



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

MAY 8, 2023 7:00 PM

NORTH HAMPTON TOWN HALL

APPROVED MINUTES

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

EXCUSED: Chairman Jonathan Pinette

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Michael Tully

Acting Chairman Maggiore welcomed everyone to the Select Board Regular Meeting of May 8, 2023 and called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance; Jonathan Pinette cannot be here tonight.

First Public Comment Session

No Public Comments.

Consent Calendar

- 3.1 Payroll Manifest of April 27, 2023 in the amount of \$72,063.15
- 3.2 Payroll Manifest of May 4, 2023 in the amount of \$220,572.49
- 3.3 Accounts Payable Manifest of April 27, 2023 in the amount \$1,064,807.42
- 3.4 Abatement Application
- 3.5 Elderly Exemption Applications
- 3.6 Veterans Credit Application

Motion: Approve Consent Calendar as presented.

Motioned: Vice-Chair Sununu

Seconded: Acting Chair Maggiore

Vote: Motion approved 2-0

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.

Correspondence – None

Committee Updates

Acting Chair Maggiore said *Heritage Commission* has been busy with Preservation Easement 106 to be done in case of possible property impacts to Historic Structures, update to Master Plan to be presented May 19, 2023; *Water Commission* has not met.

Vice-Chair Sununu said *Rails to Trails Committee* has not met but will have an update under New Business; *Budget Committee* is meeting next Monday May 15 with presentation on current state of economy and appointing a new member to fill vacancy.

Report of the Town Administrator

Period: April 25– May 5, 2023: Finance at 17% of Budget with 9 weeks remaining in fiscal year; Police Chief Kurz working on expanding search capabilities for qualified candidates; search process closed May 1st with 32 resumes received; Fire Department filled vacant FF/Paramedic position with Jarrod Wheeler, now at full staff; biggest challenge during build has been parking; new North Hampton Parks & Recreation Coordinator Kristina Chiumiento; Memorial Day barbecue on schedule; Old Home Day, 2nd Saturday in August with 5K race; new Summer Camp Director Molly Lawrence, Assistant Director Josie Maggiore; may have to add adult softball team.

Items Left on the Table

NEW BUSINESS

8.1 Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire – Electric Aggregation Program

Town Administrator Tully said Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire was not present but if they get back in touch, we can reschedule them. He said he and Mr. Sununu spoke with representatives from Hampton about an aggregation program where the Town could pool resources together and purchase a bigger group of electricity allowing lower rates; joining is automatic unless you opt out; would have to have a Warrant Article in the fall.

8.2 Freedom Energy Logistics – Electric Aggregation Program

Bart Fromuth of Freedom Energy Logistics said with Eversource charging \$0.20/kWh, the Town can basically negotiate and enter an electrical contract pooling users together to get favorable rates and contract terms. He said his company partners with Colonial Power Group of MA, and VP of Power Group Stuart Ormsbee is here this evening.

Mr. Fromuth said they began working on this project in 2019, and there was also some disagreement between what the law stated and the information Eversource was willing to provide. New Hampshire PUC promulgated rules and provided clarity for the marketplace after 2 years and we are now seeing the first aggregations across the State ready to launch this summer.

Stuart Ormsbee of Colonial Power Group said they work with cities and towns of various sizes and were just awarded a contract with Springfield, MA. He said the market approach is to provide turnkey services to the community requiring contracts with the supplier bearing all the market risk, offering multiple products at the same time; get lowest rates possible on an opt-out basis; if interested Select Board should

set up an Energy Committee with steps laid out in the Statute, requiring 2 Public Hearings for input; committee would work with Mr. Fromuth and myself to create a plan already vetted with Utility Commission in New Hampshire.

Mr. Ormsbee said they would then come back to the Board for final plan approval, and if the Board wishes to move forward they would put a Warrant Article on the upcoming Town Meeting and have voters adopt the plan; if successful at Town Meeting gets filed with Utilities Commission for their approval (statutorily within 60 days); once approved Town can go out for pricing. He said he has been doing this in MA for 12 years and said North Hampton could probably get a plan in the range of \$0.11 - \$0.12/kWh.

