

**TOWN OF NEWFIELDS SELECT BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 7, 2023**

At 6:30pm, The Select Board, by motion of Select Board Member Sununu, seconded by Select Board Member Harmon and in accordance with RSA91-A:3, to enter into a non-public session for purpose of property tax matter [RSA91-A3(II)(e)]. By roll call vote the Board passed the motion: Harmon-Affirmative; Kessler-Affirmative; Sununu-Affirmative

A motion to leave non-public session was made Select Board Member Sununu and seconded by Select Board Member Harmon. The motion was passed and at 6:58pm a public session reconvened.

**Select Board Present:** Chairman Michael Sununu, Hoby Harmon & Mike Kessler  
**Others Include:**

**Call to order at 7:01 pm.**

The Select Board reviewed and approved the following items:

Checks Dated	11/03/23:	Accounts Payable Manifest	\$6,610.14
Checks Dated	11/06/23:	School Tax Payment	\$470,559.00
Checks Dated	11/10/23:	Payroll Manifest	\$45,008.30
Checks Dated	11/09/23:	Accounts Payable Manifest	\$20,143.29

**Recognition of Officer Peirce**

Police Chief Young presented a Life Saving Award to Officer Peirce for exceptional bravery and professionalism during an event which took place on October 22nd in the Town’s parking lot. His actions prevented a tragic situation from occurring regarding an armed individual during a mental health crisis. The Chief commended Officer Peirce’s unwavering dedication to public safety and conveyed his gratitude on behalf of the community.

Officer Peirce accepted the award and expressed his pleasure in serving the community for the past three years.

Michael voiced his appreciation for the service Officer Peirce and his fellow officers provide for the community.

Mike K. thanked the Police department for their assistance during the Halloween celebration. He believed it to be one of the best Halloweens the Town has had.

### **Celebration Committee**

Amy presented her \$9,290 budget to the Board. There is a small increase from last year's \$8,850 due to the increase in costs and participation of the Senior Luncheon. Amy said they are also now delivering meals to those who cannot get to the Town Hall.

Amy discussed activities that she hopes to have for the 175<sup>th</sup> Town anniversary. Although the prior Warrant Articles set aside \$10k, she would like to put in another Warrant Article for an additional \$5k to cover the increases. Fireworks will cost between \$6.5k - \$8.5k and she will also be requesting an additional police detail. She plans to encumber funds from this year's budget before the end of the year.

### **Kent Lawrence, ZBA**

Kent asked for the Board's opinion on a zoning ordinance. Resident, Mr. Burke, has proposed adding an accessory dwelling unit (ADU). Kent asked for clarification on the dimensional requirements for a village district property. ADUs are allowed by special exception and conditions. Section 4.14.4.1.1 states the proposed use must conform to the dimensional requirements of a single-family lot and meet all existing requirements. Page 8 of the zoning ordinance states the dimensional regulations are one acre and 100 feet of frontage. Many lots in the village district are preexisting and less than one acre and are grandfathered in.

Michael said the State is trying to get towns to loosen their building codes to allow ADUs.

Kent asked if he was reading the ordinance correctly. A lot that does not meet the standards for a single-family residence is pre-existing and supports a home but because it's not one acre, 100 feet of frontage, it does not support an ADU?

Michael responded that according to the language, Kent would be correct. It should be an ordinance change and not a waiver since other homes have the same issue.

Kent said the State's reason for the ordinance was to prevent overcrowding. He could see the probability of that happening in the village district so he is not sure the ordinance should be changed.

Hoby understands the overcrowding issue but given the shortage of housing, the issue should be addressed by Planning, Select Board, and Town.

Michael reiterated that he does not feel it would qualify for a waiver as there is no unique hardship in the village.

Kent plans to discuss this further at the upcoming Zoning and Planning Board meetings.

### **Revocable Lease Agreement – 3 Hilton Ave**

Michael motioned, seconded by Mike K., to sign the revocable lease agreement with Richard Burke of 3 Hilton Avenue. This agreement will allow the resident's shed and firepit to remain on the Town property until such time they are removed/rebuilt. Mr. Burke also signed the agreement. All were in favor and the motion carried.

