

**TOWN OF ENFIELD
ENFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES May 15, 2023**

TIME: 6:00 PM

LOCATION: Public Works Facility & Teams videoconference
74 Lockehaven Road, Enfield

PRESENT

Board of Selectmen: Erik Russell, Kate P. Stewart, John Kluge, Alice Kennedy, Tracy Young

Administrative Staff: Ed Morris, Town Manager; Whitney Banker, Recording Secretary

Members of the Public: Dan Kiley, Kurt Gotthardt, Russ Ouellette (Sojourn Partners), Carolyn Smith (Acting Director & Board of Trustees President, Enfield Shaker Museum), C. Harrison Trumbull (EVA President).

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 1, 2023

Mr. Kluge made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

Ms. Kennedy commented that she did not believe the comment was correct. She intended: direct communication with primary care will be critical so as not to create more complexity in the healthcare system. It will also be important to illustrate the gap in care so we, as a community, can understand Enfield's needs. Ms. Kennedy said she had also asked to see the evaluation plan upfront. Ms. Stewart asked Ms. Banker to review the video recording to confirm the accuracy of the minutes and adjust accordingly.

Ms. Kennedy said that the minutes noted the board was in a nonpublic session at the bottom of page 7. Ms. Banker will remove this.

BOARD REPORTS

Members of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) gave updates regarding their respective committee assignments.

Mr. Russell said that the Planning Board's last meeting had a lengthy discussion with John Haffner from Vital Communities about creative solutions for large-scale zoning changes. They also discussed how to apply the work that has been done for the Master Plan to the potential zoning changes.

Ms. Kennedy said that her boards had not met. The EVA subcommittee on the Shaker 7 has been meeting bi-weekly.

Mr. Kluge and Mr. Young did not have anything to report since the last meeting.

Ms. Stewart said that the Conservation Commission met and discussed with the Cardigan Highlanders Volunteer Trail Crew (CHVTC) the possibility of their services to maintain trails. The Conservation Commission is also working on developing a plan for outreach and information sessions throughout Mascoma schools.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Morris presented the following updates to the BOS:

- Applications for Police Officers continue to be collected. There are two individuals in the process of interviewing.
- There was the first non-native invasive species class that was well attended. The presenter was very helpful, and the event included a presentation, lunch, and a working afternoon. A DPW-specific class will be coming up, as well as other related community events.
- The Whitney Hall project had a recent meeting with Bread Loaf and MFAC. The civil engineering side of the development will be soon. MFAC and Bread Loaf will also have a walk-through of Whitney Hall.
- The Public Safety Complex is underway. RFPs will be sent out for mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work. Mr. Morris has also been working with the engineer to complete the boundary survey and do some final testing at the site.
- Mr. Morris thanked Chief Holland for his work on the new police cruiser. The town has taken possession of a hybrid cruiser that is now being outfitted. Chief Holland was also able to help Canaan obtain three hybrid cruisers as well.
- There was an electrical fire at the lower shaker village sewage pump station (the meter caught fire). EFD acted quickly to contain the fire and disconnect the meter.
- The JPUC met last week with the second of their two public information sessions, with another good turnout of at least 20 individuals. The committee will now move on to deliberative sessions. They aim to submit a recommendation to the BOS by the end of June.
- The Methodist Hill Property Use Committee applications are open through the end of next week.
- The breakroom floors in the DPW are in the process of repair. There are many years of neglected maintenance to work through.
- The water project is going well. The longer-than-expected service interruption involved incorrect pipe fittings.
- The sewer line TV inspections are about halfway done and are going well. Multiple spots of groundwater infiltration have been identified, to be addressed after this project.
- The Oak Hill Road bridge project will begin when the water levels have lowered.
- The trail and "walk a mile in their shoes" grant is underway. Mr. Morris will meet Thursday with NH Fish & Game about trail placement.
- Mr. Morris will meet Friday with NH DOT to discuss the Main Street parking project, as well as the Shaker Boulevard Bridge.

With no further comments or questions, Ms. Stewart moved on to the next agenda item.

COMMUNICATIONS**Conservation Commission Resignation (Smith)**

Mr. Russell made a motion to accept Mr. Smith's resignation with gratitude and regret. Ms. Kennedy seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

BUSINESS**Select Board Strategic Planning**

Mr. Morris introduced Mr. Ouellette from Sojourn Partners to support this effort. Mr. Ouellette provided an overview of his background and role in the strategic planning process. The BOS will come up with the general direction, with facilitation by Mr. Ouellette.

Mr. Morris said that there had been a previous effort by Mr. Ayelsworth for strategic planning but that it was driven by operations; the goal for this effort is to be driven by the BOS with operational support and collaboration. Ms. Stewart agreed the BOS should provide over-arching goals, and operations should make decisions within that framework.

