

North Berwick Board of Selectmen Minutes May 4, 2021

NORTH BERWICK BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES MAY 4, 2021

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

Absent: Selectman Johnson, Sr.

Also Present: Dwayne Morin, Audra Beauvais, Susan Austin, Denise Vancampen

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

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Review and Approve Minutes of April 20, 2021

Dwayne stated that he changed an amount from \$100,000 to \$1,000,000.

Selectman Hall motioned to approve the minutes of April 20, 2021 as amended. Selectman Galemmo seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

3. Public Input

There was no public input at this time.

5. New Business:

A. MSAD #60: Review MSAD #60 Budget with Superintendent Beauvais

Audra Beauvais, the new Superintendent of Schools stepped forward to discuss the budget. This is her first year as Superintendent, but she has been with the district for 20 years. She was Principal at the Hussey School in Berwick for those 20 years. She does know the community and has a lot of history with it as well. She stated that it has been a challenging year due to the pandemic. She introduced Susan Austin, the Assistant Superintendent and Denise Vancampen, the Business Manager.

Audra Beauvais stated that the School Budget was an overall 4.18% increase for taxpayers. She stated that there were a couple of things that they kept in mind when reviewing the budget. They asked the Administrators to focus on 3 areas. The areas were:

1. Facilities
2. Literacy
3. Social/Emotional Learning

They know that what has been occurring since last March has been taking a toll on the community members, their students, and their staff.

Ms. Beauvais stated that, last July the towns agreed and approved some funds for the School Revolving Renovation Funds (SRRF). In doing so, they were able to move ahead with being able to do some of that work. They installed sprinkler systems at the Hussey School, Lebanon Elementary School, and the North Berwick School. They also did some asbestos abatement at the Middle School. Because of COVID, they got a little stalled in the process. When they went out to bid, it came in with a \$500,000 overage. The School Board, the Facilities and Finance Committee and the Building Committee decided that it was in their best interest to move ahead as a District and rectify the safety issues, given the fact that they had so much State money to do so. Ms. Beauvais stated that the other thing in the Facilities section that is pretty significant is \$100,000. This is for fees for the architect because they are looking to do renovations to each of the 3 Elementary Schools, one in each town, based on the number of students, the population and their spacing.

Ms. Beauvais stated that there is also a significant change in their Revenue. It looks like some sections are up and some sections are down. She stated that they are getting a loss of \$367,222.00 in State subsidies for the FY22. She said that they are taking some of their Fund Balance to offset some of those decreased funds. Chairman Cowan asked why the State Subsidy was reduced? Ms. Beauvais stated that it is a biennial year, and she thinks that they are looking at everything that has been happening. They are having issues with student attendance, enrollments, and numbers like that. Susan Austin said that it was State-wide. All schools got a smaller percentage. She said that instead of the State curtailing us last year, they moved forward and decided to provide less revenue. Ms. Austin that it was due to a number of things. One of them is their expectation of reduced taxes coming in and the issues that came in with COVID in terms of State Revenue in general. In regard to the enrollment piece, every district in York County had reduced enrollment based on not sending children to school. Instead of choosing remote learning they chose home schooling instead. The numbers were down all over the place. Ms. Austin also stated that a lot of families decided to take one more year for their children to go to Kindergarten. She expects that the numbers for Kindergarten registration will be higher this year because of this. Chairman Cowan asked if the enrollment piece was based on 2019 or 2020 numbers. Ms. Austin said that it was based on 2020 information because they are looking at the next fiscal year.

Selectman Johnson, Jr. asked if they had to remove teacher because of the loss of students. Ms. Beauvais stated that they actually shifted a lot of teachers. They had a lot of families ask to be remote because they weren't comfortable having their students come in. Instead of eliminating positions, they needed to accommodate those students, so they shifted positions for some of the teachers. She stated that they also had to increase some of those positions as well. They have a whole team at the Middle School that is teaching remotely that they had to do some hiring for as well as hiring some School Counselors. Susan Austin stated that their requirements for their in-person learning were based on social distancing, so they sometimes ended up with split classrooms. Typically, there are 20 or more kids in a classroom, but they could only fit about 15 in one classroom.

