

*Select Board Meeting Minutes*

*Monday, September 9, 2024 meeting held at Hinsdale Town Hall*

Present: Chairman Steve Diorio, Selectman William Hodgman (arriving at 6:06 p.m.), Selectman Richard Johnson and Selectman Mike Carrier. Selectman Bernie Rideout participated via telephone. Also present were Kim Worden, Town Administrator Kathryn Lynch, Finance Director Jodie Holmquist, Chief Evans, Sean Leary, Bob Truesdell, Jack White, Sean Osborne, Bob Harcke, Chief Zavorotny and members of the Fire Department

6:00 p.m. Chair Diorio called the meeting to order. Selectman Rideout was present via telephone, calling in; explaining he could not be present in person, and was alone in a room.

Selectman Carrier made a **motion to approve** the manifests of September 3, 2024 and September 9, 2024; and non-public sealed minutes of August 15, 2024, public minutes of August 26, 2024 and of August 30, 2024, second by Johnson. The roll call vote was as follows: Rideout-aye; Carrier-aye; and Johnson-aye. Motion passes.

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Sean Osborne of OSD LLC, was present to hand out information on the Hinsdale Water Department Asset Management Plan dated June 2024. Work was completed in accordance with an agreement and the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Asset Management Grant Program. He explained they began by determining assets, conditions, location, and what was needed to do as a team to make all more resilient moving forward. Costs associated are included to make sure assets last as long as possible. Good maintenance has been done; however, there is always more needed.

Jack spoke on hydrant maintenance. Previously, it was done once per year and now they are doing Spring and Fall hydrant flushing. Now the hydrants need replacing, rather than repair, as parts are no longer being made. The cost for one hydrant is \$4500, using \$5000 in materials and 3 employees plus highway assistance at times. There are 1935 valves in the downtown area (with highest pressure) where only  $\frac{3}{4}$  of them currently work. There are concerns of water main breaks. Most valves and hydrants are beyond their estimated useful life. There are two wells. Tanks need regular cleaning and maintenance. The more frequent maintenance, the longer they last. A mixer has been added to one tank to keep water from freezing and to clean without draining, for uniform water and temperature in the tank. They mentioned upgrading to the SCADA maintenance program which is \$5000 per year. It is also important to plan to replace water meters every ten to fifteen years. The old RFs are slowly being replaced with e-coders. Cost for twenty meters is in the area of \$5000. The idea is to set aside reserve funds for steady requests. Replacement of lead service lines needs to happen per EPA and DES. We are working with Hazen & Sawyer to determine the number of lead service lines to replace (most downtown). This is a huge cost (300 lead services at \$5000) of roughly 1.5 million. The Federal Government will give NH a 71% forgiveness with the cost to Hinsdale at about \$435,000. Other concerns include the need to plan for water main at river crossing (being the only feed to downtown). Cost is estimated at a quarter of a million dollars. There is also concern regarding the main between Chesterfield Road and Northfield Road which won't shut down and being the highest-pressure zone. Having a capital reserve will help with improvements. There are five projects: River Crossing; Downtown Main Street; 8" water Main Northfield Road to Snow Avenue; the loop at Tower Hill, Northfield Road, to 72 Depot St.; and the Oak Hill Loop in North Hinsdale.

Sean spoke on prioritizing and paying for projects. We have staff that can do the maintenance, let's give them funding. Space out increases for least impact on taxpayers. EPA set a goal of 1%-2.5% of median household income as an affordable rate. We set a goal at 1% (we're not close, we are at .76%). New Hampshire's

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average indoor use of 63 gallons per day is about \$20 every 3 months (quarterly) per person, per household. Thirty-one percent is proposed and allows us to meet maintenance needs and allows us to meet capital needs. Over four years, this would be an 8% increase each year for four years. The current budget is very inflexible and not built for emergencies. Discussion followed to include that rates have not consistently been raised as they should be; that this is predictable and not a surprise; and we need to get this started. The thought being two increases of 16% over two years. T.A. Lynch noted that this will require a public hearing. Sean will run numbers and get back in touch. He was thanked for his hard work on this project.

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6:40 p.m. Paul Belagour introduced himself as owner of the marina and (newly purchased) former Whetstone restaurant. He was here to share concerns and convey ideas. He spoke of the Town of Brattleboro's optimism once the new bridges open, however, he felt the Town of Hinsdale will be dealing with the problems. As he has made repairs to the Whetstone, he has only noticed homeless traffic and feels Brattleboro's problem will become our problem.

