

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes September 11, 2017

7:00 pm Meeting called to order by Board Chair, John Quinlan. Also in attendance were Selectmen John Esposito and Kim Roberge.

- Board reviewed minutes of 8/21.

Esposito motioned, seconded by Roberge to accept the minutes of August 21, 2017 as amended. All in favor.

Esposito motioned, seconded by Roberge to accept the non-public minutes of August 21, 2017. All in favor.

Esposito motioned, seconded by Roberge to seal the non-public minutes of August 21, 2017. All in favor.

- Board read, and granted a request from the Tax Collector to close the office one hour early on Monday, September 25, 2017 in order to attend the presentation of the Future Use of Town Buildings Committee.
- Board read recommendation from Bonnie Angulas to appoint Vanessa Chavez to chair the Recreation Committee. Esposito motioned, seconded by Roberge to appoint Vanessa Chavez as Chairman of the Recreation Committee. All in favor.

Roberge updated the Board regarding the case before the Historic District Commission: Frank Chadwick was denied permission to alter the dormers to have a peaked roof instead of the flat roof now on the home.

7:20 pm Department Head Meeting

Bonnie Angulas – Recreation

- Angulas reported on the free performance Alex Preston held on the Town green. She said it was wonderful; there were more than 300 people in attendance, he played from 6:00 – 7:30 pm, answered questions, posed for selfies, and everyone was very well behaved.
- Vanessa Chavez is ready to jump in and finish up the year; she is very excited to get going, and will be a tremendous asset to the Recreation Committee.

Bonnie Angulas – Library

- 160 people have already responded to the Library survey on Survey Monkey – you have until the end of September to fill out your survey.

Mike Ypya - DPW

- Advanced Paving is in Milford starting this week, and we are next on their list. They will be here 3 days.
- Steve Dudley will finish up mowing this year, but will not be continuing next year.
- The pumping/drainage of the pond is ongoing.
- Ypya stated that he does not want to see the newly paved road dug up so that the culvert can be dropped 6". He asked the Board if that was necessary.

After some discussion, it was decided that if the designer was ok with leaving it as is until such time as something negative happens, then it should be left alone.

- Ypya asked about closing the Transfer station on November 11; Veterans day. Quinlan verified that the State is observing Veterans Day on Friday, November 10 in 2017, and we will also. The Transfer Station will be open on Saturday the 11th.

Roberge asked if anyone had yet pulled a driveway permit for Old Amherst Road; Ypya told her: no. She then asked if they had been issued a wetlands permit: no one has seen one.

Officer Reppucci – Police Department

- Chief Furlong is on vacation.
- Officer Wolf has finished his training, and is out on his own now.

- The background check on the 2nd part timer is still ongoing.
- Furlong will be umpiring the Vintage Baseball Games on Saturday, September 23rd.

Roberge asked Reppucci about 3 service trucks parked on a bad corner on Old Amherst Rd without a flagman. Reppucci will make sure Chief Furlong is aware. Roberge thinks it is time to work on a policy.

7:50pm End of Department Head Meeting

7:50pm Wade Landrum came before the Board to update them on his Eagle Scout project (walkway on the War Memorial lot). Landrum said that he will have a table at Lamson Farm Day as the deadline for ordering bricks has been pushed out. He can accept orders until the groundwork that the Patriotic Committee has planned has been completed. So far, he has raised almost \$2,000 with 20 bricks ordered. He will put in one last order and install them all at the same time. Landrum asked if the Town could donate sand if needed, and the Board agreed.

Roberge wanted the Board to know of an issue that has developed regarding a house being built on Cheever Lane.

“Contractor A” was hired to build the house, came in and applied for and paid for the building permit. His subcontractors applied for and paid for electrical, and plumbing/gas.

The homeowner fired “Contractor A”. “Contractor A” came in and pulled his permit and license from the job, as did his subcontractors. He did not want a refund of permit fees. Rough in inspections have already been done.

