



TOWN OF NORTH HAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
NORTH HAMPTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

January 8, 2024 7:00 PM

NORTH HAMPTON TOWN HALL

DRAFT MINUTES

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Jonathan Pinette, Vice-Chairman James Sununu, Selectman James Maggiore

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Michael Tully, Fire Chief Jason Lajoie

Chairman Pinette welcomed everyone to the Select Board Regular Meeting of December 11, 2023 and called the meeting to order at 7:14 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

First Public Comment Session

Phone: 603-758-1447

Chairman Pinette opened the first Public Comment Session at 7:16 pm; no Public Comments.

Town Administrator Tully asked that the Board move up new business Item 8.1 – Swearing-in of Deputy Fire Chief Jake MacGlashing.

8.1 Swearing in of Jake MacGlashing

Fire Chief Jason Lajoie said he is privileged to introduce North Hampton's new Deputy Fire Chief Jacob MacGlashing of Rye, who was officially appointed December 4, 2023. He said Jake was at the forefront successfully managing many of the operations and has built a reputation as one of the more well-respected Fire Officers and Paramedics in the Seacoast area. He said they worked closely together on mutual aid calls and Jake was always calm, poised, and professional and brings valuable experience to overseeing our department.

Disclaimer –These minutes are prepared by the Recording Secretary within five (5) business days as required by NH RSA 91-A:2, II. They will not be finalized until approved by majority vote of the Select Board.

A recording of the meeting can be found at: http://www.townhallstreams.com/towns/north_hampton_nh, and a DVD recording is available at the North Hampton Town Administrative Offices, 233 Atlantic Avenue, North Hampton, New Hampshire 03862.

Chief Lajoie thanked Jake's wife Alyssa MacGlashing and daughters Adeline and Ainsley. Town Administrator Tully administered the Oath of Office and daughter Adeline did the pinning of the badge.

Deputy Fire Chief MacGlashing thanked the Town for believing in him and said this has been a dream to get here some day and he could not have done it without every single one of his friends, colleagues and family present tonight.

The Select Board took a 10-minute break then resumed the meeting at 7:34 pm.

Consent Calendar

- 3.1 Payroll Manifest of December 14, 2023 in the amount of \$246,790.63
- 3.2 Accounts Payable Manifest of December 21, 2023 in the amount of \$2,074,885.84
- 3.3 Payroll Manifest of December 21, 2023 in the amount of \$95,092.38
- 3.4 Payroll Manifest of December 28, 2023 in the amount of \$78,553.82
- 3.5 Payroll Manifest of January 4, 2024 in the amount of \$74,834.09
- 3.6 Accounts Payable Manifest of January 4, 2024 in the amount of \$71,772.64
- 3.7 Veteran Exemption
- 3.8 Abatement Recommendations

Motion: To approve Consent Calendar items 3.1 through 3.8 as presented.

Motioned: Selectman Maggiore

Seconded: Vice-Chair Sununu

Vote: Motion approved 3-0

Correspondence

4.1 Correspondence from Paul Zoulamis

Selectman Maggiore read the letter of December 14 in full asking the Select Board to discuss the current elderly assessment amount of reduction based on age and income and asset limits. He said he spoke with Paul Zoulamis regarding the elderly exemptions and thanked Mr. Tully for being proactive on this issue. The 2023 revaluation showed a significant increase in property values and no increase in exemptions and asset limits. He said the State finds it essential to entitle qualified seniors, but the amount is calculated by the municipality.

Town Administrator Tully said he had already reached out to Scott Marsh to put some information together and said the Town needs a Warrant Article to change the exemptions which will be discussed under New Business.

Committee Updates

Selectman Maggiore said the *Heritage Commission* did not meet at the end of December; *Water Commission* also has not met.

Vice-Chair Sununu said *Rails to Trails Committee* has not met; *Budget Committee* finished second review of Town and School Budgets, recommended unanimously; no changes to Town Budget but position removed from School Budget to be more in line with declining enrollment; Public Hearing December 11 on Budgets and review of Warrants.

Report of the Town Administrator

Report December 12, 2023 –January 5, 2024: Finance: running at 50% of Budget with 26 weeks remaining in FY; Police conducting directed patrols to address speeding; more complaints about Routes 151 and 111; Fire seeking to hire a FT Firefighter/Paramedic; construction dumpster behind Town Hall removed and generator converted to Natural Gas; landscaping and final paving for new Safety Complex slated for spring; REC: no school day for January 23 Primary, Town indoor yard sale January 27, Winterfest February 24; Highway Department assisted with Police/Fire move; Police/Fire/Highway contract warrant ready for Budget approval; Channel 22 now in HD on CH 1075.

Items Left on the Table – None

NEW BUSINESS

8.2 Discussion of Desalination Bill

Chairman Pinette said notification was received from Debra Altschiller, State Senator District 24, of a proposal made by State Senator Kevin Avar of Nashua and others as Senate Bill 301 seeking to put together a legislative study committee to study putting a desalination plant on the Seacoast, including assessment of cost and benefits for the region, and read the letter in full. Town Administrator Tully said he received this and was looking to the Board for input on what action to take.

