

North Berwick Board of Selectmen Minutes February 2, 2021

**NORTH BERWICK BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
FEBRUARY 2, 2021**

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

Also Present: Dwayne Morin

Chairman Cowan called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Review and Approve Minutes of January 19, 2021

Selectman Hall motioned to approve the minutes of January 19, 2021 as written. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

3. Public Input

There was no public input at this time.

4. Unfinished Business:

A. COVID-19: Updates, Town Hall Entrance Canopy

Dwayne Morin stated that our Rescue, Fire and Police have all had their first shots. He stated that he just received an email today with a schedule for our municipal employees to be vaccinated in the next month or so.

B. Linscott Road Intersection: Discussion on Progress

Dwayne stated that the Weavers are in their house. He said that we have taken over the Weaver house as of Monday. He went into the house on Monday afternoon, but they are going to have to go in and secure it and clean it because it is a little bit of a mess. There are still a lot of contents inside the house. Depending on the weather, the goal is to get in there and start taking the house down. He stated that there is still a lot of stuff around the house as well that they are going to need to deal with. Chairman Cowan asked if there was anything left that they could donate. Dwayne said that there may be. He said that there is a relatively new boiler there. It is probably about 10-15 years old. The burner is definitely new. The well pump is quite old. The tank was probably replaced within the past 5 years and the old one is still in there. There are other things like couches that were left, and he believes it is because they are not good. Selectman Johnson, Jr. asked if the things will be able to be put in the dumpster and Dwayne said it could. Dwayne said that there was some food waste that he wants to remove quickly so it doesn't attract any

animals. Dwayne said that there is also a wood stove. Selectman Johnson, Sr. asked if they could get money for any of the metal things that were left. Dwayne said that they could but there isn't much of that there. He also shut off the well pump so that in case anything did happen they would have water filling up the foundation. There is also still some oil in the tank. He will set the heat at 50 degrees and will let the oil burn out.

Dwayne stated that they are also going to mark all of the trees that need to be cut and get some tree cutters out there. He wants our guys to be able to do some of the work so it will save us some money. There are a few large trees that will need to come down. He will have Mike look at it to see if he feels comfortable to have the guys take them down. Dwayne stated that there is also an old trailer on the site that is in rough shape. He asked the Board if they would be opposed to him buying it from the town. He said that he has rebuilt one already. This one is in worse shape than the one that he has. He said that he is not sure if he will want it because it is buried halfway into the ground and frozen there. When they take it out of the ground, he is not sure if there would be any value in salvaging it. He said that there are critters living in it right now. He believes that the people who lived there prior to the Weaver's were probably hunters because there are 5 large boxes of deer pelts. They will start the road project once the frost is out of the ground.

C. Budget FY22: Discussion on FY22 Budget

Dwayne stated that he will wait until the next meeting to go over the budget. He figured it would be too hard to do on a ZOOM meeting. He finalized the numbers today and we are down 3% to 4% on the overall budget. It is coming in at about \$4.8 million. We were almost \$5 million last year. The decrease is mostly because of capital. He has it at about a \$43,000 increase in taxation. He is anticipating about \$90,000 in additional tax revenue which will be split between the town and the school. He said that if the Governor's budget gets approved, the Revenue Sharing is not going to drop like we thought. It should go up pretty substantially, but it looks like it will stay around where we are currently at which is about \$170,000. It should be in the \$300,000 range.

Dwayne said that most of our other revenues are down. Our miscellaneous revenues are down to about \$100,000 so he is trying to make that up. He will propose that they use about \$150,000 out of surplus. He stated that they usually end the year not spending about \$250,000 out of the budget so using \$150,000 as a stop gap will still be okay for us.

Dwayne stated that he did send out a letter to the Budget Committee to let them know what is going on with the their meetings.

Reminders: Next Board of Selectmen's Meeting – February 16, 2021 – 6:30 pm

5. New Business:

A. Personnel Policy: Request to Open Up Sick Bank Donation Period

Dwayne stated that, under their Personnel Policy, they have a Sick Bank where employees can donate some of their sick time to employees that might be running out of sick time due to a catastrophic illness. The enrollment period is from July 1 to August 15. He has had some employees come to him to tell him that they would like to donate some sick time to the sick bank. We have one employee that has catastrophic illness right now and they would like to donate some time to that employee. When someone donates time, they can donate it to a specific employee, or they can just donate it to the general sick bank. He said that they have been using some from the general sick bank to help that employee, but a lot of employees have asked to contribute some. He is bringing it to the Board to see if they want to open up the enrollment early this year.

Selectman Galemme motioned to open the enrollment for the Sick Bank Donation Period early. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

B. Land and Water Conservation: Discuss Application for Bauneg Beg Mountain

Dwayne stated that the Great Works Land Trust has been working with the Land and Water Conservation on the purchase of Bauneg Beg Mountain. They have a signed Purchase & Sales Agreement to purchase the top of the mountain. They met with Doug Beck. He is the one that runs the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In order for us to apply we have to go to Town Meeting to get approval for our Legislative body to do that. This has been a unique year. He told Mr. Beck that normally they could have done this in April. The grant is due in April so we would have had the time to do it. Now we are looking at a June Town Meeting, He asked Mr. Beck if that would take us out of the running for the grant. Mr. Beck said that he didn't think it would take us out of the running because every town is in the same boat. He told Dwayne to put together a Project Certification that is a Board summary of what we are planning to do. Dwayne put one together for them and he read it into the minutes.

