

**Minutes**  
**SELECT BOARD**

Monday, April 26, 2021, 6:00 p.m.  
Via Zoom

Bob opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

*Present for the Selectboard:* Robert Armstrong, Chair, Erica Goleman, Phil Kantor

*Others Present:* Gerry and Jiyanna LeBlanc, Olive \_\_\_\_\_, residents; Jaymie Stanton, Project Manager, Nexamp; Janet Chayes, Michele Turre, Pixie Holbrook, Open Space Committee; Megan McDonough, Habitat for Humanity; Kimberly MacPhee, FRCOG; Laurie Lucier, Town Clerk; Veronique Blanchard, Town Administrator candidate; Thomas Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Ross Perry, Interim Town Administrator; Louise M. Beckett, Assistant to the Town Administrator

*Minutes*

*Approval of minutes of April 20, 2021*

**On a motion from Bob to approve the minutes of April 20, 2021, Erica seconded; Bob, Phil, and Erica said aye, so the motion passed unanimously.**

*Warrants*

**On a motion from Phil to approve the Vendor warrant for \$197,491.97, the Payroll warrant for \$115,554.92 and the Payroll deduction warrant for \$28,691.95, Erica seconded; Bob, Phil, and Erica said aye, so the motion passed unanimously.**

*Meetings Attended by Select Board Members*

Phil, Bob and Erica attended interview meetings for town administrator and an executive session to select a candidate. Phil also met with Mary Wigmore on Friday.

*Public Comments*

*6:10 p.m. Hearing: Joint Eversource/Verizon Pole Hearing for Nexamp project, 2394 Main Poland Road*

Jaymie said she can't speak too much except to say that the new pole is to be installed between the two existing poles that feed the (area?) Bob said that Eversource sent enough documentation to hold the hearing and approve the poles. Gerry said we don't know where the poles are supposed to be installed, that he got a postcard asking him to attend the meeting. Bob said that there are a series of poles, and the map is highlighted showing where the new poles are supposed to go. Jaymie said the entry to the drive is between the existing poles. Gerry asked if there was going to be any special equipment and asked what type of pole was being installed. Jaymie said it's a standard wooden pole similar to others on that road. Gerry said he had concerns about things that change our environment, like LED lights on 24 hours a day, emitting frequencies of sounds, and asked if anyone could tell us anything about that? Jaymie said she didn't think there will be anything that emits light or noise but was not able to confirm completely at this time. Jiyanna said she felt they were underinformed, that it would be nice to know what to expect and whether it feels reasonable. If there's an issue once it's up it's done. Bob said we can pass on those concerns to Eversource and that he hasn't heard that this will be any different than any other pole. Gerry asked if the abutters' opinion have any bearing on what the select board will do. Olive asked how many poles total are we talking about. Bob said just one. Olive said she thought 4 or 5 poles went in the other day. Jaymie asked if it's typical to have to add poles for such a project. The space between poles 32/94 and 32/95 was too far. The proposed new pole is just south of the entry. Jiyanna said it's closer to our house. Gerry asked if the Selectboard could table this issue until we have more information. Erica said she was surprised that Eversource isn't here. Phil said that in previous pole hearings Eversource didn't show up, but most hearings were to have poles moved on their property. Eversource doesn't always show up. This hearing was moved up because it's necessary to alleviate noise from generator. If we table it now, it prolongs the noise. Bob said there's a generator that runs constantly to warm the batteries because there's no power. Gerry said the abutters are suffering because they're not getting straight talk from the company. He said he felt the board should table this request until a representative can tell us exactly what's going to be there. Bob

said his understanding is that they need to replace the pole to reduce the noise. Gerry said that's not what we were told earlier. They should have known that the span wasn't great enough when they put in the plan in 2019. Bob asked if they wanted a motion to table the decision until Eversource could be there. Gerry said that was reasonable. Ross asked if there's a list of questions to make the next meeting more productive. Gerry said the concerns are around lighting on 24/7, noise, what is the equipment? Is the pole a standard pole, or high-tension wire, or high-voltage? He said he was not against what's reasonable but just wanted to know the plan, to be able to participate in the process. Olive said she was not aware of the meeting at all until she met with some neighbors. She said she was also concerned with erosion on the opposite side of the road. Nobody acknowledged my concern. There's no silt screening. Lot of debris has gone through the culvert and is washing out on the wetland. Jiyanna asked about underground wiring. Can we have that defined? Ross said remarks should be confined to issues just for the pole as that's what the hearing is about and that he will pass those concerns on to Eversource. Erica asked as this wasn't anticipated, can Eversource project future poles related to this project? Gerry said there are records in the planning board minutes, and that we were told there would not be a hearing, but here we are. Tom said that if they reschedule the hearing, it would have to be posted. Ross said he thought that if there is a date certain we don't need to post. Gerry asked what is the criteria for notification of a meeting? Ross said he believed that abutters within 300 feet need to be notified, but the list of abutters is an automated process. **On a motion from Bob to continue the hearing to May 10, Erica seconded; Bob, Phil, and Erica said aye, so the motion passed unanimously.**

#### *Old Business*

*Authorize Kimberly MacPhee to submit on-line grant applications for the Town for MVP and 319 projects Opportunities for future planning and implementation work on South River flood mitigation projects*

Current grant for work on the South River ends June 30th and other opportunities are open now. MVP action grant applications are due May 7 at 2 p.m. and comes with a 25% match for the grant covered if town meeting votes to approve money for the purchase of the properties. She would like to continue permitting work for the Oxbow reconnection project and Johnny Bean Brook, and also to continue analysis of a hydraulics model done on Pumpkin Hollow and upstream through the center bridge. More work is needed to identify additional flood protection projects if they want to continue working with the COG. Would the select board support the application? She said she would need to get a copy of the town meeting warrant, or an email containing the language for the property application. The select board will need to sign the letter. If town meeting says no, then obviously the town would withdraw their MVP application because that's the match for the grant.

Another opportunity is the FEMA rebuilding infrastructure which requires a statement of interest. MEMA has a consultant on retainer until the end of the fiscal year and will do the cost/benefit analysis for free. As it's a more complicated project, they were very intrigued. There is a match required and there is no start period if you can show you have already been working on this project. I will confirm that and will structure the agreement so that there is not more money the town needs to put forward. Phil asked if all the projects mentioned are going to be completed without any increase to the town's taxes. Kimberly said she thought we can meet the MA requirement if we get the new MVP grant without any increase. Phil said there was a possibility that some of the proposal might not pass, but other parts would. Kimberly said she would try to structure it so if we don't get all parts, we could still get some. Phil said there are parts of it that have some opposition. Kimberly asked if he had a dollar figure. Phil said that with the two smaller parcels, there's no opposition, but the bigger purchase has opposition that he was aware of. **On a motion from Bob to pursue the grant applications Kimberly recommended, Erica seconded, Bob, Phil, and Erica said aye, so the motion passed unanimously.**

#### *Sign ATM Warrant*

Tom read the changes to Article 21 from what it originally read and the changes requested this evening so that it applies only to 69 Main Street. Kimberly said she had been assuming that town meeting would pass all the articles but would change the language to include the possibility that some articles will not pass. Ross said we just don't want to prevent someone from doing something on the front part of the parcel. Phil said article 20 is the first reference to 69 Main Street, and the rest of (the discussion on it) is in articles 21, 22, and 23 – do you want to be first on that topic? Janet said that was a good point, and that we should do an introduction to the topic using the smaller properties – re-order the articles. Tom asked if they should be ordered small to large which was agreed to. **On a motion from Bob to pass the warrant as modified today, changing the order and rewording the article transferring from existing special revenue funds accounts to specify the purchase of 69 Main Street, Erica seconded, Bob, Phil, and Erica said aye, so the motion passed unanimously.**

**On a motion from Erica to recommend articles 25 and 26, Bob seconded, Bob, Phil, and Erica said aye, so the motion passed unanimously.**

**On a motion from Phil to recommend article 27 Erica seconded, Bob, Phil, and Erica said aye, so the motion passed unanimously.**

*New Town Administrator: discussion*

Erica said she felt there should be no discussion as mutually Véronique is our first choice and we will begin negotiations tomorrow.