Ms. Beauvais stated that they do have some other positions in the Budget. In keeping with the Board's desire to have more manageable class sizes, they added a Kindergarten teacher in North Berwick because the enrollment is up this year. They also added a 4th grade position at the Knowlton School because that grade has a bubble. They added a Counseling position as well.

Selectman Hall asked if the reduction was reflected in the 55% State threshold that we never made it to? He wondered if we were going in the wrong direction. Ms. Austin said that she does not have the answer to that right now in terms of what they are at with their percentages. Dwayne stated that they were at 50%.

Ms. Beauvais stated that these were the biggest pieces that are affecting the budget. Chairman Cowan told Ms. Beauvais that she mentioned that the budget was an increase of 4.18% and that she had said that most of it was due to contractually obligated areas. Chairman Cowan asked if they had a percentage of breakdowns in terms of what percentage of that 4.18% is actually due to contract obligations vs other needs. Ms. Austin said that they did not have that. She did say that the increase in expenses is 2.12%. She stated that when you have decrease in Revenue, it brings the taxpayer piece to the forefront.

Selectman Hall asked if they had received some funds from the Federal Government and if so, how much did they get and how will they spend it? Ms. Beauvais said that, over the course of this school year so far, they have received a little over \$4 million. They used a lot of the funds for PPE. They also had to support the remote students in the High School. They had to spend a lot of money on the hardware to hook up classrooms. At the High School, instead of the students having asynchronous time, they are going remote into the classroom. As the teacher is teaching the lessons of the class, there are students that are remote, so they are seeing it in real time. They also bought a digital library for the High School which is used by all of the schools. They also needed to hire some staff at the Middle School and at the Elementary School to fill in some of the gaps for remote learning. They also purchased some technology devices for some students which really sets them up nicely for the future. They did some literacy work especially around remote and how to support the teachers to support the students remotely. They also had to buy different types of programs for technology as well.

Chairman Cowan had a question regarding the new hardware that they had to purchase. She recalled a conversation with the previous Superintendent last year where he stated that the Federal Department of Education had removed a significant amount of money from the Title 1 Budget which she believes was used to fund computer hardware. She asked if the Federal money they received is filling in the gap that was left because of the removal of the Title 1 funds. Ms. Austin stated that she believes that the discussion was centered around the MLTI Program which is the Technology Program. She said that they had removed funds and she is hoping that they will be putting it back for the coming year. She said that the Title 1 is a separate Federal grant for students that need services.

Ms. Beauvais stated that they also used some of the Federal funds for keyless doors and they built outdoor classroom spaces at the schools. They had an HVAC study done at the Middle School and they had to repave some of the parking lot at the Transportation Department due to

some vans that they purchased to help with food service. She stated that they have been delivering food for the students, so they had to increase their capacity to be able to deliver.

Selectman Hall asked if the staff training stuff was the purchasing of the Distance Learning Playbooks. Ms. Beauvais said that it was. She said that the remote teams have had specific training on how to give assessments remotely when the student is not right in front of you. Chairman Cowan asked if they needed to give an accounting of how they spent the \$4 million. Ms. Beauvais said that they did, and it was pretty laborious and detailed. She said that they are looking at having more funds coming in and they are going to focus on educational recovery. They will look at summer programming, tutoring, air quality and other things. Chairman Cowan asked if she knew how much they were going to get this time. Ms. Beauvais thinks that it will be substantial in the sense that it will come in equal to what we have or a little bit less. She said it will help them out tremendously with the Middle School. Ms. Austin said that, with everything they are purchasing, they are trying to offset future things that would be District funded. They are trying to be very thoughtful about what they are buying so that it will be long term and not have to be replaced for some time. Selectman Hall asked if they were allowed to use the funds on buildings and infrastructure. Ms. Beauvais said that they were not allowed to use it to build anything. Ms. Austin said that it could be used for movable spaces that could be easily taken down like tents.

