

**TOWN OF ENFIELD
SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES DECEMBER 18, 2023**

TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION: Public Works Facility & Teams videoconference
74 Lockehaven Road, Enfield

PRESENT

Board of Selectmen: John Kluge, Tracy Young, Alice Kennedy, Kate P. Stewart (6:08pm), Erik Russell

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

Members of the Public: Jim Taylor, Director of Public Works; Jean Patten, David Beaufait, Susan Brown, Joan Proulx

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Russell called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS
2024 Proposed Water & Sewer Rates
&**

Acceptance of Donation to Community Nursing Program Trust Fund greater than \$10,000 in aggregate

Mr. Russell opened the hearing regarding the 2024 Proposed Water & Sewer Rates at 6:02 pm.

Mr. Kluge made a motion to enter the public hearing at 6:02 pm. Ms. Kennedy seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (4-0).

Jean Patten inquired if there was a way to keep it at a 5% increase instead of 7%.

Mr. Morris stated that there was discussion of a 5-10% increase, with the anticipation of reviewing Lebanon's increases, and consideration for the needs of the SRF and the negative fund balance.

Mr. J. Taylor stated that Lebanon sewer rates have gone up 5%, which is related to every gallon of water we send there. We have significant infiltration and inflow issues. This year has been difficult as there has been significant rainfall, further impacting the infiltration issues. He stated that staying at 7% allows the town to maintain the town's expenses, while also accounting for the 5% increase instituted by Lebanon. He stated that in the early 2000's we experienced a deficit because the rates were not increased enough, and we do not want to experience the same problem again.

Mr. Russell inquired about the findings of the water infiltration studies.

Mr. J. Taylor stated that there are 50-55 manholes that need to be rebuilt. He stated that projects are currently being planned that can help with the water infiltration issues.

Mr. Kluge stated that it is a project that will cost money to save money.

Mr. J. Taylor confirmed and stated that a loan was approved at Town Meeting for the project, and funding is also being offset by AARPA grant money.

Mr. Beaufait stated that the water infiltration is not the fault of the users, even if they need to pay for the sewer costs associated with it, and inquired if the water infiltration was related to the condition of the town's roads.

Mr. J. Taylor stated that users are paying for the infiltration, but service line issues are what contribute significantly to water infiltration.

Mr. Beaufait inquired how much sewer water is sent to Lebanon that is infiltration and not from users of the system.

Mr. J. Taylor stated that this year, water infiltration accounts for about 40% of the water that Lebanon processes. He noted that last year was a dry year and it is estimated that only about 15% of the water sent to Lebanon was from water infiltration.

Susan Brown stated that since May street has been serviced, her water quality has gone down and it is brown and sandy, and it is not being cleared up.

Mr. Morris stated that water infiltration is not a road issue, it is a sewer system issue therefore it is sewer system funding that has to pay for that.

Joan Proulx stated that it's a lot of money on top of taxes.

Mr. Russell inquired if the deficit will be paid off by the end of 2024.

Mr. Morris stated that projections show the deficit being fully paid off in 2024. He stated that it would be beneficial to find a consultant who may be able to assist with a long-term rate study to develop an ongoing plan.

Mr. Russell inquired if the new connection fees are assessed per unit or per property.

Mr. J. Taylor stated that connection fees are per lot, and there is not currently a relationship to the number of units that it would serve.

Ms. Stewart inquired if the fees align with the current usage of water and sewer, noting that a few years ago we faced a challenge where the fees were not high enough and caused a deficit.

Mr. J. Taylor confirmed that the proposed fee rate will cover the Lebanon fees and necessary usage for water and sewer.

Ms. Stewart inquired if the proposed fees align with the water and sewer asset management plans, which will phase in within 2024.

Mr. J. Taylor stated that when the sewer deficit ends, there should be a placeholder for future repairs and replacements that will be needed.

Ms. Brown inquired if Enfield would be better off having our own sewer system.

Mr. Russell stated that it has been studied and it has been confirmed it would be significantly more expensive to create an independent Enfield sewer system than it would be to stay with the Lebanon system.

Ms. Brown stated that she had heard about the possibility of a housing development being put in that would be on the water and sewer.

