

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes November 23, 2020

7:00 PM Meeting called to order by Selectboard Chairman, John Esposito. Also in attendance were Selectmen Kim Roberge and Tim Berry.

Esposito led the meeting in a moment of silence to remember Laurie Brown's husband who passed and all the first responders that have been helping us for the last 9 months.

Eileen Naber asked if the assessors that are out and about now report things like occupied barns etc. that are not on assessing cards. Esposito said that, yes, they are supposed to, and add them to the cards.

Resident, Doug Irvine, said that he was there to articulate some of the options available to the Town. This is triggered by an assessors' visit to my property exactly 5 years later than the last time. Last time they did a full measure and list, this time was a measure only. Irvine said that he is a certified NH Assessor and wants to point out what is required by State of NH. Every 5 years at a minimum, all properties are valued anew. We are doing that.

Beyond that, RSA 76:2 says that all property must be accounted for as of April 1st each year. We are doing that through building permit valuation - effective April 1. We always do that. The type of revaluation is where we have a choice. There are 4 types, of which he wanted to talk about 2.

1. Cyclical. What we are doing now and what we did the last time. 20% of the Town is reinspected each year. They are looking for things added or removed.
At the fifth year, they do the sales analysis over the last two years and come up with a new value for each property.
2. Statistical. Every 5 years you revalue properties. There is not an assessor going to each house. Only the sales of the last 2 years are used.

We are paying more money to have boots on the ground. There is nothing that mandates inspections of any kind. Cities like Manchester haven't done a full inspection since 2006. Nashua hasn't done a full measure and list since the late 80's or early 90's. I feel it is analogous to having your car inspected and doing it again 2 weeks later.

Esposito said that we don't have any commercial properties.

Roberge asked what the cost difference would be if we opted out.

Irvine said that he could help us there a little bit. You are paying approximately \$75K over 5 years. If you do a statistical vs. the cyclical it would be approximately half the cost. It is easy to see that labor is the driving factor. That is real money after a while. That is an unofficial quote.

Esposito said that we do not use the inventory sheets any more.

Roberge said that she feels we should ask CNP what the difference in cost would be. There are a lot of towns that do a cyclical followed by a statistical. That is why I asked for this information 2 weeks ago.

Esposito said that he agrees with Roberge, but that we did ask CNP for an estimate on the statistical and have received nothing yet.

Roberge said that boots on the ground is what every company will recommend. If we could get a cost savings to the Town – those years that will be higher would be higher anyway. I didn't understand why Gerry stood up and wanted to zero that line out completely.

Esposito reiterated that we did ask for the cost difference and didn't get it.

Berry agreed that we need a cost comparison. He would also like to know the % of assessed valuation lost by not doing a physical revaluation. People are always doing things without a permit. No one wants to have the bureaucracy know what they are doing. How much would we be losing by not having someone go out once every 5 years?

Roberge said that she doesn't know if the Building Inspector's office has ever been contacted because of the assessing people finding something.

Berry agreed and cited for instance: he spent \$20K on a new well and water system without pulling a permit. It is certainly something he would tell a broker about if he was selling the house as it would make the house more valuable. I would like to know how much money is left on the table by not visiting homes every 5 years. It adds up quickly. There are other improvements that people are doing without permits. We are missing tax dollars.

Roberge asked how an assessor would pick that up.

Irvine said that in the assessing world, we expect a well that works. Cost does not equal value. Same with finished basements. People are afraid of taxes on a finished basement. They are afraid a \$50K finished basement will add \$50K to their assessed value. It doesn't work that way. Get a report at the end of the 1st year of before and after; the net change in value. Track it for 5 years. It will find sheds etc. – you won't find a dramatic change. You can decide to continue with cyclical, but I doubt it will make up for the cost.

Roberge asked if CNP could give us the last 5 years' worth of changes.

7:35 PM Recreation Director, Heather Kennedy, came before the Board to talk about Tree Lighting. She said that it looks like the Board is in favor of proceeding as planned with Tree Lighting. Chief Furlong is also on board with it. He has ok'd 10 spots for VIP parking. Furlong will be the honoree. Please send Kennedy any words you want to add to the ceremony. Furlong feels it is ok to have Rich Masters, Herself,

Kevin Furlong and Earle Rich at the ceremony, masked up and social distancing. She is testing out the live stream and may have to use the Town Hall Wi-Fi. She has spoken to Masters (Neighbor 2 Neighbor) about specific people to donate to, or if donations would be general. Roberge suggested touching base with the Welfare Officer to see if she knows of a need.

Esposito said that he really thinks that gift cards is the way to go.

Kennedy said that they do not want to do any fundraising this year; just want to spread cheer. She said that if N2N does not have a specific need, she would reach out to SHARE. She then asked if anyone had a good street map of Mont Vernon.

DPW Director, Ben Crosby said that he had one he could share with her.

Kennedy said that Saturday, December 12, 2020 will be Tree Lighting beginning at 5:00 PM.

Roberge thanked Kennedy for all her hard work and said that she has stayed within the COVID guidelines and gotten others involved.

