

Board of Selectmen
August 25, 2021 DRAFT

Present: Richard C. Edwards, Vice Chair; Kenneth G. Fifield; Dino A. Scala, Town Administrator; and Toni Bodah, Secretary.

Mr. Edwards called the posted meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. **Mr. Edwards moved to enter Non Public Session under RSA 91-A:3, II (a). Mr. Fifield seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Fifield – ‘aye’; Mr. Edwards – ‘aye’. The motion passed 2-0, and the Board immediately entered Non Public Session.**

The Board returned to public session at 6:21 p.m. During the immediately preceding Non Public Session, the Board agreed by consensus to not pay any amount of an employee’s medical co-pay. **Mr. Edwards moved to enter Non Public Session under RSA 91-A:3, II (a). Mr. Fifield seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Fifield – ‘aye’; Mr. Edwards – ‘aye’. The motion passed 2-0, and the Board immediately entered Non Public Session.**

The Board returned to public session at 6:31 p.m. During the immediately preceding Non Public Session, the Board voted to authorize an increase to \$15/hour for Caleb Kinville. **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’. The motion passed 2-0, and the Board immediately entered Non Public Session.**

The Board returned to public session at 6:43 p.m. During the immediately preceding Non Public Session, the Board voted to allow Peter Gosselin to begin accumulating 10.67 hours/month of earned time, effective as of February 1, 2022. **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’. The motion passed 2-0, and the Board immediately entered Non Public Session.**

The Board returned to public session at 6:54 p.m. During the immediately preceding Non Public Session, the Board voted to authorize an increase to \$18.49/hour for Amber Marcoux, Welfare Director. **Mr. Fifield 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’. The motion passed 2-0, and the Board immediately entered Non Public Session.**

The Board returned to public session at 6:59 p.m. During the immediately preceding Non Public Session, the Board voted to hire Kaylee Aldrich as a counselor for the After School Program at the hourly rate of \$11.50. At this time, the Board moved to the conference room. At 7 p.m., Mr. Edwards led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Those present included: Wayne Robinson; Alyssa Hall; Beth Hayes; Greg Hall; John Myers; Howie Knight; Tom Daniels; Bo Keating; Daniele West; Priscilla Colbath; Don Cheever; and Will Gatchell of Harriman. Joe Williams and Relf Fogg joined the session in progress.

1. Appointments

a) Will Gatchell, Harriman re: Proposed DPW/Community Center – Mr. Gatchell gave a presentation on possible construction of a joint building for DPW and Parks & Rec. He referred to the multiple locations currently used by Parks & Rec, the condition of the DPW building, and the space needs for each of those departments. The presentation included a potential site plan, as well as potential floor plans.

Mr. Knight noted that the project being considered is huge; however, the current Parks & Rec building is not sufficient. He noted that the senior generation also needs space for activities. The existing DPW building is in poor shape and needs to be replaced. Mr. Knight added that we should be considering this project now due to the favorable bond interest rates.

Mr. Edwards questioned why we should combine the two buildings. Many believed it would be more efficient and less expensive to build/operate one building. The proposed floor plan would also allow for use as a shelter in the event of an emergency. Mr. Fifield noted that this is a big-ticket item and must be looked at realistically. This town hall was built long ago but was built right with a view to the future. When utilizing taxpayers' money, we must make sure the project will last for the future. The Town owns a large tract of land in a great location that fits the needs of both departments. This proposal would allow for use by many in the community. Use of a bond would help to keep the tax rate stabilized. Perhaps some funds would be generated from disposition of the existing Parks & Rec building. Both buildings will be needed in the future and we may not have access to such attractive bond rates.

Mr. Edwards is always concerned with money, but he definitely supports each department. He is, however, unsure about housing both departments in one building. He believes a separate DPW building could be constructed for less than what is being proposed. Mr. Keating referred to the site work and the cost of utilities, which may point to building one facility rather than two. Mr. Edwards agreed, but thinks we could do with less. Mr. Fifield referred to the Police and Fire/Ambulance sharing some space in the Public Safety Building, which resulted in some saved costs.

Mr. Fogg stated he would support the project if ICF were used on the exterior shell. Mr. Gatchell noted that his firm certainly expects to prove the efficiency of this this proposal as the best value. He would be interested in hearing ideas of the Board members. Mr. Robinson expressed gratitude to the Harriman staff for all the work they've done, as well as to the work and support of the advisory committee.

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

3. Unfinished Business – None scheduled.

4. New Business

a) Relf Fogg – Mr. Fogg referred to serious accusations made against him via the Conservation Commission. Since he believes this challenges his integrity in serving on various Town boards/committees, he is asking the Board to have an independent internal investigation into the situation. He spoke to the difficulty of working together as a committee when such accusations have been made. If an investigation supports any of the accusations made, Mr. Fogg would willingly step down from the Conservation Commission. Mr. Fogg clarified to Mr. Fifield that he is seeking an investigation of specific accusations made against him. He is seeking for the truth to come out, and he stated there is no truth to any of the accusations made. Mr. Fogg stressed that the investigation must be independent so that there is no indication of favoritism. Mr. Fifield stated that the Board must consider the best individual to conduct this investigation. Mr. Scala had planned to advise the Board of this situation as part of his TA report; therefore, the Board is not yet aware of the situation to which Mr. Fogg refers.

It was decided that the Board will discuss this in more detail with Mr. Scala (in Non Public session) to determine whether an investigation is warranted and, if so, identify the appropriate individual to conduct such an investigation. Mr. Fogg would like any discovery from the investigation to be made public.