Mr. Fromuth said Eversource is likely to come down in the next rate cycle; he said Exeter is in the Coalition and our business model is very different; the Coalition has a regional buying group and puts a reserve fee on top of that for 3 months. He said our fee stays consistent throughout your relationship with us at 1/10 of a cent/kWh and with local control. He asked if the Town was looking for a maximal savings rate or would like to go full renewables; vote could go with 40% renewable inclusion as baseline default; everyone in coalition gets the same rate.

Town Administrator Tully asked about solar and net metering. Mr. Ormsbee said currently nobody wants to put current net metering customers at a disadvantage and those customers are probably better off staying with their utility company right now; work yet to be done working collaboratively with Eversource to provide better data.

Acting Chair Maggiore asked if School would need a separate plan as they would have a separate Warrant Article; Mr. Fromuth said they may be better staying on their own, but in theory they could join. Vice-Chair Sununu explained that the Town is laying the groundwork for a Warrant Article to be on the ballot in March after looking at pricing. Mr. Ormsbee said the Town may wonder if they would be better off joining the Coalition or some larger buying group to get better prices, but that is not really the case. He said the Town of North Hampton is large enough to get attractive offers.

Acting Chair Maggiore asked about next steps; Town Administrator Tully said the Board should have a discussion and decide if they see the benefit here, and if so put together an Energy Committee. Vice-Chair Sununu said it is certainly worth moving forward on. Mr. Ormsbee said people could visit their Website at colonialpowergroup.com for further information. Mr. Fromuth said he could also provide a slide package which could be posted on the Town Website; he added that his firm would handle all customer service. Town Administrator Tully asked that the Board permit him to move forward on this and bring back a plan to the Select Board; approved by consensus.

8.3 Discussion of Town Employee Retention

Town Administrator Tully said the Board is well aware of what is happening in the Police Department with employees being poached by other communities willing to offer larger sign-on bonuses or pay raises. With difficulties finding qualified candidates and public service difficult to fill right now, he sees this as a risk going forward. He said Gilford is putting \$1.5 Mil into salary and benefits. Vice-Chair Sununu said for scope that is more than 10% of their annual budget and said he does not want to see difficulty hiring Police Officers shifting into other areas.

Vice-Chair Sununu said it is happening broadly through the labor market with low unemployment rates and strain for labor becoming acute in certain areas like the hospitality industry; no workers and lack of affordable housing forcing people to leave the State, particularly in municipal government and public

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safety with workers opting to do other things; needs to be addressed across the board and will need to be taken into account as we do budgeting. He said the Fire Contract is up this year and they may want to make adjustments to the Police Contract. He said demographics are not on our side and the labor market is likely to be strained for the foreseeable future.

The Select Board gave consensus for Town Administrator Tully to move ahead with this.

8.4 Discussion of Rail Trail

Vice-Chair Sununu said construction on the Rail Trail has begun and work is being done in 2,500-ft increments with each one taking 21 working days, sections to be opened as completed; the Seacoast Greenway Committee had a recent meeting. Town Administrator Tully said they talked about seventeen 2,500-ft sections; ties are being removed as well as trash and debris; working on drainage at Coakley with a possible October finish.

Town Administrator Tully said they just got the 501-C:3 established with hopefully all towns joining to work together to reduce costs.

MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS

9.1 Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of April 24, 2023

Motion: To approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 24, 2023 as presented.

Motioned: Vice-Chair Sununu

Seconded: Acting Chair Maggiore

Vote: Motion approved 2-0

9.2 Approval of Minutes of Non-Public Meeting of April 24, 2023

Motion: To approve minutes of the Non-Public Meeting Minutes of April 24, 2023 as presented.

Motioned: Vice-Chair Sununu

Seconded: Acting Chair Maggiore

Vote: Motion approved 2-0

Any Other Item that may legally come before the Board

Second Public Comment Session

No Public Comments.

Next Regular Meeting: May 8, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Acting Chair Maggiore adjourned the meeting at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary