

## Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 9, 2020 meeting held at Police Department Meeting Room

Present: Chairman Steve Diorio, Selectman Bernie Rideout, Selectman Mike Carrier, Selectman Megan Kondrat, Selectman Richard Johnson; T.A. Collins and Kim Worden. Chief Rataj, Sean Leary, and James MacDonell also attended. Bob Hayden from Standard Power and Patrick from Good Energy joined via Zoom. Fire Chief Zavorotny and Steve Gassett from the Fire Department joined the meeting later.

6:00 p.m. Chairman Diorio called the meeting to order at the Police Department meeting room. Chair Diorio noted that he had spoken with Jill Collins, Town Administrator re: COVID precautions due to the recent increase and that they may decide to use Zoom again and possibly conduct meetings remotely if things get worse.

Selectman Rideout made a **motion to approve** the manifests of 11/2/20 and 11/9/20 and public and non-public minutes of 10/26/20, second by Carrier. After receipt of the Budget materials, Selectman Johnson had questions regarding the wells which were answered by T.A. Collins. He also asked what the \$7800 for KV Partners was for and her response included that it was for engineer fees. He then had a question on the Firematic Supply item and the Cheshire County Prosecutor. TA Collins responded to those questions. Chair Diorio noted that Chief Zavorotny would be in and suggested he ask Chief the Firematic question. A vote was taken and the Motion passes unanimously.

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### *New Business:*

First presented was a 2020 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Sewer Abatement in the amount of \$78.88 for Pelloni at 45 Northfield Road (outside meter for water; sewer portion abatement). Selectman Carrier made a **motion to approve** the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Sewer Abatement for Pelloni, second by Kondrat. Motion passes unanimously.

Next presented was a Permit Application for Retail Sales of Permissible Fireworks for Phantom Fireworks Showrooms, LLC dba Phantom Fireworks, (Business Location 939 Brattleboro Road, Hinsdale). Selectman Rideout made a **motion to approve** the Permit Application for Phantom, second by Kondrat. Motion passes unanimously.

Appointments for Nicole Ebbighausen and Carl Britt to the Conservation Committee were presented. It was noted that the appointment of Carl Britt was approved in June; however, another was brought for signature in case it is needed and he simply needs to stop at the Town Clerk's office for completion of the document. Selectman Kondrat made a **motion to approve the Appointment** of Nicole Ebbighausen to the Conservation Committee, second by Selectman Rideout. Motion passes unanimously.

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### *T.A. Reports/Requests:*

T.A. Collins handed out a Tax Rate Breakdown explaining that this is a preliminary tax rate breakdown and differs from her earlier projections. After discussion, it was noted that after further consultation with DRA the new tax rate should be \$34.15, pending Tax Collector verification.

T.A. Collins noted a couple of properties that we deeded. We are in the process of negotiating and the two deeds need to be signed by Selectmen. Attorneys will hold them in escrow, money will be paid to the Town, and then deeds will be recorded. Tax Collector, James MacDonell added that this is just an extra step in a normal real estate closing. Discussion followed.

*Selectmen's Meeting Minutes*

Monday, November 9, 2020 meeting held at Police Department Meeting Room

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*Board Comments:*

Selectman Johnson asked T.A. Collins where final numbers came from regarding School. She suggested that it could be found out on the DRA website. Selectman Johnson noted he will have a non-public re: personnel tonight.

Selectman Carrier thanked all who participated in the elections.

Selectman Kondrat agreed with Selectman Carrier and thought all did a great job and noted the residents were very cooperative.

Chair Diorio heard rumor of a Budget Committee meeting tomorrow night but had no confirmation. T.A. Collins confirmed it was at the Community Center at 6 with Zoom capabilities.

T.A. Collins noted that she had a non-public re: personnel. She also suggested the need to put plans in place due to COVID numbers rising, adding that they should think about bringing back plans that were in place before and bringing back Zoom. She noted that she would be off Wednesday for the Holiday, and Thursday and would be back in on Monday.

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Bob Hayden from Standard Power and Patrick from Good Energy were present via Zoom. Standard Power has partnered with them as an energy consultant. Bob noted that he has worked with Hinsdale for four years re: electricity to municipal and school buildings, first with hydro electric reimbursement in 2016 and later as 3<sup>rd</sup> party supplier and hydro electric reimbursements. Now they would like to talk about Community Power which would aggregate residents to make a planned purchase. Goals could be to save money, be greener, and foster development. They talked of a law passed in 2019 where Community Power was changed to that people can opt out if they don't wish to participate. A committee makes choices for the community to develop a plan. History of the program was discussed.

Chair Diorio had a question for Patrick, asking if there weren't already many companies giving residents options and clarifying that they propose to do this as a community effort. Patrick indicated that all have a choice of an electric supplier, that most haven't made the choice, only a small number has. He indicated that it's hard to get a good deal on your own and Community Power creates a real buying power to get competitive rates, terms, and conditions. He added that if in it, you can leave with no penalty and it creates a new set of choices. They would act as our consultant.

