

ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
Minutes  
November 4, 2019  
Approved: November 18, 2019

---

Chairman R. Wentworth convened the meeting at 6:00 PM and P. Wittmann led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence. The following staff members were present:

Reuben Wentworth, Chairman  
Virgil MacDonald, Vice Chairman  
Cydney Shapleigh, Selectwoman arrived at 6:03 PM  
Philip V. Wittmann, Selectman  
Paul LaRochelle, Selectman  
Elizabeth Dionne, Town Administrator

**Agenda Approval**

V. MacDonald made a motion to approve the agenda as presented and P. Wittmann seconded with all in favor of the motion.

**Board of Health**

R. Wentworth made a motion to recess as the Board of Selectmen and reconvene as the Board of Health and V. MacDonald seconded with all in favor of the motion.

- Septic Waiver Request; Map 42 Lot 9, 8 Treetop Lane - Deborah Vickowski

J. Dever was called upon for the discussion. The plan is to renovate the house with no intention of expansion. This is to replace the existing septic system. The tank will be 53' from the shore at the closest point with the leach field on the back of the lot near Trask Side Road 211' from the lake. The placement is for a better gravity drop into the tank. It will be a sealed tank and pump chamber system and an upgrade to what is currently in place.

V. MacDonald made a motion to approve the septic waiver request for Treetop Lane, Map 42 Lot 9 and P. LaRochelle seconded. The vote was 4 approved, 1 abstention, C. Shapleigh.

R. Wentworth made a motion to adjourn as the Board of Health and reconvene as the Board of Selectmen and V. MacDonald seconded with all in favor of the motion.

**Announcements:**

- Town Offices will be closed on Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup> in honor of Veteran's Day.

**Public Input | (limited to 3 minutes per person on agenda items only)**

None

**Appointments:**

- David Widerstrom, Jim Thomas and Patricia & Greg True - Hayes Road

The involved parties approached the Board to discuss the paving on Hayes Road, which was approved last year. It has been approved to be paved however; there is no money for paving. The question would be will there be funds allocated for paving this year, which would be dependent on the road reconstruction plan that is within the Warrant Articles that have not been discussed yet, by the Board for this year. The Warrant Articles should be discussed sometime in December. The Highway Department made great strides with maintenance with ditching, brush cutting, grading etc. that has been done. Other concerns on Hayes Road were mentioned. Several houses on the road contain within their deeds a common area on Beaver Brook that use to be a small fire pond. Within 2 to 3 years of the road being graded and the drainage system installed, the pond is nothing but a wide spot in Beaver Brook. Originally when the road was walked early in the reconstruction it was noted that the pond was beginning

to fill in and the State was not happy about it with residual materials filling it in then carried down to the lake. The same thing is happening to a worse extent with the pond being non-existing. The pond was at the bottom near the bridge where it crosses the brook and was more than 5' deep. At one time, the Town brought in a 50' boom crane to dredge out the pond but it almost immediately filled back in. Whether it is a result of the drainage system not being adequate or runoff from the road; it is unknown. Last year the Town dropped stone in the roadway which in the opinion of the parties was much too big for the necessary repairs to the road and was not rolled properly because it sat on the surface and got washed off to the side of the road and into the ditches. The past 4 to 5 years the road has become more and more difficult to manage. They requested to be put to the top of the list for paving. K. Roberts was invited to the table to join the discussion. V. MacDonald asked about the silt going into the pond. K. Roberts stated that not all but some could be coming from the road. There is an extremely large amount of sand that migrates from above the bridge and with the hydraulics from underneath the bridge it does fill in, possibly it is a bridge issue from when it was installed that created the problem. The pond was dredged by the Town. There are catch basins up and down the road that are cleaned every year. When coming in from the Drew Hill Road side everything is on the upstream side with a big area that is cleaned out. On the Rines Road side there are 2 cleanouts on each side beside the culvert system. K. Roberts is not sure why the pond fills in. R. Wentworth asked about costs for having the pond dredged. DES permitting would be necessary (turbidity curtains previously placed). K. Roberts stated he could have the wetlands specialist take a look at it to determine what might be causing the problems. The common practice throughout the entire Town is to place only stone which is the only way to bind the road during mud season. R. Wentworth stated that the Board would get in touch with them once the Warrant Articles are being reviewed and discussed, specifically for Road Reconstruction and what roads will be coming to them for the next year.

