

Select Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 29, 2024 meeting held at Hinsdale Town Hall

Present: Chairman Steve Diorio, Selectman Bernie Rideout, Selectman Mike Carrier and Selectman William Hodgman. Selectman Richard Johnson was present *via telephone*. Also present were Kim Worden, Town Administrator Kathryn Lynch, and Jodie Holmquist. Others present were: Police Chief Rataj, Bob Truesdell, Kenny Howe, and Fire Chief Zavorotny.

6:00 p.m. Chair Diorio called the meeting to order.

Selectman Carrier made a **motion to approve** the manifests of January 29, 2024 and the public and non-public minutes of January 22, 2024 second by Rideout. The vote was as follows: Diorio-aye; Rideout-aye; Carrier-aye; Hodgman-aye; and Johnson-aye. Motion passes unanimously.

New Business:

First presented was an Application for Open Container/Alcohol Permit for Hinsdale Beautification Committee for card making workshop at Community Center on February 8, 2024 from 5-9 p.m. Selectman Hodgman **made a motion** for Chair to sign permit for the workshop, second by Rideout. Motion passes unanimously.

The 4th Quarter 2023 Water Commitment in the amount of \$107,816.87 and 4th Quarter 2023 Sewer Commitment in the amount of \$99,026.03 were presented. Selectman Rideout **made a motion** to approve the 4th Quarter 2023 Water and Sewer Commitments, second by Hodgman. Motion passes unanimously.

T.A. Reports/Requests:

T.A. Lynch mentioned that Griffin Construction will be here mid-February and are getting things ready to start on the roof.

Tax Collector, Julie Seymour, was present and informed the Board that she was contacted by an attorney representing Laura Sillerman. We billed for yield tax following sale of her land. \$2941.91 is due. Discussion included that she would like an abatement. T.A. Lynch explained that yield tax is assessed and this is a report of what was cut and sold. It would set a bad precedent. This is set by the State. Discussion included steps in the instance of non-payment. Selectman Rideout **made a motion to deny** the request for abatement, second by Carrier. Motion passes unanimously.

Ken Howe was present and handed out information to the Board related to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Rules. He indicated that the Nature Conservancy was looking at buying the dam property and indicated that the sale was not complete. Chair Diorio found that the Nature Conservancy did purchase it and they do own the property. Ken said the dam is a separate thing from the hydro site and FERC is mandated to open it up. He added that Justin from Ashuelot Hydro filed to take care of the dam. T.A. Lynch responded that the Nature Conservancy applied to FERC and are going through FERC and DES to take it down. She indicated that we work well with them and would want to talk to them. There has not been energy produced there for years. There have been opportunities to bring up concerns with them. Ken conveyed Justin's take on this and of concerns of contamination behind the dam. Ken offered his personal opinion that the dam ought to stay. He added that FERC is the end game and their opinion will weigh heavier if there is some local support. Selectman Hodgman added that if relicensing is considered, they will reach out and ask and give a window for

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public input and be part of the process. Chair Diorio indicated that we will need more information and will reach out to the appropriate party. He thanked Ken for coming in.

Board Comments:

Selectman Johnson mentioned there will be a Budget Meeting tomorrow night. The suggestion was to bring school down 4½%. They are looking to the town for any cuts as well. Discussion followed. New information received today indicates that 1.01% is the increase for the town and is almost level funded from last year. Selectman Johnson plans to call in to the meeting and T.A. Lynch will attend.

The following warrant articles were provided and Article 4 to Article 26 discussed:

To the inhabitants of the Town of Hinsdale qualified to vote in Town affairs:

You are hereby notified to meet at the Hinsdale Community Center on Tuesday the 12th day of March, 2024 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning to act on the following subjects:

Article 1. To cast your ballot for all necessary Town Officers.

Article 2. To amend Article 5, Use Regulations, to change use #1 in the Commercial Industrial District from Any uses allowed in the Roadside Commercial and Business Districts except Residential District uses to Any uses allowed in the Roadside Commercial District.

Article 3. To amend Article 7, Special Regulations, Item 6, Open Space Requirements of Zoning Districts. Minimum Lot area (acres or square feet), in the Rural Agricultural District from 2 acres or 87,120 sq. ft. to 1 acre or 43,650 sq. ft.

