

Minutes of the Selectmen's Meeting August 7, 2018

Members Present: Lynn Sweet, Chairman, Bryant Scott, Scott Young

In attendance: Ashley Rowe, Mike Finnell, Mike Richard, Judy Dupré, Eric Rowe, Ed Merrill, Paul Eaton, Parker Eaton, Slobhan Norris

The Selectmen's Meeting was called to order at 5:21PM.

Bills were reviewed and approved. Two Current Use Land Use Change tax bills were reviewed and signed. An Intent to Cut Timber was signed. Minutes from the July 17th meeting were reviewed and approved. The Board members took under advisement a request from a Water Street resident find measures to control traffic speed on that road.

Town Clerk Chris Bane introduced Terri Marsh, her new assistant Deputy Town Clerk to Board members.

Board members reviewed and approved the quote from Leavitt Electrical Contractors for the electrical work on the transfer of electrical equipment from the old to new building at Recycling Center. As required, 50% payment will be made in advance. Payment for the shed was authorized.

Selectman Sweet signed a bill of sale for the "retired" police vehicle.

Judy Dupré reviewed with Board members the status of payments being made toward overdue taxes. They also discussed the naming of the shared drive off Drake Hill Road, which, due to 911 regulations, will now be named because it will access 3 homes. Red Oak Lane was suggested and awaits approval from all properties owners sharing it.

Police Chief Mike Richard shared some preliminary thoughts about his upcoming 2019 budget. The Town can anticipate an increase in dispatch fees for the next 2 years. Because of federal protocol and regulations, he believes it is time to employ a company that specializes in CIGS compliance to maintain the department's computers. They will also provide a higher level of security and provide 24 hour service. He has talked with a Chief from a neighboring town who has been pleased with this company's service. Chief Richard discussed replacing part time officers with a full time position and postponing a cruiser purchase this year to help offset the tax impact of that change. The Selectmen asked Chief Richard to continue to work on the 2019 budget proposal and to prepare a projected budget for the next 5 years to present at Town Meeting so that residents might see where the Town budget is headed; all department heads will be asked for a similar 5 year projection.

Several were in attendance to address the matter of internet service to the Parsons Hill/Evans Mountain/Willey Pond Road area of Town. Ed Merrill, General Manager of Atlantic Broadband (formerly Metrocast), spoke to the assembled group, reviewing the 3 options for gaining service available to the Town. The Town's agreement with Atlantic Broadband is due to be renewed in 2019. In the past, upgrades to service were provided upon contract renewal, but now upgrades are ongoing and continuous; he elaborated about some of the upgrades and services available to

Atlantic Broadband customers. Mr. Merrill also stated that the franchising authority (Town of Strafford) cannot deny renewal of the contract if Atlantic Broadband/Metrocast has fulfilled the terms of the agreement; if they haven't, Atlantic Broadband must be given time to fix any violations. Atlantic Broadband is presenting a standard franchise renewal agreement; however Mr. Merrill stated that they would be willing to accommodate changes that the town suggests.

Moving from the topics of available services and general franchise matters, Mr. Merrill discussed the when and how of getting service to the area. The plans to bring service via French Road are designed and budgeted; application for the poles/utilities has been made. Atlantic Broadband is able to reach more customers via this route.

Selectman Sweet believes Atlantic Broadband has not fulfilled the previous agreement with the Town, as no service has been provided to the Parsons Hill/Evans Mountain/Willey Pond Road area of Town. Mr. Rowe stated that Mr. Merrill told him that service could come via Parsons Hill Road if the Town could demonstrate the feasibility of the plan. Additionally, the Town attorneys, in reviewing the situation, agreed that the Town has the legal right to use the public way of Parsons Hill Road as access for utilities. Mr. Merrill stated that he did not receive that information. Mr. Rowe continued stating that, according to Atlantic Broadband's guidelines, service to Evans Mountain Road (via Parsons Hill Road) would stop at the end of his driveway. Mr. Rowe further stated that Bean Camp is a technology camp in the area and internet service is not proposed for it.

Mr. Merrill agreed to have the design engineers review access via Parsons Hill Road. Selectmen Young volunteered to ride along with the engineer as he makes an assessment of the area. Atlantic Broadband will determine if they can service the same areas included in the French Road plan. The Board members would like to see coverage to the camps and the Rowe property at the end of Evans Mountain Road.

Selectmen Sweet stated that, aside from this particular issue, the Board has general concerns about the quality of service provided. Before the Selectmen are to sign a new contract they want assurances of better and consistent service.

Before Mr. Merrill left, he was provided with an email from the Town attorneys stating their legal opinion on the matter. The Board members also signed correspondence authorizing Atlantic Broadband to proceed with plans to use the public way of Parsons Hill Road to provide internet access to that area of Town. This will be forwarded to Mr. Merrill.

Paul Eaton was in attendance to express some concerns about lighting at the Recycling Center and the brightness that can be seen from his house on Spencer Lane. He understands the need for the lighting in the evening during operating hours, and occasionally early morning, but would like to see them put on a timer or be more compliant with the dark skies ordinance. He wondered with the work being done on the new electrical building if this might not be an appropriate time to address the lighting as well. The Selectmen explained that electrical shed is a separate issue both by source of power and budgetary constraints. The Selectmen will work with Eversource and consider this for the 2019 budget. They also gave an update on the shed project, which they hope will be completed by late October/early November.

Mr. Rowe commented on the operations of the Zoning Board of Appeal. They currently meet only when applications are received, making it somewhat unclear as to when applications are due. He suggested that regularly scheduled meetings would also provide regularly scheduled due dates for applications. If no applications are received, a meeting could be held for the purpose of training, or it could be cancelled.

Mr. Rowe also remarked that he finds problems with due date for Planning Board applications, citing the both RSA and the current deadline requirements of the Board. If an applicant presents a plan at meeting on the first Thursday of the month, the window for application for continuing business is too narrow. He would like to see the Planning Board use the deadline set forth in the RSA.

The Selectmen, as previously planned, will provide 5 dates for training through NH Municipal Association for both ZBA and Planning Board members during the fall and early winter months.

The Selectmen Young and Scott reviewed, discussed and approved information provided by the Town attorney dealing with the outcome of a recent status conference concerning a legal matter being handled by the Town attorneys.

At this time a motion was made by Lynn Sweet and seconded by Scott Young to enter into a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (a). Roll call was taken as follows:

Lynn Sweet – Aye, Bryant Scott – Aye, Scott Young - Aye

The Board entered non-public session at 7:15PM.

A motion was made by Lynn Sweet to leave non-public session and seconded by Bryant Scott to return to public session. Roll call was taken as follows:

Lynn Sweet – Aye, Bryant Scott – Aye, Scott Young – Aye

Public session reconvened at 7:25PM.

No votes were taken during the non-public session.

A motion was made by Scott Young and seconded by Lynn Sweet to seal the minutes of the non-public session. Roll call was taken as follows:

Lynn Sweet – Aye, Bryant Scott – Aye, Scott Young - Aye

There being no further business it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:26PM.