5. Proposed Capital Reserve Fund Expenditures

a) Invasive Species ETF \$3375 – This represents the appropriation approved for Province Lake. **Mr. Fifield moved to approve this expenditure as presented. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 2-0.**

6. Correspondence

a) Clearview Community TV 2nd Quarter Report – Provided for the Board's information.

b) Wakefield Congregational Church – The WCC advises that they will be handing out cupcakes on September 22 from 3-5p.m. in honor of their 235th anniversary. A police officer will be on site. Mr. Scala noted that the crosswalk is scheduled to be addressed on Friday of this week.

7. Unscheduled Matters/Public Comment #2

--Mr. Miller referred to the recent rise in Covid cases in Wakefield. He is wondering whether something could come out from the Board regarding their plan—i.e., at what point must we again social distance, wear masks, use Zoom, etc. The Governor is leaving it up to individual towns. Mr. Scala has discussed with Chief Ventura. His office is again sharing reports with staff. Mr. Fifield referred to reaction vs. over-reaction; tolerance vs. lack of tolerance. He believes Covid has divided this community. Everyone was kept safe during the initial pandemic; employees' jobs were kept safe. Many processes are still available. He does not believe we are at a point where we need to mandate restrictions. We cannot react to every up-tick or down-tick. He stressed that we need to be more careful the second time around with people's liberties and that the Board will not mandate that employees or the public get vaccinated. Mr. Edwards added that he is aware of the number of cases and will be paying attention.

8. Administrative Matters

a) Town Administrator's Update

--Perambulation with Ossipee: The Board confirmed Tuesday, September 14 (instead of September 13). Mr. Scala will advise Mr. Duffy.

--Mr. Mitchell is looking at a new tractor for the Wastewater lagoons. The current tractor is a 1987 and needs to be replaced. United quoted a new John Deere at \$53,026, with no trade in. Chappell has quoted \$46,500 for a new Kubota, plus \$10,500 for our trade in, for a balance of \$36,000. Mr. Mitchell recommends purchase of the Kubota, using funds available in the Wastewater CRF. Mr. Scala noted that ARPA funds have been earmarked for wastewater pump station replacement (in combination with a bond). \$78,000 of the Wastewater CRF has been earmarked for engineering for the wastewater pump station. Mr. Fifield stated that the cost of treating septage must be considered in an effort to recoup a portion of the cost of doing business. **Mr. Fifield moved to purchase the Kubota tractor from Chappell at \$36,000, as recommended by Brock Mitchell. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 2-0.**

--NH Division of Historical Resources advises that the Union Railroad and Freight Station will soon be considered by the NH State Historical Resources Council for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

--Wakefield's previous holder of the Boston Post Cane has moved, and the Board should recognize the next recipient. A new replica cane has been ordered and a presentation will be scheduled.

--Wakefield will receive 2 payments of \$267,482 (totaling \$551,397) in 2021 and 2022. A public hearing will be scheduled for acceptance of these funds under RSA 31:95-b. Use of these funds is limited to four specific areas, including wastewater.

--The Board reviewed/approved proposed dates for review of the draft 2022 budget with department heads. These dates will be shared.

b) Building Permit Releases – Mr. Fifield moved to approve the building permit release for Booth on North Desmond Drive. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 2-0.

c) Payment Manifests – Mr. Fifield moved to approve PR #19, a void and reissue of a payroll check. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 2-0.

Mr. Fifield moved to approve PR #20 in the amount of \$96,903.74. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 2-0.

Mr. Fifield moved to approve AP #22 in the amount of \$55,128.77. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 2-0.

d) Minutes – The minutes of August 11, 2021, were tabled until members present at that meeting are present.

e) Selectmen's Work Session

Mr. Fifield noted he and Mr. Scala met with Department Heads to review the 2022 budget process, specifically plans for the wage chart. He still needs to set a date with Mr. Scala to view Town beaches. Mr. Fifield advised that he did receive the mailer from Chuck Robbins (as discussed at a previous meeting earlier this summer) regarding shoreland protection. Mr. Edwards believes that the current staff have shoreland protection covered.

Mr. Edwards referred to the new sign on display on Canal Road. Positive comments are being made on Facebook. Mr. Edwards stressed that the Board and Town did well with this project and he hopes to hear 'thank you' for Mr. Bean's efforts. Mr. Edwards continues to work on new department signs for the Public Safety Building. He believes there will be sufficient funds to replace carpet in the building as planned.

Mr. Fifield stated we should be planning to address several more troubled bridges, perhaps through bonding.

Mr. Edwards reminded all of the car show scheduled for September 11 at noon. Come on down!

Mr. Scala noted that the Welcome to Wakefield sign (at Route 16/109 intersection) looks beautiful. He noted that the same group is addressing the sign for 2 High Street, as well as taking care of the flowers in front of Town Hall. Thanks go to Pride of Wakefield Volunteers.

Brackett Road is coming along, although some work will be subbed out. Then the Highway Department will turn to Access Road. Oak Hill will be saved for 2022.

Mr. Fifield moved to enter Non Public Session under RSA 91-A:3, II (c). Mr. Edwards seconded the motion. The Board will adjourn immediately following this Non Public Session. **Roll call vote: Mr. Fifield – ‘aye’; Mr. Edwards – ‘aye’. The motion passed 2-0, and the Board entered Non Public Session at 8:43 p.m.**

The Board returned to public session at 8:58 p.m. **Mr. Fifield moved to adjourn. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 2-0.**

Respectfully submitted,
Toni Bodah, Secretary

Approval of Minutes:

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Mark P. Duffy, Chair

Richard C. Edwards, Vice Chair

Kenneth G. Fifield