Dwayne stated that there is a significant increase in Special Education and asked them to explain it. He said that it is about a half a million-dollar increase. It looks like it is for additional Psychologists, Social Workers and Ed Techs. That is a pretty significant increase for just that one line item. Ms. Beauvais said that they did increase for a School Psych Examiner. This is partly due to the fact that they have routine testing that they need to do as far as Special Education goes. They were not able to do a lot of that testing that could have occurred between March and June of last year, so they are continuing to do testing for Special Education. In doing so, they added some more assistance and support to offset some of the backlog for that testing. Denise Vancampen stated that the increase just in Salaries and Wages is approximately 5% which includes the Psych Examiner as well as a permanent sub that is dedicated to Special Education. They find it difficult in the self-contained classroom to find subs that are able to move in and know what they need to be doing. Having a specialized permanent sub just for Special Education would be a help. She stated that the rest of it is primarily contractual obligations. The other big increase for Special Education is for Medical which went up almost \$225,000. All Medical is booked based on who is taking medical insurance right now and what will the prices be next year. She said that it is actual usage. The increases come when they have staff turnover and a person who has a single plan is being replaced with someone who has a family plan.

Dwayne stated that based on their numbers, it looks like the Psych Examiner is an increase of about \$84,000 and Ed Techs increase about \$88,000 which he is assuming are additional Ed Techs. Ms. Vancampen said that she would need to look at a person-by-person basis. She stated that if they look at the Summary page where it gives FTE's, we went from 71 Ed Techs in FY21 to 70 in FY22. She will need to research it a little more.

Dwayne stated that the Town Budget is at almost 4% lower than last year. The School Budget is coming in for the Town of North Berwick significantly higher. It will represent a \$.35 increase in our tax rate which will be an average increase of about \$85.00 to the taxpayers. Every other budget that we have has come in lower except for the School Budget. He said that this is concerning to him. He is seeing other Schools Districts in the area bringing their budgets in at or lower than they have in previous years. Denise Vancampen said that if they took out the \$600,000 that they are reacting to based on the timeline given by the State for the grant for the sprinkler project and asbestos abatement, their increase to taxpayers would have come in at 1.29% with an increase in expenses of .72%. It is currently at 4.18%.

Dwayne stated that he assumes that the \$600,000 is for the \$500,000 for the overage and the \$100,000 for the architectural design of next phase which is the new school in Lebanon, some additions to Berwick and some additions to North Berwick. He asked if this was going forward for the November election. Ms. Beauvais said that it was. He asked if they considered splitting the \$500,000 over a couple of years instead of doing it in one fell swoop. Ms. Vancampen said that they did. She said that, accounting wise, they have to recognize it when those funds are spent. When the North Berwick sprinkler system is done, whatever the overage is, they have to recognize it in the books. All of their projects are going to be done May/June of 2022, so they have to recognize it all in 2022. Dwayne stated that he understands about recognizing the costs. He is wondering if they have thought about borrowing the money and spreading the costs. He said that, right now, the interest rates are very low. He said that of the \$905,000 increase, \$600,000 of it is for facilities. He asked if there was some discussion about taking the \$500,000 and borrowing it. Ms. Vancampen said that the problem is not the borrowing. She said that they have to recognize the expense, so it needs to be built into the budget, so they don't overspend. Dwayne said that if he has a project that will cost \$1 million, he spends the \$1 million today but he borrows the money and spends it over 5 years. He does it all the time. Ms. Vancampen said that the grant was supposed to be spent within 18 months. It was awarded in January of 2020, so it needs to be spent by June of 2021. The State gave them an extension so they could get the work done after COVID so they can now get it done in 2022. They don't have an infinite amount of time to spread the payments. Dwayne stated his perspective is that they take the \$500,000 in overage, understand that they are going to spend it in the current fiscal year, but they can spend that money as a loan. They are still accounting for it in the year, and they are still paying the bill out, but the District is paying it out over time instead of paying it out in one payment. He is concerned because the taxpayers are going to get hit hard. Ms. Austin said that they went through this with their Accountants and Attorneys, and this is how they were advised to handle it. Dwayne said that we are now hopefully post-COVID and there are still people that are struggling, and our goal was to try and alleviate some of the burden, but the School Budget is not helping us do that.

