

**TOWN OF ENFIELD
ENFIELD SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES January 22, 2024**

TIME: 6:00 PM

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

PRESENT

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

Administrative Staff: Ed Morris, Town Manager; Alisa Bonnette, Assistant Town Manager

Members of the Public: Russ Ouellette (Sojourns Partners), Jim Taylor (Public Works Director), Rob Taylor (Land Use and Community Development Administrator), Roy Holland (Enfield Police Chief), Dan Kiley, Brad Rich, Dave Beaufait, Lindsay Smith (Town Moderator)

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 8, 2024

Minutes had yet to be received at the time of the meeting.

BOARD REPORTS

Members of the Select Board (SB) gave updates regarding their respective committee assignments.

Mr. Russell said the Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Committee met and drafted a project list. They are moving forward with putting together an updated TIF plan. One committee member is moving out of town later this year, and TIF is looking for another member to fill that spot.

Ms. Kennedy said the Enfield Village Association (EVA) met last week to debrief from holiday season events. Due to schedule conflicts, the Heritage Commission did not meet and will not meet in January.

Mr. Kluge said that the Budget Committee had a lengthy and vigorous meeting to discuss the tax rate increases, citizen responses, and concerns among the committee about the figure. The majority of the committee agrees that the increase of about 5% is necessary, and there will be further discussion at the next meeting about pushback on some figures.

Mr. Young said the Energy Committee had not met since their last meeting. The Municipal Facilities Advisory Committee (MFAC) had met; however, he would leave the update to Mr. Morris. Ms. Stewart said that she would add that for the Energy Committee, the rate is going down in February to 8.1¢ for the energy itself.

Ms. Stewart said the next Conservation Commission meeting would be February 1, 2024. Shirley Green is the new Conservation Commission Chair. They are looking into working on education around stormwater management and Soak Up the Rain, NH.

Ms. Stewart asked for any questions or comments from board members or the public. With none, she moved on to the next agenda item.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Morris presented the following updates to the SB:

- The work to hire two Police Officers is continuing. There is one candidate who is likely to receive an offer of employment after completing some testing.
- There have been several applicants for the Police Assistant position, and it is expected to be filled within the next week.
- There is a new DPW Building Maintenance Specialist, Dan Quimby. Mr. Morris welcomed Mr. Quimby to the team.
- There are open positions for election, and the filing period begins January 24, 2024 – February 2, 2024. The positions are:
 - 1 year – 1 Budget Committee member
 - 2 years – 1 Budget Committee member, 1 Supervisor of the Checklist
 - 3 years – 1 Select Board member, 1 Cemetery Trustee, 1 Library Trustee, 2 Zoning Board of Adjustment members, 3 Budget Committee members
 - 4 years – 1 Supervisor of the Checklist*
 - 6 years – 1 Supervisor of the Checklist

*There was some discussion about the Supervisor of the Checklist term and verification of correct posting.
- The Whitney Hall groundbreaking took place last week, and the first official construction meeting was last Friday. Demolition is well underway. Plumbers are anticipated this week. The town is working with the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) to obtain the shoreland permit. They requested additional information, which they supplied to NH DES.
- The Public Safety Building is in the final details of the data collection phase. The floor plan, electrical, and mechanical are all finalized. The final construction RFPs are being worked on, and as they come in, the estimates are getting closer to the budget number.
- The Budget Committee continues working on getting budget items as low as possible while providing services to Enfield. As of last week, the general fund increase was 7.5%, and the total overall was approximately 17.5%. Mr. Morris is gathering data from other NH Towns regarding raises and overall budget increases.
- The legal review of the Johnston Property and the Short-Term Rental Ordinance is almost complete.
- The DPW met with FEMA regarding the declared July storm disaster.
- The surplus police cruiser was sold for \$4,750.
- The Tree City application for the town has been filed for the 15th consecutive year.

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

BUSINESS**Strategic Planning Presentation**

Mr. Morris thanked Mr. Ouellette and Sojourn Partners for their work on this. He explained to the public that the board had a retreat in June to discuss strategic initiatives. The presentation will review these initiatives, a breakdown of smaller steps to reach them, and the staff's objectives.

Mr. Morris reviewed the timeline of the research process, which included a review of the Master Plan, strategy mapping, and creating an operational matrix.

Mr. Morris gave an overview of strategic planning compared to the Master Plan. The strategic plan focuses on direct operational guidelines and performance metrics for staff.

Mr. Morris presented each strategic initiative: Public Safety, Development, Town Culture, Communication & Community Involvement, Facilities & Improvements.