*6:30 p.m. JOINT MEETING with Capital Improvements Planning Committee*

*Voting by individual "clicker" electronic voting system and other Town Meeting logistics*

Tom advised the board that the Capital Improvements Planning does not have a quorum. Ross said that there's about \$10,000 in COVID money, which is exactly a correct use for it, so it won't cost the town anything. Ross said he used them last year in Sterling and they are really a simple, fantastic solution. Jimmy is in favor as is Laurie, who did all the work of getting the quote. If people are concerned about their vote being known it's helpful. For example, for a 4/5 majority vote the system makes the counts easier and accurate and it speeds up town meeting. It avoids raising hands and recounts. Ross also said he will arrange for a technician to be there so that we can avoid any problems. Laurie said it's also a permanent record going forward. Ross recommended purchasing 300 of the clickers, which are \$30 each. Ross said there would also be a backup plan. **On a motion from Erica to recommend the purchase of 300 clickers with CARES funding, Bob seconded; Bob, Phil, and Erica said aye, so the motion passed unanimously.**

*New Business*

*Open Space Committee - Plan for the South River Meadow*

Janet said the approved plan for the South River Meadow includes benches. Pixie said a fundraiser has raised enough to purchase an additional bench they would like to dedicate to Judy Loughlin. Janet said they are just looking for the select board's formal support for the gift, and to accept the gift of the memorial bench.

*South River Meadow Entry Sign*

Janet said the South River Meadow Entry Sign is coming and we hope to have it up this summer. Additional signage will also be placed.

As to the Pollinator Planning Project: We are working with the FRCOG and other towns in the region on large-scale planning and have selected the Bigelow property, which the town owns across from the meadow.

*Discussion re: Habitat for Humanity building a home at 638 South Deerfield Rd.*

Megan McDonough, Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity said that they are in the process of just starting to plan to build a single-family house and have submitted an application to CPA to help with construction. Typically when partnering with towns is to go through a local initiative program. It puts the property on the state affordable housing list to make it permanently affordable. Habitat raises money from the town and from private donors and uses local contractors and the homeowner. She said they have worked with Franklin Tech. and Smith Voc. and will reach out to Franklin Tech for this project. If the CPA article passes, we would be coming back for funding for the select board to sign as a joint application. Bob said that we lack affordable housing in Conway and this would be a first step. There would be a lien on the house with a deed restriction that they can't re-sell without contacting Habitat and the town to arrive at an affordable sale price to the next buyer.

*Discussion of Community Host Agreement Policy*

Phil said he looked at both Conway's and Deerfield's agreements and recommended we adopt Deerfield's agreement instead of ours. Erica asked if the board could table it to next meeting. The board agreed to table the discussion.

*Support for armored mudballs as the official sedimentary structure of Massachusetts*

Erica said there are no other contenders so she is happy to sign. **On a motion from Bob to sign the petition of support to name armored mudballs as the official sedimentary structure of Massachusetts Erica seconded, Bob, Phil, and Erica said aye, so the motion passed unanimously.**

*Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting*      *None*

*Town Administrator update*

*Departments*

Since Tuesday, I have worked mostly on organizing the Town Administrator interviews and the necessary follow-up.

I've also been busy with the ongoing transition to bringing our Interim Town Administrator, Ross, Perry, into the full swing of Town business. He will be a great addition and has already added a great deal of value to the work of the office. It's been a bit challenging to share the work but we've managed well, addressing a wide variety of issues and procedures.

Finally, I'd like to thank the Town for all it has given me, including the opportunity to help facilitate the Town Academy and try to encourage more and better-informed participation in Town affairs. I may well look on my time here as the golden days of my career, and it has been a pleasure working with all of the talented and committed residents who make the Town the gem of the West County that it is. Thank you again.

*Select Board member comments and concerns*      *none*

*Mail*

Tom said he had received an email from Buckland asking to gauge interest pursuing shared services, and a survey, which he would forward to all.

*Announcements*

Phil announced that on at 2 p.m. on May 5 on Pine Hill Road, there is a group meeting about the MacLeish Studio.

**Bob asked if the board would agree to go to every other Monday meetings starting on May 10<sup>th</sup> and upon the agreement of all he made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Erica and Bob, Phil, and Erica said aye. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.**

**Next Meeting:** Scheduled for Monday, May 3, 2021, at 1 p.m., via Zoom