Chairman Cowan asked if they had the capability to borrow money on behalf of the School system. Ms. Vancampen said that the School District has the capability to borrow money. She said that when you have expenses, you have to recognize them as an expense in the year that the activity is complete. All of the teacher's salaries for the year have to be recognized for that year as well as other expenses like electrical work. She would have to pay the contractors for their work on these projects. It has to appear as an expense in her budget. If it appears as an expense, she has to have a revenue to cover it. Chairman Cowan asked if the revenue could come from a

loan. Ms. Vancampen said that loan is considered cash. Dwayne said that they are planning on building a new school in Lebanon for \$20 million. He asked if they will be hitting the towns for \$20 million in 1 year? He said that they are not. They will be borrowing the money and spread it out over 30 years. Ms. Vancampen said that they will spread it out because their payments that will be paid back to the Maine Bond Bank are in increments. There are 20 increments paid annually. Dwayne said that they could do the same with the \$500,000. They could borrow it and spread it out in payments for 5 years. He said that the Maine Bond Bank is at about 2% interest right now. Instead of hitting North Berwick with an increase of \$379,000 in our budget it would be an increase of \$120,000 in our budget. He said that he is not against the project but would like to think about better ways to spend the money and alleviate pressures on our taxpayers.

Selectman Hall asked if they had always paid more for Ed Techs than for Special Ed teachers. Ms. Vancampen said that the Teachers just comprise those that are in a regular classroom, a resource setting where they pull students out or a self-contained setting. This would include Case Managers. Ms. Austin stated that there are more Ed Techs in our District than there are teachers. Ms. Beauvais said that they only have 3 students that are out of district right now. The need for more support was needed to keep the kids in the schools and our district. Selectman Hall asked how the contract negotiations were going. He asked if it was settled yet. Ms. Austin said that they will be voting on the Teacher's contract by this Friday. Chairman Cowan asked if it was a 3-year contract and Ms. Austin said that it was.

Chairman Cowan said that they referenced the Middle School virtual program and mentioned that due to the success of the program with that particular population they were considering making it a permanent part of the school program. She asked if it was going to happen only at the Middle School level or will it also be used at the High School level. Ms. Austin said that we lose kids to a variety of things over the course of their lifetime. At the Middle School and High School, students start to utilize other online Academies and things like that. As they started seeing more of this, they decided that they could do it themselves and maintain our students here and continue to receive the State funding for those students. They came up with the Noble Middle School. They are piloting it this year for grades 6, 7 and 8 and see how it goes. The goal would be to become progressive in both directions. Their feeling is that grades K, 1 and 2 need to be in school and maybe looking at grades 4 and 5 at some point. However, they would definitely look at the High School if the pilot program is successful. She stated that it is very different than what they are doing right now. There are 3 teaching coaches, and it is more of a project-based approach. It has a lot of flexibility. They have talked to a lot of home school parents to see if they would be interested in participating because it provides a different approach to learning. It follows the standards that are provided at Noble. Chairman Cowan asked if it was paralleling the Noble curriculum. Ms. Austin said that it will meet the same standards, but it may be more creative on how they can meet those standards. Chairman Cowan asked if it will require its own Coordinator or will they utilize current staff for it. Ms. Austin stated that they will fund it with the next round of money from the Federal Government. They want to see how it goes before they put anything in a budget for it. Chairman Cowan asked what percentage of the Middle School population was participating in the program. Ms. Austin said that they currently have about 100 students which is about 20% of the population. In the

future, their goal is more for 30 to 60 students which will be more manageable so they can see if it will work.

Dwayne asked if they anticipate having all students for all of the grades back in school in the fall. Ms. Beauvais said that they sent out a questionnaire to all of the parents. She said that if there are any extenuating health concerns, they will address that for those families, but their goal is to be K-12 in person. Ms. Austin said that they currently have had about 2200 responses and only 90 are saying that they don't feel like they can return. Most of them are Middle School aged children and she is wondering if it is more that they just want to stay remote vs the necessity of staying remote.

Chairman Cowan asked what the graduation rate is this year. Ms. Beauvais said that they are a little behind with numbers with the way they get the percentages back. She said that right now they are at 90%. Chairman Cowan asked what percentage of graduates are attending post-secondary. Ms. Beauvais said that she didn't have those numbers, but they can find out and her know.

Selectman Hall said that it shows a \$221,000 decrease in the Transportation budget. Assuming that there will be 3 feet of distance required, will they be purchasing more buses. Ms. Beauvais said that the requirements for transportation are recommendations not requirements so they will be able to have more students on the bus next year. They have purchased some buses all along, so they are in good shape. Ms. Austin stated that there is a reduction in a driver. They have worked it out so they think they can manage at least another year without the extra driver. She stated that it is also hard to find drivers to hire. Selectman Galemme asked how many students they were sending to SRTC. Ms. Beauvais said that they are sending about 123 students this year. She said that they are one of the largest sending schools.

