Session, the Board voted to offer the part-time position of Deputy Code Enforcement/Building Inspector to Peter Gosselin at the hourly rate of \$26.76. **Mr. Fifield moved to enter Non Public Session under RSA 91-A:3, II (a).** Mr. Edwards seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Fifield – ‘aye’; Mr. Edwards – ‘aye’; Mr. Duffy – ‘aye’. The motion passed unanimously, and the Board immediately entered Non Public Session.

The Board returned to public session at 6:58 p.m. During the immediately preceding Non Public Session, the Board agreed by consensus to buy out 129 hours of earned time for Police Department staff, who were unable to utilize their time due to COVID. **Mr. Edwards moved to enter Non Public Session under RSA 91-A:3, II (b).** Mr. Fifield seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Fifield – ‘aye’; Mr. Edwards – ‘aye’; Mr. Duffy – ‘aye’. The motion passed unanimously, and the Board immediately entered Non Public Session.

The Board returned to public session at 7:02 p.m. During the immediately preceding Non Public Session, the Board executed paperwork for Garrett Anthony, recently hired as a fulltime police officer. The Board moved to the conference room. Also present at this time were Phil Twombly and Carroll Shea. Pam Wiggin was present via Zoom. Mr. Duffy gave a ‘shout out’ to the great job done by the Department of Public Works, who were out on Christmas Day, taking care of issues at the pump station.

1. Appointments

a) Wakefield Heritage Commission re: Canal Road Bridge – Mr. Duffy noted that the Commission members are here to be updated on this project. Mr. Edwards stated that nothing has changed from his previous presentation in October 2019, although he is trying to move the project forward. He met with the Acton Board of Selectmen to determine their willingness to participate, as the bridge is owned equally by both the Town of Acton, Maine and the Town of Wakefield. Mr. Edwards is anxious to move forward as the cost of the project has already increased by \$10,000 (from October 2019). In response to Mr. Twombly, Mr. Edwards stated he is seeking a 50/50 split of costs with Acton, with the total cost of the project between \$225,000 - \$250,000. The goal is to not touch the existing historical bridge. The proposal is to install a structure over the existing bridge—nothing would actually touch it. The proposal uses engineered bridge slabs, set on pillars, which would hold 120,000 pounds.

Mr. Twombly asked who is currently monitoring use of the bridge. He was advised that no one sits there to monitor use; rather, if the police see an overweight vehicle on the bridge, they would enforce the weight limit.

Mr. Edwards noted that the original plan would have resulted in weight on the existing bridge while all material dried. That is now not the case, as no weight will be put on the existing bridge at any time. The original cost (involving the State) was \$750,000 to \$1 million. Now the projected cost is \$225,000 - \$250,000. Mr. Edwards shared a packet of material, including references, with the Commission.

Mr. Duffy stressed that the Commission is concerned with protection of the bridge. He believes the current plan is best as it results in no weight on the bridge at any time. The total project would take 7-10 days. Mr. Shea asked how high above the existing bridge the structure would be. Mr. Edwards estimated it would be just the thickness of the vapor barrier pad. Mr. Duffy noted that the longer we wait, the more use of the red-listed bridge will occur—some of which is over-weight. Mr. Edwards indicated that the Town of Acton is on board but is unsure as to how they would fund their portion of the project.

Ms. Wiggin clarified that in October 2019 she expressed agreement to look into the project for additional information. Mr. Edwards reviewed the timeline again. He reiterated that the Town of Acton is on board but is unsure how they would fund their portion of the project. Ms. Wiggin noted that none of us can be assured this project will work as none of us are engineers. She added that a cultural review of the project is required by RSA since the bridge is on the National Register, and stressed that the review needs to be done now. Ms. Wiggin referred to there being 18' on either side of the canal, which information is included in the CLG report, a copy of which is located at Town Hall. Ms. Wiggin stressed there is still much to be done, referring to the historical site being on the National Register, RSA 227, and 2 towns in 2 states being involved. She has heard concerns about a similar bridge which 'chatters', which could cause stones to dislodge. Ms. Wiggin also referred to a previous safety report about deficient railings, which should be repaired. Mr. Edwards stated that the issue is not a railing—the issue is a red-listed bridge. The Town cannot afford \$1 million to fix this bridge, so we need to pursue other options.

Mr. Edwards questioned whether the Board of Selectmen needs to seek permission from the Heritage Commission. Ms. Wiggin explained that by RSA the Heritage Commission is here to assist as necessary and is responsible for all cultural assets, built or natural, in town. Since the Commission was involved in getting this structure on the National Register, it should also be involved now. Ms. Wiggin stressed that the Town must adhere to RSA 227. Mr. Edwards questioned whether a cultural review is necessary if there is no intention of touching the bridge.

Ms. Wiggin asked whether any consideration has been given to building a bridge along side of the existing bridge. The State of NH owns one side, the State of Maine the other. In that case, no cultural review would be necessary. Mr. Edwards agreed that is an option worth considering. Ms. Wiggin added that such a project would still involve the canal, which is also on the National Register; however, it may not involve RSA 227. Mr. Edwards will contact Bill Lambert at NH DOT.

Mr. Edwards added that the engineers involved to date have not been paid, nor will they be paid. Mr. Fifield stated we should look at what we have to do, do what we need to do and stop going back in time. Mr. Duffy suggested a joint meeting with the Acton BoS, as he does not anticipate going forward without their participation. Mr. Edwards stressed again that Acton is on board but cannot commit

without a funding source. He noted that the bridge is in trouble and in danger of collapsing—we must do something.