Chairman Pinette said with our wetlands and aquifer in North Hampton, a plant on the Seacoast turning saltwater into fresh water is a ginormous waste of money. Vice-Chair Sununu said this would be an unnecessary study committee as there is no drinking water shortage in North Hampton. He said a cellular communications study a few years ago ended up making unfounded claims about cell towers and is now used as evidence to try to prevent any development of cell tower infrastructure which is desperately needed for public safety. Selectman Maggiore agreed and said no local State reps or senators were included as co-sponsors of the bill, and no one from this area was included in the discussions; he said objects to this.

Town Administrator Tully said all three Select Board members are on the same page and asked Selectman and State Senator Maggiore to keep an eye on this bill going forward and inform him of any action that needs to be taken.

8.3 Discussion of Emergency Alert System Changes

Fire Chief Lajoie provided notice of a new public safety alerting system available and said CodeRED has been transferred to Genasys Protect effective January 1, 2024 as NH Alerts which allows Public Safety officials to deliver free emergency and non-emergency notification through phone calls, emails, and text messages. Those already enrolled in CodeRED before December 26, 2023 will be automatically added to the new system; to enroll, go to readynh.gov.

8.5 Appointments to Conservation Commission

Chairman Pinette read the letter from Conservation Commission Chair Lisa Wilson in full recommending the appointments of Jay Chabot and Jennifer Kotzen.

Motion: To appoint Jay Chabot as a regular member of the Conservation Commission for a 3-year term expiring 2026 and Jennifer Kotzen as alternate member for a 3-year term expiring 2026 to the Conservation Commission, as recommended.

Motioned: Vice-Chair Sununu
Seconded: Selectman Maggiore
Vote: Motion approved 3-0

8.4 Discussion of Proposed Warrant Articles

Town Administrator Tully said the Board has gone through articles and is waiting for information for Articles Two and Fourteen.

Article Two: Proposed Fire Department CBA with cost items assessed. Town Administrator Tully said when the town had issues with the Police Department and lower pay, they sat down with basis of how to retain current staff and talked about difficulty recruiting Police and Fire employees. He said starting wage is fairly competitive but employees moving through the ranks do not stay competitive without a yearly step increase in contracts.

Town Administrator Tully said they created a new 15-year step system with 1.25% increase per step and COLA on top of that to keep employee spending power the same year to year, plus an extra step to make them stay. Wording was added to attract employees allowing candidates to be brought in up to step 4 in the contract and for employee education and training; rearranged Health Insurance buyouts and agreed to short-term disability insurance; raised annual uniform allowance; added additional language for Start Team members (Regional Hazardous Materials team); added longevity pay: 5-9 years \$500, 10-14 years \$1,000, and 15+ years \$1,500. He said Mr. Sununu negotiated the contract with him.

Vice-Chair Sununu said they looked at a dozen different department contracts, departments North Hampton is competing with for qualified candidates, and fixed COLA rates overcome by inflation in last contract. He said the Town needs to stay competitive to provide a well-run department with solid management. Town Administrator Tully said the Town had record-setting call volume this year.

Motion: That the Select Board recommend Article Two: Proposed Fire Department Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) as presented.

Motioned: Vice-Chair Sununu
Seconded: Selectman Maggiore
Vote: Motion approved 3-0

Article Fourteen: Modify Elderly Tax Exemptions. Vice-Chair Sununu said as discussed earlier, elderly exemptions are established in Statute by age range and limits, but actual dollar amounts are set by the community based on vote by citizens of the Town. Scott Marsh has looked at our existing exemptions in comparison to neighboring towns and we are in the middle. Current exemptions: age 65-74 \$125,000, \$165,000 for 75-79, and \$200,000 for 80 and above set in 2018.

Vice-Chair Sununu recommended rounding off numbers provided by Scott Marsh to: \$170,000 for ages 65-74; \$225,000 for 75-79, and \$275,000 for 80 years and above, keeping within \$50 of total amount and keeping budget in line, and said he recommends adopting these dollar amounts for elderly exemptions.

Motion: That the Select Board recommend Article Fourteen: Modifying Elderly Exemptions from Property Tax with exemption units of \$170,000 ages 65-74, \$225,000 ages 75-79, and \$275,000 for age 80 and above, and add income and asset limitations as defined in Statute.

Motioned: Vice-Chair Sununu

Seconded: Selectman Maggiore

Vote: Motion approved 3-0

MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS

9.1 Approval of Minutes of Workshop Meeting of December 20, 2023

Motion: To approve the Workshop Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2023, as presented.

Motioned: Vice-Chair Sununu

Seconded: Selectman Maggiore

Vote: Motion approved 3-0

9.2 Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of December 11, 2023

Motion: To approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2023, as presented.

Motioned: Vice-Chair Sununu

Seconded: Selectman Maggiore

Vote: Motion approved 3-0

9.3 Approval of Minutes of Non-Public Meeting of December 11, 2023

Motion: To approve the Minutes of Non-Public Meeting of December 11, 2023, as presented.

Motioned: Vice-Chair Sununu

Seconded: Selectman Maggiore

Vote: Motion approved 3-0

Any Other Item that may legally come before the Board

Town Administrator Tully said something has come up and requested that the Board go into Non-Public Session after the meeting to discuss.

Second Public Comment Session

Phone: 603-758-1447

Chairman Pinette opened Second Public Comment; no public comments; closed at 8:14 pm.

Next Regular Meeting: January 22, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To move into Non-Public Session.

Motioned: Vice-Chair Sununu

Seconded: Selectman Maggiore

Vote: Motion approved 3-0

Chairman Pinette recessed the meeting at 8:15 pm to move into Non-Public Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary