

"These minutes of the Town of Whitefield Board of Selectmen have been recorded by its Secretary. Though believed to be accurate and correct they are subject to additions, deletions, and corrections by the Board of Selectmen at its next meeting when the Board votes its final approval of the minutes. They are being made available at this time to conform to the requirements of N.H. RSA 91-A:2."

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 19, 2021

At the Selectmen's meeting held on Monday, April 19, 2021 at 6:31 p.m. the Selectmen participated via Zoom:

Peter Corey is at his home in Whitefield, maintaining social distancing.

Shawn White is at this home in Whitefield, maintaining social distancing.

John Tholl is at his home in Whitefield, maintaining social distancing.

Others in attendance via Zoom: Bob Loiacono, Sondra Brekke, Terry Lufkin, Brian Gosselin, Fred Ingerson, John Ross, Jr., Rob Larson, Melissa Farrow, Ed Samson.

Chairman Corey called the Meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Brian Gosselin of Brian's Autobody Re: Brown Street Furniture Building

Brian said he is here to discuss the Brown Street Furniture Building. He said he spoke to Gerald Winn, real estate agent from Littleton, NH, who recently met with the Board. He was wondering if it is public knowledge that he should be aware of in reference to the tax situation there. Brian said that he and Mr. Abbott had a verbal agreement for him to rent the property until the tax situation and EPA issue could be cleared up. Brian is trying to figure out where things stand with the town, and what the next process is going to be. Is there something he can do or offer to help the situation out? He said that it has been a tough year and 4 months for him. Business is tough, money is tight, and the building needs tons of work. He did what he could to get in there and get going. He took out two separate loans in his name to get the property up to snuff. His last payment is a weekly payment on June 25th, \$801.25 a week payment. After that it frees up money for him. He doesn't know if he could set up something to make some payments to the town starting July 1st where he could make payments each month and if he was paying \$900 a month that add us up to one year of taxes and one year of back taxes. He would be willing to do that for three years and see where things are at then. At least someone is doing something about it. He has not talked to Mr. Abbott lately. Last time they had a discussion and he had some water damage due to the roof leaking, and that conversation did not go well. He doesn't know if Mr. Abbott has paid any taxes or not. Brian said he has given him some money and the construction company who is putting materials on the property has as well. He is not sure what his future holds and what his next move will be. He will be financially able to do something to help out. It is an offer on the table.

Peter said Brian had cut out a couple of times. Brian said he thinks he is receiving money from the construction company. They reached out to Brian and he told them to contact Mr. Abbott. Brian said that he has \$65,000 to \$70,000 invested in that building of his own money. He is trying to find out what is going on. He doesn't want to show up some day with a padlock on the door. He would like to work with somebody so it doesn't all go up in smoke.

Peter said Mr. Abbott is the property owner of record. The back taxes on the property as well as water and sewer rents are approaching \$100,000. We have not received any payments against that as long as Peter has been on the board for six years and no contact from Mr. Abbott or attempts to make payments. There is an EPA lien against the property which is also somewhere around \$130,000. The property has not yet received a clean bill of health in terms of a level II environmental assessment. Town is working on funding from the state to do this. Peter said he believes he speaks for the board in saying that we are glad to have the property being used. We appreciate that you are coming forward and looking to maybe making a contribution. At the end of the day, the property owner is still Mr. Abbott. It was suggested to Brian that he might want to talk with an attorney. We can't advise what you should or should not do. No decision on the property has been made by the select board due to the environmental issues and EPA issues. We are looking for opportunity to resolve these issues and get the property back to a productive use. It would be best if Brian could work something out with Mr. Abbott. Shawn said he agrees that he needs to speak with Mr. Abbott and work through him. Brian said he has. His original conversation with Mr. Abbott he said two things you need to do is go to the town and speak to them about the back taxes and work something out with them and to get the EPA issue worked out. He was up against getting the building up to be workable. There was no water or septic at the building, and he had to pay to have wiring put in the ground. Everything that has been done has been done on Brian's dime. Mr. Abbott has nothing invested since Brian has been there. He made it clear he wants nothing to do with the property. The original discussion was go to the town and see what they will do. He has copies of the bill from the EPA that says it is \$49,000. He spoke to someone at the EPA and he was told you are not Mr. Abbott. Brian said that he is the one who is renting it and looking to own it. He has an investment in it. Brian said as he recalls \$49,000 is billed to Mr. Abbott, and \$80,000 was supposed to be billed to the previous owners. He understands it is an outstanding bill and someone has to pay it. He offered to make payments and was told that he was not the owner of the property, and that they could only split it up into two payments. He thinks only \$49,000 is Mr. Abbott's responsibility. He told Brian to take care of those two things, and then he would sign off on the property. He has \$65,000 into the property. He has not looked into the liens on the property. Peter advised him to speak with an attorney. Even if he paid off the EPA lien and back taxes, he could be taking on an environmental responsibility. Mr. Tholl said that he agrees that Mr. Abbott is the one who has control over the property. We appreciate he wants to make things right, but he should look out and protect himself. Brian said he just wanted to see where things are going. He is trying to be the better part of something. The select board thanked Mr. Gosselin for reaching out and being