The following part of the Town Meeting shall be adjourned and will be held on Saturday, the 16th day of March, 2024 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning in the gymnasium of the Hinsdale High School or after the School District Meeting is adjourned whichever comes first.

Article 4. To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$426,068 (Four hundred twenty-six thousand, sixty-eight dollars) for the purpose of repairing the Depot Street Bridge, or act in any manner thereon, of which \$125,000 (One hundred twenty-five thousand dollars) will come the unassigned fund balance which represents the Roads and Bridges Concentration Account set up for this purpose, and to authorize the Selectboard to borrow the sum not to exceed \$301,068 (Three hundred and one thousand, sixty-eight dollars) of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA Chapter 33) and to authorize the municipal officials to issue and negotiate such bonds and notes to determine the rate of interest thereon, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,852 (Seventy-eight hundred, fifty-two dollars) for the first payment. (3/5 ballot vote required).

- Recommended by the Selectboard,
- Recommended by the Budget Committee,

Article 5. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,257,775 (Five million, two hundred fifty-seven thousand, seven hundred seventy-five dollars) for the general operating expenses of the Town, or act in any manner thereon. (Majority vote required).

- Recommended by the Selectboard,
- Recommended by the Budget Committee,

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- Article 6.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$706,805 (Seven hundred six thousand, eight hundred five dollars) for the operations of the Water Department and to be paid by water user fees, or act in any manner thereon. (Majority vote required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,
- Article 7.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$549,333 (Five hundred forty-nine thousand, three hundred thirty-two dollars) for the operations of the Sewer Treatment Plant and to be paid by sewer user fees, or act in any manner thereon. (Majority vote required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,
- Article 8.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$300,000 (Three hundred thousand dollars) for demolition of 54 Canal Street, such sum to be raised by the acceptance of grant funds Invest NH in the amount of \$300,000 (Three hundred thousand dollars). (No estimate tax impact - Majority vote required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,
- Article 9.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$250,000 (Two hundred fifty thousand dollars) for the rehabilitation of the Millstream Community Center, such sum to be raised by the acceptance of grant funds from CDFR Community Center Investment Program in the amount of, \$212,500 (two hundred twelve thousand five hundred dollars) and Town matching funds in the amount of \$37,500 (Thirty-seven thousand, five hundred dollars) from the Millstream Community Center Capital Improvement Capital Reserve Fund. (No estimated tax impact - Majority vote required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,
- Article 10.** To see if the Town will authorize the Selectboard to enter into a loan agreement of up to \$100,000 (One hundred thousand dollars) through the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Clean Water State Revolving Fund for the purpose of a feasibility study of the Town's Water and Sewer Infrastructure. The loan will be repaid as follows: \$100,000 (One hundred thousand dollars) will be forgiven by agreement with NHDES. (No estimated tax impact - Majority vote required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,
- Article 11.** To see if the Town will raise and appropriate \$76,000 (Seventy-six thousand dollars) from the Undesignated Fund Balance due to an overage on the sidewalk project. (No estimated tax impact - Majority vote required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,
- Article 12.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 (Fifty thousand dollars) to be added to the Fire Apparatus Fund previously established for the purpose of purchasing fire vehicles to be used by the Fire Department, or act in any manner thereon. (Majority vote required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,
- Article 13.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000.00 (Thirty thousand dollars) to be added to the Town Hall Improvement Expendable Trust Fund previously established for the maintenance and improvements to the Town Hall, or act in any manner thereon. (Majority vote required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,
- Article 14.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$18,812 (Eighteen thousand, eight hundred twelve dollars) for the purpose of purchasing a commercial lawn mower to be used by the Parks Department, or act in any manner thereon. (Majority vote required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,