Mr. Russell confirmed and stated that it is in discussion how the number of proposed units may impact the pumping stations and general infrastructure.

Joan Proulx inquired about the \$25,000 transfer from the water fund to the capital reserve at the December 4th meeting. She stated that Lebanon is asking for a 5% increase and the town is asking for an additional 2% above that, and she inquired if any funding went into the reserve fund to cover things like the repair of the manholes.

Mr. Russell stated that the water and the sewer are separate funds, and the water is purely an Enfield item, and anything moved in or out of capital reserves is presented as a public hearing, as it was for the last meeting.

Ms. Stewart agreed and noted that the recent public hearing was to discuss taking money out of the capital reserves instead of into the fund as there were multiple failures which were of significant expense.

Mr. J. Taylor stated that this year there were four well failures, which resulted in \$75,000-80,000 in well work. He stated these are the types of situations that result in large expenses that can be supported by the capital reserves.

Mr. Russell agreed and noted that having the capital reserves allows the town to cover those unanticipated expenses without changing the rates.

Mr. J. Taylor stated that there are also regulations that the EPA is requiring the town to perform, such as a lead survey plan for town users in the coming year which will increase the number of staff hours needed to complete the project. He stated that typically the responsibility of the town ends as the water main, but this will further the responsibilities to what comes out of the taps in the homes connected to the main. He stated that there has also been an increase in the tests required for Lebanon's sewer system relative to the Connecticut River, the expense of which is passed on to users.

Mr. Young inquired what percentage of the increase in costs is coming from the project costs of the improvements.

Mr. J. Taylor stated that the project, which was approved at Town Meeting, will be completed with some AARPA funds, and payments beyond that have been built into the rate. He stated that there is a percentage of the future payments in the rate structure to try to avoid one substantial increase.

Mr. Morris stated that we will not know the exact percentage of the SRF loan until the projects are completed. He stated that part of the 7% increase is ensuring that there is enough money to make the first payment to the projects when it is due.

Ms. Proulx stated that she has been informed that the only way prices may come down for users is to increase the user base. She inquired how we will get more people to sign up for it with the costs associated with connections and usage.

Mr. Kluge stated that large developments, which have been considered in the past, would have the greatest impact, but those have not been

Mr. Russell stated that the rewriting of the zoning, which is being planned for review in the upcoming year, could allow for changes to be made and could help with that.

Mr. J. Taylor stated that adding Lakeview Condo's was beneficial to the system. He stated that the condominiums were spending twice as much replacing their leach fields than it cost to connect to the system, and as a result property values have tripled.

Ms. Kennedy inquired about the problem Ms. Brown is encountering with her water quality and what support was needed to have it addressed.

Mr. J. Taylor stated that pipes in that district are over a hundred years old and while the lines are flushed it does not always prevent iron from coming off the walls of the pipes. He stated that many tests have been run on the water to ensure it is safe.

Mr. Kluge made a motion to close the public hearing at 6:30pm. Ms. Stewart seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

Mr. Kluge stated that it is hard to see that kind of rate increase, but the reasoning is valid in order to maintain the system and plan for the future.

Mr. Russell agreed with Mr. Kluge and stated that in 2024 there should be a thorough evaluation of the usage fees.

Ms. Stewart stated that we should work with Lebanon to see if there is any impact to Enfield residents from costs associated with projects only serving Lebanon.

Mr. Kluge made a motion to approve the rates as presented. Ms. Stewart seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

Public Hearing regarding the Acceptance of Donations to the Community Nursing Program Trust Fund greater than \$10,000 in aggregate.

Mr. Young made a motion to open the second public hearing at 6:33 pm. Mr. Russell seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

Mr. Morris stated his thanks to Jake's and Mr. Bergeron for his sizable donation. He stated that it is encouraging to see the inflow of funds to support the program, and he looked forward to getting the board and program started in the coming year.

Mr. Kluge stated that the support has been exceptional.

Mr. Russell stated that the total donations to the Community Nursing Program Trust Fund to date is \$89,616.73.

Ms. Stewart requested comments from the public.