someone who wants to cooperate. Brian said that he hopes he can come back to us with better news.

Airport Commission Appointments: The approved and signed appointments to the Mt. Washington Regional Airport Commission: Jim Ash, Airport Commissioner – Whitefield Representative, Three-Year Term; Jay Ennis, Airport Commissioner-At-Large; Three Year Term; Wendy Roberts, Airport Commissioner-At-Large, Three-Year Term.

Department Head Meeting

Chair Corey said it has been a while since we have had a Department Head Meeting. He said we did ask each of the Department Heads to discuss the fees they currently charge and if they feel there should be an increase in any of those fees. We always look at the expenses and don't seem to look at our revenues. We have seen significant increases in salaries, state retirement, health insurance, and other costs and looking at revenues may be a way to offset some of those increases.

Chief Samson: Things have been status quo. Managing through the winter, able to maintain being fully staffed, which is fortunate because a lot of departments have not been able to be fully staffed. It has been busy with no major changes. Last year we received a donation and speaking to them they would like to earmark it for something specific. In discussing it with the individual who made the donation, we agreed to move forward in using the money to purchase new firearms. Chief Samson said the vendor offered a trade-in for our current guns or the officers could purchase those firearms for the same discounted price. The officers have said they would like to pursue the purchase of those firearms. Looking for the board's approval to purchase those. The Board was ok with this. When we pay for the guns, the money will go directly to Interstate Arms.

In reference to the fee schedule, we took a look at all the different things. We increased the reports and ordinance ones just a couple of years ago so those seem to be on par. Insurance reports are on par with others. Currently, Fingerprints and vin verifications we don't charge for. Ed feels we should not charge for vin verifications as that is included in the services that the taxpayers pay. In reference to the fingerprints, we are currently limiting that service for in-town residents. We could continue that for town residents, and maybe look at adding a fee for out of town or businesses. The SROs in the schools have fingerprint kits and are doing the school district employees so we would not need to charge them for that service. Ed said he would propose for residents to provide the service free of charge. What would the fee be for non-residents and businesses? Ed replied that the standard fee for fingerprints is \$10. Ed said on the emergency management side, Chief Ross and he have been speaking as changes come. We feel that we should keep things status quo for now and see how it goes.

Ed said we did purchase the cruiser for the quote we had received for town meeting. We used the same company as last time, Colonial Motors. They keep an in-stock inventory. The issue is

the equipment to outfit the cruiser takes twice as long to get here. Hope to get it started soon and transitioned over. Shawn reminded Ed to do a written pre-approval purchase order for the purchase of the car. Ed has the quote for the outfitting as well and will get a pre-approval done up for that as well. John had a question on the department's and town's policy about who come to the building and don't wear a mask. Ed said it is one at a time in the lobby, and they need to wear a mask. There are some provided in the lobby if people don't have one. Shawn said what are we doing when residents or town employees come in without a mask? Is it being enforced? Ed said he isn't aware of any situations with that going on. It is a case by case basis. It is more of an educational piece and hasn't been challenged. Shawn said he thinks it is still the board's position that the employees need to wear a mask. There has been no change with that.