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- Article 15.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000.00 (Fifteen thousand dollars) for the purpose of adding to the Fire Department Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Fund previously established for the purpose of purchasing personal protective equipment for the fire department, or act in any manner thereon. (Majority vote required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,
- Article 16.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000 (Fifteen thousand dollars) for the purpose of adding to the Fire Department Protective Equipment Fund previously established for the purpose of purchasing protective equipment for the fire department, or act in any manner thereon. (Majority vote required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,
- Article 17.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 (Ten thousand dollars) to be added to the Cemetery Expansion Fund previously establish for the purpose of expanding our cemeteries in the future, or act in any manner thereon. (Majority vote required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,
- Article 18.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5500 (Fifty-five hundred dollars) for the purpose of purchasing fence for Oak Lawn Cemetery to be used by the Cemetery Department or act in any manner thereon. (Majority vote Required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,
- Article 19.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000.00 (Five thousand dollars) to support the Hinsdale Historical Society, or act in any manner thereon. (Majority vote required).
- Recommended by the Selectboard,
 - Recommended by the Budget Committee,
- Article 20.** Shall we modify the Elderly Exemption from property tax income levels for qualified tax payers from married income limit of \$28,000 to \$32,000 and modify the following: for a resident 65 years of age up to 74 from \$19,500 off assessed value to \$27,000 off assessed value; and for a resident 75 years of age up to 79 years from \$32,500 off assessed value to \$42,000 off assessed value; and for a resident 80 years of age and up from \$56,000 to \$60,000 off assessed value? To qualify a person must have been a New Hampshire resident for at least 3 consecutive years preceding April 1 in the year in which the exemption is claimed and meet all the other requirements of RSA 72:39-a. (Majority vote required).
- Article 21.** Shall we modify the Disabled Exemption for qualified tax payers from married income limit of \$28,000 to married income limit \$32,000 and to modify the following: change from \$15,000 off assessed value to \$24,000 off assessed value? To qualify the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for 5 years and meet all the other requirements of RSA 72:37-b. (Majority vote required).
- Article 22.** Shall we modify the Blind Exemption for qualified tax payers from married income limit of \$28,000 to married income limit \$32,000 and to modify the following: change from \$15,000 off assessed value to \$24,000 off assessed value? To qualify the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for 5 years and meet all the other requirements of RSA 72:37-b, III, (c). (Majority vote required).
- Article 23.** Shall we modify the Deaf Exemption for qualified tax payers from married income limit of \$28,000 to married income limit \$32,000 and to modify the following: change from \$15,000 off assessed value to \$24,000 off assessed value? To qualify the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for 5 years and meet all the other requirements of RSA 72:38-b. (Majority vote required).
- Article 24.** Shall we modify the Veteran’s Tax Credit from property tax optional credit from \$250 off tax due to \$400 off tax due? To qualify the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for 1 year on April 1st of the year requested Veteran’s Tax Credit and meet all the other requirements of RSA 72:28. (Majority vote required).

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- Article 25.** Shall we modify the Veterans Tax Credit from property tax optional service-connected total disability from \$1400 off tax due to \$1800 off tax do? To qualify the person must have been a New Hampshire resident for 1 year on April 1st of the year requested Veteran's Tax Credit and meet all the other requirements of RSA 72:28. (Majority vote required).
- Article 26.** To see whether there is community support to consider opting into the Cheshire County Community Power Plan for electricity supply for residential, business and municipal use, in accordance with the provisions of RSA 53-E:6. The Hinsdale Community Power Electric Aggregation Plan may be viewed at Town Hall during normal business hours or on the Town's website. (Recommended by the Selectboard)
- Article 27.** To see if the Town will vote to accept and adopt the reports of the Selectboard, Auditors, and other Town Officers.
- Article 28.** To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

Article 4 was discussed. Selectman Hodgman **made a motion to approve Article 4** as printed, second by Carrier. Motion passes unanimously.

Article 5 was discussed and mentioned that it will decrease slightly. This was passed over.

Article 6 was read. Selectman Rideout **made a motion to approve Article 6**, second by Hodgman. Motion passes unanimously.

Article 7. Selectman Johnson **made a motion to approve Article 7**, second by Carrier. Motion passes unanimously.

Article 8. Selectman Hodgman **made a motion to approve Article 8**, second by Carrier. Motion passes unanimously.

Article 9. Selectman Johnson **made a motion to approve Article 9**, second by Carrier. Motion passes unanimously.

Article 10. Selectman Johnson **made a motion to approve Article 10**, second by Hodgman. Motion passes unanimously.

