

North Berwick Board of Selectmen Minutes May 17, 2022

**NORTH BERWICK BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
MAY 17, 2022**

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

Also Present: Dwayne Morin, Justin Perry, Audra Beauvais, Elva Lovejoy, Denise Van Campen, Rebecca Hopper, Susan Austin, Nancy Neubert, Kate Stanton Whalen

Chairman Galemmo opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF MAY 3, 2022

Selectman Cowan motioned to approve the minutes of May 3, 2022 as amended. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

3. PUBLIC INPUT

N/A

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. PLANNING BOARD: Justin Perry Committee Membership Application

Dwayne stated that Justin Perry has applied to be a member of the Planning Board and is present to answer any questions that the Board has for him. Selectman Cowan asked Justin what has motivated him to join the Planning Board. Justin indicated that he has been in the community since 1988 and he would like to be a part of making sure that the Town grows in the way it was laid out in the zoning and feels there should be some input and research into every application. Justin indicated he is familiar with the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Selectman Johnson, Sr. feels that he has done a lot of work in the Town and feels Justin would make a great Planning Board member.

Selectman Johnson, Sr. motioned to accept the application of Justin Perry and appoint him to the Planning Board. Selectman Cowan seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

Reminders: Next Board of Selectman's Meeting – June 7, 2022 - 6:30 P.M.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. MSAD 60: MEETING WITH SUPERINTENDENT REGARDING FY23 BUDGET

Audra Beauvais, who is the Superintendent for MSAD 60 introduced herself and indicated that this is her second year as Superintendent and 20 + years in the district prior to being Superintendent. She introduced Rebecca Hopper who is a North Berwick representative and Vice Chair, Elva Lovejoy, a Berwick representative, Denise Van Campen, who is the Business Manager, Susan Austin, the Assistant Superintendent, Nancy Neubert, the Chair from Lebanon and Kate Stanton Whalen, a North Berwick representative.

Audra provided the Board with the MSAD 60 Annual Report for 2022-2023 which were mailed out recently. Audra indicated that the biggest focus on their budget this season was the retention and hiring of staff and that was where a lot of the focus has been. The Board was committed to making sure that the salaries were comprehensive and competitive. Audra indicated that they have not been fully staffed all year and she understands that is a problem across the State. She indicated that their transportation department has been short-staffed, substitutes are very hard to find, nurse substitutes are very difficult to find and so they have very much focused on areas of educational technicians all the way up through the classroom teachers, school nutrition, custodial, bus drivers and maintenance. She stated they negotiated with two contracts this year and have reflected those agreements in the new budget. She stated what they also did for their teaching staff was look across York County and realized that their teaching staff was the lowest in York County at this point. The Teachers Association negotiates in the Fall but they did not think that waiting another whole year was right and needed change more immediate so they made an adjustment to the teacher scale for this upcoming year and that is reflected in the budget. She said in the budget there is an increase in salary, wages and benefits and that is significant. Audra indicated that primarily 86.5% of their budget is made up of salary and wages. She indicated that Regular Instruction/Education is 45.5% of the budget. Audra stated they are trying to address these issues moving forward in future budgets.

Chairman Galemme asked where increasing the salaries would put us in York County. Audra stated it did bring us up however we will not be competitive with York, Marshwood and Wells but above Sanford and Biddeford so we have gained some steps to become more competitive.

Audra stated other areas that they are working on as well is the ongoing learning and accessibility for all of the students. Over the past two years, they have noticed a couple different things happening as far as the students go due to COVID and remote learning. There were students who were impacted by not participating in live classroom learning and they are trying to recoup some of that learning for them. She stated they have placed an advanced math teacher position back in the budget at the Middle School and they have three positions that are more behavioral based positions to help with adjustment and support for those coming back into the classroom.

Audra indicated that there has been a 32% increase in student participation in athletics over the last year. They are excited to be offering a volleyball team at the High School for girls. They have 83 students participating at the Middle School and they need to support that as they are heading up to High School. That is about a \$50,000 start-up fees for such things as a coach, uniforms, gym floor, etc.

Selectman Cowan stated since there was an increase for support positions, she was curious about the percentage of kids that require those interventions. Audra ballparked about 25% to 30% on various levels of support. Audra indicated that state wide, they are average and they are seeing not so much disciplinary issues but anxiety issues. Selectman Cowan mentioned how she had recently read that Westbrook schools were thinking of not allowing cell phone use by students and wondered if MSAD 60 were going to consider any of those initiatives particularly at the middle school ages dealing with social media and the impact. Audra stated that they have gone back and forth as a District on that issue and they do have different teachers who have the students put their phones away and then there are others who have the students use them for projects so the balance is somewhat hard but they have not had a recent conversation about banning them. Selectman Cowan feels it would behoove everyone to look into the effects of social media/cell phones to our middle school level children.