Kennedy also said that the Recreation Committee is trying to circle the Crotched Mountain Ski Program back into Recreation. Everyone would have to pay the Town and the Town would cut one check to the mountain.

7:45 PM Crosby came in with a quote from Beltronics for switching our low-band radios to high-band radios. For 9 radios in the trucks, installed it would be \$6,723.90. If we wanted to do a base radio system, and our own frequency it would be an additional \$3,704.00.

Roberge asked what the value of a base unit would be.

Crosby said that the base unit would be readily available to respond.

Esposito feels it would be a nice thing to have, but not necessary right now.

Crosby said that is why he separated it out. He is going to test a radio out tomorrow.

Roberge asked if he is looking at this year's budget, or to put it into next year's figures.

Crosby said that if we switch, we will be set up for MACC, going alone, or going with someone else.

Esposito said we should put it in for next year.

Crosby suggested encumbering the funds.

Brown agreed that it was possible to encumber funds if you have a firm quote.

Esposito agreed but said that the highway lines were all used up as it is. I do think we should go with the high-band, though.

Crosby said that he is working with Chief Wilson to see if they have any radios they could pass over.

Esposito told Crosby to get some good numbers.

Crosby said that he had a call from one of the officers last week regarding lights out on the McCollom Building.

He had Paul Gagnon of Mont Vernon Electric look at them. The canopy light needs to be replaced at \$170, and we have 2 flood light with problems.

Roberge said there is money in the Repairs and Maintenance to the McCollom Building line. That's what it is there for.

Crosby said that it would be cheaper to do all 4 flood lights and replace them with LED's. Total will be \$937 installed with the canopy light.

Esposito agreed with Roberge and told Crosby to get it done.

Berry asked if the McCollom Building walkway had been paved and which line it came out of.

There was discussion over the Block grant money and it was decided that Block Grant money was only to be used on roads. The walkway was going to be taken out of R&M to the McCollom Building.

Crosby asked if the Block Grant expenses for this year will be flipped back into Tarring and Sealing and was told yes.

8:05 PM Esposito discussed the extension of the 2013 MACC IMA and how they will negotiate with Milford after Town Meeting.

Berry said that he thought Wilton wanted to start negotiations immediately.

Esposito said that he thought Wilton said in April – right after Town Meeting.

Berry said that he thinks we should team up with Wilton and let them know we want to renegotiate right after Town meeting and get a response from them.

Roberge said that she would be fine with a joint letter to the Milford Selectmen stating we are looking for a date to start negotiating.

Esposito said that one of the properties on our Junk Yard list has been sold to a property management company. I don't know what they are going to be looking to do with it, but the 2 residences have been there since 1950.

Roberge said that it does not meet our ADU regulations. Does being sold change it's use? The complaining resident's concern is that it is being sold as a multifamily or a rental.

Esposito asked Brown to get in touch with our Town Counsel.

Roberge said that we need to get guidance on this – there is a permit for a partial remodel.

Berry mentioned that the Tax Kiosk is not working. The office is aware of that, it is not on our end, but is being worked on.

Roberge asked if we could put something acknowledging it on the front page of our website.

Brown agreed.

Berry asked Brown to speak with Town Counsel regarding the property at 66 Old Milford Road. They were denied their variance – what do we do now?

8:15 PM Roberge told Brown to remove the Trailer on Francestown Turnpike off the old business list as they got their 180-day permit.

Naber asked who is keeping track of the 6 months.

Roberge said that it shows up to the Building Inspector as non-renewable. The construction trailer has to be vacated when the house gets a C.O.

Berry asked that if he wanted to, he could get a permit to put a trailer on his property for 6 months?

Chief Wilson came to the meeting to discuss some trees on Harwood Road he wants to take down to get better reception for emergency services on an antenna.

Roberge asked for more detail – where are they? Are they marked? What is the purpose of the antenna? What is the cost of the antenna?

Wilson said that 1 or 2 trees need to come out across from the Town Hall for the MACC microwave system.

The property owner is ok with it.

Roberge said that we need something in writing from the homeowner saying that it is ok. Can we wait to give the ok until next Monday night?

Wilson said that next Monday is fine.

Esposito asked if any power lines were in the way and was told no.

Roberge asked what line in the budget it would come from.

Wilson guessed that the DPW Tree work line would be correct.

Esposito said that the Tree line is already over budget.

Wilson said that if there isn't any money left, we could add it to the 2021 budget line.

Roberge said that she wants to see the quote for the trees, and the trees marked.

Jason Johnson, of MACC, said that there is one forked pine, and he is requesting a letter from the homeowner and an estimate from NE Tree.

Budget back on the agenda for next week.

Kennedy said that the flashing light everyone was complaining about was coming from the NBAFS and it has been repaired.

Board reviewed the minutes of 11/9/20. Roberge motioned, seconded by Berry to accept the minutes of November 9, 2020 as amended. Roberge; yes, Berry; yes, Esposito; yes.

8:35 PM As there was no further business before the Board, Berry motioned seconded by Roberge to adjourn.

Roberge; yes, Berry; yes, Esposito; yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie M. Brown