

North Berwick Board of Selectmen Minutes July 7, 2020

NORTH BERWICK BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES JULY 7, 2020

Present: Chairman Cowan, Selectman Hall, Selectman Johnson, Sr., Selectman Johnson, Jr., Selectman Galemmo

Also Present: Dwayne Morin, Stephen Peasley

Chairman Cowan opened the meeting at 6:30 pm

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Review and Approve Minutes of June 16, 2020 & June 23, 2020

Selectman Galemmo motioned to approve the minutes of June 16, 2020 and June 23, 2020 as written. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

3. Public Input

There was no public input at this time.

5. New Business:

A. Police: Chief of Police Update to the Board

Dwayne Morin stated that Board wanted the Chief to come before them at least once a year. He said that it seemed like this would be a good time with everything going on in the news and what is happening.

Chairman Cowan stated that with all of the discussion that has been going on in Portland regarding getting rid of the SRO officers in schools, has there been any requests to do the same at our school. Chief Stephen Peasley stated that he has not heard anything from Noble about it. He had a meeting yesterday with the new Superintendent and he brought Officer Koelker with him. They sat and he told her everything that they have done in the past in the school and with the school. Chief Peasley told her that he still continues to teach the DARE program. The new Superintendent listened to them and asked some questions especially about what they do if they have a crisis incident. Chief Peasley gave her both his cell phone number and Officer Koelker's cell number so she can reach them any time of day or night. Officer Koelker also told the Superintendent about some of the things that he has been doing as the SRO. She never mentioned anything to them at all about anyone wanting to remove the SRO from the school.

Chief Peasley stated that they are down 1 person because Jim Moulton retired so they are looking to replace the Lieutenant position from within the department. He has 2 officers that have showed some interest in the position. He set up some Oral Boards with Chiefs and Deputy

Chiefs from around the County to interview them. He just had a one on one with each of them prior to this meeting tonight. He will be making a decision within a week or so. By hiring one of these internal officers, it will leave them needing another full time officer. They were looking in house, but he will be advertising outside as well. They have a couple of new reserves. They have Bob Landrigan who lives on Beech Ridge Road. He is getting ready to retire from his job in Boston and would like to do this part time. Chief Peasley said that they have been low on reserves for quite some time because it is hard to find anybody that is willing to work the hours that they have. Chairman Cowan asked how many reserve officers we have. Chief Peasley stated that we have 3 that work on a regular basis. One of them lives in North Carolina but he comes up on all the major holidays to work for us. He has been employed with them for about 12 years now. He stated that he is presenting someone tonight for approval that looks like a very promising candidate. He stated that they can get by with 3 but it would be much better to have at least 4. This would allow the other 3 to have a little time off sometimes. Chief Peasley stated that it is very difficult to find people right now. He said that he is looking forward to seeing the response to their F/T officer job opening. He is optimistic because the new contract that the patrolmen signed might be attractive to some people outside.

Chief Peasley stated that things have been strange during the COVID issue. He said that, at first, it was very quiet. There was nobody leaving their house. All the radios were silent in all of the surrounding towns as well. It is starting to pick up now.

Chief Peasley stated drugs are still an issue. It is mostly all fentanyl as well as some heroin. They have had a couple of burglaries that they solved. They have also had a few car burglaries which have not been solved yet. The monetary items were not real significant. It was more a crime of opportunity.

Selectman Galemme asked what happens with the SRO if the schools don't open. Chief Peasley stated that, since the school shut down in March, they have used the officer to cover vacations and as a 2nd unit out at night. The school still does have complaints such as stolen laptops and neglect cases. The SRO still works on these issues. Selectman Hall asked if the school was still paying their part for the SRO. Dwayne stated that the school still pays their 78%.

Selectman Hall asked what kind of precautions they were taking because of COVID19. Chief Peasley stated that they have been distancing. When they go to check out a complaint, they try to do everything outside. They do not always wear the masks. Selectman Hall asked what they do for a traffic stop. Chief Peasley said that traffic stops have declined a lot. They keep the distance from the car. He stated that Dollar General has been donating sanitizer, masks, and other things they might need.

