

Selectmen's Public Meeting Minutes October 23, 2023

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

Tim Berry came before the Board to discuss the minutes of 10/2/23. In those minutes, **Quinlan** stated that there may be a need for shuffling some people's responsibilities on the Budget Committee. Berry asked what he had in mind. **Quinlan** stated that at times last year, things seemed to be a bit out of control. The same people have returned to be on the Committee this year. The suggestion was made to maybe switch things up when assigning officers at the organizational meeting. Berry asked if he had pulled aside members of the Budget Committee and made this request. **Quinlan** stated that he did not; it was just a general statement made in the hope that things could run smoother this year.

Zoe Fimbel, Lamson Farm Chairman, came before the Board. She was quite upset when she heard that people are saying that they asked the library not to participate in Lamson Farm Day. They never asked the library not to participate; the library has chosen the last three years not to participate. Three years ago, the library wanted to paint fish for Lamson Farm Day. The Lamson Farm Committee said that has nothing to do with agricultural life; they are trying to get LFD back to being agricultural. The library decided not to participate. They haven't participated since. During the week before this year's Lamson Farm Day, she received an email from Spencer Lovette with the Mont Vernon Library Charitable Foundation. They wanted to set up a table to provide info about the new library project. Fimbel wrote back saying that they could not have a table; she explained that LFD is a day to celebrate MV's agricultural heritage (email attached). She wants it known that they never asked the library not to participate; they have missed their participation. They are just trying to fine tune to get back to the original intent of this special day of farm life activities. Lamson Farm Day was created to remember where we started from. She feels that the LFD Commission is being misrepresented and she wants to set the record straight.

Isaac Wilkins, 2nd NH Tpke, came before the Board to voice his discontent with the name change of the 2nd NH Tpke to Wilson Road. His is the only house currently being built down there. They are the ones who paid to put the power out there; his parents rebuilt the culverts that meet the emergency services recommendations for making it a viable Class VI road to build on. They've put thousands of dollars into that property. They've owned the property on that side of the road for 159 years. He understands the reason for changing the name is that emergency services couldn't find it on a map. However, the only notice he got that the name of the road was being changed was that he happened to bump into a Selectman out there. He understands that there is not a requirement to notify him as he does not have a CO on the house as of yet; but no one else on that road does either and no one would be responding to a 911 call for anyone except for him and his family. He feels they should have some kind of say in what the name of this road gets changed to. Caesars Brook Road would honor the conservation land next to it. Upham Road would honor the original owner his family bought the land from 159 years ago. When he agreed that he would live on that Class VI road, he signed an affidavit stating that he acknowledges the town is not responsible for that road. He is responsible for the

plowing, the maintenance, grading etc. If he has that much responsibility to that road, he feels he should have at least some say in the naming of that road (email attached). **Quinlan** apologized and said it was an oversight; they should have been contacted. Sally Wilkins said they paid to update that culvert. They are going to pay to bring the road up to Chief Wilson's specifications. It's a Class VI road; they had to go to the Planning Board to get the recommendation to issue a building permit on a Class VI road. There are two lots for sale across the street right now; will they have to jump through the same hoops? The Board agreed to take all of this under advisement. **Esposito** feels that there is a lot more to this than they realized which needs to be discussed.

Jamie Kennedy came before the Board. He stated that last Monday Sheila Sturm made some very strong accusations and called for Heather Kennedy's resignation as the Recreation Director. He feels that her statements were not accurate and wants to know if anything has transpired since then or what the plan is to address all of it or if there is a plan to address it.

Quinlan stated that nothing has transpired since that night; we are going to look into it legally before we actually discuss it. There will be no discussion tonight.

Quinlan noted that Eric Willis resigned as Town Treasurer effective October 6, 2023. The Board needs to appoint an Interim Treasurer through next March. Tim Berry asked if the Treasurer gave a reason for his notice. **Quinlan** stated that the Board met with him where they discussed it; it was an amiable meeting where they agreed that it wasn't a good fit for him. **Esposito** noted that Willis did not realize all the duties of the Treasurer. He just started a new company; it just wasn't going to work out. **Esposito** motioned to appoint Becci Schwarz as Interim Treasurer seconded by **Brown**. All in favor. **Esposito** noted that this is the reason why we will have a warrant article in March to have the Treasurer appointed by the Board vs elected at Town Meeting. We are not authorized to stipulate anything other than being a resident of the Town to run for this office. If we appoint somebody, we can set stipulations and qualifications for the position. If the Town approves the article, it would take effect in 2025. **Quinlan** noted that this is the one position where there should be some qualifications seeing as it is a \$4,000,000 budget and it does take some skills. Unfortunately, the state sets the restriction for every elected office. We are not allowed to put any stipulations on it. The Town of Amherst just changed theirs last year and voted it to an appointed position.

The 2024 COLA increase came out at 3.2%. **Esposito** stated that he feels we should give our employees a 5% increase because he doubts the numbers the government has come out with. In September it was estimated to be 3.7% and all of a sudden in October its 3.2%. They increased the taxable income for Social Security by 5.25%. They increased the premiums on the medical for the recipients by 5.8%. They increased the deductible by 6.4% for medical payments. The government has come out with 5% - 6% numbers but yet, conveniently, we get 3.2% for the citizens. We don't give merit increases throughout the year; it's always been COLA. We've always upped it to the next percent; this year he feels we should go with 5%. **Esposito** motioned to increase the COLA for town employees to 5% for 2024 seconded by **Brown**. **Brown** asked for the difference between 3.2%, 4% and 5%. Cleary will run the numbers on all three and get to the Board for review and discussion.

The Board reviewed the minutes from 10/16/23. **Esposito** motioned to accept the minutes of 10/16/23 as written seconded by **Brown**. All in favor.

Approved

7:40 PM As there was no further business before the Board **Esposito** motioned to adjourn seconded by **Brown**. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Cleary

From: P MICHAEL FIMBEL moxiesix@aol.com
Subject: Re: Lamson Farm
Date: Sep 21, 2023 at 7:33:53 AM
To: Spencer Lovette smlovette@gmail.com

Hello Spencer~

Your request to have a table at Lamson Farm Day has been denied. Lamson Farm Day is a day to celebrate Mont Vernon's agricultural heritage. We have been fine tuning over the last few years to get back to the original intent of this special day of farm life activities. Thank you for your understanding.

Zoe Fimbel

Lamson Farm Commission Chairman

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 19, 2023, at 3:42 PM, Spencer Lovette
<smlovette@gmail.com> wrote:

Zoe Fimbal,

The Mont Vernon Library Charitable Foundation would like to have a table at Lamson Farm to provide information about the new library project. A lot has developed over the past 6 months and we would like to make up to date information available so folks can make an informed decision regarding this effort.

Would you kindly let me know if we can proceed with a table?

Regards,

Spencer Lovette