

North Berwick Board of Selectmen Minutes October 1, 2019

**NORTH BERWICK BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
OCTOBER 1, 2019**

Present: Chairman Cowan, Selectman Hall, Selectman Johnson, Jr., Selectman Galemmo, Selectman Johnson, Sr.

Also Present: Dwayne Morin, Rob Versocki, Rebecca Reed

Chairman Cowan called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Review and Approve Minutes of September 17, 2019

Selectman Johnson, Jr. motioned to approve the minutes of September 17, 2019 as written. Selectman Galemmo seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

4. Public Input

Rob Versocki stated that he lives on Linscott Road and Hussey has started to do some work in the area. His land abuts their land. He stated that he knows that this area was a tree farm and he wonders if what they are currently doing terminates them from being a tree farm. He was wondering if they need to pay the taxes due on the land that they own if they are no longer in tree growth. Dwayne stated that Hussey is just currently doing tree farming in compliance with their tree growth management plan. Mr. Versocki said that they seem to be doing a lot more than what they usually do. Dwayne said that they had a certified forester, Dave Parker, mark all of the trees that need to be cut that is in compliance with their management plan.

Mr. Versocki said that they seem to be harvesting a lot more trees in one bulk area. He said that they made a right of way road on Linscott Road to take all of the lumber out. He stated that the area that they are making as a staging zone seems bigger than what they have done in the past. Dwayne said that it definitely is bigger but they are still in complete compliance of their tree management plan. Selectman Hall asked if they come out of the tree growth management plan, will they have to pay back taxes. Dwayne said that they would have to pay. They don't reimburse the Town taxes. There is actually a formula that determines what their penalty would be and it is called a Tree Growth Removal Penalty. It takes the number of years that they are in the tree growth program and also bases it on assessed value.

2. Public Hearing – 6:35 pm – GA Appendices

Chairman Cowan read the legal ad into the minutes:

Notice of Public Hearing
General Assistance Ordinance and Appendices
October 1, 2019 6:35 P.M.

The North Berwick Board of Selectmen will be holding a Public Hearing on Tuesday, October 1, 2019 at 6:35 pm in the Municipal Building Room 212. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to seek input on the revised General Assistance Ordinance and Appendices proposed to replace the existing Ordinance and Appendices. The proposed Ordinance and Appendices were prepared pursuant to the Maine General Assistance Law (22 MRSA § 4305(4)).

The North Berwick Board of Selectmen encourages all interested residents to attend this Public Hearing.

Dwayne stated that, every year, the Board has to adopt the new General Assistance Appendices that the State puts out. He said that we are agents of the State when we do General Assistance within our community. The State puts out appendices that the Town has to adopt. It is not a change to the General Assistance Ordinance text. It is just a change to the Appendices which are basically the levels of support that we are able to assist the clients with.

Dwayne said that there have been significant changes to the Appendices. The max level of assistance for a single family house has increased from \$766.00 to \$899.00. The number has increased by about \$100 or so for each additional person in the household. There has also been an increase in the weekly food allowance by about \$2.00 per month. There was no increase in the electricity amounts. There was some change for apartments for both heated and unheated. For unheated apartments, it went from \$600.00 per month to \$748.00 per month. Also for heated apartments, it went from \$701.00 per month to \$845.00 per month. There was no changes for Special Care, Personal Care or Heating Fuel assistance.

Chairman Cowan asked if they just based these increases on a percentage. Dwayne said that they do a study in every metropolitan area. He stated that every Appendices has a metropolitan area and it goes from Aroostook County down to York County. We are in the York County HFMA District. There are 2 Districts in York County. There is the York/Kittery/South Berwick HFMA District and the other District includes the rest of York County. He stated that Food is usually based off of Federal Guidelines and Assistance is based off of Poverty Guidelines. The Federal Government publishes the Poverty Guidelines and the State follows these. Dwayne stated that General Assistance is for temporary assistance. The levels are not significantly high.