This is to certify that the Board of Selectmen of the Town of North Berwick hereby authorizes Dwayne Morin, Town Manager in conjunction with the Great Works Regional Land Trust to make application for financial assistance under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, Public Law 88-578 for the purchase and stewardship of the top of Bauneg Beg Mountain Hill #1.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Board of Selectmen have postponed Town Meeting until June 2021, however, this further certifies that the Town of North Berwick is familiar with the terms and conditions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Project Agreement, revision dated March 1995 and the approvals for this project shall be placed before the voters at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting when it is held to authorize the Town Manager to enter into said agreement between Town of North Berwick and the State of Maine upon federal approval of the above identified project.

Proposed Warrant Article is as follows:

Article:

To see if the Town will 1.) authorize the Town Manager in conjunction with the Great Works Regional Land Trust to apply, on behalf of the Town, for federal financing assistance under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, Public Law 88-578 for the purchase and stewardship of Bauneg Beg Mountain Hill #1 purchase; and further authorize the Town Manager to enter into the Land and Water Conservation Fund Project Agreement with the State subsequent to federal approval of the project, 2.) appropriate \$80,000.00 from the Open Space Impact Fee Fund to assist with the purchase of the property and \$20,000.00 from the Recreation Impact Fee Fund to assist with the stewardship of the property in conjunction with the Great Works Regional Land Trust and 3.) the town in conjunction with the Great Works Regional Land Trust will be obligated to pay all costs of the project “up-front” which will be repaid by federal reimbursement.

This further certifies that the Town of North Berwick through its Conservation-Agricultural Commission and Parks and Recreation Department in conjunction with the Great Works Land Trust has been legally constituted and is responsible for planning and carrying out the municipal recreation program, and the continued operation and maintenance of this completed project in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Project Agreement.

This further certifies that the Town of North Berwick shall enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the purchase and long-term stewardship responsibility of the Bauneg Beg Mountain Hill #1 project with the Great Works Regional Land Trust.

And this further certifies that except for the financial assistance requested by this project application, no financial assistance has been applied for, given or promised under any other State or Federal Program.

Dwayne stated that he has sent this off to the State for them to review it to make sure that it is what they are looking for. He also wanted to get any comments from the Board regarding it. The Board all agreed that it looked good. Dwayne stated that GWLT is taking the lead in applying and will send him the papers that he needs to complete. He said that we already have 4 other Land and Water Conservation Funds that we got money to do some projects. We received money for Guptill Field, Canal Street Park and Flat Iron Park. They also received money for the soccer field at the Community Center. He said that he has to certify that they are still in compliance with these projects. Mr. Beck has been out to see our facilities, so he knows that we are in compliance. Mr. Beck stated that we are one of the few towns that maintains their Land and Water Conservation projects. Dwayne said that the towns get points deducted if you don't keep up with the funds that you received before.

Dwayne said that he will have the form ready for their signature at the next meeting.

6. Other Business:

Dwayne stated that he sent the Board the copy of what the Water District will be filing with the PUC on Thursday. It is in conjunction with what they discussed with the Board at their meeting. It is a 2-pronged increase. The first increase brings us to about \$175,000 which is about a \$48,000 increase this year. Next year, it will go to \$195,000 which is another \$20,000 increase. He stated that, for regular water users it is about a 5% increase this year, an additional 9% the following year. They are pretty significant increases with the Water District. He stated that our increase next year is 38% and the following year will be an 11.5% increase.

Chairman Cowan asked about what these increases will look like on an average water bill. Dwayne said that for a regular customer, it will be \$51.33 per quarter and it will go to \$56.25 in 2022. He said that we are currently at \$48.00 per quarter so it will be about a \$4.00 increase and the following year will be about a \$6.00 increase. For residential customers, it is not too bad. It will still be under a \$20 increase in a year.

Dwayne stated that he did meet with the Fire Chief and they will be doing some training in the spring regarding the fire hydrants.

Dwayne stated the auditors will be coming to the next meeting. They are just about done with the audit.

Dwayne said that he is meeting tomorrow with the South Berwick Town Manager about the Assessor. Craig is planning on retiring on July 31st. They are going to discuss how to move forward. He stated that the current South Berwick Town Manager is planning on retiring as soon as they find a replacement for him. Dwayne said that what they have always done is that the Assessor has been a South Berwick employee and we paid South Berwick back. This has been the process for at least 20 years. He said that he will mention to them that if they want the Assessor to be a North Berwick employee for the next contract, we can do that. South Berwick would then just reimburse us for the Assessor's time. About 3 or 4 years ago, South Berwick thought they weren't getting a fair shake on the deal. They had him Monday, Thursday and Friday. Mondays are when the holidays primarily are, so they thought they were not being treated fairly. What they didn't realize is that every time there was a holiday on Monday, he would send Craig down to South Berwick on Wednesday. They tracked it for a couple of years, and it was all set.

Dwayne said that Craig will try to get us all done up to commitment. His goal is to have all of the commitments done before he retires. He will have everything ready so that when the next person comes in, they can concentrate on getting familiar with the system and not have to worry about the busiest time of the year.

7. Review and Approve Warrants and Correspondence:

Warrant:	January 26, 2021	- \$ 15,488.60
Warrant:	February 2, 2021	- \$ 73,291.24

Selectman Galemmo motioned to approve the Warrant of January 26, 2021 for the amount of \$15,488.60 and the Warrant of February 2, 2021 for the amount of \$73,291.24. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

8. Adjournment:

Selectman Galemmo motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 pm. Selectman Johnson, Sr. 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.