Recreation Department – Melissa

Melissa said baseball season has come into swing. Ed has been helping out with baseball and Melissa appreciates it. Kids and parents seem excited. Want to make some upgrades to the field to make it safer. She has emailed back and forth with Rob about the Highland Street fields for TLC to practice on. Melissa spoke to Rob about water and sewer to the legion field and he said it should be addressed sometime after June. He told her that something came up with an easement at the Legion Field. John Tholl said that easement was signed last year as he was the one who signed it for the Legion. Melissa said that she was told it just came through recently. There is no water or sewer there currently so she will need to put in a porta-potty for at least the baseball season. These are usually there for the baseball and soccer seasons. She feels it will be best to have the summer program at the town office facility. She still wants a space big enough so she feels it is best to use the town hall building. She will have an expense of \$100 every 4 weeks for the porta-potty. Hopefully the water/sewer hook-up will be done before winter.

Melissa reviewed her fee schedule. She is going to increase the rate for the summer program. It is a \$5 a week increase. Residents will go from \$85 to \$90 and any additional children will be \$85. Non-resident fee will be increased from \$90 to \$95 and any additional children will be \$90. This fee includes the trips and swim program. Parents have been aware of the increase. She is proposing to keep the sports fees the same. Don't have the senior program at this time.

The Board asked Rob to speak to the water and sewer for the legion field. This has been talked about every year. Is this going to get done? What would be holding it up? Rob said that easement got signed late summer last year. We couldn't get it started last year. Since the money that is paying for the dirt work is coming out of the highway department and is about \$17,000, Rob wants to wait until June 1st to see where we are with the highway budget. Salt purchases looking good so there should be money left over in that line item. Rob said we are going to wait until June 1st to be sure we are ok on the budget. Between July and August dirt work will get done. That is the big expense. Shawn asked what is the expense? Rob said we need to have someone else to do it. The crew just doesn't have the time to do it. Melissa said her only concern is she is a little bit afraid that this would not be completed before the ground had frozen

and she just wants to be assured this is going to happen. She said she can cut corners, and/or get donations to get this job done. This has dragged on so long and we would like to get it done. Shawn suggested trying to get this project done in the next month. It is not a big project. He thought the highway crew could put that sewer installed in three to four days. If we can at least get that done. Try to at least get it going. Do what we need to get it done. If they can get this job done, can someone else do the work down at the highland park. She has been in touch with Mike Josselyn. Has given a quote and bring some infield mix in there as well. He is willing to help out at the legion field as well. We want to make it safe for the kids. Judy said there is money in the parks and playgrounds budget as well. Rob asked if the board wants to hold off on the Old East Road demo? They just started taking that trailer down. Took the excavator over today to start the demo. Peter suggested that they finish the demo, and that will give them time to mobilize for the ballfield job. It was agreed that we should do what we can to get the sewer and water lines as soon as possible.

John Ross, Jr. – Fire Chief

John asked Rob in reference to the water line – are you going to tie into the hydrant at the fire station and are they going to replace the hydrant? Rob said yes to both of those. They will replace the hydrant and tie into the water. John said that they are having problems with ambulance 2. Parts are getting obsolete. Looking to replace that down the road. Whole exhaust system is obsolete now. We were able to get it fixed. Power Cot and Power Load system has been ordered for ambulance 1, and should be coming in any day. This was approved at town meeting. Shawn has some information on paving the parking lot at the fire station that was supposed to be done. When we got the driveway permit from DOT, there was supposed to be a permanent fence, possibly a chain link fence. The temporary barriers we put up caused difficulty plowing in the winter. DOT was alright with having a fence in the summer time and taking it down in the winter. Rob and John were going to work on what they wanted to do. Do the Selectmen have any idea what you would want for a fence? Shawn thought we had a discussed a split/rail fence. Whatever looks decent, functions, and is easily removable. Rob doesn't want to be boring holes in the cement. Cheaper to remove the pavement. Spoke about paving at the fire station. Shawn said he would donate his time and he will help them do that at the fire station.