Chairman Cowan asked if anybody had any comments. There was no public comment.

Chairman Cowan closed the Public Hearing at 6:46 pm.

Selectman Galemmo motioned to accept the new General Assistance Appendices for 2019/2020. Selectman Hall seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

5. Unfinished Business:

A. Capital Projects: Updates

Dwayne stated that the shim coat and base coat have been laid on Bauneg Beg Hill Road. The final surface will probably be done next week. He is waiting to hear from Libby Scott to see when they can do it.

Dwayne said that they met with the architect for the Fire and Rescue Station. The first round of plans have been changed a little. He wanted to see some additional changes but because of code, they aren't going to be done. He stated that all new emergency buildings have to meet new earthquake standards. The problem with our old Rescue building is that it doesn't meet the new standards so we need to be careful as to how we rehab the building so that it is not considered a first emergency priority building. It will basically be an office building. We can't use it for living quarters or for anything that would be considered first responder activities. He stated that we can use it but we would need to bring it up to earthquake standards. The architect told him that it would be cheaper to tear it down and rebuild it rather than rehab it to meet the standards.

Dwayne said that they are looking to possibly do this in 2 phases for cost reasons. The preliminary costs are still coming in higher than what they had anticipated originally. They did shrink the building by about 1,000 square feet. He wanted to shrink it by about 2,500 square feet but coding issues are preventing him from doing this. The issue is that all bedrooms now have to have a window. Originally we were going to try to cluster the bedrooms but we now have to build a wing that has windows. Dwayne stated that they are going to be building 4 bedrooms.

Dwayne stated that it will be a wood frame building. There will be no bricks due to the costs. There will be some aesthetically pleasing features around the bottom such as some half brick type of thing. There will be siding on the top half. He stated that wood frame buildings are easier to add additions to it in the future if they decide to do so. He stated that they are probably looking at a cost of about \$4 million for the project.

Selectman Hall asked how many bays there would be. Dwayne said that there are 3 bays and they will be set up to drive through. He stated that they are double bays so it can fit 2 trucks. Chairman Cowan asked what kind of roof line it would have. It will be a pitched roof. They are still working on what the roof will look like throughout the whole building. Selectman Hall asked if there were any entrances. Dwayne said that there is a back entrance where the firefighters will come in and there will be a separate public entrance.

Selectman Hall asked if the 2 ambulances were going to be in the new building. Dwayne said that the new building would have the ambulances in one of the bays on one end and have the pickup trucks, utility trucks and forestry or tanker sharing this bay.

B. Linscott Road: Review Possible Intersection Realignment

Dwayne stated that he is getting prices right now for appraisers for the property. Right now, he is having problems with appraisers getting back to him or they are not able to tell him when they can do it. He does have one price right now but most of them are saying that they can't look at the property until November. It looks like the appraisal cost will be about \$500.00 to \$600.00 and will be done sometime in November.

Dwayne stated that he has also reached out to engineering firms to get some draft costs. He received 1 proposal but he has sought out for more proposals. The one that he received was significantly higher than what he thinks it should be. He will have some more proposals at the next meeting. He stated that they need to get a survey done and he wants it done before we get any snow. He said that he has tried to utilize firms that are on the DOT list for intersection alignment. Unfortunately, all of the firms that are on it are significantly larger engineering firms and these typically cost more money. Dwayne stated that it is a vertical and horizontal layout. We don't need documents because we are going to build it ourselves. He hopes to have some prices at the next meeting.

C. Streetlight Project: Update – Constellation Extension

Dwayne stated that he did sign our extension for our streetlight electricity contract. It is now extended to December, 2024. It was a \$.01 increase. The current contract at \$.0448 will run through December, 2020. After that it will go to \$.0546 through 2024. The goal is to try and lock in before our consumption went down because our contract is a consumption based contract so if our consumption goes down, it is okay.

Dwayne stated that we have completed the sale so we now own the streetlights. He met with Affinity today and they told him that we are 2nd in the queue right now. We are right behind Waterville. Their goal is to start locating all of the lights next week.

