

**TOWN OF NEWFIELDS SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY MARCH 11, 2024**

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

Others Include: Lt. Blais

The Select Board reviewed and approved the following items:

Checks Dated	2/28/24:	Accounts Payable Manifest	\$6,172.69
Checks Dated	3/01/24:	Payroll Manifest	\$34,625.97
Checks Dated	3/04/24:	Accounts Payable Manifest	\$10,707.77
Checks Dated	3/07/24:	School Tax	\$458,142.00
Checks Dated	3/08/24:	Accounts Payable Manifest	\$38,267.43
Checks Dated	3/15/24:	Payroll Manifest	\$37,556.38

Michael called the meeting to order at 7:01.

GRVL Cycling Road Race

Lt. Blais discussed the upcoming annual GRVL Cycling Road Race scheduled to pass through Newfields on June 2nd on the Rockingham rail trail. He does not anticipate any issues.

Town/Burke Property Tree Removal

Michael will reach out to the Road Agent to have the dying tree that stands on town property abutting Richard Burke's property removed.

Eversource Tree Trimming – Halls Mill Road

Eversource seeks permission from the Board to trim trees on Halls Mill Road which is a scenic road and therefore requires a public hearing. The Board scheduled a public hearing for April 9th at 7:00. An Eversource representative will attend the hearing to discuss the matter.

Partikian Correspondence

The Board agreed to send Michael's response letter to Mr. Partikian and expressed an invitation for Mr. Partikian to attend the next meeting if he chooses to discuss it in person.

Town Hall Maintenance

The Board discussed some needed Town Hall maintenance – the entrance to Police department and the Town Hall entryway ceiling. Michael will reach out to Munch Marek to have him repair the two areas.

Officer Emerson Appointment

Lt. Blais said Officer Emerson will be a good fit for the department. Michael motioned, seconded by Hoby, to accept the oath of Office for Officer Emerson. All in favor and the motion carried.

PA-42

Michael motioned, seconded by Mike K., to accept the PA-42 - Exemption for Residents in an Industrial Zone for map 201/21. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Land Use Change

Michael motioned, seconded by Hoby, to accept the Land Use Change application for map 209/29.3. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Abatements

Michael motioned, seconded by Mike K., to accept the abatement for map 213/5 in the amount \$37,900 as requested by the homeowner and recommended by the Town Assessor, Rodney Wood. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Michael motioned, seconded by Mike K., to deny the homeowner's abatement application for map 104/1.2 as recommended by the Town Assessor, Rodney Wood. The home was reassessed at the homeowner's request and found to be valued \$90,000 higher than originally assessed. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Elderly Exemption

Micheal motioned, seconded by Mike K., to accept the elderly exemption request for map 104/34. All were in favor and the motion carried.

EPA Letter

The Board discussed Michael's revisions to Bill Meserve's draft letter. Michael added some additional language and formatting. The letter indicates that the Town has completed a significant amount of work to address the major nitrogen issues in the Town. The major items being the runoff at Newfields Elementary School and Town Hall which are being addressed by rain gardens. Summer and Pleasant Streets will be addressed in the spring with the Stormwater Project. The Board will officially approve the letter at the next meeting after giving Bill Meserve an opportunity to make any additional edits.

Lamprey River Regional Co-Op Meeting

Hoby said he attended the Lamprey River Regional Co-op meeting on February 27th and mentioned there will be a public hearing on April 18th at 2:00pm in Stratham. The Co-op does not anticipate any changes in fee levels.

Miscellaneous

The Board reviewed February's Revenue and expenditure report.

Michael asked Officer Blais how the new prosecutor was doing. Officer Blais replied that Andrea Mitrushy and her team have been great. She has a victim advocate and another attorney who are helping her.

Mike K. said he is finalizing the live streaming process for all the other boards and will be putting it up for a vote at the next meeting.

Hoby asked for an update on trimming the trees behind the Town Hall parking lot. Michael will reach out to the Road Agent.

Vernon Family Farm

Hoby advised the Board of his discussion with Attorney Durbin regarding the cease-and-desist order regarding Vernon's additional signs. The Board agreed to have Attorney Durbin formalize it.

Michael discussed the Vernon Family Farm's Attorney Manzelli's letter regarding an unpermitted junk yard located at 306 Piscassic Rd which is across the street from the Vernon's. The Board sent a letter to the property owner, Mr. Wachsmuth, along with a copy of the attorney's letter. Michael said Mr. Wachsmuth's response to the letter was extremely thorough and addressed all items in the complaint. One of the major complaints was that it was a junk yard. Mr. Wachsmuth indicated that all vehicles referenced in the letter are in fact registered. The other complaint referenced the storage of boats on the property. Michael and Hoby found Mr. Wachsmuth to have a licensed boat storage business at that residence since 2005. At this time, the Board saw no action to take. Michael will forward a copy of Mr. Wachsmuth's letter to Attorney Manzelli.

Hoby mentioned he received the Vernon Family Farm's schedule for upcoming events. They have a certificate of occupancy coming up in May if there are no issues with the septic system. Hoby said he spoke with Mr. Cuomo, the Rockingham Septic Designer, who has yet to receive the paperwork on this application. Michael responded that it is scheduled to be discussed at the next Planning Board meeting. This was a notice of decision issued by the Planning Board. Any recommendations from them will be communicated back to the Select Board.

Audit Questionnaire

Michael informed the Board that he completed most of the auditor's questionnaire and will forward it to each of the other board members to complete their information.

Town Election

The March 12th Town Election will be held at the Town Hall from 8:00am to 7:00pm. Michael thanked Lt. Blais for assisting with setting up the election booths and tables.

Meeting Attendee Question – Mr. Partikian Letter

A resident came in mid meeting informing the Board that the audio for the meeting was not working. Michael apologized and told him the camera had been used to record oral histories for the 175th celebration and the microphone on the camera had been turned off since they use a separate boom microphone.

The resident asked about the Partikian correspondence. Michael told him the Board discussed the unfounded accusations indicated by Mr. Partikian in his email. Michael said the Board will send a reply to Mr. Partikian and invite him to a meeting if he wishes to discuss it further. Michael added that the accusation Mr. Partikian made about Swamscott beverages is also incorrect and that the accusation that the Board and Department of Transportation gave a heads up to people regarding sandwich board signage is entirely unfounded and ridiculous. There are other references Mr. Partikian referenced in the letter to which the Board will certainly investigate but for the bulk of the issues they are baseless and do not require action from the Board. The resident, Mr. Wachsmuth's son-in-law, said the email indicated that his family supposedly sent complaints to the Board, but he has not personally sent any complaints. Michael responded that most of the complaints come from the Vernons and Mr. Partikian more than anyone else in Town.

Minutes & Upcoming Dates

Michael motioned, seconded by Mike K., to approve the 2/20/24 Select Board meeting minutes as drafted. All were in favor and the motion carried.

The Select Board decided on the following dates for upcoming meetings:

April 9th and April 29th

At 7:41, Michael motioned, seconded by Mike K., to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kisha Therrien