His ideas for the old bridges include: to open a restaurant on the bridge connecting to the Whetstone, adding revenue to Hinsdale. He feels it would add revenue to the town on the New Hampshire side and he could prevent Brattleboro traffic going onto the island. Ideas given include perhaps a wedding venue, food, restaurant, beer garden.

He has two possible plans for Norm's Marina: 1) Perhaps open a seasonal RV Park and Luxury Glamping on the Island (with parking at Norm's) and 2) 200 to 300 apartments on 13 acres (to include working with Town of Brattleboro on a sewage plan).

Discussion followed on the impact on emergency services, whether there can be ownership or lease, and opportunities to make designs work.

Paul added that the new Whetstone's name will be *Rail and River Tavern*. He also had more island ideas of perhaps a casino, or residential complex (hi-rise). His idea is to lease it from Hinsdale. (Hinsdale does not own it.)

Discussion followed on the need to talk with the State of New Hampshire and checking on insurance aspects of these ideas. The Board members' discussion supported the ideas, extending appreciating for his insights and information and conveyed that they expect to be in touch with him after contact with the State of NH.

*New Business:*

First presented were Applications for Open Container/Alcohol Permit for Christina Gunderson at Community Center on 9/14/24 for a karaoke event; and for Brianna Banford at Community Center on 12/8/24 for Birthday Party. Selectman Hodgman **made a motion** for Chair to sign both Permits (for Gunderson and for Banford), second by Carrier. The roll call vote was as follows: Hodgman-aye; Johnson-aye; Carrier-aye; and Rideout-aye. Motion passes.

Next, a Letter to Southwest Regional Planning Commission in Support of conversion of the Fort Hill Truss Bridge into a multi-use bridge in the NHDOT Ten Year Plan was looked at. Selectman Hodgman **made a motion** to approve signing the letter and moving forward with it, second by Carrier. T.A. Lynch added that the cost is \$11,500, of which SWRPC has \$7000 they can assist with. Our contribution for engineering services now

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will be \$4500. She can apply to the Holt Grant for \$4500 once the plan is done. The roll call vote was as follows: Hodgman-aye; Johnson-aye; Carrier-aye; and Rideout-aye. Motion passes.

A *Health Officer and Deputy Nomination* renewal form was presented. Selectman Hodgman **made a motion** to approve the Health Officer and Deputy renewal form, second by Carrier. The roll call vote was as follows: Hodgman-aye; Johnson-aye; Carrier-aye; and Rideout-aye. Motion passes.

*T.A. Reports/Requests:*

T.A. asked the Board when they could work at the Primary tomorrow and made note. She mentioned that next week all can enter through the Community Room Front Door and the room can be rearranged. She will have a non-public negotiation. She reminded the Board of the need to set COLA next week to help in putting budgets together, and to be thinking about that. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics Northeast region COLA increase is at 3.6%. She reminded the Board of the Special Town Meeting on September 15<sup>th</sup> and of the need to set up that morning as a dance will be held here the prior evening.

*Public Comment:*

Sean Leary offered to help set up on Sunday, if called.

Bob Harcke appreciated being able to attend and indicated that Paul's comments fit in with what they've been talking about for housing - - the concept of senior housing or age restricted housing, and work force housing. He liked hearing what he had to say and advocates for business and manufacturing on Monument Road and retail on Route 119.

*Board Comments:*

Selectman Hodgman will have a School Board Meeting on Wednesday.

Selectman Carrier suggested a *moment of silence* be offered for the recent passing of Richard Tracy. A moment of silence was observed.

He indicated that next week he will be covering for Selectman Rideout at the Planning Board Meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

It was announced that the Board would be going into a non-public session. Members of the public left the meeting.

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. The roll call vote was as follows: Hodgman-aye; Johnson-aye; Carrier-aye; and Rideout-aye. Motion passes.

7:21 Meeting reconvened.

7:21 p.m. Selectman Hodgman **made a motion to adjourn**, second by Johnson. The roll call vote was as follows: Hodgman-aye; Johnson-aye; Carrier-aye; and Rideout-aye. Motion passes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim P. Worden,  
Secretary