- Roger Sample - Old Home Week Car Show

Roger Sample addressed the Board to discuss the concerns regarding the Car Show held annually in Monument Square. It was brought to his attention that a decision was made or suggested about moving the event from the current location. He understands that the business next to the Town Hall wrote letters of opposition. Over the course of the year during the Memorial Day Parade and the Car Show they voiced concerns of Monument Square being blocked off and don't want that to happen again for interference of their business. The Board did not say they were going to do away with the Car Show. Everyone needs to work together keeping pedestrian safety in mind and leaving the spaces (3 or 4) across from the Hardware Store open, not occupied by classic car participants and the spaces in front of the Hardware Store to be open. Various scenarios/options were discussed. R. Sample agreed to work together.

Denise DeRoche was invited to speak on behalf of the circumstances. Ms. DeRoche read an excerpt from the Winnepesaukee Forum from the first car show in 2014. She is just looking for consideration regarding parking. She noted that there are no trash receptacles. She has been dealing with the car show from inception, she likes the show but it does not bring any customers to the business and feels that business is at a 30% loss the day of the show. R. Wentworth stated a memo would be sent to Parks and Recreation and/or the Old Home Week Committee to have trash receptacles available and hopefully R. Sample will be in to discuss the issues brought forward tonight.

### New Business:

1. New England Solar Garden - Solid Waste Department

Scott Simonds, Solid Waste Director, John Kubiczki, Engineer, Andrew Keller, NE Solar Garden Representative and Don Sorrentino, resident addressed the Board in regards to a Solar Array on the closed/capped landfill location. A. Keller explained that he previously worked with L. Dionne in her prior position in Milton, NH on a very similar project. A meeting was previously held with the parties to discuss the logistics resulting in a recommendation to come to the Board for presentation. Background on the company was provided to the Board noting that they focus on municipal projects and larger scale projects. Their focus is to approach communities with parcels of land that have no value to the community such as closed landfills. This offers to bring new revenue to the Town due to the fact you would more than likely never be able to lease the property to anybody and you would not be taxing yourself on your own property. Solar is a great opportunity to create new revenues. They did the Milton project (their first), done one other landfill project and have several other projects currently in the permitting stage. A comparison to Milton: we leased the land from the Town; we entered into a PILOT Agreement and offered a rebate for helping the Town to save money on their electric bills. This would offer roughly 20K in revenue to the Town on a piece of land that in some cases is a liability with expenses such as monitoring etc. There have been a lot of

changes in the state regarding solar, they are allowed by current standards to do up to 1 megawatt of solar on a given parcel of land. The feedback from the previous meeting seemed to be in support of the project and would like to be able to move forward with a project if the Board agreed and it passes Town Meeting. V. MacDonald questioned the wells; J. Kubiczki responded that there are no ground water monitoring wells of concerns. R. Wentworth questioned the penetration of the cap that is at the location. A. Keller stated that they are not anchored they are ballast blocks that are poured and placed and before anything is done you must go through a full process with the State with pre and post 1989 requirements. While in that process engineering has to be done to be sure that the size of the blocks are not going to create any issues with the cap. The equipment to be used on the cap has to be verified and approved by the State. NE Solar is familiar with the process with their experiences. This needs to be signed off by the Town Engineer, the State and engineered to be sure it meets all specifications of the actual cap. The PILOT Program was clarified, there is a statute, which could be used and considered in decision making as to how to tax the assessed value of the equipment. A. Keller believes that the PILOT program cannot go beyond 20-years and consistent with the financial terms of the development and based on that 20-year plan. The maintenance of the grounds is up to NE Solar Garden and an extra benefit to the Town. L. Dionne informed the Board that this would need to go before Town Meeting to be voted on as a Warrant Article and has been confirmed by legal counsel. A decision should be made as soon as possible. S. Simonds and J. Kubiczki both agree that it is a good idea with the ability to gain revenue from a piece of land that is just sitting there and in addition it might defer some monitoring costs. The permitting process is very strict to ensure that the integrity of the cap is maintained. If the integrity of the cap is compromised it would show in the ground water monitoring. Insurance and typical bonding would be required. The property was walked by NE Solar, they feel that fencing and gating would be appropriate. The estimated timeline would be for construction in early 2021 if all went accordingly. It typically takes 1-year for the build. The utility applications cannot be submitted without site control in place and a letter of intent is not enough. Interim work can be done to move it along. R. Wentworth asked about who oversees the project and who bears the cost of such; these this need to be investigated. A. Keller responded that there typically is Town oversight with it needing to go through the processes of the State, Town, Planning, etc. and are costs borne by the applicant. As with any development, it needs to go through the processes. NE Solar would work closely with the Solid Waste Department and its operation. D. Sorrentino spoke highly of the company, they are honorable, it would bring tax revenue to the Town, reduce costs to the Town and it would help the environment with renewable energy and getting an electric discount for the Town. The Board voiced support.

P. LaRochelle made a motion to support consideration of a Warrant Article for NE Solar Garden to be placed on this year's ballot and P. Wittmann seconded with all in favor of the motion.

## 2. Warrant of Belknap County Treasurer

V. MacDonald made a motion to deliver Two Million Two Hundred Thirty One Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Three dollars to the Belknap County Treasurer for the tax bill on December 17, 2019 and C. Shapleigh seconded with all in favor of the motion.

## 3. Bay Sidewalks, East Side

K. Roberts addressed the Board asking that the East Side Sidewalks go out to bid now so that the price could be locked in for the spring. It was noted that the State project with Fish and Game has come to a halt due to problems. This is for sidewalks all the way to the beach, it has been dug and prepped, the only thing is the final grading after the curbing is put in place. The cost would be approximately 21K for the project. This will be a springtime project; put out to bid now for future approval and award by the Board. The Board agreed for this to go out to bid.

## Old Business:

### 1. Chamberlain Road

K. Roberts explained the upgrades done by Scott Rowe to Chamberlain Road to his property. The road has been inspected, has all the necessary culverts and pull offs as recommended and K. Roberts is satisfied with the passable condition of the road. There is still a gate/cable and will continue in order to keep people from dumping on the property. This is a Class VI roadway and will remain as such even when a driveway permit is issued because it won't be a subdivision it will be a single dwelling. This is for informational purposes only.

## 2. Budget Presentations

- Insurance

L. Dionne was called on for the presentation. R. Wentworth voiced that he feels that all employees should pay towards the insurance, it should be \$25.00 per employee, and a family plan should be \$50.00. Costs have gone up again this year and has cost the Town over 20% in the last three (3) years. He noted seeing a request for domestic partners to be added to the plan and feels that they should have to pay for the insurance, not given. Comparisons were made to the private sector opposed to the government sector. There is a very minimal pay in for employees, there are deductibles but the employees pay a minimal portion and believes the taxpayers pay roughly 90%. The thought is the employee should have more employee contribution. L. Dionne noted that this is really under the Benefits budget not the Insurance budget. This is the Workers Comp, Liability, Unemployment etc. there really isn't much that can be done about those amounts. L. Dionne informed the Board of the increases and decreases for each line item. There is roughly a 9K decrease from last year's total.

C. Shapleigh made a motion to approve the Insurance budget as presented and P. Wittmann seconded. R. Wentworth added for a total of \$296,713 with all in favor of the motion.