Article 11. Selectman Johnson expressed his concern with verbiage and requested that "*No estimated tax impact*" needs to come out. Selectman Johnson **made a motion** to approve with "*No estimated tax impact*" deleted, second by Hodgman. Motion passes unanimously.

Article 12. (Regarding adding 50,000 to the Fire Apparatus Fund) was discussed. Selectman Johnson had concerns of the cost to taxpayers in the need to put this money away. Selectman Hodgman believed they had passed over this earlier and concerns of the importance of having a fleet cycle and schedule plan in place first. The Board decided to remove Article 12.

Article 13. Selectman Johnson expressed concern that \$30,000 is a lot of money and suggested reducing the ask. Selectman Johnson **made a motion** to reduce the ask to \$10,000 to be added to the Town Hall

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Improvement Expendable Trust Fund, second by Carrier. Discussion followed including Selectman Hodgman's concern that contributions need to be made on a regular basis. T.A. Lynch voiced her concerns on the condition of the building and the items needing attention and lack thereof for years. The vote was as follows: The vote was as follows: Diorio-no; Rideout-no; Carrier-aye; Hodgman-no; and Johnson-aye. Motion fails.

Selectman Hodgman **made a motion** to reinitiate and leave the Article at \$30,000, second by Rideout. The vote was as follows: Diorio-aye; Rideout-aye; Carrier-no; Hodgman-aye; and Johnson-no. Motion passes.

Article 14. Selectman Rideout **made a motion to approve Article 14**, second by Hodgman. Discussion included that bids were asked for and the other two were well over \$18,000. It was asked that in the future, a little more detail be provided. Motion passes unanimously.

Selectman Johnson **made a motion to approve Article 15**, second by Carrier. Motion passes unanimously.

Selectman Johnson **made a motion to approve Article 16**, second by Hodgman. Motion passes unanimously.

Article 17 was discussed. It was mentioned that there is enough money there, there is a need for cemetery expansions and \$10,000 wouldn't make much difference. Selectman Johnson **made a motion to pass over Article 17**, second by Hodgman. Motion passes unanimously.

Article 18 regarding the purchase of fencing for Oak Lawn Cemetery was discussed. Selectman Johnson **made a motion to approve Article 18**, second by Rideout. Motion passes unanimously.

Following discussion, Selectman Carrier **made a motion to approve Article 19**, second by Rideout. Motion passes unanimously.

Article 20 was discussed. It was mentioned that exemptions have not been redone in five years. Selectman Hodgman **made a motion to approve Article 20** as written, second by Carrier. Motion passes unanimously.

Selectman Johnson **made a motion to approve Article 21**, second by Hodgman. Motion passes unanimously.

Selectman Johnson **made a motion to approve Article 22**, second by Hodgman. Motion passes unanimously.

Selectman Johnson **made a motion to approve Article 23**, second by Hodgman. Motion passes unanimously.

Selectman Hodgman **made a motion to approve Article 24**, second by Rideout. Motion passes unanimously.

Selectman Johnson **made a motion to approve Article 25**, second by Hodgman. Motion passes unanimously.

Selectman Hodgman **made a motion to leave Article 26 as printed**, second by Rideout. Motion passes unanimously.

Discussion followed on whether to change Article 5 reducing the operating budget due to the articles removed or passed over by \$60,000. Selectman Hodgman asked about RSA 79-E and whether this has been brought to

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the Town. T.A. Lynch responded that it has a couple of times. Discussion included that it was a great way to get people to purchase property that needs improvements with up to thirteen years of tax relief. There is a whole process and considerations before putting it before the town. T.A. Lynch can send it along to the Planning Board.

It was announced that the Board would be going into non-public.

7:12 p.m. Selectman Hodgman **made a motion to enter into non-public** session under RSA 91:A-3, II, (e)-negotiation, second by Carrier. Motion passes unanimously.

7:29 p.m. Meeting reconvened.

Selectman Rideout **made a motion to seal** the non-public minutes, second by Hodgman. Motion passes unanimously.

7:30 p.m. Selectman Johnson **made a motion to adjourn**, second by Hodgman. Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim P. Worden,
Secretary