John said he provide the Board with copies of his department's fee schedule. He doesn't believe he will raise anything. So far everyone is paying, but it was agreed that the school was not going to be paying. He is considering charging for usage of the tanker. He is thinking \$50 per trip and \$75 for an out of town trip. We can raise some revenues from that. He is also thinking of charging a non-transport fee so when we go to lift assists. It is happening over and over again with the same people. He is going to check with some other towns. Insurance wouldn't cover it. Shawn asked what is the plan for the ambulance? John said we may look at next year to purchase a new one. We actually rotate it in and out to keep the new one kind of new.

Rob Larson – Department of Public Works

Wastewater treatment facility is on track, and they are doing equipment start-ups on individual pieces in the facility. June is projected for start-up and final sign off is September. We are good with the EPA on that, and we got the extension for that for the mandates for testing.

Water project started up again. Currently working on Water Street. They ran into a problem boring underneath the river. They hit a whole conundrum of boulders, and they can't bore under the river. They don't want to continue boring and risk damaging their equipment. They looked at an older line in the river bed and put a valve on both sides and pressure tested it and inspected it. It is in very good condition so we opted to connect the water line to the exiting piece under that and join on the other side. There was no drop in pressure or flow. This is going to save the project a lot of money, which hopefully means we can do other work.

Mike Webster is going to go to work at the high school. He will be here until May 1st. Rob said we will have to search for a new employee in mid-June.

Rob said he has the original treatment plant survey, and it shows the jog in it which would address the issue with disputed area with Mr. Chase. Joyce researched the deed. It was a railroad easement we were awarded. We did not find an easement or a jog in that boundary. We are back to square one, and have not resolved the issue.

Rob asked the Board if they had any recommendations for the color of the crosswalks? Shawn said he sees that Cabot went back to florescent yellow/green sidewalks. Shawn said it was expensive to maintain that when all of downtown was paved with new pavement. Shawn thinks if we went back to standard white sidewalks that saves us money. Shawn's recommendation is to go back to the standard, white crosswalks. Rob said we used the green because we had it. Last year we went with mustard yellow. Rob is recommending we go back with the standard white. Peter said it is personal preference. John likes the white. Shawn said that crosswalks at a stop sign only have to be two parallel lines at a minimum of 60 inches apart within the lines. Non-stop sign crosswalks have to be 60 inches side to side with two parallel lines and crossbars in the center.

Rob said he would like to sell that Onam Generator that came from the fire station and ended up in the trailer. Rob would like to sell it and get the trailer back to Chief Ross. The Board thought it was a good idea.

Rob said in reference to DPW Fees, there are sever changes he would like to make. Trash bags for the transfer station. Transportation as of March 1s went from \$270 a trip to \$319. A trip to Mt. Carberry went up significantly. The increase is needed in order to cover that cost plus the fuel surcharge went up. To balance that, he needs to do something with trash bag fees. We increased them for the first time a while ago, and it went well. Rob would like to increase them by \$1 a case so instead of \$17 it will be \$18 for the large bags and an increase of \$12 to \$13 for

the small bags. Another change is we give away one box of bags to the stores that sell the bags. They get one free box for every 15 sold, and Rob would like to change that to 20 units sold then they get one free box. Peter said he thinks changing the cases from 15 to 20 for the vendors is reasonable. They should get something for their time in dealing with it. Peter thinks the cost for the trash bags should be a larger increase. We had a significant increase in the tipping fees, labor fees, retirement has gone up, etc. If you do a comparison with neighboring communities, we are very low but that is not a reason to raise the fee. The intent is to cover the cost of disposal, cost of bags has gone up. 80% of the people everything is in one bag. There is no incentive for them to recycle anything. Cheap enough to throw it away versus recycling. He would like to see us go to \$20 for the large bags and \$15 for the small fees to incentivize people. John said he has mixed feelings. People tend to throw everything away rather than recycle. He thinks it will create more angst. Shawn asked when are we getting the recyclables back in there? Rob said we recently have found another purchasing place we can use in addition to NRRA. The problem is a lot of recyclables are no longer marketable. That is the world market. Nobody wants some of these items. We have to dispose of them. We can't store them and you wouldn't want us to. Just added two more items to the list: one of the plastic ones, both plastics #7 and 3-4 plastics. Just ones and two accepted before. Shawn said on the bag fees, they know his standing on that. He has a hard time moving the bag fees up. He is not able to decide tonight. Peter thinks we need to think about these and any increases. We need to think about shifting the costs to the users. Not right for the people who don't use it to subsidize it especially as costs continue to rise. As costs rise, fees should rise as well. We certainly don't need to decide tonight. Shawn has a concern with the transportation costs. He has an issue with the fuel fee. That needs to be looked into. Why is the transportation costs and fuel fees going up as much as it is? Should we look at what other towns are paying? Rob said most of it has to do with insurances and it is statewide. Rob has spoken with a couple of disposal companies. Their container rates have all gone up. Everybody is mumbling under their breath. The companies are all seeing the same thing we saw with our employee costs. Rob can put it out to bid. Shawn made a recommendation to check with other transportation companies for the transfer station. Rob said the trigger is \$2.25 per gallon for diesel for the fuel fee to kick in.