- Benefits

C. Shapleigh questioned when was the last time the employees incurred an increase of contributions towards health insurance. L. Dionne did not have an exact timeframe but knew it was prior to 2016; she has been discussing this with the Finance Manager and hopes to have further information for the Selectmen. She would be recommending an increase; it seems to be unavoidable. Currently the plan is a high deductible plan, which lowers the premium, lowers the payroll deductions, it is still a significant cost to the Town. Liz did not feel that she would have a recommendation for this budget, definitely for next budget along with other things that are being reviewed; being in the middle of budget season we are not prepared to bring it forward now; it would be a very extensive creation to include statistics, history and recommendations. It went up 12.3% this year, no increase last year and the year before it went up roughly 10% so in three (3) year's we have incurred a 22.3% increase and have not increased the employees at all. We either increase a little this year or hit them hard next year. C. Shapleigh would be more in favor of increasing across the board 4% and it is the responsible thing to do. L. Dionne thought that that may work but keep in mind the part-time employees who work a permanent 20 or more hours a week their benefits are pro-rated. R. Wentworth would like to see this brought back to the Board at the next meeting. The budget could be approved with the understanding that there will be a larger employee contribution. R. Wentworth would like to see a breakdown of costs for each employee with what they pay and what the Town pays. Grandfathering was mentioned for current opposed to new employees but would need to be looked at from a legal standpoint. R. Wentworth noted that the people that are living pay check to pay check are actually paying more than the department heads the way the policy is written. C. Shapleigh feels that entire policy needs to be looked at and agree that the people that are paid the most should not be paying the least for coverage. L. Dionne stated that every effort will be made to provide the information at the next meeting.

C. Shapleigh made a motion to approve the Insurance budget as presented and V. MacDonald seconded. R. Wentworth requested that the amount of \$1,610,514 be included with all in favor of the motion.

### Selectmen Reports

P. LaRochelle reported he met with the Water Bandstand Committee informing the Board that their discussion included the amount for the repairs to the crib at \$4,380.31. They are requesting the Warrant Article to be \$5,500 to allow for repairs for any unforeseen damages. The intent is to hold a water ski show in June and two (2) concerts; July and August. In addition, the Committee is formally withdrawing the request to become Trustees and remaining as a Committee. They would like to have appointments to the Committee for three (3) year terms for all the current members.

P. Wittmann had nothing to report.

C. Shapleigh had nothing to report.

V. MacDonald had nothing to report.

R. Wentworth reported that he was unable to make the last Budget Committee meeting but knows that budgets were approved with another meeting this week.

**Town Administrator Report** by L. Dionne

**2019 Tax Rate**

DRA set the tax rate late on Thursday, which needs the Board's approval. A handout was provided with the history dating back to 2001. The proposed tax rate is \$12.79 and is a decrease from last year. The current Fund Balance is \$2,884,583 at 11.86% it is recommended by DRA to be at 17% at \$4,136,288; the Town is right in the middle. A debate transpired about voting last year to put the surplus money back on taxes. L. Dionne noted that the surplus money from 2018 is in the Fund Balance and does not have an amount for this year.

V. MacDonald made a motion to put \$500,000 back on the taxes. No second. FAILS.

Further discussion: C. Shapleigh noted it would only take you down to \$12.51 and we have come down significantly and are not where the DRA recommends. L. Dionne recommends a healthy Fund Balance in case there is a catastrophic event. R. Wentworth stated the drop in amount for this year is \$1.54 and seems to be a good amount and feels the fund balance should not be used and is happy with the \$12.79, which is the lowest it has been since 2010. Both P. Wittmann and P. LaRochelle see both sides of the debate whether to use fund balance or not. By using \$500,000 from the Fund Balance it would lower the rate 28 cents from \$12.79 to \$12.51.

V. MacDonald made a motion to use \$500,000 from the Fund Balance to lower the tax rate and P. LaRochelle and P. Wittmann simultaneously seconded. The vote was 3 approved, 2 opposed C. Shapleigh and R. Wentworth.

**L. Dionne - Annual Self-Evaluation**

L. Dionne provided her self-evaluation to the Board for consideration at the next meeting during Non-Public Session. R. Wentworth stated he won't be at that particular meeting and will return on December 10<sup>th</sup>. It will be the decision of the Board either to act on this or wait until he returns for a full Board review.

**Domestic Partner Request for Insurance**

An email was provided to the Board with a request to add a domestic partner onto insurance, which is a nice idea however, there is a cost factor associated. It would be the Board's decision whether to allow or not allow. C. Shapleigh feels that the Town is well behind the times on this subject and feels that this should be part of the overall review and revisions of the policy. It was the consensus of the Board to wait until the complete review of the policy is done.

