

NORTH BERWICK BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES

JANUARY 24, 2023

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

Also Present: Dwayne Morin

Chairman Galemmo opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2022

N/A

3. PUBLIC INPUT N/A

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. COMMUNICATION TOWER: Update on Project

Dwayne stated that there is not much to report. He stated he met with Civil Consultants to make sure that they are all set to inspect and perform the concrete testing once the project begins. He stated there was a communications issue but hopes that it was solved earlier today. Apparently, there is another town that is on the same police frequency as our police department and they put in a new repeater and it is more than their license allows and it is knocking down our communication. But he is confident this issue will be resolved immediately if not already.

B. PHONE SYSTEM: Update on New System

Dwayne stated they have made significant strides towards getting the new phone system installed. He stated that this week, the majority of the hardware and computers were installed and cabling was run. The switch over date is scheduled for February 1st. That is a Wednesday, and this is by far our slowest day of the week. There will be a time period when our phones will not be working and he will be placing an alert on the Town's website to alert the Public of the switch over. He stated that training will be done while the switch over is taking place.

C. BERWICK GUN RANGE: Discussion on Letter to Berwick Board of Selectman

Dwayne stated he heard from the Berwick Town Manager today and they are proposing February 23rd as a meeting date at 6:00 p.m. at the Berwick Town Hall for the North Berwick and Berwick Board of Selectman to meet to discuss the Berwick Gun Range. The Board Members indicated that they would all attend on February 23, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Reminders: **Next Board of Selectman's Meeting – February 7, 2023 - 6:30 P.M. – Room 212 Town Hall**
 Budget Committee – February 1, 2023 – 6:30 P.M. - Room 212 Town Hall

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. EASTERN TRAIL: PLAN TO BEGIN PLANNING NORTH BERWICK TO SOUTH BERWICK PORTION

Dwayne stated that there is a grant opportunity that has become available for the planning of the Eastern Trail section from Pratt through South Berwick. He stated it is called a PPI Grant and it is similar to the grant that we received for the planning of the section of the trail from Kennebunk to Pratt. He indicated that the one twist is that the Maine DOT would like to see the Towns put forth a cash match of \$2,500.00. This is a change in the policy where in the past, the Eastern Trail, of which we are a dues paying member, puts up the cash match. The Eastern Trail has the cash match (\$5,000.00) for this grant proposal already encumbered. We had a meeting with the MDOT and explained that our budget season had already begun and that the deadline for budget submission had already past, they agreed to allow us to state that we will offer staff time match and that in the future the Town would consider a cash match for future Eastern Trail projects. South Berwick was in the same situation and will be offering the same. Dwayne indicated he has drafted a letter to the MDOT outlining that North Berwick is in favor of the project and will provide staff match, and in the future consider cash match for other grant opportunities.

The letter reads as follows:

January 24, 2023

Support of Eastern Trail Extension – North Berwick to South Berwick Planning Study

To Whom it may Concern:

The Town of North Berwick is writing in support of the PPI application for the Planning Study of extending the Eastern Trail South from North Berwick to South Berwick as part of the 3,000-mile East Coast Greenway.

The Eastern Trail is a valuable resource for the Town of North Berwick. By extending the trail to include the 8 miles from North Berwick to South Berwick, the trail makes a significant contribution to the health of our community by providing transportation and recreational facilities to people of all abilities.

The trail will also provide tangible economic benefits to the Town of North Berwick as the trail will travel through the village area where the majority of the Town's businesses are located.

Further, the trail, when completed, will contribute to the region's ability to promote transportation alternatives for workers. In addition to the local businesses and general public there are two significant industries within our town, Pratt and Whitney and Hussey Seating, that will benefit from extending the trail south to South Berwick.

Access to a facility like the Eastern Trail makes North Berwick a more attractive location for residents and businesses alike. We fully support the Eastern Trail and the PPI application to move this project forward.

The Town of North Berwick commits staff resources to this project, however, due to the timing of the application with our budget process we are unable to provide a cash commitment to the project. The Town's budget process for FY24 is currently underway and budget submissions were required to be requested by December 31, 2022. The Town was unaware of the need for a cash commitment until after the deadline and this was not included in the budget. The Town's current budget submissions were 11.57% higher than last year's budget and at this time a cash commitment cannot be made. The Town would be willing to consider a cash commitment to the project in future years where it can be included in the town's budget process.

The Eastern Trail, of which North Berwick is a member and pays annual dues, does have the financial resources to commitment to the PPI grant process in the form of a cash match. North Berwick is an active member of the Eastern Trail Management District and funds from dues are part of the cash match.

If we can be of any assistance in this project, please call on us.

Town of North Berwick, Maine...

Selectman Hall motioned that Dwayne's letter be sent to the Maine DOT regarding the Eastern Trail. Selectman Cowan seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

B. BUDGET COMMITTEE: APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Dwayne indicated that Colleen Kelly has expressed an interest in the open Budget Committee seat. Colleen is a new resident and recently purchased a home this summer in North Berwick on the corner of West 2 and Morrills Mill Road. She has completed an application and the Board needs to approve her appointment.

Selectman Cowan motioned that Colleen Kelly be appointed to the North Berwick Budget Committee. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

C. TOWN REPORT: COVER AND DEDICATION

Dwayne stated that it is that time of the year to determine a Town Report Cover and Dedication. He welcomed suggestions from the Board.

The Board will discuss and select a cover and dedication.

D. BUDGET: REVIEW PRELIMINARY BUDGET REQUESTS FOR FY24

Dwayne stated that before we discuss budget, the Board needs to establish a cost-of-living increases for the employees for the coming year. Dwayne has provided the Board with a draft proposed chart with a 6.5% increase.

Selectman Hall motioned that we approve the cost-of-living increases for FY24 for non-contractual employees. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

Dwayne stated that since the last meeting, he has made the changes that the Board discussed as well as other changes that he noticed needed correcting, such as energy costs, etc. and determined an error in the spreadsheet calculations. The budget is approximately 3.8% higher than last year versus the 2% that he mentioned at last meeting. Dwayne continues to work on the budget to see where areas can be cut back. Chairman Galemme stated that considering inflation, 3.8% is not horrible. Dwayne went over all areas of the budget in further detail as he did at last week's meeting.

Dwayne indicated that in the past 26 budgets he has put together, there have maybe been two budgets at this rate. Selectman Cowan stated that most of these increases are out of the Town's control and are also post-covid related.

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

Selectman Hall questioned what the Town's policies are regarding warming centers when there are power outages. He stated he understood the Town opens the Rescue Center for charging and warming there. Dwayne indicated that recently we had people in all of our fire stations for availability and those are the only buildings that have back-up power. Selectman Hall asked if that information was available on our website when there is an emergency. Dwayne stated when there is an extended outage, that information is in fact available. Selectman Hall inquired about opening up the high school. Dwayne stated that is not controlled by the Town so he has no control of whether or not that is something they would do. That would be 100% the superintendent's call. Selectman Hall indicated he would be sure to bring it up at the Strategic Planning Committee.

7. REVIEW AND APPROVE WARRANTS AND CORRESPONDENCE:

Warrant:	January 17, 2023	- \$760,667.71
Warrant:	January 24, 2023	- \$ 0

Selectman Hall motioned to approve the warrant for January 17, 2023, in the amount of \$760,667.71. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

8. ADJOURNMENT:

Selectman Cowan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm. Selectman Johnson, Jr. 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.