BOS members provided introductions and a brief overview of their own backgrounds. Members discussed themes and goals with Mr. Ouellette.

Mr. Russell said that, with his background of involvement in the Master Plan, he would be interested in determining how to translate the plan into action by the town. Mr. Russell suggested a town policy for “complete streets” as an example of one item that was identified as important in the Master Plan but needed to be transferred into action.

Ms. Kennedy said that she has a primary interest in public health and public safety within her role as a member of the BOS. She said that another common theme heard throughout town is the concern for the budget and less spending. Ms. Kennedy said that one public safety issue for her is the proximity of Huse Park to a busy and dangerous roadway. Ms. Stewart said that Route 4 and traffic are high-priority issues. Mr. Morris added that the BOS had repeatedly discussed traffic calming in this area.

Mr. Morris said that another area of discussion might be more growth in some areas and a reduction in other areas. Mr. Ouellette will be instrumental in helping with these discussions.

Mr. Kluge said that his concerns revolve around the Planning Board and Budget Committee, both of which he has been a member at various times. He said that solidifying the tax base is a high priority. Other high priorities included the quality of life and not losing the small town, natural environment, and calm feel of Enfield.

Mr. Young said that his concerns and goals are primarily operational. He stated that he felt it was important to follow through and follow up with issues, such as ongoing facilities issues. Mr. Young agreed that public safety along the Route 4 corridor, particularly in the elementary school area, is a high priority. Mr. Young said that funds to make improvements to the DPW in a timely manner are a priority.

Ms. Stewart said that safety is a top priority for her and looked at how projects apply to keeping community members safe. She wants to work toward the community's goals outlined in the Master Plan. She wants to determine realistic levels of expected services and set project goals. Communication style for the town is a high priority. Ms. Stewart would also like to attract new families while honoring current residents and supporting aging in place (such as with smaller housing units).

Mr. Morris agreed that facilities projects and seeing them through are a high priority. He said that another priority is determining priorities with a limited budget and limited staffing. There has been a lot of change in staffing that requires organization and better internal communication. Efficiencies and service levels for the current town climate are a high priority. The town is overdue to review and adjust. Mr. Morris said that the town also needs to focus on improving technology.

Ms. Stewart added that retirement planning and cross-training are two things the town needs to continue improving. Mr. Morris added that the town is also working on a major compensation plan.

Mr. Ouellette and BOS members continued to discuss and clarify high-level goals and priorities. Mr. Ouellette will discuss general themes with Mr. Morris and work with him on the next steps and include additional staff as needed.

Award Compensation Study Contract

Mr. Morris said that there were five companies that came back with RFQ and RFPs. He distributed those to various department heads to review and rate. All department heads chose Paypoint HR as their top choice.

Mr. Young commented that he is very much in favor of this and would like to see an executive summary of the Paypoint HR proposal. Mr. Morris will send out the RFQ and some examples of their work.

Mr. Kluge made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to enter a contract with Paypoint HR for an amount not to exceed \$20,000 for the completion of a Town compensation study and the recommendation of a new compensation plan and hereby authorize the Town Manager or his designees to take such actions and execute all documents that may be necessary. Ms. Kennedy seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

Charitable, Religious, and Education Exemptions

Mr. Morris said the assessing department had been working through these Exempt Property Applications. Some recent court cases have begun to help define the correct percentage of charitable exemptions. The board will need to discuss whether these are being done correctly. Mr. Morris had invited Chosen Vale and EVA to the meeting tonight. Mr. Morris said exemptions should not accompany commercial and residential rented spaces. The town expects a re-evaluation next year.

Ms. Stewart said that traditionally the BOS had exempted properties that were not recommended. She shared concern that the DRA (Department of Revenue Administration) may make decisions for them in the future, and it would be important to work and think collaboratively with these organizations to approach areas of concern.

Mr. Kluge asked if there had been any legal opinion on this. Mr. Morris said there had not been a review by legal at this time. Mr. Morris said that it would be important for legal to review these decisions. Mr. Russell said the BOS should be consistent with how they apply their decisions across the board. Mr. Morris agreed the decisions should be based on what the law does and does not allow.

Mr. Morris said that federal non-profit status is different from NH Charitable status.

Ms. Stewart said that she felt the board should move forward with decisions they have previously made. Mr. Kluge agreed. Mr. Morris said that he would suggest this as well.