Dwayne discussed the transportation department and the need for bus drivers. Dwayne noticed that it looks like they are going to be hiring a Transportation Specialist and he asked what exactly that position was. Audra stated that that is a two-fold answer. She indicated that right now in their budget, at the Transportation Office, they have a position that is a driver/safety trainer/coordinator. She indicated that that position trains the drivers in safety precautions and is also able to drive themselves. That person is retiring at the end of this year so this is an opportunity to look at the position and work on it and make it more of a directory position so that person can help with the scheduling of the routes as well as the evaluations of bus drivers and bus monitors. It really is to take on additional director roles. Audra stated they would like to have someone in and trained so they can handle an easy transition when the time comes when the Director retires in a couple years. Audra stated recently they could not run a route and that was the first time in two years that that has happened.

Dwayne stated he noticed in looking over the budget that there was a huge increase in stipends (nursing, staff development, and miscellaneous). He referenced Article 5 under Salaries/Wages where there is over a \$70,000.00 increase and basically doubles that amount in the budget and asked for clarification. Dwayne also noticed there was about a \$30,000.00 increase in stipends for coaching staff as well.

Denise Van Campen indicated that the athletic stipend reflects the significant amount needed for volleyball, which would be three coaches. Denise stated they also have two new coaches for E-Sports which is a new activity. In addition, 1.5% was agreed with the Teacher Union to increase those stipends that are given to staff.

Susan Austin indicated that one of the big pieces of the nursing stipend was due to COVID. She indicated that they stipend Amy Creighton, who is the District Head Nurse, an additional amount

of money due to the enormous amount of work she was doing including weekends and nights relating to COVID.

Sue indicated that a large increase of stipends to the budget was relating to ALICE Training which is the active shooter training required by staff. This training is to be done throughout the summer and indicated it is a four-hour training for all staff.

Audra indicated that space is also an issue for the schools and something will have to be done about that. Sue indicated that they are going to have to get creative and think outside the box if building is not an option. Dwayne indicated that a yurt is going to be constructed right next to the softball field for students district-wide to do on-line learning and physical testing they have to do which is a creative way to add space. Sue indicated the yurt is an application process and not an option for all at this time. Audra indicated that pre-k was being tossed around to be mandatory but Dwayne indicated that will not likely happen because the Department of Education would have to be on the hook for that.

Chairman Galemme indicated that Lebanon should be on the top of the list for a new school in the future. He believes that if Lebanon was put on a ballot separate from the other schools, it may pass and then in the future, put another school on the ballot and spread it out a little. Dwayne stated that schools should be able to borrow for 30 years instead of 20 years and there should be a conservative push for that. Dwayne feels the budgetary pressures are alleviated by a 30-year bond versus a 20-year bond and feels the Superintendent Association should be pushing for this.

Selectman Hall wondered if it would make more sense to build an administrative building and repurpose the space that was originally designed for classrooms at the high school. Audra stated that is one thing that is being talked about. Selectman Hall stated that for North Berwick in particular, having the administrative office move out of the town hall altogether and into the high school and now having a space issue, is a bit of a sticking point. Selectman Hall indicated that the high school is built for 1500 students and there are currently 1300 students there.

Audra stated that Building Assets and Reducing Risks is a program that they using at the middle school and the high school and this year the high school has been recognized as one of six schools in the country for being a bar of excellence school and that is quite an honor for the high school. As part of the dual enrollment program, there are 50 students enrolled in college courses this past fall and this spring there were 87 students register and take college courses. There are 65 students set up for summer courses. Audra stated there are 125 Juniors and Seniors at SRTC and Somersworth. Selectman Hall asked if there was a greater demand than the capacity we have for technical education. Audra stated there was. Selectman Hall asked if there has been any thought in expanding that and ways to do that. Audra stated they worked very closely this spring with Somersworth and they ended up having more students continue on to Sanford than Somersworth. Audra indicated they can't offer anything here at MSAD 60 because there is a regional center. Audra did state that we are one of the schools that send the most students to SRTC. Selectman Hall asked how that got broken down amongst all the sending schools. Sue stated that the students have to interview and they are chosen that way instead of where they are from. Selectman Hall asked if there are any qualified applicants that are not receiving a vocational education. Sue believed there probably was because they can only take so many

students in Sanford or Somersworth and not every student gets in. Sue did state that there is a wait list where kids can get in. Sue did state that the trades are in need. The big piece is that Sanford is heavily funded by the State for the SRTC and if we did our own vocational program, we would have to absorb all the costs and the space to go along with that.

B. POLICE: APPROVE CONTRACT AMENDMENT

Dwayne indicated that there were two changes to the police contract. One is adding Juneteenth as a holiday and the addition of a corporal base salary in the base pay. At the last meeting, the Board allowed him to move forward and discuss this with the Union and we are now at the point of the Board approving the amendment to the agreement.

Selectman Hall motioned to approve the Contract Amendment with the Police Association. Selectman Cowan seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

C. MMA LPC: NOMINATE DWAYNE MORIN FOR LPC REPRESENTATIVE

Dwayne indicated that MMA is accepting nominees for the Legislative Policy Committee for the next 2 years and he would like to be nominated. Dwayne stated that this would ensure that he is aware of legislation and status of legislation being tracked by MMA as they relate to municipalities. Dwayne believes that it is an asset for North Berwick to be represented on this committee. He indicated he was a member two years ago and found the experience to be beneficial for the Town. It would require a commitment of about one day per month during the legislative session to be in Augusta.

