**Selectmen’s Public Meeting Minutes**

**November 13, 2023**

**7:00 PM** Selectman John **Quinlan** called the meeting to order. Also present was Selectman Jack **Esposito** and Selectman Howard **Brown.**

Bonnie Angulas commented on the minutes from 10/23/23 in regard to Zoe Fimbel’s comment about Lamson Farm and the Library. Bonnie wanted it noted that the Mont Vernon Library Charitable Foundation was who requested to be at Lamson Farm Day, not the Library. When they were declined to show the project, it was a surprise to them because obviously projects have been shown in the past at Lamson Farm Day. It’s their event and their choice, but picking and choosing projects is not really a good look. She would be happy to go to the Lamson Farm Commission as a Board member to speak with them.

The Board reviewed the minutes of 11/6/23. **Esposito** motioned to accept the minutes of 11/6/23 as amended seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Quinlan** asked if anyone at MACC Base had any objection to the renaming of 2nd NH Tpke. to Caesars Road. Joan Cleary stated that the MACC Base Director, Ray Anderson, sent out a mass email stating that the matter has been put to rest. Our Highway Director has ordered the street sign.

**Quinlan** thanked the Patriotic Purpose Committee for the Veteran’s Ceremony held on Saturday the 11th. It was very nice and a good introduction to traditional things like patriotism.

He then gave an update on the Weston Hill Road issue. He spoke with Town Counsel and things should be moving forward quickly.

**7:10 PM – Department Head Meeting**

**Chief Mark Slavin – Police Department**

* In October they had their Prescription Drug Takeback Day. They took in 5.9 lbs of prescription drugs.
* They got good feedback from the Trunk-or-Treat done on Halloween. He thanked Sheriff Connelly for joining. They’ve gotten quite a few emails from people saying they want to be part of it next year; hopefully they will get a full parking lot next year.
* Town Administrator of Wilton has advised that as of May of 2024 they will not be renewing our prosecution contract. This is due to a staffing shortage; it has nothing to do with the PD personnel. Sgt. Daigneault and Officer Reppucci are both prosecutors; they will cover until we find a new prosecutor. They are in talks with Amherst right now trying to figure something out to join with Amherst.

**Chief Jay Wilson – Fire Department**

* Doing the maintenance of all apparatus with their mechanics who come to the Station to do the servicing.
* The Association handed out glow necklaces on Halloween.
* They are up 10%from last year in calls for service in Town/Mutual Aid.

**Recreation Director – Heather Kennedy**

* We had a successful Trick-or-Treat and candy collection. They collected candy in 4 locations; the General Store generated the most donations dropped off. They had 44 trick-or-treat locations on the map. Five of them provided their own candy/treats (FD, Library, Police/Trunk-or-Treat, Mary Brown/MVVS teachers and Peanut house) and Rec distributed odd items from the gazebo on the green. They distributed over 38,000 pieces of candy on two different weekends before Halloween.
* Tree lighting is on December 9th from 5:30pm – 7:00pm. There will be a tent in the Town Hall parking lot again, Santa, music, commemorative ornament and fire department involvement – similar to what they did last year. They are accepting nominations for Tree Lighter. She has a form for nominations that she will send out.
* Youth Development Ski Program at Crotchet Mtn. will likely start the first week of January. We get discounted group rates; usually 5-weeks of ski passes plus 2 additional passes, usually on Friday evenings.

**Library Director – Bonnie Angulas**

* Library 580 visitors on Halloween night; special thanks to the Frinds of the Library for providing the treats.
* MVLCF hosted their One for the Books Charity Auction on Thursday November 2nd. They raised $54,000; with the NEH match it was $70,00 towards the library project. Twenty local businesses sponsored; 106 auction items were donated; 130 attendees.
* Seats and Feets Underwear Sock Drive for SHARE starts November 14th. For two weeks you can donate children and adult socks and underwear and SHARE will distribute through the month of December.
* Library Building Committee will be presenting on 12/6 at 6:00pm at the MVVS. Members of the Library Trustees, the Daland Trustees, DSK Architect Planners, Turnstone Construction and the Library Building Committee will be at the Village School to present an updated vision for the new library and for community questions about the project. A new 3-D model of the site and building will be on display. Also, the Library Trustees are hosting another session where you can go in and chat with them on Saturday, November 18th from 10:00am – 12:00pm.