Selectman Hall asked about the \$361,000 reduction in Student and Staff Support. Ms. Austin said that it is mostly in equipment. Dwayne said that he knows that they are going to vote on the new school in Lebanon and the additions in Berwick and North Berwick in November. He asked if bond payments were included in this year's budget. Ms. Austin said they were not. He asked if they had any idea of what those costs were going to be. Ms. Beauvais said that they are currently getting estimates on the plans that they created. For the Hussey School, they just came back, and it was comparable to what the earlier estimate was. She said that Lebanon will be the most complex so she is not sure what the bid will be. She said that building materials have increased significantly. Dwayne stated that they spoke with the Superintendent last year regarding the political aspect of doing something in all 3 towns, but the amount of money is quite a bit. He said that of all 3 towns, Lebanon is the one that is in most need right now. He said that if the numbers come in at a much greater amount than they are looking to spend, would they consider scaling the project in Berwick and North Berwick back and concentrating on Lebanon. Ms. Beauvais said that they have talked about it with the Building Committee, and they will look at that.

4. Unfinished Business:

A. COVID-19:

Selectman Hall asked if they were going to change the guidelines for any of the Summer Camp sessions. Will the kids still need to wear masks? Dwayne said that they would because the guidelines for Summer Camp have not changed. Chairman Cowan asked what they were doing about Memorial Day. Dwayne said that he reached out to the Legion, but he has not heard back from them. Chairman Cowan stated that they should probably send notice that it will be cancelled this year. Dwayne said that the Town doesn't run it. The Legion is the one that puts it together.

B. Linscott Road Intersection: Discussion on Progress

Dwayne said that the house and trees are gone. There is one more tree that they will need to cut down. They thought they could have saved it, but they will have to take it down. They are starting to dig tomorrow. The goal is to have it done by mid-June.

C. Budget FY22: Budget Committee Final Recommendations – Final Warrant

Dwayne stated that the Budget Committee was done, and the updated Referendum Questions are in the Selectmen's packet. The end result was a budget of \$4,878,509.00 which is about a 3.56 reduction in cost to out taxpayers.

Dwayne said that they now have to hold a Public Hearing on the Referendum Questions. It has to be held a minimum of 7 days before the election. He originally was going to do it at the next meeting on the 18th but he thinks that may be unwise. He thinks that they should do it on the 25th as a Special Meeting because it will have to be a ZOOM meeting. He believes that it will be a small amount of people that will show up, however, we need to plan ahead in case more people show up.

Selectman Galembo motioned to hold the Public Hearing for the Referendum Questions on May 25, 2021 at 6:30 pm via ZOOM. Selectman Hall seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

Dwayne said that, starting on page 13 of their packet, is the final version of the Referendum Questions. He stated that they will need to vote on it either tonight or at the next meeting.

Selectman Hall motioned to approve the Final Warrant for the FY22 Budget. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

D. Land Trust: Update on Bauneg Beg Mountain Project

Dwayne said that they are still working on the Bauneg Beg Mountain project. The goal is to have everything submitted by May 15th.

E. Elroy Day Canoe Launch: Review Sign for Canoe Launch

Dwayne said that they met with Mrs. Brezak at the last meeting, and it was decided that some signs would be ordered. He has included some reiterations of the sign in the packets. He was

originally going to do green with white letters. Billy got back to him and said that he can't get green sandwich. He can only get white. They are going to do white with green letters instead. He should be able to get the signs done this week. Dwayne will put up the dog sign up himself, but he will need the guys from Public Works to put in the other one because they have to put the posts in the ground.

Reminders: **Next Board of Selectmen's Meeting** – May 18, 2021 – 6:30 pm
Public Hearing on Referendum Questions – May 25, 2021 – 6:30 pm via
ZOOM meeting

5. New Business:

B. Liquor Laws: Review Letter from Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages

Dwayne stated that he spent hours on the phone with the Director of Alcoholic Beverages to discuss the liquor laws. He said that it started in the town of Readfield, Maine. They gave a Liquor License to a Chinese restaurant and the restaurant was sold. When it was sold, they inspected their vote more closely and the town had never given them permission to do what they were doing. They took the Liquor License away and there was a fiasco. The Legislature got involved last year and told the Liquor Enforcement to look at every town and find out what they are doing. They just finished doing that and they found that 290 towns, including North Berwick, had incorrect votes.