Ms. Stewart invited Chosen Vale to present. Ms. Smith said that the Enfield Shaker Museum has a major place in the public perception of Enfield as a top tourist attraction in town. The museum works collaboratively to support town events and school events and bring business to the town. They take in about \$12,000 worth of rent, resulting in about \$500 in taxes. They ask for a tax exemption, as the rented space is less than 20% of one of nine buildings. They do not intend to expand the amount of space they rent for commercial purposes.

Ms. Stewart invited EVA to present. Mr. Trumbull provided a brief overview of the history of EVA's establishment and purpose. He said EVA is unusual as owning real estate is part of their non-profit's purpose and was a founding purpose of the association. The Greely House building was purchased and rehabilitated by EVA, which does have an affordable rental apartment as part of a condition of their CDFA grant from the state. This provides tenants an opportunity to live in Enfield and remain in Enfield. Mr. Trumbull said that he feels that the real estate portion as an affordable rental is in line with the intended purpose of EVA. He said EVA is a small organization with a small budget and would appreciate the continued exemption. Ms. Stewart said that the \$5000 tax annually is 34% of the rental income. The BOS reviewed the assessor's recommendations and decisions made last year.

Mr. Kluge made a motion to grant the same exemptions as last year to all, excluding EVA. Ms. Kennedy seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

Mr. Kluge made a motion to approve the same exemption as last year for EVA. Mr. Russell seconded. Vote in favor of the motion (4-0-1). Ms. Kennedy Abstained.

Mr. Kluge made a motion to allow Mr. Morris to work with the non-profits, assessor, and attorney to prepare for changes to these exemptions next year. Mr. Russell seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

- Chosen Vale
- Dartmouth College
 - Mr. Young asked how the percentages were arrived at. Mr. Morris said that it involved looking at how often class-related activities took place versus how often other activities took place at the organization.
- Enfield Community Church
- Enfield Historical Society
- Enfield United Methodist Church
- Enfield Village Association
 - Ms. Kennedy noted that as a member of EVA, she would abstain from their vote and asked that it be separate from the others.
- La Salette
- Living Waters Bible Church
- St. Helena's Catholic Church
- Union Church of Enfield Center
- Upper Valley Humane Society
- Upper Valley Snow Sports Foundation
- Visions for Creating Housing Solutions Inc.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Veterans Tax Credit (Nicodemus)

OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Ms. Stewart requested any comments or questions from the public.

Mr. Gotthardt said that during the strategic planning process, he hoped to see the BOS look at what the town currently offers for service and what they can provide. He said that increasing the tax base will require commercial or private development.

Mr. Gotthardt said that each year the assessor gives a recommendation, and each year, the BOS continues to give an exception against the assessor's recommendation. He noted that this had been a standard practice for as long as he has attended meetings, and he believes this is an issue as the assessor looks at what the law states.

Mr. Gotthardt said that with regard to strategic planning and the overall budget, the budget committee looks at what to adjust, including leaving small amounts instead of cutting them that add up over time. He suggested that small cuts, such as only \$5k/year, should be considered to move toward larger, infrequent purchases (such as a police cruiser every handful of years). Mr. Gotthardt commented that the budget for streetlights always seems to be less than what it costs, even after decommissioning several streetlights. The electricity costs continue to rise, but the budget item does not reflect those costs.

Mr. Gotthardt said there appear to be some very small town-maintained roads that go to single homes or are smaller than some driveways. He would suggest the board consider whether the town needs to continue spending money on these as part of its strategic planning. Ms. Stewart asked that Mr. Gotthardt email Mr. Morris with specific streets of concern so he can work with his team to address these. Mr. Morris agreed that he would like a list to review with Mr. J. Taylor.

Mr. Gotthardt suggested the review of the cost of the curbside pickup throughout the town and whether it makes sense to continue to pay for this.

Mr. Kiley said that he would like to see a curbside pickup of trash remaining. Mr. Russell said that the budget committee had reviewed this several years ago, and the cost per household for curbside pickup was shockingly efficient. Mr. Kiley said that the transfer station is becoming more costly, with contractors and commercial use of the facility leading to more frequent pick-ups. Mr. Morris said that they would be working on a review of this going forward.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS - NO ACTION REQUIRED

Policies for Review/June 5th Action

- **Capital Reserve Policy**
- **Debt Management Policy**

Tax Collector's Report – April 2023

Town Clerk's Report – April 2023

NH DES Restoration Plan Approval – File 2020-01702, 65 French Rd, Map 17 Lot 24 (French)

NH Division of Forests & Lands Report of Timber Sale at Lower Shaker Village Wildlife Area

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kluge made a motion to adjourn at 7:54 pm. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 pm.

Katherine D. P. Stewart, Chair

Erik Russell, Vice-Chair

John W. Kluge

Alice Kennedy

Tracy Young
Enfield Board of Selectmen