Selectman Cowan motioned to have Chairman Galemme sign the nomination paperwork for Dwayne Morin to apply for the LPC. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

D. SELECTMAN SCHEDULE: JUNE 21 MEETING POSTPONEMENT

Dwayne indicated that he has a vacation scheduled for the week of June 20 – 24 in New York and would like to request that the Board either move the second meeting in June to either the 14th or the 28th.

The Board decided to table this discussion until June 7th.

E. VACATION: REQUEST FROM KATE PHINNEY TO BRING FORWARD AND ADDITIONAL WEEK

Dwayne indicated that Kate Phinney is requesting to bring an additional week of vacation forward due to her covering for Richard when he had his heart surgery and his latest medical issue. Dwayne stated that the Board can allow for one week in addition to the week that he is allowed to authorize. She would like to bring two weeks forward since she has not been able to take her vacation.

Selectman Cowan motioned to allow Kate Phinney to bring forward an additional week of vacation. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

F. FORECLOSURE: Peter Quint Property

Dwayne indicated that back in February, the Town foreclosed on Peter Quint's property and signed a one-year agreement with him to repay and he was able to repay the money in two months so the Board needs to sign the municipal quitclaim deed.

Selectman Hall motioned to have the Board sign the Release Deed for the Quint property. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. PUBLIC HEARING: June 1st York County Budget

Dwayne indicated that a Public Hearing will be held on June 1st. He also stated that their budget has not changed back when it was proposed back in the March/April timeframe. Dwayne wanted the Board to be aware.

B. MEMORIAL DAY PARADE ROUTE

Dwayne made the Board aware of the new Memorial Day Parade route. It was changed from the one that the Board was previously given. There is a new map. Dwayne indicated the route has now been reversed instead of going down Madison Street and up Route 4, they are reversing the direction. Apparently, that was an issue with the traffic flow according to the police. Dwayne was told by the legion that if the Board of Selectman would like to be on a float, they will provide that to the Board. Selectman Hall and Dwayne indicated they would not be at the Memorial Day Parade as they have prior engagements.

C. RESCUE UPDATES

Dwayne indicated that the Rescue was able to fill the schedule for May and June with using financial incentives but that is not sustainable. Dwayne stated that Mike Barker was working on a plan right now. Dwayne has reached out to surrounding communities as the Board asked him to do and sent an email to all the surrounding towns that use a private contractor. Dwayne indicated that was Berwick, South Berwick, Eliot, Kittery and York. He asked what their experience was with a private company and what the cost was. Dwayne stated that Berwick pays nothing because they are so close to Somersworth. South Berwick and York uses the same private ambulance company which is York Community Ambulance. Berwick pays \$105,000.00 per year and York is paying \$80,000.00 per year. However, there is some concern about the ability of York Ambulance. Dwayne stated that York had a very large trust fund that they have been utilizing for years to keep the cost down and that fund is getting low so the cost will likely go up. Dwayne reached out to Stewart's Ambulance Service, who bought AMR, to see if they would be interested in servicing North Berwick and they are not interested due to the low volume of billable calls. The next closest ambulance service to us is Northeast Ambulance, who we have not talked to. Eliot and Kittery are both paying around \$100,000.00 per year for their contract with Stewart's.

Dwayne indicated that he spoke to several town managers and received some feedback from them if the town decides to go with a private company. Dwayne did indicate that right now our rescue budget is about \$400,000.00 per year. Dwayne did say that he and Mike Barker have had many conversations over the last few weeks and Mike is working on a plan to present which uses North Berwick Rescue but not creating a town department and will have some ideas for the Board to look at.

D. VALLEY ROAD: OSCAR HOULE PROPERTY

Selectman Hall stated that he noticed today there was a sign on Mr. Houle's property that said "*Go further at your own risk*" and that felt that was of some concern. Dwayne stated that Code Enforcement has had conversations with Mr. Houle about cleaning up his property and apparently those conversations have not gone well and made zero strides to clean the property up. Dwayne stated that technically the Town owns Mr. Houle's property because it is under foreclosure and the Town and Mr. Houle has a signed agreement in place. Dwayne indicated he has contacted the Town's attorney and asked since we have tax title right, if the Town can step in to clean it up and he is waiting for a response. Dwayne indicated that a Notice of Violation letter is going out to Mr. Houle giving him a date specific to have the property cleaned up. Selectman Hall feels that is a threatening sign and would like to ensure the safety of the Code Enforcement Officer as well as the Police Department.

7. Review and Approve Warrants and Correspondence:

Warrant:	May 5, 2022	- \$24,332.28
Warrant:	May 17, 2022	- \$571,302.23

Selectman Hall motioned to approve the Warrant of May 5, 2022 for the amount of \$24,332.28 and the Warrant of May 17, 2022 for the amount of \$571,302.23. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0

8. Adjournment:

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

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.