He said that all of our votes are good except for one which is the serving of malt liquor and wine in restaurants, Class A restaurants, clubs, and hotels. We originally voted in 1968 and 1969 and it failed. In 1996 when Virginia Meehan opened up Doughty Falls Restaurant, she came to the town and asked what she needed to do to bring it to the voters. We called the Liquor Commission to find out what we needed to do. They gave us 2 questions. He told Virginia that we needed to pick one of two questions. She needed to submit a petition to the town, so she did this. Come to find out, the questions that they were given were illegal. When they look at it now, no matter if they told us to do something illegal, they cannot honor it any longer. He said that in 1976, the Law changed on how the questions had to be phrased but we were not given these questions in 1996 when applying. They said that they will give us until July 1, 2022 to fix it by holding another vote. He said that they have taken away the part where they need to petition before the Board of Selectmen send out to vote. Now the Board of Selectmen can send it to the voters for voting.

Dwayne said that we need to follow the rules as they sit today. We need to vote either Yes or No with no exceptions. We can't specify Class A restaurants, or clubs or bars. It is either that we allow it, or we don't. Dwayne said that, historically, bars have not been looked kindly upon our town. There have been many votes taken to make sure that bars don't exist in our town. There are now 6 questions that are service on Sunday, service the rest of the week, liquor stores on Sunday, liquor stores the rest of the week, sale of malt liquor and wine on Sunday and sale of malt liquor and wine the rest of the week.

Selectman Hall asked what the definition of malt liquor was. Dwayne said that they also changed the definition of what liquor was. Liquor is all alcohol which includes beer, wine, or spirits. If we don't do something, Johnson's loses their ability to serve alcohol in their restaurant. If we decide to do something and it is passed that will open the doors for taverns within our town. Dwayne said that they told him that as Board of Selectmen, they can deny a liquor license to anybody, but Dwayne disagreed with him. He said that if the town has voted to allow it and the Board of Selectmen deny their license for any reason, the town would get sued and lose. Dwayne said that they can only deny a liquor license for cause.

The State thought that it was going to be a small group of municipalities that would be affected. It actually affected 290 out of 435 towns which is pretty significant. The State is having a Public Hearing on Friday on a piece of Legislation submitted by the Town of Biddeford that will allow towns to confirm their liquor status without going to vote with a vote by the Board of Selectmen. It will give an option for the town to either hold an election with a Referendum vote or just have the Board of Selectmen confirm it. We can't keep the question that is in error. If the Board decides they would decide to allow the sale of alcohol on days other than Sundays. However, once we do that it will not be limited to any classification.

Dwayne said that the Board can opt to send it to the voters and let them decide. The Board can opt to say No and do it themselves but before they do that, we should change the Zoning Ordinance to limit land uses. The Ordinance lists it as Drinking Establishments, and they are currently just allowed in the Commercial District and Industrial Zones. Selectman Galemmo asked if they could restrict it more in the Ordinance. Dwayne said that they could. They could put that there will be no Drinking Establishments in the town.

Selectman Galemmo stated that they should make changes in the Ordinance. They should eliminate Drinking Establishments and limit Eating and Drinking Establishments to where Drinking Establishments are now. Dwayne said that they are pretty close right now. The only other area that it allows it would be the Village Center which would be more expanded. It would include all of the Village area. They could keep the restaurants as they are now because they can still serve alcohol.

Dwayne said that they will want to meet with the Planning Board to discuss it further.

C. Town Hall: Review Proposal From Elevator Contractor

Dwayne said that our elevator license is up in August. Otis is prepared to freeze our costs for this coming year which is about \$4,457.56 for elevator maintenance. It would then be an increase of 3% each year.

Selectman Galemmo motioned to approve the entering into a 10-year maintenance agreement with Otis Elevator. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

D. Transfer Station: Review Proposal from Casella for Solid Waste Transportation

Dwayne said that Transfer Station contract is up at the end of this year. Our current contract allows for an extension contract. He contacted Casella and they said they would review the numbers. Dwayne said that he knew that the hauling numbers would go up a little bit. We are currently paying \$165.00 per haul. They want \$175.00 per haul and that would increase by 3% over the next 5 years. They want a pretty significant increase on the shingles side. Right now, we pay \$235.00 to get rid of our shingles. They now want \$250.00. He said that we only do 2 shingles containers per year, so it is an additional cost of about \$40.00 over the course of a year. Even with the new hauling costs going to \$175.00, it adds \$1,850.00 to our overall costs. Dwayne said that the other people around will charge us a lot more.