Selectman Hall stated that he had discussed at their last meeting what equipment each officer carries on them. He asked Chief Peasley to show him where everything was. Chief Peasley stated that he is not currently wearing everything that the patrolmen wear, but he did show them where everything was located. He showed them where the body cameras are located and said that they turn them on whenever they have contact with people. He stated that the taser is usually on the opposite side of the gun. He bought bright yellow ones so that they are not easily mistaken for a gun. They also carry Asp batons which are located on their belt along with the

handcuffs and gloves. Selectman Hall asked if all of the officers wear a vest and the Chief said that they do. Selectman Hall asked if the SRO wears a vest at the school. Chief Peasley said that he does. Selectman Hall asked if the assault rifles have only been used for target practice and when the Town had purchased them. Chief Peasley stated that they got the initial ones right after they went to a training after Columbine. Before this we always had shotguns in the car. The people at the training stated that shotguns were okay but, in a setting, where there are a lot of people, they are not the ideal choice. They had recommended that they get the AR15 rifles. We just updated them about 3 years ago. Selectman Hall asked if there had been any other grants that they had received since he had become Chief. Chief Peasley stated that they got the body cameras with a grant. The radios, some body armor and portable radios were all obtained by a grant. Almost the whole K9 program was through a grant. Dwayne stated that they get a lot of grants from the State for specific reasons. They get some for programs like Click It or Ticket, child safety, and Text & Driving. These allow us to put more officers out on the street. It is not necessarily to arrest anyone but a lot of it is educational for the community.

Selectman Hall stated that when they had the protest in Sanford, they had called in for assistance from other sources. Chief Peasley stated that they had 3 officers that participated in it. They said that it went pretty good and there were no issues.

B. Police: Appoint Sarah Myrick as Reserve Officer

Chief Peasley stated that he would like to hire Sarah Myrick as a Reserve Officer. She currently works for the Department of Corrections in Windham and has been there for about 6 years. She went through the Reserve training last January and she would like to get out on the road. She has a lot of qualifications. She is a Staff Sergeant in the Army National Guard. Chief Peasley stated that they would like to bring her on and put her through our field training program. Her schedule at the prison gives her weekends off so it would work out well for us. Chairman Cowan asked how she heard about the position. Chief Peasley stated that one of our officers, Brian Donahue used to work at the prison. After she completed the officer reserve training, she reached out to Brian to see if she could do a ride along. She told him that she grew up in a small town in Vermont that reminds her of our town, so she put in for the position.

Selectman Galemмо motioned to appoint Sarah Myrick as a Reserve Officer. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

4. Unfinished Business:

A. Budget FY21: Discuss Budget for FY21, Town Meeting Discussions

Dwayne stated that by this time next week, we will know whether the budget passed or not. He stated that they have a tremendous number of absentee ballots that need to be returned. He said that they have a ballot box outside of the building every day for people to drop off their ballots. Dwayne stated that he has an emergency meeting set up for 7/15/20 in case the budget fails. Selectman Galemмо stated that if the budget fails, they need to put together a new budget. He asked how different the budget needs to be for them to submit. Dwayne stated it doesn't have to be very different at all. They could actually submit the same one. If it fails and we have the

meeting on 7/15, and we would set up a Special Town Meeting for September 1st. This would allow us to have over 100 people so we could do an open Town Meeting. This way they could argue all of the Articles.

B. GWRLT: Discussion on Negutaquet Conservation Area Parking Lot

Dwayne stated that they started to move forward with the parking lot, but they are not going to ask for our assistance. They did not raise as much money as they had hoped so they are only going to build half of the parking lot. They thought that having us in the mix was going to complicate matters with their contractor. The contractor will be building the entrance and half of the parking lot. They also have a contractual arrangement that they have to build an access road down to the person's farm. They will build the parking lot on the roadside up to the apple tree. The goal will be to build the other half on the other side of the apple tree at another time. They stated that it would be done sometime this summer.

Selectman Galemme asked about the status of the bridge. Dwayne said that the bridge is under construction. They have bought almost everything that is needed. They are trying to figure out how to get everything down to the site. They have asked Dwayne if the town would be able to assist them. He told them that they could as long as it fits in between their other projects. The bridge will be about 26 feet across and the cost will be about \$20,000 to complete.

C. Assessing: Discuss Value Adjustments for FY21

Dwayne stated that on page 19 of their packet, he has a draft of the numbers. He is 99% sure that these will be close to our final numbers. With the 5%, we gained about \$14 million in additional value. We lost about \$2.5 million in personal property value and we gained about \$25 million in BETE reimbursement. The numbers are still looking like a tax rate in the \$11.90 range. Dwayne stated that he ran some numbers for tax rates from \$11.95 to \$11.85 to see what would happen with the taxes to the people. At \$11.95, about 44% would decrease, 27% would stay about the same, 23% would go up to no more than \$100 and about 5.5% would see an increase over \$100. At a \$11.90 rate, almost 50% go down, about 33% stay the same, about 13% increase between \$25 to \$100 and about 5% would see an increase over \$100. Most of the ones that are at an increase of \$100 or more are all brand new buildings or they made improvements to their homes. At the \$11.85 tax rate, the numbers are a little better. About 58% will go down, about 29% will stay the same, about 7% will go up to no more than \$100 and about 4.5% will see an increase of \$100 or more. He stated that his only concern with the \$11.85, is that next year will not be as great a year in value. He doesn't see Pratt buying the amount of equipment that they did this past year. Because of COVID 19, they have had to lay people off. Dwayne believes it will be a lean year for most businesses. For this reason, he is leaning more towards the \$11.90 rate and keeping our overlay at over the \$300,000 amount.

