

# **NORTH BERWICK SELECT BOARD MINUTES JANUARY 9, 2024**

**Present:** Chairperson Galemmo, Selectperson Johnson, Jr., Selectperson Cowan,  
Selectperson Johnson, Sr., Selectperson Hall

**Also Present:** Dwayne Morin, Rebecca Reed, Mark Reed, Toby Bowden, Derek Fitzgerald,  
Brian Gosselin, Mike Barker, Alex Sargent, Randy A., Gary Flashner

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**2. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 19, 2023**

Selectperson Cowan motioned to approve the Minutes of December 19, 2023 as amended. Selectperson Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

**3. PUBLIC INPUT**

N/A

**4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**A. VERIZON: Update on Project**

Dwayne indicated that Verizon is up and running. He stated there are still some punch list items that need to be addressed but they are working to finalize the project.

**B. REFERENDUM QUESTIONS: Final Zoning Amendments for Town Meeting**

Dwayne has included the draft referendum questions put together for the Planning Board Public Hearing on January 25, 2024. There is a question on housing law and the solar energy definition change.

**Reminders: Next Select Board's Meeting – January 23, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.-  
Room 212**

## **5. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **A. FIRE STATION: Meeting with Fire and Rescue Chiefs Regarding New Station**

Dwayne indicated that the Rescue Chief has been talking with Senator Collins' office about a potential earmark for the new Rescue/Fire Station and he wanted to open up the discussion regarding this. Dwayne stated that there are some grant opportunities for Fire Stations at the federal level and the Fire and Rescue Chiefs would like to revisit the project and start discussions regarding a plan for the project. Dwayne stated he has contacted the architects and they have provided information for the Town to consider. The architects had provided two ideas to consider, one being a conventional construction costs and that estimate would be about \$6.4 million and the other is a design build and that estimate would be about \$4.6 million. If there are grant possibilities that could reduce the town's overall costs while still completing the project, that would be a great opportunity for the Town. Port City Architects is willing to discuss these options and how they could be part of grant process and final product moving forward. Dwayne referenced prior correspondence with Port City for the Board's review along with the report from 2021 on the project. Currently the Town has about \$327,000.00 in the Fire Station Account. For every \$1 million the town borrowed on a 30-year bond at 4% interest, the cost would be approximately \$58,000.00 a year. (\$2 million - \$116,000.00, \$3 million - \$174,000.00, \$4 million - \$232,000.00) Based on this year's budget, every \$50K equals approximately 5 cents on the mill rate.

Mike Barker stated that this discussion opened up in 2018, then COVID happened and rising building costs, etc., but after researching and discussions, they would like to go forward. He has had conversations regarding grants and they are looking for funding from the federal government. The current rescue station will need a new roof soon as well as a new heating system. He stated they are running out of space, as there is someone there 365 days per year, 24 hours a day. As they continue to grow, and how busy the town is getting, there is a true need and they need to move to the next phase this year. Dwayne stated that this project has been on the shelf since COVID and the price has gone up about \$2 million dollars since the last report and if we do a design build, it would be about the same price as originally discussed. Dwayne stated that the design build is negotiated with design builders and it would be a metal building, using Patco's Industrial Division and it does not have to go through the bid process.

Dwayne stated that his recommendation is to move forward and sit down with the design build architects, submit federal funding and then come back to the towns people to raise the money for the balance. Mike stated there is a delay this year in funding.

Brian Gosselin stated that the project as a whole really needs to be completed as the Fire Department is running out of room as well. He stated one truck will be kept downtown and the rest of the trucks at the new Rescue/Fire Station. The new building would also provide more bunk space to reduce response time. Dwayne stated he will look into a federal fire station program for bonding which provides lower interest rates. Mike Barker stated our town is well

ahead since we have draft design plans and have already started putting money aside. Selectperson Cowan wants to ensure a quality project, using due diligence, and explore all options available.

