

**TOWN OF ENFIELD
ENFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES DECEMBER 19, 2022**

TIME: 6:00 PM

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

PRESENT

Board of Selectmen: Erik Russell, Kate P. Stewart

Excused: John W. Kluge

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

Members of the Public: Emily Curtis, Recording Secretary; Jim Taylor, DPW Director; Kim Quirk, Energy Committee; Jo-Ellen Courtney, Chair Energy Committee; David Fracht, Master Planning Task Force; Lindsay Smith, Master Planning Task Force; Phil Vermeer, Dr. Jerold Theis, Dr. David Beaufait,

CALL TO ORDER

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

PUBLIC HEARING – Water & Sewer Rates

Acting as water and sewer commissioners, the Selectmen will discuss and act upon the setting of Municipal Water and Sewer Rates, in accordance with RSA 35:7.

Ms. Stewart opened the public hearing at 6:01pm.

Mr. Morris stated that Lebanon will be raising their rates and our recommendation is to raise water consumption charges 8% and raise sewer consumption charges 8% to cover the increase in treatment charges by the City of Lebanon and increased operation charges, as well as increase the quarterly meter reading charges for both water and sewer by 10% to cover increases in meter replacement costs.

Ms. Bonnette stated there is a \$190,000 deficit for sewer and water is about \$428,000 in the positive.

Mr. Morris stated that we are about a year behind the sewer portion than we thought we would be, but there have been expenses which have inhibited that.

Mr. J. Taylor stated that the increases are materials and services that keep the operation going. He noted that the meter cost is a little higher as they have gone from \$121 to \$147 each.

Ms. Stewart requested comments or questions from the public.

Dr. Beaufait stated that he understands the reasons for increases from Lebanon which we have no control over, and a marginal 1% increase to water and sewer, but his concerns are that the town is concentrating increasing municipal costs on a relatively small portion of residents and that that will have impact over time.

Phil Vermeer inquired when we anticipate the deficit being paid off.

Mr. Morris stated he anticipated the debt being paid off by 2023 or 2024.

Mr. Vermeer inquired if once those were paid off if it would help eliminate a price increase for a year.

Mr. Morris stated that we would need to evaluate the fund balance as well as capital costs and replacement costs, but the current goal is to get out of the negative fund balance.

Ms. Stewart emphasized that the negative balance is only on the sewer, but the water is in the positive.

With no further comments or questions, Ms. Stewart closed the Public Hearing at 6:07pm.

Mr. Russell made a motion to set the water and sewer rates and raise water consumption charges 8% to cover increases in operating costs, to raise sewer consumption charges and fixed charges 8% to cover the increase in treatment charges by the City of Lebanon and increases in our own operating costs, and to raise quarterly meter charges for both water and sewer 10% to cover increase in meter replacement costs. Ms. Stewart seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (2-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 5, 2022

Mr. Russell made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Stewart seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (2-0).

BOARD REPORTS

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

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Morris presented the following updates to the BOS:

- He stated that we have a bookkeeper position open, and so far, 30 applications have been received and are being reviewed at this time.
- We have made a job offer for the open groundskeeper position.
- The Enfield Police Department has completed their hiring process and the full-time officer position has been formally offered to Matthew Ocker.
- The water main replacement project for Maple Street has been put out to bid. It is posted in the Valley News as well as on the town website.
- The new well has been drilled and samples have been taken for testing.
- An RFP has been put out regarding the replacement of the chipper. He stated that information would be brought forward to the CIP Committee and the Selectboard regarding the costs that may go above the \$40,000 issued by the insurance company for purchasing a replacement.
- The ambulance RFP has been released, and he anticipates more information to come forward next year.
- S.W. Cole completed 6 soil borings at the proposed site for the public safety facility. He stated there was water in several holes and we will be looking into it further to verify if it was possible rainwater or a potential water table.
- A letter of intent to purchase land has been signed with Rob Malz to purchase a portion of the Shaker Hill Granite property, but it is pending final boring results.
- We are moving forward with Mascoma Bank for the financing of Whitney Hall. He stated that USDA loans have been reviewed but there would be additional administrative time commitment,

increased paperwork, and additional annual reporting. He stated that the rate for Mascoma Bank is 4% whereas the USDA loan would have been about 3.5% and based on all the information gathered it was determined that it would be in the best interest of the town to work with Mascoma Bank.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

Community Power Update

Ms. Stewart introduced Ms. Quirk and Ms. Courtney of the Energy Committee to present information regarding the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH).

