**Selectmen’s Meeting Minutes**

**August 8, 2022**

In attendance: John Quinlan, Howard Brown, Jack Esposito, Rebecca Schwarz (admin), Ben Crosby, Jay Wilson, Bonnie Angulas

Absent: Mark Slavin, Heather Kennedy

7:05pm **Quinlan** calls the meeting to order and leads the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

As some department heads are late, the board moved up **Other Business** to allow time for Department Heads to arrive.

**Proposed Police Detail Rates:** **Esposito** states he doesn’t have a problem with the proposed rates but doesn’t believe we need to lower the cruiser charge. **Quinlan** states is it reasonable and he agrees with **Esposito** that we don’t need to lower the cruiser rates, but it is something they should keep an eye on as time goes on to make sure we’re in line with other towns. **Brown** states they did a good job of comparing. **Quinlan** agrees it was on the low end. **Brown motions to approve the proposed Detail Rate of $83/hr and the Cruiser Rate will remain at $15. Second by Esposito, no further discussion, all in favor, motion passed.**

**Planning Board Member Appointment:** The Board reviews a request from community member Zachariah Johnson requesting to be appointed to the Planning Board. Johnson has attended one meeting already and is interested in becoming more involved in the community. **Brown motions to appoint Zachariah Johnson to the Planning Board as an Alternate, second by Esposito, no further discussion, all in favor, motion passed.**

**Body Worn Cameras PD Grant: Schwarz** reports that the grant that was originally applied for by Chief Slavin has been approved in the amount of $7786.00 for 7 body worn cameras and data storage for all. The grantor, the Department of Safety requires the Selectmen to make a formal vote to approve the funds. **Brown** asks how much storage is available and **Schwarz** responds 10g per officer. **Brown motions to accept the $7786.00 in grant funds from the NHDOS Body Worn Cameras Grant Program, second by Esposito, no further discussion, all in favor, motion passed.**

**Schwarz** states that at the time of application, Laurie Brown was the Treasurer, and with the Interim Treasurer being on vacation, **Schwarz** had to sign as the Deputy Treasurer and needs the Selectmen to sign a Letter of Authority stating **Schwarz** is authorized to enter into such an agreement on behalf of the Town. **Quinlan** signs.

**Schwarz** presents the Window Restoration Agreement on behalf of the Heritage Commission. Explains that Laurie Brown did not have the Board sign this portion of the contract, and LCHIP is looking for the signed copy at the risk of losing the grant funds. **Quinlan** signs.

**Esposito** mentions that the bond rate has increased to 3.66% for a 25 year note. This is almost double the previous rates and will be even higher in January.

**7:30pm Department Head Meeting:**

**Library** **Angulas** states: Summer Reading Program wrapped up this past Friday with 200 children having signed up. A reported 1833 books were read. Assumes more books were read but the parents were in charge of writing them down. JoAnn Kitchel hosted the finale at the Wilton Town Hall Theater giving out the grand prizes sponsored by the Friends of the Library: a fish tank and a kayak that was raffled off. The Daland Trust rewarded the top readers in different age groups with New England Aquarium passes. Anticipates continued library patronage by Souhegan students who need to complete summer reading requirements. The library is turning 113 this week and will be celebrated during the Senior Summer Program with a cake and ice cream social. Charitable Foundation fundraiser Battle of the Burbs to raise funds for the new library. Highest donating neighborhood will win a Block Party and the second highest will win an ice cream social. Will run from 8/4-9/5.

**Fire Departmen**t: **Wilson** reports they will be doing fire extinguisher inspections in the coming weeks. Budgetary concerns were expressed regarding Repairs and Maintenance to the Apparatus. All supplies have been raised and are not reducing. Calls have been average, with mostly mutual aid calls and no major cases in Mont Vernon. **Angulas** asks if we can burn brush at the dump and **Wilson** states no, everything is burning 12-18 inches below ground so that will not be possible until we get a good 2-3 day sustained soaking rain.

**DPW:** Newest hire Dave Lemieux started last Monday. Is working very well so far. Scheduled work for Francestown Tpke has been postponed at the fault of the company, as such no fees will be incurred. New loader was delivered last week, variable sign boards have been delivered and DPW, PD and FD are working to learn the systems and operations. There is another hire in the works, waiting on background check results and could be fully staffed within the next month. Town of Milford wants their steel plates back from Brook Rd. **Crosby** has reached out to other companies and towns and there are none available to borrow. Hands out quotes for both purchasing and renting ranging from 17k to 23k for purchase and 2k per month for rentals. **Esposito** asks about the possibility of renting plates and allowing Milford to use them and **Crosby** states that Milford doesn’t want to be beholden to a timeline. Purchase lead times are anywhere from 1-3 days and rentals were at 2-3 weeks. **Quinlan** advises **Crosby** to contact Milford and see what their thoughts are. **Schwarz** states there was a letter received by the office today regarding Block Grant Funds being released. **Quinlan** asks if it’s the second one, **Schwarz** states yes, somewhere around $28,000 was released to us in July. **Crosby** states he’s unsure of the balance of funds on hand but was aware it’s been set aside for the Brook Rd. project. **Quinlan** states we have prior years money available as well. **Angulas** asks when the project is going to begin, **Quinlan** states we are waiting to receive all the funds from the Block Grant before we begin. **Wilson** states that the Town should just own plates of their own, we don’t know what’s going to happen down the road. **Quinlan** asks when the paving on Francestown Tpke is rescheduled for. **Crosby** states it will depend on weather etc., but that it’s planned to resume in 1-2 weeks. **Quinlan** asks about Wilton/Old Wilton Rd. **Crosby** states they will be doing it all together. **Quinlan** asks if the State has finished their portion of the work and **Crosby** states they’ve done their portion of Francestown Tpke and Amherst Rd with rubberized chip seal, which is supposed to be the better of the processes they use. **Quinlan** asks is that a topcoat? **Crosby** states yes, it’s a wearing coarse, it seals the road and doesn’t allow any water to seep through cracks etc. It will be interesting plowing on it, as if it isn’t properly crowned etc. the plows can peel it up in spots. **Quinlan** asks about Amherst Rd. Did they take the old road out before laying the new pavement? **Crosby** states they milled the old road down to the Pomeroy’s and then overlaid what was existing down to the Amherst line. **Quinlan** asks why you would put a permeable coat over top of a coat that’s not permeable and **Crosby** states the chip seal is nonpermeable. **Crosby** states that there are some concerns with ice in that area of Amherst Road and the state does very little to maintain it. He states they don’t mow it either and he has offered to have our contractor for roadside mowing do that section and bill the State and they’ve declined, so he’s glad to see they’ve done this paving. He does keep mentioning the vegetation encroaching on the road and he’s going to ask the PD to contact them and report that it’s unsafe to see if we can get them to come out. **Quinlan** states the Selectmen will meet again in another day or two once **Crosby** gets his responses from Milford.