#### **Route 108 traffic Flow**

The Board and Police Chief Young discussed the traffic flow at the intersection of Rt. 108 & Rt. 85. Hoby said he conversed earlier with Police Chief Young and a representative from the Department of Transportation (DOT) about the right turn lane at the Irving Station. Drivers are getting in the South bound turning lane too early and causing accidents. The State has temporarily placed barrels blocking the section between Irving's entrance and the right turn lane into Newfields. During the initial development of the Irving Station, the Town requested the right lane be a continued right lane from the Irving entrance up into Newfields. The State decided to design the road as it is currently, and therefore it needs to be addressed by the State. Police Chief Young will reach out to the State to relay the Board's decision.

#### **Bell Tower – Badger Park**

Michael informed the Board of the Newfields Community Fund's offer to replace the weathered shingles on the Bell Tower for the 175<sup>th</sup> Town anniversary. Michael motioned, seconded by Hoby, to approve the shingle replacement. All were in favor and the motion carried.

#### **Municipal Assessment Data Certification**

Michael motioned, seconded by Mike K., to approve the Municipal Data Certification for the equalization ratio provided by the Town's Assessor, Rod Wood. The Town's assessment of property was completed this fall, bringing the assessed value up to a 99% equalization. All were in favor and the motion carried.

#### **Miscellaneous**

The Board reviewed the October Revenue & Expenditures.

Michael thanked everyone who assisted with the Fall Cleanup.

#### **Health Trust**

The Board discussed HealthTrust's insurance plan options. The benefit changes are due by November 17, 2023. Michael notified the Board of Greenland's decision to participate in another health insurance company. Michael said that once the Town breaks from HealthTrust, it cannot return for three years so he would like to wait and see if Greenland prefers the new company. The Board discussed going with HealthTrust's higher deductible insurance option. The Town would reimburse the participating employees for the deductibles but would still be much lower in expense than the other option which is \$37k higher. Police Chief Young asked to have both plans available to employees so the retired individual may have a lower deductible. The Board will think further on the options and speak with HealthTrust.

### **Email Upgrade**

Michael said they will discuss the email upgrade in December and encumber any available funds at the end of the year.

Hoby mentioned his opinion that Town employees & committee members should have a town email instead of using personal ones.

Michael said that employees are at risk by using personal emails. If someone submits a sunshine request, all their personal emails may be exposed.

### **SELT/Girards**

Michael advised the Board members that the Town was notified of SELT suing the Girards for access through their property. The Town is not a defendant in the case.

### **Protest Lawsuit**

The Town and some former employees are being sued by protestors in Hillsborough Court. This pertains to the 2020 protests at Governor Sununu's house.

### **Hazell Property**

Michael said he spoke with the Town auditors about the Hazell auction proceeds. The auditors recommended placing the funds in an undesignated funds as restricted funds until next June when it will become unrestricted. The undesignated fund balance may be utilized in future to bring down the tax rate.

### **School Steps/Crosswalk**

Hoby and Police Chief Young met with the school on November 2<sup>nd</sup> regarding the school steps and crosswalk. The school is planning a redesign of their parking lot in addition to the steps and crosswalk. The school has allocated another \$8k to address this issue. If the Warrant Article for this does not pass, the Town will need to address the safety issues of the steps and crosswalk.

Police Chief Young said he went to the school meeting to ensure that it was on record that the sidewalk and stairs is a small portion of the total construction and that it needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. The DOT also feels the steps are a blind spot for drivers.

### **Rugg Property**

The Board discussed the Rugg Property meeting and were not aware of any additional information the Ruggs or Trust for Public Land has produced since the initial meeting. Michael was concerned some people feel adequate information has been provided to the Select Board to submit a Warrant Article in March and that is not the case. The Town still does not have a concrete number of lots the property will allow if the Town chooses not to purchase it.

Michael indicated his belief that the sellers of the property need to complete the process with the Planning Board which they have neglected to do. He does not know how the Town can assess this without more information about the property value and its assessment.

**Veteran's Photo Op**

Mike K. reminded all Veterans, Town employees & officials of picture day on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am.

Hoby motioned, seconded by Kessler, to approve the 10/24/23 Select Board meeting minutes as drafted. All were in favor and the motion carried.

At 8:19 pm, Michael motioned, seconded by Mike K., to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kisha Therrien