Ms. Quirk stated that the goal is to reduce the rates we pay for electricity in Enfield. She stated that the wire maintenance for electrical lines, as well as customer service and billing, will remain with current suppliers such as Liberty Utilities and Eversource. She noted that to participate in the Selectboard would have to agree to the terms and a member services contract will be presented at a later time for approval.

Ms. Quirk stated that the target launch for the Enfield Community Power Plan is April 2023. She noted that the goal is to lower costs and expand access to renewable energy, and participation in CPCNH is completely voluntary. She stated that it would be important to have input from the Selectboard.

Mr. Morris stated that there are very knowledgeable consultants and contractors working on the project.

Ms. Stewart and Mr. Russell stated that the information was well presented, and they supported going forward.

Dr. Theis inquired if people currently served by New Hampshire Electric Co-Op will have the opportunity to make the decision to participate as well.

Ms. Quirk confirmed.

Dr. Beaufait stated that he has concerns that the economies of scale and there is concern about the possibility of bait and switch where the savings may lower from 5%.

Mr. Quirk stated that CPCNH is not a for-profit corporation and the Energy Committee asked questions regarding the possibility that the savings could change. She stated that 5% is good right now, and there is an intention that every 6 months they will go to market and do the best they can. She stated that 5% is not a guarantee, but they will seek the best avenues to keep it as close to that, or higher, if possible.

Ms. Courtney stated that the documents currently under review are the Energy Portfolio Risk Management Policy, the Retail Rates Policy, and Financial Reserves Policy.

Mr. Russell made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to work with the attorney to review and finalize and prepare the documents for the next Selectboard meeting. Ms. Stewart seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (2-0).

Master Plan Update

Mr. Fracht stated that the Master Plan is done and gave a summary of what has been completed in the last three and a half years. He stated that all members of the Selectboard have been a part of the process over the years. He stated that public meetings, workshops, and proofreading have been completed, and the required public hearing before the Planning Board has been scheduled for Wednesday December 28th.

Mr. Russell to say that hundreds of people in town have been a part of the process and it is an excellent piece of work.

Mr. Fracht stated that he anticipates adoption of the next five chapters in early 2024. He stated that the next five chapters include: Energy, Conservation, Heritage & Preservation, Recreation, and Municipal Facilities & Services. The tentative budget is \$24,474. He stated that they are looking into a grant allocated by the state to assist in covering that, and to have it covered in the next budget year.

Ms. Stewart inquired if the request had been brought before the Budget Committee to have the next phase included in the budget.

Mr. Morris confirmed that it has and stated that it has been discussed to utilize fund balance money to cover the one-time cost, as has been done in the past.

Members of the Selectboard agreed that would be appropriate to use fund balance money.

Ms. Stewart inquired how new members to the Master Planning process were selected.

Mr. Fracht stated that the applications for members flow through the Planning Board.

Ms. Smith stated that she would prefer it to be a requirement for committees to select a representative to be on the Master Planning Task Force.

Mr. Fracht stated that the Master Planning Task Force will meet at the beginning of the new year and draft communication to the various boards and committees to invite members to a task force meeting and make a plan to move forward.

Mr. Vermeer stated that one of the goals is to track the return on investment and how the development of the Master Plan is influencing people coming to Enfield.

Mr. Fracht stated that the proposal is to do a zoning rewrite. He stated that there are grants for up to \$100,000 available through the state for rewriting zoning and supports that process so long as it involves housing.

Ms. Stewart inquired how labor intensive the grants are.

Mr. Morris confirmed that they are achievable. He stated that the Selectboard can recommend the project and support seeking the grants as it will be the Selectboard who accepts the grant funds should they be granted.

Mr. Fracht stated that the Planning Board approved being the grant applicant.

Mr. Morris stated that the support of the Planning Board and Selectboard will be the most important part of the process, which will be emphasized in the grant.

Mr. Russell made a motion to approve the application of a Master Plan grant of up to \$25,000. Ms. Stewart seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (2-0).

Mr. Russell made a motion to recommend consider funding \$25,000 in planning costs in the budget process for the Master Plan. Ms. Stewart seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (2-0).

Mr. Russell made a motion to approve the draft Master Plan as presented. Ms. Stewart seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (2-0).

NH Liquor Commission Notices (Family Dollar, Kitchen 56)

Mr. Morris stated that he reviewed the requests with the Planning and Development Office, the Chief of Police, and the building inspector and no concerns were raised. He stated that the information was brought forward to verify that the Selectboard had no further concerns. He noted, if there are no objections, there is no response required to the NH Liquor Commission notification letters.

Members of the Selectboard agreed there were no concerns to be brought forward.

BUSINESS

USDA Grant

Mr. Morris has talked with the USDA through the grant and loan process, and he has worked with all the public safety departments regarding the necessary items to outfit the public safety facility.