Dwayne stated that the good news is that no matter which way they go, most of the people will see a decrease or stay the same. He stated that most of the surrounding towns are much higher than what we are.

D. COVID-19: Town Response to COVID-19

Dwayne stated that things are going pretty good. There have only been a couple people that have caused some issues, but it was nothing major. It has been taking about 5 minutes or so to get a car registered.

E. Personnel Policy: Adopt Personnel Policy Change

Dwayne stated that, after the last meeting, he sent out a memo regarding the Personnel Policy and changing the medical rates. It went out to all of the personnel and he did not receive any comments back from anyone.

Selectman Galemme motioned to approve to adopt the new Personnel Policy regarding the change in the medical rates. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

Reminders: Next Board of Selectmen's Meeting – July 21, 2020 – 6:30 pm

Tentative Emergency Selectmen's Meeting – July 15, 2020 – 6:30 pm

5. New Business:

C. Fee Schedule: Review Fee Schedule

Dwayne stated that they haven't reviewed the fee schedule since 2016. He said that they have had a few people ask us to review them. There was one gentleman that came in and was very upset about our electrical permits especially as it relates to solar. Dwayne stated that, when our Electrical Ordinance was written, solar was not a consideration. We have the lowest electrical permit rates in York County. Selectman Johnson, Sr. stated that Dwayne had included copies of permits from Sanford, Kennebunk, and Biddeford. He stated that these towns all have Master Electricians for inspectors. When they go out to inspect, they know what they are doing. Our inspector doesn't have any electrical training at all. He does not believe that it is fair for us to charge full price when we don't have an inspector that can go out to inspect properly. Dwayne stated that he understands this and the amount that they are proposing to charge are no where near the cost at these other towns. Dwayne stated that Eliot does not have a Master Electrician and their numbers are lower than the towns mentioned but still higher than ours. He stated that they are looking to do more what Eliot is doing than what the bigger towns are doing.

Dwayne stated that in reviewing these, there was a few things that they saw. Our Electrical Ordinance does not account for solar, so we have been doing it by panel. If they put up 20 panels and it costs \$10.00 per panel then the cost for the permit would be \$200.00. Dwayne stated that a gentleman called and said that he was putting up 43 panels. The gentlemen said that they were older panels. The caller stated that someone that puts up 43 new panels is getting more kilowatt generation than his older ones will so our permits should take that into account.

Dwayne stated that they could find the proposed changes that he is recommending on page 55 of their packet. They are recommending that we charge a flat rate of \$100.00 for Alternative Energy which includes wind and solar. This seems to be the going rate. He stated that most people are

charging \$150.00 and some are charging \$50.00. Selectman Johnson, Jr. asked if this was just for residential permits or commercial permits. Dwayne stated that they do not permit for commercial. The State does those. Dwayne stated that they currently have a Minimum Permit Fee of \$10.00. They would like to get rid of the Minimum Permit Fee and have an Administrative Fee of \$25.00. The reason for this is that, we still do inspections and \$10 doesn't cover our gas.

Dwayne stated that the only thing they want to change is add an Alternative Energy Fee, remove the Minimum Permit Fee, and add the Administrative Fee for the Electrical Permit. Most people are charging \$75.00 for an Administrative Fee and we just are asking for \$25.00. Selectman Galemme asked about how much they collected in permits costs per year. Dwayne said that they collect around \$5,000.00 on the Electrical Permits. Selectman Johnson, Sr. asked if the permit fees that we collect cover the CEO's salary. Dwayne said that it did not, but they were getting closer. This year, we were about \$40,000.00 off. He stated that most towns self-fund their CEO with the permit fees.

Chairman Cowan asked if we were charging enough for our fees. Dwayne stated that they did notice something on the Building Permit side. Our building Permit Fees used to be \$4.00 per \$1,000.00 back in 1998. In 2001, we changed it to \$6.00 per \$1,000.00. He stated that there are 2 different philosophies on permit issuing. One is to charge so much by square foot for finished space and so much for unfinished space. Most towns are charging \$.50 per sf for finished space and \$.25 per sf for unfinished space plus some other costs like Minimum Permit Fee or Administrative Fee. The other way is by \$1,000.00 of estimated completed cost. Most of the towns around us that are doing the \$1,000.00 are charging \$15.00 per \$1,000.00. He stated that when you figure out the \$.50 and \$.25 per sf, it comes out to about \$7.00 to \$8.00 per \$1,000.00. Most of the towns around over \$10.00 per \$1,000.00

Selectman Johnson, Sr. asked how they figure out the estimated completed cost. Dwayne stated that our Assessor provides a square foot value. They figure out what the estimated cost would be based on the assessor value and look at what the estimated cost is provided by the contractor. Whichever amount is the highest is what we base our permit fees on.