Selectperson Hall motioned to move forward with the project and allow the Rescue and Fire Departments to seek federal funding in doing so. Selectperson Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

**B. BUDGET FY25: Review Preliminary Budget FY25**

Dwayne indicated the initial budget requests have been received and he is going through them and reviewing the budget. Utilizing a 4% increase in personnel costs (CPI is running around 3.5% but final numbers will not be known until January 15), it would appear that the requests are about 9.5% higher (increase of \$650,000.00) than last year's budget. Based on this year's budget, every \$50K equals approximately 5 cents on the mill rate. Good news is that there should be additional revenues as our investment earnings have increase significantly (+\$115,000.00 a year).

Dwayne stated based on the numbers he is saying there will be a 20-cent tax increase but is working with the bank to increase interest earnings which will help with budget costs. Dwayne also stated it was a very uneventful audit year and our financial situation is pretty much status quo which is good.

**C. SAND POND BRIDGE: Preliminary Report from Wright Pierce**

Dwayne indicated that the City of Sanford and Town of North Berwick has received the initial report from Wright Pierce on the Sand Pond Bridge. Over the past few weeks, the State of Maine has finalized their inspection of the bridge (really a 12' culvert) and has required the posting of the bridge to 22 tons. Dwayne stated the Town's regular plow trucks cannot go over the bridge anymore due to weight.

Dwayne indicated the report has three (3) alternatives to consider that range in cost from \$1.4 to \$3.3 million. These estimates are based on contracting out the construction and not considering utilizing Town and City Public Work staff and local contractors to assist. Dwayne has asked for a meeting with Sanford and Wright Pierce to go over the report as he thinks there may be other options available to compete a project. One idea is to seek the assistance of the State's MPI grant program. The state's contribution would be capped at \$875,000.00. He has not had an opportunity to perform a complete review of the 77-page report but he thinks there are other options to assist in lowering the cost to the towns. There is also a stream crossing grant that is capped at \$200,000.00 that we are also considering, however, that grant application is due in by January 19 and it may be premature for this year.

Dwayne stated the cheapest way out is to do what was previously done on Valley Road where the water was drained and pour a concrete bottom but they are saying we would need to

raise the road. Dwayne has talked to Sanford to see if they would be interested if North Berwick ran the project of rehabbing the culvert and they indicated they were open to that. Dwayne stated there still needs to be much discussion on this project but wanted to provide what he had to the Board.

**D. ZBA: Clough & Reed Reapplication**

Dwayne stated he received two re-applications for the Zoning Board of Appeals. One is Norman Clough and the other is Rebecca Reed.

Selectperson Hall motioned to reappoint Norman Clough and Rebecca Reed to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Selectperson Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

**6. OTHER BUSINESS**

Dwayne stated that he received a complaint regarding the snow as the caller felt the sidewalks were not cleared fast enough. The sidewalks were in fact cleared by the Town but when the State plowed, they pushed the snow back into the sidewalks. The Town was out early the next morning to plow again.

**7. REVIEW AND APPROVE WARRANTS AND CORRESPONDENCE:**

Warrant:	December 26, 2023	- \$ 10,620.92
Warrant:	January 2, 2024	- \$ 110,427.92
Warrant:	January 9, 2024	- \$ 17,446.16

Selectperson Hall motioned to approve the warrant for December 26, 2023 in the amount of \$10,620.92, the warrant for January 2, 2024 in the amount of \$110,427.92 and the warrant for January 9, 2024 in the amount of \$17,446.16. Selectperson Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

**8. ADJOURNMENT:**

Selectperson Cowan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 pm. Selectperson Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

Respectively Submitted,  
Jennifer Berard, Stenographer

Original to Town Clerk

Chairperson: Charles Galemmo

Selectperson: Jonathan Hall

Selectperson: Michael Johnson, Jr.

Selectperson: Wendy Cowan

Selectperson: Michael Johnson, Sr.