

**Enfield Board of Selectmen
Public Works Facility, 74 Lockehaven Rd, Enfield, New Hampshire
Meeting Minutes August 9, 2017**

Board Of Selectmen: Fred Cummings, John Kluge, Meredith Smith

Administrative Staff: Ryan Aylesworth, Town Manager; Alisa Bonnette, Assistant Town Manager; DPW Director Jim Taylor

Others: Annabelle Bamforth (minutes); James Bonner (video); John Dunkerley; Kurt Gotthardt; Jerold Theis, Conservation Commission; Keith Thomas; and others.

BUSINESS MEETING

I. Call To Order

Fred called the meeting to order at 6:00.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Kluge moved to approve the regular and non-public minutes of July 17, 2017, Mrs. Smith seconded, vote unanimous in favor of the motion.

III. Communications

County FY 2018 Budget

Trustees of Trust Funds Report as of June 30, 2017

Notice of Wetland & Shoreland Permit Application, Hartung, Map 47, Lot 1-3 – driveway access and culvert:

The Board briefly reviewed a notice that a Wetlands and Shoreland Permit has been filed with DES, stemming from a property owner's project intending to install a driveway with a culvert passing over a stream leading to Crystal Lake.

Visions Open House Invitation

Town Clerk/Tax Collector's Report, July 2017:

Mr. Kluge asked Mr. Aylesworth for input on the town clerk's and tax collector's reports. Mr. Aylesworth said there appeared to be healthy trends on both.

IV. Board Reports

Planning Board:

The Planning Board recently held a public hearing regarding a proposed Jake's convenience store. There are no longer plans for a car wash but the proposal is still large and includes 3 gas pumps.

Heritage Commission:

Mrs. Smith said she has received notice from the Heritage Commission that the Town House is now on the state's historic building register and eligible for grant funding.

III. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Aylesworth discussed his recent attendance at the August 8 Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting regarding 60 Main Street during which the board approved a special exception application to convert two storefront spaces at that location into apartments on the first floor. Mr. Kluge noted that in the past, the ZBA had approved such conversions with a review and reapplication requirement after 3 years. Mr. Aylesworth said a motion was made for a 2 year reapplication requirement but it was defeated.

Mr. Aylesworth went on to discuss recent meetings with town employees and various departments to gain their perceptions of town services and receive feedback. He plans to initiate continuous meetings every other week to remain on same page regarding daily and long-term affairs. Mr. Aylesworth told the Board that he appreciated a warm welcome from residents during Old Home Days and was thankful for the pleasant reception.

Mr. Aylesworth has been attending various department, committee and commission meetings to gather information and said he's been learning a great deal. He noted a recent meeting with the school superintendent, as well as a meeting earlier in the day with Budget Committee chairman Sam Eaton, who expressed interest in an intensive study of the sewer rate. Mr. Aylesworth said he and Mr. Eaton talked about the idea of developing long range capital plans for water and sewer. He added that Mr. Eaton said he would like to begin having quarterly meetings between the Budget Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Aylesworth informed the Board that the town highway supervisor will be stepping down. DPW Director Jim Taylor and Mr. Aylesworth agreed that it may be best to initially advertise the upcoming job opening in-house.

Mr. Aylesworth said that the state has recently qualified for FEMA funding from the July storm. Mr. Taylor said he will be taking photos of damage in town.

The town ambulance had been experiencing some electrical issues, but it appears to have been resolved.

IV. Public comment

None.

V. Business

Conservation Commission: Oak Hill Rd. Landlocked Property:

Jerold Theis spoke on behalf of the Conservation Commission about a piece of town-owned landlocked property on Oak Hill Rd (Map 13, Lot 49). Mr. Theis informed the Board that the Conservation Commission is advising that the town refrain from putting this property out to bid for sale, emphasizing the lot's wildlife habitat and wetlands. Mr. Theis told the Board that he has walked through the property and observed a large body of evidence of wildlife such as moose, salamander eggs, and various animals. He said there would be little revenue to town (he estimated about \$100-150 in taxes per year) if it was to be sold.

Kurt Gotthardt reiterated that this lot is landlocked, and Mr. Theis noted that much of this property is wetland.

Mr. Cummings asked whether an abutter, if he or she were to purchase the property, could build on this land. Mr. Gotthardt said it may be possible on the upslope, but opined that it's not likely that a building larger than a camp could be built. Mr. Gotthardt noted the additional likely issue of difficulty in installing a driveway.

Mr. Kluge asked if there was any record of ownership. Ms. Bonnette said the original owner is unknown. Mr. Gotthardt said he theorized that the original owner, knowing this lot was largely wetland of little value, subdivided it prior to the implementation of the current use taxation law. Mr. Gotthardt added that is sometimes the reason behind landlocked properties.

James Dunkerley, an owner of property abutting this lot, said he may be interested in purchasing it. Mr. Cummings said that the Board is not interested being in the real estate business. Mr. Gotthardt said the state's DES requires mitigation to offset filling in of wetland which would be costly.

Mr. Theis said it was his understanding that the property would need to go out to bid. Mr. Cummings agreed, but added that the buyer would have to secure independent access to the lot which could be difficult and expensive.

Mr. Kluge asked if the Conservation Commission could buy it. Mr. Theis said the price is likely to be outside of the Commission's budget.

Fred asked the Board for input.

Mrs. Smith said that in light of the requirement of mitigating development of wetlands, it makes sense to leave the land as is.

Mr. Cummings said that the town often has a variety of reasons for holding onto land. Mrs. Smith noted it's virtually undevelopable. Mr. Cummings agreed but said he didn't want to hold onto real estate and that he didn't see a disadvantage to selling it.

Mr. Kluge moved to retain landlocked property on Oak Hill Road, Map 13, Lot 49, and Mrs. Smith seconded; motion passed with 2-1 in favor.

Mr. Theis asked the Board if it was possible for people to fish at Harris Brook. The Board confirmed. Mr. Theis said the Conservation Commission would like to put up a sign explicitly allowing fishing. Mr. Kluge said the Commission may put up a sign.

Upper Valley Humane Society Charitable Exemption:

Mr. Aylesworth updated the Board on the issue of the Upper Valley Humane Society failing to file for charitable tax exemption and thus being issued a tax bill that has not been paid. There had been discussion at a previous Board meeting about a recommendation to continue issuing tax bills to UVHS and examine the possibility of undergoing an abatement process, but a significant consequence of this procedure would be draining of the overlay.

Ms. Bonnette said there is about \$26,000 remaining in overlay, which is used to provide abatements to property owners. An abatement for the UVHS would eliminate nearly all the overlay. While Mr. Aylesworth said he would prefer not to brush aside the problem of improper filing, granting a tax exemption may be more sensible than ordering payment of taxes and going through an abatement process.

Mr. Kluge moved to recommend granting a charitable exemption to the Upper Valley Humane Society, and Mrs. Smith seconded; vote unanimous in favor of the motion.

Building Inspection Permit Fees:

Building Inspector Phil Neily informed the Board of his intent to incrementally increase building permit processing and inspection fees. Mr. Neily said it's been a long time since fees were raised and that he believes it's time to begin the steps to raise fees in order to offset the costs of increased inspection and review times. Mr. Neily said that the fees will remain reasonable for the next few years and put forth a gradual process to reflect similar prices in other towns. Mr. Cummings asked if Mr. Neily was comfortable with these numbers, and he confirmed.

Mrs. Smith moved to approve Mr. Neily's proposal, and Mr. Kluge seconded; vote unanimous in favor of the motion.

Mr. Taylor discussed the upcoming receipt of highway block grant funds; the town is set to receive a little over \$122,000 in funds to use this year or carry over into next year. Mr. Taylor referenced a memo he had sent to Mr. Aylesworth suggesting various uses for this money. Mr.

Taylor said the memo's purpose is to launch a discussion, and the suggestions included paving projects and defraying some capital expenses. Among Mr. Taylor's suggestions is using \$50,000 of the block grant funds to cover the cost of the Lovejoy Brook Rd project that was not appropriated from the TIF fund. Mr. Kluge asked if TIF funds will be accessible to pay for that project. The Board agreed to further discuss the highway block grant funds during the public hearing at the next meeting.

Sewer Rates:

Mr. Cummings said he would like to begin a rate plan that does not raise the rates 250% straight away, as the rates are already very high. Mr. Aylesworth said this issue was discussed at the last Budget Committee meeting. He added that a new proposed rate structure upon the completion of Route 4-A sewer project could be a good deadline.

Route 4 Sewer Line:

Mr. Taylor told the Board said sewer connection is required in homes within 350 feet of the line. Waivers and exemptions have been granted but at this point, he said that there are some that could be eliminated. Mr. Taylor said that a main point of the Route 4 extension was to ensure that nearby residents hook on. Mr. Cummings agreed that he would like to see that and gave Mr. Taylor the go-ahead to move forward in reinforcing sewer hookups.

Mr. Gotthardt said after the Budget Committee meeting discussing this issue, he called the City of Lebanon and was told verbally that going back to 2010, nearly every year had a rate percentage increase. Mr. Cummings said Enfield had been raising their own rates to cover those increases. He added that Enfield raising the rates to cover costs beyond Lebanon's increases would amount to very high rates. Mr. Kluge said it's possible the town has been "tenderhearted" regarding raising the sewer rates beyond covering Lebanon's increase.

Town-wide Communications:

Mr. Aylesworth discussed enhancing the town's website, launching a regular email newsletter, and increasing presence on social media. He said he would like to see newsletter-type "email blasts" from different departments to keep residents informed. Mr. Aylesworth said based on feedback from the Town Manager Search Committee and people in town, it appeared that it was a good idea to run with it. Mr. Aylesworth said he looked at the state law in MA which indicates that public comments on social media could be turned off. Ryan asked the Board if the town would approve of an official Facebook page upon the condition of deactivating comments.

Main Street improvements:

The improvements are moving along with scheduled end of Aug 11. Jim said three extra days were granted because aggregates did not pass inspection.

Route 4A Sewer Extension:

Mr. Taylor said 1700 feet of pipe has been laid so far and the project is moving along.

Old Home Days Committee Appointment:

The Old Home Days Committee is seeking to have Dan Harrington appointed.

Mrs. Smith moved to appoint Mr. Harrington, and Mr. Kluge seconded; motion approved unanimously.

Abatement:

The Board reviewed a property tax abatement request.

Mrs Smith moved to deny the abatement request, and Mr. Kluge seconded; motion to deny approved unanimously.

Wetlands Permit:

Ms. Bonnette reported the receipt of another Wetlands Permit for the replacement of a failing 18" culvert with a 24" hdpe corrugated pipe on Lovejoy Brook Road.

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Cummings moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:54 PM, and Mrs. Smith seconded; vote unanimous in favor of the motion, meeting adjourned.

B. Fred Cummings, Chairman

Meredith C. Smith

John W. Kluge
Enfield Board of Selectmen