

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 30, 2020

At the Selectmen's meeting held on Monday, November 30, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. the Selectmen participated via Zoom:

Stanley Holz is at his home in South Carolina, maintaining social distancing.

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

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

Chairman Holz called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Tom Tower of the North Country Alliance for Balanced Change (NCABC) board, a group of civic activists that balance both economic expansion with that of making sure the environment stays at the forefront of whatever projects or activity is going on in this area and region, particularly impacts on the John's River, Forest lake watersheds. One of the things we want to talk about and focus on is traffic flow. We feel like this is a regional issue and if we band together and use resources with the Town of Whitefield to work together with the other regional impacted areas to counteract the problem. When we look at the traffic flow, the original proposal was to come in via Twin Mountain travel along Route 3 and ultimately into Whitefield and on to Route 116, which is a regional impact. Twin Mountain and Whitefield are heavily impacted. This is a pretty significant risk to safety, i.e., pedestrian safety. Negative impact on the area. The traffic flow would look like 73-foot long trash haulers would be using this particular route coming through Whitefield would generate 200 truck trips a day. This creates risk and impacts the existing infrastructure.

Sara Doucette said they have some recommendations for Whitefield and NCABC to work together. Sara said as Tom said this route has not been in dispute since the beginning. Whitefield is the favored route. Casella made it clear that he had no interest in looking at Littleton or aggravate Littleton. Whitefield is the epicenter of this terrific traffic burden. Whitefield will see significant impacts. Whitefield is the target. Our group wrote a letter to DOT on 11/17. This is going to have a regional impact on the communities and towns who need to be included and have access to documents, and have an opportunity to address this is a regional issue. NCABC got a package with Casella's traffic study data, which has a lot of focus on Whitefield. It doesn't include much for other area towns being involved. We are still processing it and reviewing it. If the Board has not seen the traffic study, we would like to provide it to you. NCABC is working with a traffic engineer and would like to make their insight available to the Town. Sara thought Mr. Larson and Emergency Services people could take a look at it, and their input would be helpful. Would the Board ask them to look at this material? We want to share our insights, and maybe get together again in 2-3 weeks and ask the Town to write to DOT and copy area towns and make your statement on what your needs are and what you anticipate the needs to be. Anticipating legislation again in NH to protect our state

parks from new landfill developments, which Edith Tucker is sponsoring in the House and Erin Hennessey will sponsor in the Senate. We hope the Town will come out in favor of it. Sara spoke with Frank Lombardi and understands the Whitefield Conservation Commission is meeting on Wednesday to take up the permit and application and comment on it to DES. The wetlands permit is before DES right now. NCABC has commented as well as other groups. It is good to see that DES took a look at a lot of these recommendation in their request for more information. Sara said that they want to hear what the Board has to say.

Peter said he did want to mention that we have met with DOT about a year ago with District 1, Phil Beaulieu and the office out of Concord called the Traffic Bureau and NCC. We met at the Whitefield Town Hall to discuss the intersection by the Jiffy Mart, Lufkin's Garage, and the Triangle Dairy Bar and route up the road to the Summit and Weeks Medical Center. There are concerns with traffic now, and pedestrian safety now. We want to try to create a safer intersection and sidewalks up the hill. Discussed our concerns with Casella's potential project that potentially could see 90 trucks a day and concerns with that increase. DOT is keenly concerned and NCC is concerned. That section of our road has been added to the 10-year plan. They do know we are very concerned about this as well as at NCC and DOT District 1 and at the state level.

Shawn said he is not for this, but he knows that DOT is actively working on traffic studies and those are studies are what he is waiting for. They are non-biased reports. Rather hear from the engineers about their road. It will be available to the public and there is no time line when it will be ready.

Stanley Holz said that intersection was identified as the most dangerous intersection in town. The long-term discussion was adding sidewalks, slowing down speeds, and getting access from the summit to the medical center, adding walkways at the bottom of the hill. There were several on-going discussions, which are conceptual. We are on the 10-year plan. DOT knows of our concerns. We did add the speed limit signs on the hills to notify them how fast they are going. Sara asked about meeting minutes. Peter said it was a work session, and Alex Belensz from NCC is the administrative person. It did not include the elementary school walk-ways.

Shawn said the ten-year plan is something NCC and town personnel get together to get things in our area fixed up. In 2028 -29 the area on the 10-year plan would be the hill at the Lancaster Road/Jefferson Road intersection. We have been told we would be put on for the sidewalk from the Jiffy Mart up to the town office, and the only other Whitefield project is the airport on the 10-year plan.

Eliot Wessler said one thing that hasn't come up. That Intersection is very close to the John's River, a truck roll-over or just a mighty wind could blow trash into the John's River. In Coventry, Vermont a leachate truck spilled. Anything like that would have an impact on the John's River. Sara mentioned the route going past the elementary school. They learned from the

traffic study, that the peak times for traffic are also times when kids are going to be going into and out of school. Early in the morning and late to mid afternoon is peak times for trucks. One last thing is we are really trying to encourage people to think of this as a regional issue, especially with traffic. Very obvious that Casella will do anything to avoid political entanglements with Littleton. People think this is unfair. Littleton has political muscle and is a wealthy town. Casella has exempted Littleton from any traffic impacts. The proposed route is moving south on Interstate 93 would go right past Littleton exit, and take the interstate into Bethlehem and take Route 302 all the way into Twin Mountain and Route 3 to Whitefield. A polar route just not to involve Littleton. It is a regional problem that we need to come up with regional resolutions. Encouraging towns to work together. Ensure DOT knows how strongly Whitefield feels about the project.