Next steps:

- Select Board to digest the Strategic Plan before adoption
- Staff to create plans to implement and incorporate initiatives into daily operations
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be developed
- Strategic Plan to be reviewed annually and updated as needed

Ms. Stewart asked for questions from the board. With none, she asked if any department heads present had anything to add. Mr. J. Taylor said that he felt this would be a helpful initiative and provide community members with an improved understanding of some things. Mr. R. Taylor said he appreciated how Mr. Morris approached this and felt it was an open, two-way dialog between department heads and the Select Board. Creating the plan has been productive in getting everyone on the same page. Mr. Holland said this would help town organizations and the community be on the same page.

Mr. Russell said that there was a lot of work that went into this plan. Mr. Morris agreed and said there is a lot in the plan but a lot that intertwines throughout multiple areas. Ms. Stewart commented that the draft is 138 pages and is very comprehensive.

Ms. Stewart asked board members to send comments or edits to Mr. Morris. Mr. Morris commented that if the appendices were to be made public, they would need additional work.

Mr. Kluge said that if the goal is to connect with the public, it may be helpful to condense the information. Ms. Stewart suggested Appendix C as a possible condensed document, which Mr. Morris mentioned earlier.

Mr. Young asked if Mr. Morris would forward the PowerPoint presentation to board members. Mr. Morris said he would do so.

Mr. Rich commented that he had been involved in many strategic plans and congratulated the board on a comprehensive plan. He asked if adding a financial objective (efficiencies, cost savings, how to implement things cost-effectively) would be appropriate. Ms. Stewart said that finance was discussed at length throughout each plan section versus as a separate portion. Mr. Rich commented that identifying this for community members would be important. Mr. Morris said there are also many technological improvements that will aid efficiency, which the town does not currently have.

Mr. Beaufait said that he felt there was value in saying, perhaps in the introduction, that cost-effectiveness and affordability are a significant part reflected throughout the plan.

Mr. Ouellette said he and Mr. Morris had discussed that community members would be curious about the costs. Mr. Morris agreed and said that this focuses on planning, and the cost will become a factor as planning happens, which includes cost assessment.

Ms. Stewart asked for further comments from members of the public. Ms. Stewart thanked Mr. Ouellette for his work and help.

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

Town Meeting Warrant Review

Ms. Stewart noted that all areas highlighted in yellow as part of the document need updating. Mr. Morris added that some things may be for discussion purposes only.

Article 2 was discussed, proposing combining the town clerk's office and the tax collector's office. This would align with what many other towns do, having a single position for town clerk/tax collector (elected office for a 3-year term). Ms. Kennedy asked for clarification as to why this was added. Ms. Bonnette said that this was what the town had been doing already. It is more of a housekeeping item. Mr. Kluge asked what the benefit is of doing this. Mr. Morris said that it would give community members a single window to go to for service. Mr. Young commented that there was no financial implication for this article. Members agreed

Article 3 is waiting on the budget numbers.

Article 4 was discussed, proposing \$20,000 from the 2023 Unassigned Fund Balance for the Police Recruitment & Retention Bonus Trust Fund. Mr. Kluge asked for further clarification on this item in the narrative. Mr. Morris confirmed there would be more information in the town report's narrative.

Article 5 was discussed, proposing modifying the provisions of RSA 72:39-a for elderly exemption from property tax in the Town of Enfield. Mr. Morris said he would like to do more research to study how to standardize the numbers. Mr. Young asked how old the numbers were. Ms. Bonnette said that they had not been updated in some time. Members discussed ideas for determining the numbers and expressed concerns about the tax rate increases and potential negative impacts on other community members. Qualification for this exemption is done by application only. The exemption is only for the Enfield portion of the tax bill. Ms. Stewart said she would like to see the number of exemptions given per year. Ms. Bonnette noted that it is not broken out, but there is a total.

Ms. Bonnette said that the warrant would need to be finalized at the next meeting on February 6. Ms. Bonnette will send the articles to the board.

Article 6, for a short-term rental ordinance, was still under the editing phase.

Article 7 was discussed, proposing discontinuing several reserve funds and the transfer of the funds to the municipality general fund (or Capital Improvement Program/CIP fund). This article will include a Select Board recommendation and vote in the final draft.

Article 8 was discussed, proposing the town rescind the authority to borrow \$97,500 approved at the 2018 Town Meeting. Ms. Bonnette reviewed the items intended to be improved with this funding and the reasons it was never borrowed for those improvements.

Article 9 was discussed, proposing the town amend the Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District Plan to add floodplain engineering. Mr. Beaufait asked if properties in the floodway are town-owned or private. Mr. Morris clarified that they are privately owned but within the TIF district and that the TIF funding is used for improvements in the TIF district, which would include assessing the floodplain.