Homeowner then hired “Contractor B” to finish building his home. “Contractor B” does not want to pay for new permits and has been trying to discuss with the Inspector and the Office that the permits already granted belong to the homeowner, not the contractor that paid for them.

Both the Building Inspector and the Office have confirmed that the permits were issued and paid for by “Contractor A” and his Subs; therefore, our contract is with them. If the homeowner subsequently reimbursed the contractor for the permits, that is between contractor and homeowner; nothing to do with the Town.

Board agreed.

This is the same property the Board heard about a couple of months ago because their driveway was built on town property (Conservation Land). “Contractor B” said that there was a deal made with the Selectboard regarding the driveway, but the Board remembers no such agreement. The builder has been told that no occupancy permit will be issued until the driveway issue has been taken care of.

Esposito relayed that at the last SLRD meeting, Bruce Berry said that they are having a problem with Mont Vernon residents coming into the Amherst transfer station with construction debris and while they are there, dumping their household trash also. Esposito said that it sounds like a problem that needs to be solved in Amherst; it isn’t a SLRD problem. Berry also said that people coming in with no sticker are from Mont Vernon.

Again, Esposito said that it also is an Amherst problem, not a SLRD problem, that Mont Vernon residents all get a free sticker in their tax bill, and if anyone goes to the Amherst station without a sticker they should be turned away. Berry then went on to say that he is not sure the \$.10 / pound they charge for construction debris may not cover Amherst’s expense. He wants to get all the Selectmen together to discuss it. Esposito told Berry that the Selectmen do not need to meet; if Amherst does the research and feels they need to raise the fee – do it.

Roberge mentioned seeing a bill for snow plowing on last week’s manifest, and wondered why we pay for plowing as we have our own plows.

Esposito said that he thinks our plows cannot get behind the fire station, but suggested asking Chief Wilson.

Roberge said that she believes we need to find a way to do our own plowing.

Board reviewed a request from Chief Furlong asking for Kristopher Wolf’s pay to be brought up from training pay to regular starting part-time pay.

Esposito motioned, seconded by Roberge to increase Kristopher Wolf’s pay to starting part-time officer pay. All in favor.

Roberge said that she is extremely bothered by the adverse opinion delivered by the independent auditors.

She wants to see the duties of the Treasurer kept completely separate from the Selectmen’s Office personnel.

The other Board members acknowledge the shortcomings of having such an abbreviated pool of employees in the office to carry out normal checks and balances, but know that the modifications already made to protocol are sufficient. All suggestions made by the auditors have been implemented immediately, and the auditors are satisfied. They produce an adverse finding because the new protocol is not what can be expected in larger towns.

Esposito explained that:

1. All bills are accompanied by invoices that have been to the department heads for signed approval
2. The Office Assistant enters the bills into the computer and prints the checks with a detailed manifest.
3. Manifest goes to Selectboard weekly for approval (At least Two signatures needed).
4. Checks with all back-up go to the Selectboard weekly for approval. One signature needed proving that the checks match to the manifest.

5. Checks and manifest go to the Treasurer. Treasurer is charged with making sure that the money spent is in the spirit of the Operating Budget that the Town voted in at Town Meeting.
6. The Treasurer transfers only enough money to cover the manifest.
7. The Office Assistant reconciles the bank statements.

Esposito contends that the auditors came up with this separation of duties, and that all small towns have had to modify their methods also.

Roberge asked Brown to look at what can be done to make the adverse opinion go away.

Brown will look into separating the software so that another Treasurer could do the job independently without getting into the Town's accounting and to ask the auditors what a Treasurer should be doing.

Roberge also asked Brown to find out which other towns have an elected Treasurer that is also an employee.

Quinlan mentioned that he had had a call from a resident of Weston Hill Rd. who was beside herself with worry about a neighbor who seems to fire a gun indiscriminately near her home. She is also concerned about the state of her neighbor's property, and how much of a mess it is. She is ready to come in and put her name to a complaint, and we will hear her out next week if Chief Furlong can be in attendance also.

8:55 pm As there was no further business before the Board, Roberge motioned, seconded by Esposito to adjourn. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laurie M. Brown