Tom Tower said we have resources that we want to offer to the Town of Whitefield. Please work with us and reach out to us. These resources we are making available.

Stanley Holz said the three selectmen feel that this project only has a negative impact for the Town of Whitefield. Don't see an upside for the Town with this at all. This is a negative process for us. There is no support from the Town for this project, as it does not help this town at all. When the actual information comes to us, we would gage the impact on the Town. The DOT study will be very interesting to see.

Budgets - Public Works – Highway, Transfer Station, Water, Sewer

Rob Larson reviewed the Water Budget. He said his wages include the pay scale steps and a 4% cost of living increase proposal. Shawn said the Water Dept. pay scale that Shawn put in is the numbers we are looking at. It was sent to Rob a month ago. Fred should be at \$24.70. Rob said that he is good with that. Shawn said the steps were just done and the economy we are in today he doesn't see any cost of living increase along with the pay scale. We should would be working on the pay scale. Fred to \$24.70 and Rob will forego the 4% increase.

--Electricity should be less than \$50,000 but don't want to lower that yet until we know for sure.

--Water Testing requirements have gone up and are more expensive, increasing that line item by \$3,500.

--Tank Maintenance has an increase of \$4,900 because in 2022 we are due for tank inspections, so we have to start preparing for that.

--Bottom line increase of 2.68%.

--Shawn asked about the equipment hire reason for increase? Shawn said they based it off the excavator lease and that lease is locked in and it is not going to go up and the Water Department has always contributed to that. It was decided to leave that at \$5,000.

--We will refigure the salaries and reduce the equipment hire back to \$5,000.

Rob reviewed the sewer department budget. Once this new plant is up and running, it is whole brand new plant. Rob said we may need Welch for the first 90 days. The lagoons will still be

operating, air system still operating, and may need to know what buttons to push. The new company has seen the facility, and is coming for a tour next week. At that point they are going to tell us when they can move forward so needing Welch may be a mute point. The \$196,813 is January to January. Peter asked if they are they going to start being the contractor on January 1st? The new plant won't be operating until the end of May. Their actual number will be adjusted by how many operators they have to have on site. That number could decrease and we won't know until we see the contract. Waiting on Christine for the contract. Rob said that the payment to the Welch's will be on as a needed basis. Peter thinks the \$196,813 would cover if we needed to use Welch. Rob will reach out to Christine tomorrow and check on the status of the contract. \$242,000 is the bond payment amount so the increase in the sewer department budget is basically for the bond payment. Pretty close to the old budget in reality.

Rob reviewed the transfer station budget. Again, we will need to do the salaries based on the pay scales that were done up. The implementation of the pay scale was discussed. It was decided that if the budgets pass at town meeting, we can make the wage increases effective retroactive to January 1st, but keep to the schedule of putting the pay increases in two weeks after town meeting.

- Maintenance & Repairs: \$5,000 increase for a new baler pad
- Tipping Fees - \$4,309 increase
- Permits, Testing, & Engineer: \$2,000 increase
- Pay-Per-Bag Purchases - \$2,800 increase – cost at the vendor
- Storage Containers - \$3,500 increase

Rob said that we have six box trailers that the bottoms are rotted out in, and we need to start replacing those with containers. The state will do a match. They will pay half. We are going to start replacing the boxes with the containers. Those box trailers were put there when the transfer station was built.

Rob reviewed the highway department budget. The majority of the increase is wages and benefits. The Board reviewed the wages per the pay scale that has been implemented. Shawn told Rob that for the DPW Director there is two years between steps so his increase will be in 2022, not 2021. There is an \$11,000 increase for garage repair and maintenance for new garage doors. The cost for the doors is \$12,000. Shawn thinks for the doors it would be better to do the doors as a warrant article.

Rob said he would like to do a warrant article for Kimball Hill Road reconstruction for \$175,000.

The 2021 capital reserve accounts would remain the same as 2020:

- Bridge & Town Buildings Repair/Maintenance/Replacement Capital Reserve Fund: \$45,000
- Road Projects Capital Reserve Fund: \$100,000
- Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund: \$45,000
- Sidewalk Repair/Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund: \$20,000

The Board discussed starting a capital reserve fund for a new town garage building.

Rob has an estimate of \$198,000 for the Parker Road bridge.

Shawn said there is still money left in the highway budget this year that could be used. He asked about the boiler. Rob said that estimates coming in for the plumbing. He has to requote the boiler. Prices are changing quickly. Boiler was \$18,000, confirming tomorrow if it is still that and place that order because it takes 4-6 weeks. What about doing those garage doors this year out of this year's budget? Rob said he doesn't want to cut it too close at year end. The Board said if we can do it this year, if there is money available, and not raise the money next year might work. Peter said if there were funds to take the house down at 23 Lancaster Road, it should be removed by the end of the year. Rob said he is moving forward with this and it should be down by the end of the year.

A motion was made by Shawn White to approve the November 20, 2020 Selectmen Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Peter Corey. Roll Call Vote: White: Yes; Corey: Yes; Holz: Yes. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.