Mr. Duffy noted that the material Mr. Edwards is considering purchasing now is something that could be used on a different project should this project not move forward. Much discussion followed regarding which side of the existing bridge a second bridge could be constructed. Ms. Wiggin stated that the Town of Acton needs to determine what Maine regulations require. She added that she would support anything that does not interfere with the bridge, nor jeopardizes the integrity of the bridge and which allows crossing of the area. She stated we need to investigate further whether a cultural review will be required. Ms. Wiggin added, and Mr. Twombly and Mr. Shea confirmed, that the Board has the Commission's support to find a viable alternative to the way the bridge is currently being used. She definitely wants to see the bridge preserved. In response to Mr. Duffy, Ms. Wiggin advised that Acton does not have an actual Heritage Commission; however, it has other boards that would overlap with such a commission. The Board will advise the Heritage Commission when there is new information.

2. Unscheduled Matters/Public Comment #1 – None forthcoming.

3. Unfinished Business

a) Encumbrances of 2020 Funds – None received.

4. New Business

a) Policy Concerning Uncollectible Checks – Mr. Scala noted that the Finance Clerk suggested establishing a policy for handling returned checks and drafted a proposed policy. **Mr. Duffy moved to approve the policy as presented. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.**

b) Printing Estimates for 2020 Annual Town Report – Two estimates were received: Minuteman Press for \$1,643.98 and RC Brayshaw for \$1,121. Mr. Duffy noted we have contracted with Minuteman for a number of years, during which time we have had no issues and have been very satisfied with the product. However, the estimate from Brayshaw is \$500 less. **Mr. Edwards moved to accept the lowest bid (RC Brayshaw \$1121). Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed 2-1 (Mr. Duffy voting against).** Mr. Scala has been informed that the JW Garvin Building will soon celebrate its 150th birthday. If true, he suggests featuring it on the cover of the Annual Report. The Board agreed.

c) GWRC Lease with Gafney Library –

d) GWRC Lease with MMRG/AWWA – Mr. Fifield moved to authorize Mark Duffy to execute both leases as presented. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

e) SWP CDBG Grant Administrator – As requested, the Town advertised for this position with respect to the Water Precinct's anticipated grant application. However, we have been unable to confirm with the SWP Commissioners that they are prepared to award this contract. Therefore, this will be tabled to a future meeting.

5. Proposed Capital Reserve Fund Expenditures

a) Transfer Station Facility CRF \$1195 – This represents the cost to layout and stripe the Transfer Station. Mr. Fifield moved to approve this expenditure as presented. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

6. Correspondence – None forthcoming.

7. Unscheduled Matters/Public Comment #2

--Mr. Miller (remotely) noted that this marks the first time an entire meeting has been run remotely from his home, including the cameras, live feed and television! The Board expressed thanks to Jim Miller. Mr. Miller added that he has also broadcast 2 live Church services.

8. Administrative Matters

a) Town Administrator's Update

--Clearview has worked with Spectrum and we now have an option for a 2nd channel. The recent equipment upgrade cost \$18,995 (an increase of \$5500 over the original estimate). However, we also realized a reduction of \$1917 (equipment was not needed at the school) so we are seeking approval to expend \$16,919 from the revolving fund. Mr. Fifield moved to approve the \$16,919 expenditure. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

--The Town has received a total of \$105,658.55 from the recent auction of tax-acquired property.

--Former owners of Tax Map 124, Lot 3 have redeemed this tax-acquired property. Therefore, Mr. Scala requested that the Board execute a deed transferring the property back to the former owner. Mr. Fifield moved to execute the deed for redemption of Map 124, Lot 3. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

--The Board has not yet voted on the Operating Budget. Mr. Edwards moved to recommend the Operating Budget for 2021 at \$6,128,257. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

--Neither has the Board voted on the Default Budget. Mr. Edwards moved to recommend the Default Budget for 2021 at \$6,128,129. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

--We have received a petition warrant article. Historically, the Board does not make a recommendation; however, it can be spoken to at Deliberative Session. The Board members agreed not to make a recommendation as they do not want to influence the voters on this article.

b) Treasurer's Reports for November – Provided for the Board's information.

c) Payment Manifests – Mr. Edwards moved to approve PR #27 in the amount of \$92,203.76. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Mr. Fifield moved to approve AP #34 in the amount of \$94,473.22. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Mr. Edwards moved to approve AP #33, a void in the amount of \$315. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

d) Building Permit Releases – Mr. Fifield moved to approve the release for Sopp on Anglin Road. Mr. Duffy seconded the motion, which passed 2-0-1 (Mr. Edwards abstaining).

e) Minutes – Mr. Fifield moved to approve the Non Public minutes of sessions 1,2,3,4 & 6, for December 9, 2020, as presented. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion. Mr. Fifield withdrew his motion (realizing he did not attend the December 9 meeting). Mr. Edwards withdrew his second.

Mr. Duffy moved to approve the Non Public minutes of sessions 1,2,3,4 & 6, for December 9, 2020, as presented. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 2-0-1 (Mr. Fifield abstaining).

Mr. Edwards moved to approve the sealed Non Public minutes of sessions 5 & 7, for December 9, 2020, as presented. Mr. Duffy seconded the motion, which passed 2-0-1 (Mr. Fifield abstaining).

Mr. Edwards moved to approve the minutes of the public session of December 9, as presented. Mr. Duffy seconded the motion, which passed 2-0-1 (Mr. Fifield abstaining).

Mr. Edwards moved to approve the minutes of December 15, 2020, as presented. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

f) Selectmen's Work Session

See y'all next year!

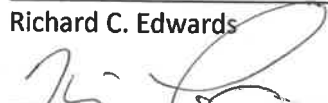
Mr. Edwards moved to adjourn at 8:32 p.m. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Toni Bodah, Secretary

Approval of Minutes:



Mark P. Duffy, Chair

Richard C. Edwards


Kenneth G. Fifield