**Highway Director – Ben Crosby**

* Getting the equipment ready for “that time of year”. One employee is back off short term disability; we are still down one employee.
* With the Boards approval, he will have 1-2 contractors on-call to assist with storms while he is short staffed, and then moving forward to fill in some gaps. He is trying to shorten the driver routes; they are at 4.5 hours; he wants to get that down to around 3 hours if possible. They are pushing to their limits and it can be dangerous. **Esposito** asked if we are covered with our insurance if a non-employee drives our equipment. Cleary will contact Primex for clarification.
* The 200-amp service change at the Transfer Station has been completed. There are a couple of floodlights that need to be repaired.
* Advanced Paving is supposed to be coming back to finish up the patching of pot holes, weather permitting.
* We have contracted again to have the snow removed from the sidewalks this winter.

**Sgt. Daigneault – MACC Base**

* They have their second Budget Hearing tomorrow night. Mont Vernon is all set; the 2024 increase is about 4%.

**Quinlan** reminded everyone that the Strategic Advisory Committee is wanting any feedback from Departments on the Draft CIP. They are meeting on the 21st to produce their second draft, which will be going in front of the Planning Board for approval on November 28th.

**Quinlan** spoke of his meeting with Amherst’s Selectman Danielle Pray in regards to the ambulance service contract. We have been paying the Town of Amherst $17,000 for the past 20 years or so. We have a couple of very outdated contracts; it’s impossible to figure out how they ever arrived at that amount. They are in the process of reappraising everything they’re doing and it was intimated to Quinlan that if we want to re-up the annual service with Amherst, it’s going to be somewhere north of $100,000 annually. We are waiting on figures. He asked the opinion of the PD and Fire Dept. as to whether we should be looking at other services besides Amherst. Chief Wilson feels that we should. They are charging the patients and the ins. company a minimum of $1,000 per call. If there are 100 – 120 calls in Mont Vernon, that’s $200,000 to the residents. That’s an insane amount of money to guarantee an ambulance. If they weren’t charging it would be a different story. Randy Wilson said that if Amherst is still soft billing, he would be curious to find out what they are collecting from patients they’re picking up in town on average over the past few years and how that factors in to covering their operating costs. Chief Wilson stated that the only choices we have are Amherst and Milford. New Boston is too far out; they have one ambulance in the center of New Boston and the other is off of Chestnut Hill at the Tracking Station. They are also volunteer, where Amherst and Milford have 24-hour coverage. We will reach out to Milford; as soon as we have numbers from Amherst, we will revisit the situation.

**Esposito** presented the Board with updated numbers on the Elderly Exemption, which has not been updated since 2007. He ran comparison numbers with the towns of Hollis, Brookline and New Boston. **Quinlan** wants to get some information from NRPC on the breakdown of demographics for all the towns.

**Esposito** presented the Board with a Town Building Use Policy for review. The Board will revisit at the next meeting.

The Board discussed the COLA for 2024. **Esposito** stands by 5%; **Brown** wants to let it go to the Budget Committee for their opinion before we make a decision. **Quinlan** said to tacitly set it at 4% and we can hear what the Budget Committee has to say.

**Quinlan** stressed that we need to update the Employee Handbook; mainly develop a personnel evaluation system.

**Esposito** wants to see a memorial area set up; something such as a bench on the side yard of the Town Hall. This had been discussed but never came to fruition.

**Quinlan** wants to meet again with the Library Trustees, Cemetery Trustees and the Conservation Commission on November 27th for an update on the Town Center parcel plans for the future. Cleary will reach out to set up.

**8:15PM** As there was no further business before the Board **Esposito** motioned to adjourn seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Cleary