

North Berwick Board of Selectmen Minutes December 21, 2021

**NORTH BERWICK BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
December 21, 2021**

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

Absent: Selectman Johnson, Sr.

Also Present: Dwayne Morin, Stephen Peasley, Daniel Pelkey, Tom Komola, Dan Dugal, Ryan Babcock

Chairman Galemmo opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Review and Approve Minutes of December 7, 2021

Selectman Cowan motioned to approve the minutes of December 7, 2021 as amended. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

3. PUBLIC INPUT:

Dan Dugal and Ryan Babcock from the Fire Department were present to talk about the new firetruck in regards to the budget. Dwayne indicated that whatever they wanted to present, they could include it in the budget packet and provide it to him. Dwayne indicated they will need to have the projected current price by February and they will be ordering the truck by June. Dan was under the impression that the firetruck budget was going to be talked about at this meeting but Dwayne indicated that it was not.

4. NEW BUSINESS:

A. POLICE: Meeting with Chief Regarding Budget

Chief Peasley stated that they have some strong prospects in-house for a new officer. He stated that over the past several years, they have been seeing an increase in time-consuming calls and more work including following up with different resources after a call. It is not just going to a call and being done with it, there is a lot of time spent after each call now with follow-up including DHS. The officers are seeing heroin on a regular basis now and calls have been getting a lot more serious. For about 25 to 30 years, they have been working the same schedule and it has worked for the amount of people they have although there are a couple holes in the schedule that is of some concern. One of the issues is on the evening shift, there are two nights a week where an officer is scheduled alone. Often times there is a need for a two-officer call, such as a domestic dispute or a warrant arrest. They do work closely with Berwick to back each other up.

The other big concern is that they working their reserve officers more than other surrounding departments. They are scheduled for four shifts per week and all four shifts are on the weekend. The reserve officers also fill in with sick time and vacation times. The reserve officers do not get nearly the amount of training that the full-time officers receive and that is of concern. By state law they cannot work more than 1,020 hours per year which averages out to 20 hours per week. Two of the four shifts that the reserve officers are working, they are alone. Right now, the Chief and the Sergeant rotate weekend shifts to be on call so they can assist the reserve officers if needed. However, the concern is that a reserve officer may not be able to get to a phone to call back up so by adding another officer, it would eliminate two of the reserve shifts on the weekend and it would put a supervisor through the weekend and the reserve officers would only wind up working four hours from 3:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. alone. Those hours generally are pretty slow and the officer getting off shift would still be available as well as the oncoming shift officer so it would significantly cut down on the time that the reserve officers are out on patrol alone. It would also eliminate the two shifts during the week that there is only one officer on duty at night. Hiring another officer would provide double coverage and cut down on the vacancies. Right now, if an officer goes out on a vacation, there are holes in the schedule that they have to fill with overtime. If there is double coverage, there is a good chance, that will save on overtime as well as saving money on the reserve shift by eliminating the two shifts.

Chief Peasley said that two years ago when they were looking at hiring an officer, the request was to look for possible grants. They were too late that particular year, and last year with COVID-19, they did not look into it. So, this year, when grants were becoming available, Dan Pelkey found a COPS grant and did a great job and secured one of 180 grants out of 600 applicants. Only four departments in Maine received a grant and North Berwick was one of them. They were notified in November that they did receive a COPS grant of \$125,000.00 which is for starting an additional officer in the department.

Chief Peasley stated that the last time an officer was added to the Department for patrol was in 1988. At that time, there were 1,088 complaints and 88 arrests. This year, there up over 5,500 complaints and 240 arrests and that is with the same number of officers they had in 1988. So needless to say, the patrol officers have been stretched pretty thin and the Department could really benefit by increasing the Department by one officer.

Selectman Cowan asked what that would bring the number of officers to and the Chief indicated that there would be nine altogether including the School Resource Officer.

Chairman Galemme inquired about the net costs and increase in the budget and Dwayne stated that the increase in cost would be somewhere in the area of a net cost of \$140,000.00 range. Costs could be defrayed. Right now, they are budgeting \$55,000.00 per year for reserve officers so he needs to pair that back since some reserve shifts would be eliminated as well as some overtime. \$140,000.00 is a top end including officer, uniforms, retirement, health insurance, workers compensation, unemployment compensation, etc. at the highest level for sergeant level officer. The goal is to hire a patrol officer and promote from within a sergeant. Dwayne stated that conservatively they are looking in the \$125,000.00 range for additional costs. That would most likely be stretched over two years. The COPS grant can be used over a period of three years

which is a benefit to defray costs. Net costs in year one and year two would be in the \$60,000.00 range. Dwayne also indicated that the COPS grant is available immediately.

Selectman Hall inquired whether this has to be presented at the Town Meeting or if the Board votes on the additional position or just budget. Dwayne said the Board and himself control labor and the Town Meeting controls budget.

Selectman Cowan motioned to approve the request for an additional officer being added to the North Berwick Police Department and the grant be applied to this cost. Selectman Hall seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. COVID-19: ARPA Funding

Dwayne stated that he has received the Sanitary District and the Water District's list to see what he can do with the ARPA money. One thing he did confirm was the use of ARPA funding for wages for Rescue. Dwayne is working on using about \$30,000.00 of ARPA money towards the Rescue budget next year. He's also working on looking at using money for employees who worked through COVID. Dwayne said he is looking at all scheduled full-time employees would get a one-time \$2,000.00 and all scheduled part-time employees would get a one-time \$1,000.00 if they worked through COVID. There are minimum hours they would have to work to achieve those levels. Dwayne said that is how other towns are doing their premium pay. Dwayne stated that there are four positions that would not be eligible for premium pay unless the Town used their own funds for premium pay, because those four individuals make more than the \$78,000.00 salary that ARPA allows for. Dwayne will have all of those numbers broke down for the January 4 meeting.