Dwayne said that he has 2 concerns. The first one is that our solid waste contract, which is tied in heavily in this transportation contract expires in 2025. That was a 30-year contract that we signed with Casella. He said that we may just want a 4-year contract so that it coincides with that contract. If we decided to change from Casella to somebody else for our solid waste disposal, this contract would be null and void anyway because we are not going to haul it to Wells if our new contract goes to Turnkey.

The other big concern is our recycling costs. We signed a great deal when Oceanside sold it to Casella. We agreed that through the life of our contract we would pay \$45.00 for disposal of our recycling. That deal ends December 31st. They want us to go to an ACR which is basically a formula on how you figure out the recycling rate. Right now, the recycling wait is \$155.00 per ton. You get an ACR right now of \$26.51. They pay \$155.00 and they get \$26.51 returned to them. They give us that credit because they make money. We are currently spending \$45.00 and get rid of about 265 tons per year in recyclables for a total of about \$12,500.00. That amount will go to \$33,500.00. Selectman Galemme asked what this means as far as raising bag prices. Dwayne said that we are still okay. We still have \$250,000.00 sitting in the bank so we still have a few more years before we need to start thinking about bag pricing. He thinks that it should be about 5 years before changing the price.

E. **Newsletter: Review Town Meeting Newsletter**

Dwayne stated that he included the Newsletter in their packet for review. If approved, he will send it to print tomorrow. He just needs to add the ZOOM meeting numbers.

Selectman Galemme motioned to approve the Newsletter. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

6. **Other Business:**

Selectman Hall stated that this month is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. He has heard from 3 different constituents in town about some racist remarks and hate speech directed towards them. In light of the recent mass shootings motivated in part by Asian hate and other stuff that is happening around our country, he thought that they could have a discussion about issuing something as a town that says that the Town stands with diversity. We are against discrimination, bigotry, and racism. He does not really know how or what exactly to do or say but he at least wanted to have a conversation with everybody about making some sort of

statement as a town. He said that we want to be a welcoming place. He knows that we have a growing Asian and African American community, and he believes that diversity helps everybody. He thinks that it would be a big step for us as a town government to make some sort of statement saying that we stand on the side of these different groups. We are all from different backgrounds whether it is French Canadian, Irish Americans, Asian, and African American who were all treated unfairly at one time. He would like to see us as a Board draft some sort of statement which would say that this is not something that we tolerate or accept in the Town of North Berwick. We stand for diversity and welcome and support different groups of people moving to our town. In our Comprehensive Plan, we want to expand slowly and with controlled growth, but we also want to be open and make it known that we are open to all kinds of people who want to make this their home.

Selectman Galemme said that we could probably do a Resolution. We have had Resolutions for other things that the Board has taken a stance on. Selectman Hall said that it would go a long way if the Board as a governing body of this town and overseer of the poor would make a statement. Whether it is people being made fun of because of poverty or ethnicity, we don't stand for these things and believes that it would go a long way with the minority groups in our town.

Selectman Galemme stated that maybe they could put something under the Welcome to North Berwick sign that would say something about our being a welcoming town. Chairman Cowan stated that she thinks there are probably some other towns that have adopted Resolutions of this nature. It would be interesting to see what other towns have put out there. Selectman Hall said that he would do some research on that. Chairman Cowan also thought that they could update or replace the current Welcome to North Berwick signs that are out there. She said that they are really looking old and ragged. She would like to see a new Welcome to North Berwick sign anyway so if they did a new sign, they could probably incorporate something on it relating to this topic.

7. Review and Approve Warrants and Correspondence:

Warrant:	April 27, 2021	- \$ 16,149.62
Warrant:	May 4, 2021	- \$ 92,247.67

Selectman Galemme motioned to approve the Warrant of April 27, 2021 for the amount of \$16,149.62 and the Warrant of May 4, 2021 for the amount of \$92,247.67. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

8. Adjournment:

Selectman Johnson, Jr. motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 pm. Selectman Galemmo seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

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.