Ms. Patten commended Mr. Bergeron and stated that he is a great community member, and his contributions are appreciated.

Mr. Beaufait stated that he is glad to hear that there is a three-year program that is fully funded, and we need to look forward to further years to see if there is any taxpayer impact.

Mr. Kluge made a motion to close the public hearing at 6:36pm. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

Mr. Kluge made a motion to accept the donations to the Community Nursing Program Trust Fund with thanks. Ms. Kennedy seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 4, 2023 (Regular & Non-public session); November 20, 2023, Review

Mr. Kluge made a motion to approve the minutes of November 20th as presented. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

Ms. Stewart stated that Ms. Patten had feedback regarding the November 20th minutes that should be discussed and requested the minutes be put back on the table for discussion.

Ms. Kennedy made a motion to put the minutes of November 20th back on the table for discussion. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (5-0).

Ms. Patten stated that she asked about the funding for the clerk of the works and Mr. Morris answered her, and it was not included in the minutes. She stated that when there is a discussion like that details should be included for the public in the minutes.

Members of the SB discussed Ms. Patten's request regarding the minutes for November 20th. Upon review of the minutes the conversation was noted to be reflected on page 10 line 501, regarding the discussion beginning on line 488.

Members of the SB discussed the context of the minutes and determined that the term 'clerk of the works' would be added to line 501 for clarification.

Ms. Patten agreed that would help clarify the context of the question.

Mr. Russell left the meeting at 6:47pm.

Mr. Kluge made a motion to approve of the minutes of November 20th as amended. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (4-0).

Mr. Kluge made a motion to approve the public and nonpublic minutes of December 4th as presented. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (4-0).

BOARD REPORTS

Members of the Select Board (SB) presented updates on their respective committee assignments.

Ms. Kennedy highlighted that there are a lot of events for the Hometown Holidays, hosted by many organizations and encouraged members of the public to participate.

Ms. Stewart thanked members of the staff for their help and support in moving the Town Offices. She thanked Mr. Morris for his work in assisting with getting the facilities updated and preparing for the transition as well.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Morris presented the following updates to the SB:

- Staff report: Enfield PD is working through the hiring process for a candidate; DPW is accepting applications for a winter seasonal plow truck operator and a janitor/building maintenance position.
- This year there are two secret Santa's that have donated items for residents in need. He thanked the police and fire departments for their help with the work in collecting gifts and helping families.
- He is reviewing contracts for Whitney Hall with a careful eye to see where savings can be made. The final contract will be written as a 'not to exceed' amount to ensure the budget for the building matches the amount of the bond.
- Catamount Environmental will be at Whitney Hall on Jan 8th to perform asbestos abatement in the vault.
- The groundbreaking of Whitney Hall will be advertised as soon as it is scheduled
- Town Officer are up and running at the La Salette property, and all operations are back up and running. He noted that the Library will be opening on January 2nd.
- An application to the NH State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program has been awarded to the town. He noted that it is a 100% grant for five members of the staff to take cybersecurity training courses, and

the members of the executive team will be taking the training to bring information forward to their respective departments.

- Thank you to the DPW for their work over the weekend related to the storms. He stated that DPW crews replaced approximately 25 culverts this year and the new truck equipment has proven to be a great asset in keeping the ditches clear for water flow. He thanked Jim Taylor, Jeremy Clay, and the DPW Crew for all their work this year.
- Due to the rain, it is being requested that members of the public reduce their travel on dirt roadways due to current conditions.
- The DPW and police department staff met with FEMA regarding the summer storm damage to review the July 2023 storm damages for possible reimbursement.
- The Shaker Boulevard bridge process is currently in the scope and fee phase of approval. He noted that state approvals are a necessary part of the process for that project so it may not follow the typical structure of other projects.
- Thank you to the people who have put the time and applied for the Granite State Green Fleets Grant, especially Jeremy Clay. He stated that we have been awarded a \$180,000 grant for the DPW.
- The surplus cruiser has been stripped of all equipment and will be listed for auction later this week

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

BUSINESS

Acceptance of Granite State Clean Fleets Award

Ms. Stewart stated that a grant had previously been awarded for a smaller amount of funding, however, now that the larger grant amount has been awarded the Select Board needs to formalize the forfeiture of the previous grant to accept the larger one.