Dwayne did state that the two things he is looking at are premium pay and the communications tower for ARPA money for current budget year

B. LWCF: Grant Funding of Bauneg Beg Hill Project

Dwayne stated they had a conference with LWCF last week. They are getting ready to submit our proposal. The Town has been approved at the state level for \$180,000 to assist in the purchase and conservation of Bauneg Beg Mountain. That will be matched with the \$100,000 the Town put in, the \$30,000 worth value of property that we are going to add to the project and the Great Works Land Trust has committed \$35,000 to that project which brings us to around \$500,000 project to be completed. They didn't realize that we had already voted on that back in June. They are now waiting on the appraisal of the property. There has to be an actual appraisal and then a review of the appraisal. That will be submitted at the end of January which should result in a contract agreement sometime in June.

Land for Maine Futures requires that there be a signed Purchase and Sales Agreement in order to go through the process. LWCF does not allow you to sign a P&S Agreement until a contract in hand. Land for Maine Futures will make a decision in May. There is a provision that allows for a Retroactivity Clause to the Feds, so in the January submission, there will be a Retroactivity Clause and have an agreement in place by April.

C. FY23 BUDGET: Continued Budget Discussions

Dwayne said they are still talking about a new firetruck. They will most likely draw out a bond a couple extra years so they can stay within budget. A truck's life is thirty years and they will use a twelve-to-fifteen-year bond. He indicated the cost is around \$625,000.00 for a custom truck which will be built for our town. They are trying to uniform all of their fleet of trucks.

Gilpatrick Property Services is who has mowing for the Town for the last twelve years. He has been the same price for all of those twelve years. Gilpatrick has submitted a quote to Dwayne since their contract runs out December 31st. Dwayne said that there will be approximately a 30% increase for the cost for mowing. He discussed the quote and indicated that it was fair and suggested that they continue with Gilpatrick. He indicated that he looked into whether it would make sense for the Town to perhaps buy their own mower and take care of mowing on their own but that would mean that the Town would have to pay for labor, purchase a mower, maintain it and store it, which would not be cost effective.

Selectman Johnson, Jr. motioned to approve continuing with Gilpatrick Property Services for town mowing. Selectman Cowan seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

Dwayne went over the costs including how much each mow costs. He said that Gilpatrick spends two full days with two people in North Berwick each week mowing the Mill Field, Community Center, parks and all of the cemeteries.

D. ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE

At the last meeting, there was a request to change the Animal Control Ordinance in regards to waste. Dwayne presented the Board with language contained in Sanford and Wells Animal Control Ordinances. Dwayne also talked about the cost of violations and whether or not the Town should keep the cost the same or change the fees.

Selectman Johnson, Jr. motioned to adopt the new changes to the Animal Control Ordinance in regards to dog feces. Selectman Cowan seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

Reminders: Next Board of Selectmen's Meeting – January 4, 2022 – 6:30 pm

NEW BUSINESS:

B. PLANNING BOARD: Review Applications for Membership

Dwayne indicated that there are three current Planning Board Members whose membership is up at the end of the year and they would like to renew their membership. The three members are Jon Morse, David Ballard and Mark Cahoon.

Selectman Cowan motioned to accept the applications to renew the Planning Board memberships of Jon Morse, David Ballard and Mark Cahoon. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

C. ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS: Review Applications for Membership

Dwayne indicated that there are two current members on the Zoning Board of Appeals whose memberships are up at the end of the year and they would like to renew their membership. The two members are Todd Hoffman and Tim Kezar.

Selectman Hall motioned to accept the applications to renew the Zoning Board of Appeals of Todd Hoffman and Tim Kezar for another three-year term. Selectman Cowan seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

Dwayne indicated that Route 4 is going to be paved this year from the Hurd School to the Sanford Rotary. He said it was going to be a “recycle in place” project which means they are going to melt the pavement, relay it and put a one-inch overlay over the entire road. He referenced the letter that the Town received from the Maine Department of Transportation dated October 24, 2021. Dwayne said that the Town has asked that there be no paving between 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. each day due to allow for Hussey, Pratt and Shipyard traffic. Dwayne indicated that they are planning on night time paving at this time. They are also planning on paving Route 236 as well.

Selectman Cowan inquired about the status of the Hanchitt property on the corner of Route 4/Route 9. Dwayne said that the tent is down and when asked why the tent was there, he was told that it was to continue the demolition of the first floor throughout the year. The fence is going to be going back up as well. It was taken down when he installed the tent.

7. Review and Approve Warrants and Correspondence:

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| Warrant: | December 14, 2021 | - \$ 8,722.85 |
| Warrant: | December 21, 2021 | - \$ 753,138.99 |

Selectman Hall motioned to approve the Warrant of December 14, 2021 for the amount of \$8,722.85 and the Warrant of December 21, 2021 for the amount of \$753,138.99. Selectman Cowan seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

8. Adjournment:

Selectman Cowan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. Selectman Hall seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

Respectively Submitted,
Jennifer Berard, Stenographer

Original to Town Clerk

Chairman: Charles Galemmo

Selectman: Jonathan Hall

Selectman: Michael Johnson, Jr.

Selectman: Wendy Cowan

Selectman: Michael Johnson, Sr.