Mr. Russell made a motion to authorize the Town Manager or his designee to apply for the USDA Community Facility Grant Program in the amount of \$44,000, to help offset the \$80,000 cost to outfit the Town's new public safety building. Ms. Stewart seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (2-0).

Conservation Commission Warrant Articles

Dr. Theis stated that Article 1 has been rescinded and Article 2 has been reduced from 50% to 10%. He stated the funds would be used for the maintenance of the trails including liability insurance, gas for chain saws, and compensation for materials needed. He stated that the decisions of what needs to be done would be made by a Trail Master, which is a position planned to be implemented in the coming year.

Mr. Russell inquired as to why the funds should go through the Conservation Commission and not the standard budget process.

Dr. Theis stated that the Trail Master will not be salaried, and they will be compensated for materials.

Ms. Stewart inquired about the anticipated dollar amount associated with the proposed 10% of land use funds.

Mr. Russell stated that the last three years totaled about \$50,000 in land use, which would equal around \$5,000 allocated to the Conservation Commission.

Members of the Selectboard inquired if there was a written maintenance plan that outlined costs that would support the need for \$5,000 to complete the tasks.

Dr. Theis stated that if the funds were not necessary then the Conservation Commission could forego contributions.

Ms. Bonnette stated that the Conservation Commission could not forego contributions, but it would be possible to set a cap amount in the article.

Dr. Theis stated that 46% of the town includes land that has trails that need to be maintained.

Members of the Selectboard moved on to discuss Article 4 regarding the establishment of a town forest.

Mr. Morris stated that he spoke with a logger who informed him that the Methodist Hill Property was completely logged about 8 years ago and there would not be anything that could be gained from logging. He stated that he was awaiting a written report.

Mr. Russell stated that there should be a cap for Article 2 as otherwise it could accrue a large amount of money. He stated that he supported the maintaining of the trails, but it seems like something that could be a part of the regular budget process.

Mr. Morris stated that a Trail Master stipend and trail maintenance could appropriately fall under the recreation budget instead of falling under the Conservation Commission.

Ms. Stewart stated she would prefer to see the Trail Master as a stipend position and the process should involve bringing information forward to the Budget Committee and having their buy in as well. She inquired about the liability coverage of volunteers and the use of chain saws.

Mr. Morris stated that volunteers could apply through the town and be covered, but the town's insurance carrier would frown upon having untrained people utilizing equipment such as chain saws.

Mr. Russell stated that hand tools could be utilized as they would not require the training and safety materials needed such as a chain saw. He stated that this is a meaningful expenditure, but it should appropriately flow through the budget process.

Ms. Stewart supported the idea that it should be put through the annual budget as to otherwise change the allocation would require going to town meeting to get approval for it to be changed again, whereas it would be reviewed annually as a part of the budget process.

Mr. Morris added that, while there is a current plan for the funds related to the trails, that plan does not outline how the Conservation Commission could use the future use of the funds.

Mr. Russell stated that the final decision can be made at the first meeting in January.

Year End Encumbrances if any

Mr. Morris stated that he is working with SymQuest to acquire two iPads for employees that work in the field, and he is looking to encumber \$2,500 to be able to order them and expend those funds at the beginning of next year.

Mr. Russell made a motion for the Town Manager or his designee to encumber up to \$2,500 in account line 01-4150-06-344 for DPW Hardware and Software. Ms. Stewart seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (2-0).

OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Ms. Stewart requested comments from the public.

Ms. Stewart reminded the public that the Town Offices are closed for observance of the holiday on Monday December 26th and Monday January 2nd. She noted that the Transfer Station is closed for observance of the holiday on Sunday December 25th and Sunday January 1st.

With no further comments, members of the BOS moved on to adjournment.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – NO ACTION REQUIRED

- GL Beyond Income Fund correspondence – IRS Filings/Fund Closing Status

- Shoreland Permit Application, Map 31 Lot 37, 71 Main St. (Kelleher)
- Shoreland Impact Permit 2022-02641, Map 17 Lot 24-1, 65 French Rd (Oseid)
- Shoreland Impact Permit 2022-03153, Map 32 Lot 6, 19 Bridge (Moulden)
- Shoreland Permit Application, Map 48, Lot 3A, Conant Dr (Pollard Trust)
- NHDES correspondence re File #2022-01659, 65 French Rd, Map 17 Lot 24 (Welikit Trust)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Russell made a motion to adjourn at 7:28 pm. Ms. Stewart seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (2-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 pm.

John W. Kluge, Chair

Katherine D. P. Stewart

Erik Russell
Enfield Board of Selectmen