**Heritage Commission**: **Schwarz** reports the HC received the preliminary Condition Assessment from the Architect but cannot release it yet as it must be approved by the NH Preservation Alliance as the Grantor that funded the Assessment. That is a condition of the grant. The Town can look forward to seeing that very soon. A copy will be released to the Selectmen, Planning Board and placed on the HC page of the website. Along the same lines **Schwarz** received notification today that the HC was awarded another grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation which will pay the other 50% toward the Conditions Assessment meaning the assessment will be paid for entirely with grant money. There is a requirement of the grant that the grantee must have membership with the Trust so the HC will have to vote to expend $250 for a membership fee, but that also makes them eligible for more grants through that entity. Reports that the HC also received word on Friday that the Town was selected as a Certified Local Government by the National Park Service. **Schwarz** states that this was brought to the HC at the second ever meeting of the HC while **Quinlan** was the Chair, and he states he remembers. **Quinlan** states that’s been a long time and its great that we finally got it. **Schwarz** states the largest reason the HC applied is because it is another avenue for preservation grant funds with 10% of the Federal government’s preservation funds being dedicated to Certified Local Governments, but also the program provides access to funds and professionals in Historical Surveying.

**8:00pm Mail and Announcements**: **Schwarz** reports receiving a letter from the Daland Trust regarding cleaning fees. The way the letter reads, the Trust received the invoice from the Town maybe 1-1.5 years after the cleaning had happened. They are regulated by the courts and must close their books by a certain time. Once their books are closed, they are not supposed to expend more funds for that year. **Esposito** asks who sends the bill to them and **Brown** responds that Laurie Brown was doing that before she retired. Currently the Town is paying the cleaner for all 5 buildings and the Daland Trust pays the Town half of the fee back. There have been complaints about sporadic visits from the cleaner by the library in the past. **Schwarz** suggests some sort of checks and balances system like the cleaner leaving a “timecard” type slip for the department head to sign off on a turn in with their timecards as the process currently doesn’t include any way for the department heads to approve or deny payment. **Brown** states that they are looking to get their own cleaner instead of using the Town’s cleaner. **Schwarz** asks as the person handling payables now, would we still be cutting the checks and paying half or would they be handling that on their own. **Quinlan** states he doesn’t know.

A letter arrived with the payment schedule for the block grant funds $95, 510 in 4 payments will be received. Esposito asks about the second half of the ARPA funds. **Schwarz** states she believes those are in a separate account that she does not have access to. She tried to find that information before the meeting and was unable to.

**Esposito** brings up a discussion on Solar Panels, because we are seeing increases in energy rates and we have no regulations on the books, especially for the Historic District, which has seen applications for solar panels twice in the last six months. **Quinlan** states we should investigate what the Historic District Regulations say, and **Esposito** responds that solar panels are not mentioned in the regulations. **Quinlan** states it mentions appearance of homes and alterations to them, which could be a restriction. **Brown** remembers a house in Amherst that had solar panels and was required to remove them. **Schwarz** states that the HDC has been interested in updating the regulations because they are outdated (1979) and do not address many common items of this day. The HDC is hearing another case soon and expects to get more applications in the future. **Schwarz** states that the way the regulations are written now, the HDC function is to protect and preserve the historic aspects of the homes and structures within the district, but do we really want to tell someone that because they live in an historic home, they can’t have solar? What about the non-historic homes within the historic district? Do we approve one resident but not another? There needs to be some guidance from the Selectmen/Planning boards regarding their directives on such items as solar panels and the like that the HDC can refer to. With the passing of HB1221 boards and committees are required to have much better descriptions for why an application was approved or denied and the HDC is setting precedents by making decisions without guidance. **Schwarz** states the HDC wants to protect these historic homes but doesn’t want to cause a financial hardship on some one over aesthetics. **Quinlan** states that time moves on and the regulations need to reflect that. **Brown** mentions solar panels that are built into the home like shingles and **Schwarz** states that someone did bring that up, and apparently, they are more expensive and less efficient, but it’s an option we could consider. The other issues it that the HDC could ask for the panels to be installed in a less conspicuous location, but they obviously need access to the sun so that’s not always possible. **Quinlan** states he can see the problem and would like to see a copy of the regulations for the HDC. Wonders what the process is to change the regulations, **Schwarz** states it’s a public meeting, but doesn’t require Town Meeting vote. States she will provide a copy of the HDC regulations to the Selectmen via email.

**Esposito** motions to adjourn, second by **Brown**, meeting adjourned 8:05pm, next meeting August 22, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Schwarz

Adminitrative Assistant