Mr. Morris stated that the Clean Diesel Program is offering to pay 80% of the cost for a purchase of a new vehicle of up to \$225,000, which is intended to be utilized to replace the 2006 plow truck. This will take the place of the \$56,250 grant we received but will pay for 80% of a \$225,000 truck leaving the Town to only pay the \$45,000 difference. He expressed his gratitude to Jeremy Clay for his efforts as it was his diligence and persistence that helped the Town receive this grant.

He noted that to accept the newer grant for \$180,000, we will need to forfeit the DERA grant we received earlier in the year for \$56,250.

Mr. Kluge made a motion to authorize the Town Manager or their designee to forfeit the DERA Grant and accept the Granite State Clean Fleets Award awarded by the State of New Hampshire in the amount of \$180,000 once the grant is approved by Governor and Council, and hereby authorize the Town Manager or their designees to take such action and execute all documents that may be necessary. Ms. Kennedy seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (4-0).

Members of the SB thanked members of the staff for their contributions to the grant process.

Resolution to adopt FEMA Floodplain maps in accordance with RSA 674:57 “Amendments to the flood insurance rate maps shall apply to local floodplain ordinances upon their adoption by resolution of the local governing body of a municipality and shall require no further action by the local legislative body.” Amendment to the Flood Plain Ordinance was approved at the 2023 Town Meeting.

Mr. Kluge read the resolution to be approved by members of the SB:

Whereas the Town of Enfield, NH has a Floodplain and Zoning Ordinance, originally adopted in March of 1990 and last amended in March of 2023, and consequently participates in the federal flood insurance program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administered through the

State of NH, Office of Planning and Development's NH Floodplain Management Program we, the Enfield, NH Select Board, hereby adopt the following resolution:

Pursuant to RSA 674:57, by resolution of the Board of Selectmen, all lands designated as special flood hazard areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in its "Flood Insurance Study for the County of Grafton, NH" dated February 8, 2024, together with the associated Flood Insurance Rate Maps Panels 33009C1110F and 33009C1120F dated February 8, 2024 and 33009C0916E, 33009C0917E, 33009C0918E, 33009C0919E, 33009C0938E, 33009C0939E, 33009C0943E, 33009C1080E, 33009C1085E, 33009C1095E, 33009C1101E, 33009C1103E, 33009C1105E, and 33009C1115E dated February 20, 2008, are declared to be part of the Town of Enfield Zoning Ordinance and are hereby incorporated by reference.

Mr. Kluge made a motion to approve the resolution as presented. Ms. Kennedy seconded.

Ms. Kennedy inquired if impacted residents would be notified of the changes.

Mr. Morris stated that he believes that residents would already have been notified, but he is not certain.

Ms. Stewart stated that FEMA regularly redraws the maps and it is possible for residents to advocate through the federal level as to whether or not they are in the flood zone.

Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (4-0).

Review and Approval of Encumbrances of 2023 Budget items to 2024 including, but not limited to, NH Retirement contributions, Master Plan update funding.

Mr. Morris stated that when there is a contract for an expense is not expended in the current years' budget and is anticipated to be completed in the upcoming budget, it can be encumbered to be brought forward into the next budget year. He stated the following items have been requested to encumber:

- **NH Retirement System (NHRS)**

Mr. Morris stated that, due to complications with the new NHRS systems software, the Town has been unable to make payments to NHRS for the months of July – December. NHRS assures us that this will not affect the retirement benefit of participants. Due to the way the Payroll system functions, NHRS payments show as expended though there has been no actual payment made to NHRS during this timeframe. He noted that the request for encumbrance includes the unexpended balance of \$77,029.24 for NHRS Employer Paid Retirement as well as any additional monies due to NH Retirement System for 2023 employer paid retirement expenses with expenses not to exceed the \$400,000 budgeted.

- **Executive Contracted Services**

Mr. Morris stated that there will be a Strategic Plan presented to the SB at the second meeting in January 2024, which will review the updated contract. He noted that \$10,000 has been paid to date, with the request to encumber the balance of the contracted amount due of \$10,000.