Article 10 was discussed, proposing to raise and appropriate funds for the CIP Reserve Fund. Mr. Young asked if the sums would change. Ms. Bonnette explained the fund breakdown and that they are up to date. Article 11 was discussed, proposing the appointment of a Town Treasurer via Select Board or Town Manager appointment rather than by election. Mr. Morris recommended that this would be an appointment by the Select Board.

Petitioned articles anticipated (not yet received) were discussed briefly. The consensus was that petitioned articles would appear on the warrant in whatever order they are received, not necessarily as listed below.

Article 12 proposes to adopt the provisions of RSA 40-13 (known as SB 2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the Town of Enfield on the second Tuesday of March.

Article 13 proposes the Pledge of Allegiance be recited at the beginning of the Enfield Town Meeting (following call to order?)

Town Report Dedication & Cover Photo

Members agreed they liked the building cover photo proposed.

Ms. Stewart said there was a previous discussion about potentially dedicating the report to MFAC 1 & MFAC 2 and the work that has gone into them. Mr. Young said that he liked this idea. Mr. Russell said that he felt this would be a good way to acknowledge the work of the many community members. Members agreed to identify donors and those who have worked on the project but not name people specifically to avoid accidentally leaving out anyone.

Mr. Beaufait said that many volunteer committee members have substantially contributed to the community and felt that highlighting one committee or group would ignore those people. Ms. Stewart said that the practice has been to rotate through various types of dedication (sometimes individuals, sometimes committees, occasionally other groups, etc.). Mr. Morris said he liked the “dedicated to all people...” wording. Ms. Stewart asked if they wished to do just Whitney Hall or also the Public Safety facility. Members agreed to keep the dedication to both.

Ms. Stewart will work on a draft of the dedication. She asked members to email her individually with any suggested wording they wanted included.

Ms. Stewart said that she had not received any additions to the Select Board section of the Town Report. She plans to put together highlights without taking details away from town department updates.

With no further discussion, Ms. Stewart moved on to the next agenda item.

Acceptance of Donations to Community Nursing Program Trust Fund (\$775, vote required)

Mr. Russell made a motion to accept the donations to the Community Nursing Program Trust Fund for \$775.00. Mr. Kluge seconded. Vote unanimously in favor of the motion (5-0).

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE SELECT BOARD

Public Comments

Mr. Beaufait said that at MFAC last week, it was mentioned that there was a gap of about \$100k between the approved bond funding for Whitney Hall and a gap of about \$200k for the Public Safety Facility. He asked what the plan is to fill these gaps. Mr. Morris said that for Whitney Hall, he is fairly confident that they'll come in below the \$100k gap. If they are not, funding will need to be discussed. One suggestion was not to fully renovate the elevator or find other funding for this. For the Public Safety Facility, some funding is anticipated to come back to the town and put the gap closer to the \$50-100k mark.

Ms. Smith said she hopes to have at least one Select Board member, preferably two, at the town polls all day tomorrow, January 23, 2024, for the NH Primary. Ms. Kennedy clarified that she would be there from 8-2. Ms. Stewart said that she would be there from 8-5:30, then return around 7:30 for breakdown and counting. Mr. Kluge asked, given the number of write-ins to be counted if there would be any extra help. Ms. Smith said there would be two deputy clerks, the town clerk, three ballot clerks all day, and an additional two for part of the day. She said that too many people can make the count harder. Ms. Smith noted removing booths was not a high priority for Tuesday evening, as this can be done on Wednesday instead. Mr. Beaufait asked if there was an organized team for Wednesday to remove the booths. Ms. Smith said that she was all set with this. Ms. Stewart will have name tags for all Select Board members.

Mr. Kiley said it is inconceivable that the auditors took 13 months to put out the audit report. He felt the audit needed to be prioritized by the town or that auditors who would prioritize the audit needed to be found. Ms. Stewart asked Mr. Morris if the auditors had an earlier draft. Mr. Morris confirmed that they had. Mr. Young asked if they could ask for a tighter timeline next year. Mr. Morris said they could explore this and that, in his experience, 9-10 months is relatively normal for municipality audits. Ms. Bonnette added that an attorney letter was needed, which had also taken several months.

Other Business

With no further discussion, board members moved on to adjourn.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – NO ACTION REQUIRED

Roberts & Greene – Independent Auditors – 2022 Audit findings

Shoreland Permit Application 2023-03165, 23 Main St, Map 34 Lots 36 & 37 (Town of Enfield) – Request for Additional Information

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kluge made a motion to adjourn at 8:46 pm. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimously in favor of the motion (5-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Katherine D. P. Stewart, Chair

Erik Russell, Vice-Chair

John W. Kluge

Alice Kennedy

Tracy Young
Enfield Select Board