Selectman Rideout questioned the rate difference and what type of savings we might see. Patrick indicated it would differ based on choices; and they can offer multiple rates. He indicated that conservatively it might be around \$50 per year and maybe \$100.

T.A. Collins added that if interested, a Committee is put together to develop a plan and look at templates.

Patrick noted that costs for their services would be covered by the ultimate electricity supplier. He added that they help us draft a plan, help consider key questions; and once a plan is approved, they handle education and outreach, manage enrollments and customer support. we make the decisions and they bring people, power, and expertise.

Patrick indicated that they have been able to save other cities and towns money by bringing in local, renewable energy from within the region and added that all services are at no cost until power is flowing. Bob added that he would enjoy working on this local project too.

*Selectmen's Meeting Minutes*

Monday, November 9, 2020 meeting held at Police Department Meeting Room

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Chief Zavorotny and Steve Gassett were present re: Fire Department Building update. Steve Gassett stated that they felt it was not realistic to rebuild at Depot Street and they are looking for guidance to keep moving forward. T.A. Collins informed them that we have entered into an agreement with Peter Tennant. Phase I will assess the current property and consider other property and that Peter said he could move on it fairly quickly. Cost for this will be \$5000 and up to \$10,000 for an engineer to come in. Steve Gassett asked why we keep sinking money, hoping we will get a better answer. Discussion followed. T.A. Collins gave history of another site that failed and added that Peter will look into retrofitting the church property. The second phase would be a preliminary design with a cost (to go to Town Meeting with). Chair Diorio added that timing is a big concern. T.A. Collins added that Peter is anxious and we've given him the green light to keep it moving and we are moving forward with Peter.

Selectman Johnson asked his question about the Firematics Equipment. Chief Zavorotny and Steve Gassett agreed that it was for two sets of turnout gear.

There was discussion on putting together an Article for Town Meeting for \$100,000 and the possibility of lowering it to \$50,000. T.A. Collins added that there used to be a communication fund and we should consider putting it back.

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*Citizen Comments:*

Chief Rataj gave an update on COVID counts to date with the official number being 1 active and 12 total. His unofficial number is higher with 3 active and 15 total. He added that numbers are going up in surrounding areas. He noted that the Highway Department went to the range to mow and found an amount of materials left there from a range building project that was never finished. He estimated \$7000 worth of cost by today's prices and that some of the materials were rotted and infested. His Budget is complete and level-funded but has concerns re: the towing amount of \$500 for the year. Just in two recent drug cases, half of the towing budget was used. Cruiser concerns and replacements were discussed. Maintenance concerns were discussed.

The petition re: The Shooting Range was brought up and Chief Rataj noted that in the past, a concrete pad was poured 1/3 of the way from the berm and a structure was put up which sits in the middle which made it virtually useless for the public to use. If you want to shoot a rifle, you have to go to one side and shoot and there is danger of putting holes in the building. There was further discussion on the Petition received and the last discussion and Ordinance. Chair Diorio would like to see the Ordinance. T.A. Collins indicated that it is online. T.A. Collins added that if people want to site-in guns, there are other options in surrounding areas. Having another public hearing was discussed. Selectman Rideout did not feel that was necessary; Selectman Johnson was okay with that and not opposed to it being a Town Meeting Warrant Article; Selectman Carrier was okay with another public hearing. Concerns were discussed that resulted from the prior Public Hearing. All agreed that they would like this worked out prior to Town Meeting.

Sean Leary noted a confirmed case of COVID within the School and they were going to remote learning for two weeks.

Selectman Rideout made a comment to Steve Gassett that he is not convinced of the need to abandon the current building and of a company in Winchester that remedies some of the issues. Steve Gassett noted other issues with parking of the fire trucks. Jackwood Park was also discussed as not feasible for parking.

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Public portion of the meeting ended. Chair Diorio noted that they would be going into a non-public under personnel.

*Selectmen's Meeting Minutes*

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7:13 p.m. Selectman Kondrat made a **motion to enter into non-public** under RSA 91-A:3, II (a) personnel, second by Carrier. The vote is as follows: Diorio-I; Rideout-I; Carrier-I; Kondrat-I; and Johnson-I; Motion passes unanimously.

7:45 p.m. Regular meeting reconvened.

Selectman Carrier made a **motion to seal** the non-public minutes, second by Rideout. The vote was as follows: Diorio-I; Rideout-I; Carrier-I; Kondrat-I and Johnson-I; Motion passes unanimously.

Discussion followed on the plans for Budgets. Joint meetings were discussed. The Budget Committee will meet tomorrow and this will be discussed.

7:50 p.m. Selectman Kondrat a **motion to adjourn**, second by Carrier. Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim P. Worden  
Secretary