- **Invasives Species Project**

Mr. Morris stated that \$46,000 had been budgeted and the request is to encumber \$20,000 of the unexpended balance of \$25,696 for contracted invasive species project expenses.

- **Master Plan**

Mr. Morris noted that there have been issues with the contractor that had been hired for the next phase of the Master Plan, which had been budgeted in 2023 from Unassigned Fund Balance (UFB). He stated that a new contractor has been signed and the request is for the encumbrance of the full balance in this expense line in the amount of \$25,000.

Ms. Bonnette stated that there is also a balance of the revaluation line of \$10,998 due to not receiving the bill for December 2023 services as of yet, therefore it is being requested to encumber the contract price to be paid out in the beginning of the next budget year.

Ms. Kennedy made a motion to approve 2023 encumbrances for the NH Retirement System Employer Paid Retirement, Executive Contracted Services, Invasive Species Project and Master Plan, and Revaluation work as presented. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (4-0).

Mascoma Lakeside Park Resignation Effective Immediately (Smith)

Ms. Kennedy made a motion to accept the resignation of Meredith Smith from the Mascoma Lakeside Park Committee, which she served as chair, with recognition of her tireless efforts and endless time contributed to making Mascoma Lakeside Park the reality that exists now. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (4-0).

Heritage Commission Resignation Effective Immediately (Smith)

Mr. Kluge made a motion to accept the resignation of Meredith Smith from the Heritage Commission effective immediately with thanks for her hard work and significant achievements. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (4-0).

Conservation Commission Resignation Effective December 31, 2023 (Theis)

Ms. Kennedy made a motion to accept the resignation of Dr. Theis' from the Enfield Conservation Commission with gratitude for his longstanding support of the natural resources of Enfield. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (4-0).

Community Nursing Committee Appointments Non-Public Session RSA 91 A-3: II (c)

Ms. Stewart stated that the appointments are going to be discussed in nonpublic session.

OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Other Business

Ms. Stewart stated that members of the public are welcome to apply for the vacancies online or by turning an application in to Ms. Bonnette for consideration.

Ms. Stewart stated that the SB is not the appointing body for the Supervisor of the Checklist and thanked Nancy White for her time as a Supervisor of the Checklist in Enfield, for which she has served many years. She stated that the position will be listed on the ballot, and members of the public can file with the Town Office for that position.

Mr. Kluge stated that we should consider what an undertaking the primary election will be in January.

Ms. Stewart stated that Lindsay Smith, Town Moderator, will be consulted.

Ms. Bonnette stated that the Town Clerk has also asked for additional funding for ballot clerks in 2024.

Ms. Bonnette presented documentation for signature from the SB.

Public Comment

Ms. Stewart requested comments or questions from members of the public.

Mr. Beaufait stated that, as a member of the Mascoma Lakeside Park, stated that Meredith Smith has made great contributions to the Mascoma Lakeside Park.

With no further comments from the public, members of the SB moved on to nonpublic session.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91 A-3: II; (C)

At 7:27 pm, Mr. Kluge moved to enter non-public session following 91-A:3 II (C). Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (4-0).

At 8:05 pm, Mr. Kluge moved to come out of non-public session. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (4-0).

Ms. Kennedy made a motion to appoint: Dawna Pidgeon for a one-year term, Sheila Bessette for a one-year term, Parker Hinshaw for a two-year term, Cynthia Loring as a two-year member, Affrille Degoma for a three-year term, and Stephen Powell for a three-year term; as members of the Enfield Community Nurse Committee. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (4-0).

Members of the SB signed administrative items and moved on to adjourn the meeting.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – NO ACTION REQUIRED

- Supervisor of the Checklist Resignation Effective January 19, 2024 (White). Vacancies are filled by appointment of the remaining Supervisors of the Checklist, or Moderator if not so done within 45 days.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kluge made a motion to adjourn at 8:07pm. Mr. Young seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (4-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm.

Katherine D. P. Stewart, Chair

Erik Russell, Vice – Chair

John W. Kluge

Alice Kennedy

Tracy Young

Enfield Select Board