**Approval of Minutes**

**October 2, 2019 - Workshop**

V. MacDonald made a motion to approve the Workshop minutes of October 2, 2019 as presented and C. Shapleigh seconded. The vote was 4 approved, 1 abstention, R. Wentworth.

**October 21, 2019 - Regular**

C. Shapleigh made a motion to approve the minutes of October 21, 2019 as presented and P. Wittmann seconded with all in favor of the motion.

**October 21, 2019 - Non-Public**

L. Dionne recommends that item #2 remain sealed.

C. Shapleigh made a motion to approve the minutes of Non-Public October 21, 2019 releasing #1 and P. LaRochelle seconded. The vote was 4 approved, 1 abstention, R. Wentworth.

## **Approval of Consent Agenda**

C. Shapleigh made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and P. Wittmann seconded with all in favor of the motion.

### **Fire Department**

New Hire - Sam Jaden Stankos, Firefighter, \$13.79 per hour, effective 11/5/2019.

### **Planning Department**

Conditional Hire - Amelia A. Cate, Planning Secretary, \$15.79 per hour, effective 11/6/2019.

### **Public Input II (limited to 5 minutes per person on any Governmental/Town Business)**

Loring Carr questioned the legal status of the domestic partner issue that was brought forth. It was explained that it was not approved tonight and when the policy is reviewed, legal counsel will be consulted.

Bob Holt addressed the Board on the Warrant Article for the solar project asking for clarification. It was explained that it would be asking the Town's people to allow the Selectmen to enter into an agreement to lease the land for the solar project; it must be approved by Town vote. Hopefully, there will be more information at the Deliberative Session. He urged caution entering into such a large contract. Clarification on the tax rate was requested and confirmed.

Patrick Maimone and Evelyn Sheehan addressed the Board stated he was going to build a barn behind his house at 79 Bay Hill Road. R. Wentworth noted that this was previously brought to the Board's attention by K. Roberts about using the well and are still waiting to hear from him and the Water Superintendent C. Mitchell. The request is to use the right-of-way through the Town well location. His concern is pulling his trailer in his driveway by getting on the left hand side of Route 28 then backing down Bay Hill Road with people going around him from a safety perspective. It was recommended that they contact K. Roberts and C. Mitchell or go through the Town Administrator. L. Dionne will reach out to the departments and will be in touch after their review and recommendations.

Joseph Haas addressed the Board asking if the details of the tax rate included the school; it was confirmed it did. He informed the Board that within ten (10) days of receipt by RSA you have the power to contest to DRA and suggest you do. He referred to the Londonderry case from 2006. He further stated the Board has a duty by RSA as an elected official to obey the law. Tax rates and taxes shall be proportional and each town is to be proportional it has to be equal across the board. He is just sharing the information; you can do with it what you please, you can contest.

### **Discretionary Action on Requests for Appointments (No discussion, majority vote required to allow/not allow appointment)**

None

### **Non-Public Session:**

R. Wentworth made a motion to enter into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (b) at 7:52 PM and C. Shapleigh seconded. The Board was polled in the affirmative by roll call with all in favor of the motion.

P. LaRochelle, yes  
P. Wittmann, yes  
C. Shapleigh, yes  
V. MacDonald, yes  
R. Wentworth, yes

### **Adjournment:**

C. Shapleigh moved at 8:04pm to exit nonpublic session. R. Wentworth seconded. **Roll call vote:**  
C. Shapleigh - yes V. MacDonald - yes

P. Wittmann - yes  
R. Wentworth - yes

P. LaRochelle - yes  
Roll call vote carried unanimously.

C. Shapleigh moved to “not divulge” the minutes because divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board. R. Wentworth seconded. Roll call vote:

C. Shapleigh - yes  
P. Wittmann - yes  
R. Wentworth - yes

V. MacDonald - yes  
P. LaRochelle - yes  
Roll call vote carried unanimously.

C. Shapleigh moved at 8:05pm to adjourn. P. Wittmann seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*Mary K. Jarvis*

Mary K. Jarvis  
Recording Secretary