Water/Sewer connection fees stay the same. Rob said he would propose 10 cents a gallon for the septage receiving fee. In checking the area around us it ranges from 9 to 12 cents a gallon. Shawn was contacted about cost rates and he will forward to Rob a person to contact. How much can we accept? Rob said it is a projected volume at this time until the system is actually up and running to see how it is going to react and what our ability is to accommodate what we put down. They are looking at 3 trips a day, 15 to 25 a week. What are they figuring for gallonage? 1,000 gallons. Shawn said the person he spoke with is willing to give all his business to the town which would bring in \$80,000 to \$90,000 a year. He will do business as long as the rate stays low. The Town of Lancaster has a certain rate for 1000 gallons and when he has a truck that hauls 1500 he has to pay 1000 then another 1000. Would like to keep it simple. We need get people to use it. Rob said he will reach out. We want to generate money to

try to offset the cost here. We don't want to be too high so people don't use the facility and lose money. Peter said when we were going through the engineering with the firm and DES there is a gentlemen Wright Pierce was using that has all the sewage disposal data in the state. Littleton is charging 12 cents. Some haulers are traveling longer distances and paying less money. What if he contacted some of these septic haulers? Shawn doesn't think that 10 cents is unreasonable. Peter doesn't think we want the septic haulers setting the rate. Ultimately the board will set the rate.

Shawn said he is disappointed with the sink holes that have come up with the water project. Shawn said that they are not compacting. They are just backfilling with dirt. The engineer on site overseeing the project, Bob Erickson, should be inspecting those. Rob said that the sink holes are from temporary connections and temporary patch work. Shawn said that they have to compact on state roads whether it is temporary or permanent. Is the soil around the pipe being compacted? The quality control person needs to get on top of that. Fred Ingerson said the issues with sink holes is ground water that is already existing in the ground. Pipe is getting laid and they bed it and pack it around the stone and sand is put over that. Groundwater is following the stone and leaking through. They do compact once they bring it up with gravel material. They have been doing compaction tests. Shawn said that Bob Erickson would know which areas have been tested and which have not. Peter suggested that Shawn join in on the next construction meeting to address these concerns.

Shawn said there is an extreme amount of trash at Highland Street Park. The trash barrel is overflowing and trash is all over the place. Rob said that the guys were going out today to take care of that.

Fred Ingerson said that Rob had discussed the water department items.

A motion was made by Shawn White to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2021 Selectmen's Meeting. The motion was seconded by John Tholl. Roll Call Vote: Corey: Yes; White: Yes; Tholl: Yes. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passes.

A motion was made by Shawn White to enter Non-Public Session at 8:07 p.m. pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3, II(1) Consideration of legal advice by legal counsel, either in writing or orally, to one or more members of the public body, even where legal counsel is not present; NH RSA 91-A:3, II (e) Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed by or against this board or any subdivision thereof, or by or against any member thereof because of his or her membership therein, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled. The motion was seconded by John Tholl. Roll Call Vote: Corey: Yes; White: Yes; Tholl: Yes. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passes.

The board adjourned from non-public session at 8:13 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.