Selectman Galemme stated that if somebody is going to build a solar energy panel project it is going to cost about \$20,000.00 so a \$100.00 fee is not going to make a big difference. The same thing with raising the Building Permit Fee from \$6.00 to \$7.00 per \$1,000.00. If someone is building a house for \$400,000.00, it would be about \$400.00 more in fees. This will not stop the contractor from building.

Chairman Cowan asked when the fee schedule that he provided them was established. Dwayne stated that it was from 2016 but most of the fees had been established way before that. She asked if they should look at adjusting the whole fee schedule. Dwayne doesn't think that they need to do that. He said that when they looked at what everyone else was charging, we are still low. Chairman Cowan stated that this town seems to be in great demand and wonders why we shouldn't be profiting on that a little bit. Dwayne stated that they also have to consider the fact these fees will also affect the locals that already live her. He said that last year they issued 32 new home permits but issued 100 run of the mill projects for locals. Chairman Cowan stated that

she is not talking about big increases but maybe raise it by \$5.00 on each. Dwayne stated that this is why they were looking at \$7.00 per \$1,000.00 instead of the \$6.00. It hasn't been increased since 2001. It is not a huge increase, but it will generate a little bit more money for the town. He doesn't believe that the extra \$1.00 will make or break a project.

Selectman Hall stated that he would like to see some changes in the wording on the Building Permit. Where it says, \$5.00 filing fee and \$20.00 Minimum Permit Fee, can we just do a \$25.00 Administrative Fee so it is the same language as the Electrical Permit. Dwayne stated that the \$5.00 filing fee is basically the administrative fee. The Minimum Permit Fee is \$20.00 so we don't charge the \$20.00 on top of everything. Dwayne stated that it is up to the Board as to what they want to change it to.

Selectman Galemme asked if they could have a basic fee for projects under a certain amount and another fee for those building a home. Dwayne stated that would be difficult because you have to treat everyone the same. Chairman Cowan stated that if they based it on an actual dollar amount there would be no issue. Everyone would be treated the same based on what they were building. Dwayne stated that if someone comes in and they want to build a shed, we have exempted anything that is 120 sf. If they come in wanting to build a 10 x 12 shed, we would not charge them anything for their permit.

Selectman Galemme motioned to approve the following changes to the fee schedule:

1. On the Building Permits, change the cost from \$6.00 to \$7.00 per \$1,000.00 of estimated completed value. Also change the \$5.00 Filing Fee to \$5.00 Administrative Fee to be consistent with the language. Any project under \$5,000 would be \$35.00 plus the \$5.00 Administrative Fee.
2. On the Electrical Permits, add the Alternative Energy fee of \$100.00, remove the Minimum Permit Fee of \$10.00 and add the Administrative Fee of \$25.00

Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

D. ZBA: Resignation of Craig Linscott

Dwayne stated that Craig Linscott is resigning from the Zoning Board of Appeals. He has been on the Board for a long time. He is looking to do more traveling with his wife.

Selectman Galemme motioned to accept Craig Linscott's resignation. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

E. Vacation: Request by Kristie Michaud to Bring 16 Hours Forward

Dwayne stated that we usually have quite a few people requesting to carry over some vacation time. He made everybody use their vacation time during the COVID issue if possible. Kristie was going to take some time off, but Rebecca's husband had worked with someone that had COVID and had been tested. Rebecca could not come into the office until the results for the test were confirmed. This was when the office was getting all of the ballots ready to mail out and Katie was out on vacation and couldn't come in because she was away. Chris called Kristie to

see if she could come help them out and she did. Kristie told him last week that she would take her vacation the first week of July. There were 16 hours that she worked with us where she couldn't take her time, so she is 16 hours over. Dwayne stated that the Board is able to allow an employee to bring some vacation over.

Selectman Galemme motioned to allow Kristie Michaud to carry over 16 hours of her vacation time. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

6. Other Business:

There was no other business at this time.

7. Review and Approve Warrants and Correspondence:

Warrant:	June 23, 2020	- \$ 49,845.16
Warrant:	June 30, 2020	- \$ 0.00
Warrant:	July 7, 2020	- \$ 196,504.71

Selectman Hall motioned to approve the Warrant of June 23, 2020 for the amount of \$49,845.16 and the Warrant of July 7, 2020 for the amount of \$196,504.71. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion.

8. Adjournment:

Selectman Johnson, Sr. motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 pm. Selectman Hall seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

Respectively Submitted,
Susan Niehoff, Stenographer

Original to Town Clerk

Chairman: Wendy Cowan

Selectman: Jonathan Hall

Selectman: Michael Johnson, Jr.

Selectman: Charles Galemmo

Selectman: Michael Johnson, Sr.