D. Salt/Sand Shed: Update on Project

Dwayne said the salt and sand shed is done. They sprayed it black today. The new concrete rim was installed last week along with all of the patching. Chairman Cowan asked if there were any issues with the project. Dwayne said that there were some challenges. He stated that it is very difficult to pour a one sided wall but they were able to do it. They were able to do it in 5 pours. They originally thought that they could do it in 3 but it took 5. They did switch bonding agents. Because of the extensive corroding that we had, the engineer said that we needed to switch bonding agents. Originally we were just going to spray a bonding agent for the concrete to stick together. Because the rebar was so corroded, we needed to put in an anti-corrosive bonding agent. When you spray this bonding agent you have 6 hours to put concrete or you have wasted your time. They were going to do it in pours anyway but it needed to be more pours because of the six hour time frame. Dwayne said that they sprayed everything with the rubber asphalt today. They will let it set at least a week before adding the sand/salt.

Reminders: Next Board of Selectmen's Meeting Oct. 15, 20019 – 6:30 pm Municipal Building

6. New Business:

A. Tax Refund: Review Request for Tax Refund

Dwayne stated that we have a policy on refunds. If your taxes are paid and there is a credit, it goes into the next year and we will reimburse it on request. This case is a little bit different. They paid their taxes. There was some closing problems that they had with their bank. They have actually paid their taxes for this year and into next year. They have about a \$50 credit on next year's bill. They want Dwayne to reimburse the 2nd half of this year's tax bill. We typically don't do this. He stated that even though our tax bill is made in 2 payments it is 1 tax bill. The policy has always been that we keep it as a credit and the taxpayer works it out with their bank. In this case he has changed his bank so he would like us to reimburse the May payment as well as the overage that would have gone into next year's FY 20/21 bill.

Chairman Cowan stated that this is an interesting scenario because it is not something that we created. Selectman Galemmo asked if the new bank was charging him escrow and then going to be paying it. Dwayne said the bank had already set up an escrow and they will pay the May payment. Dwayne said that he is not opposed to doing it because he is asking for the May payment and not the October one. Chairman Cowan asked Dwayne if he foresees any issues with setting a precedent where we would be doing refunds outside of our refund policy. Dwayne stated that he has been here for 22 years and it is the first time that it has happened.

Selectman Galemmo motioned to reimburse the taxpayer \$1,406.55. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

B. Verizon: Update on Cellular Antennae's on Town Hall

Dwayne stated that Verizon has reviewed our building on a first site visit and they are interested. They would like to talk to us further about utilizing our building for their antennae. Their goal was to come in next Wednesday and do a more complete site visit but Dwayne said that he is out so they will have to reschedule. They will look at how they will need to run their electricity and their wiring and design something so we can look at it. They will then make a proposal for us to consider.

C. Commitment FY20: Municipal Valuation Report

Dwayne stated that, in their packet, was the 2019 Municipal Valuation Report. Every year, we have to give a summation of our taxable property within our community. We have to submit it to the State by November 1st or we risk losing the aid that we get from them. It lets the State know what we have so they can audit us in the Spring. He stated that our taxable income for the year is about \$539 million and personal property is about \$66 million. This is a total tax value of \$605 million. Our tax rate was \$12.35 which came to a property tax levy of \$7.5 million. We have about 1,080 homestead exemptions. Our BETE number was \$228 million which was for 33

approved applications. Our TIF is about \$3.5 million. The TIF District is for the housing project across the street. Last year we collected about \$912,000 in excise tax. The electrical distribution lines within our town are valued at almost \$16 million. We have 64 parcels in our Tree Growth Program.

Selectman Galemmo motioned to approve the Municipal Valuation. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

Dwayne stated that the proposed 2020 State Valuation was also in their packet. It shows the valuation for all 29 towns in our area. We were the 4th highest growing community in York County. It was a 15.72% increase in our valuation. Almost all of our increase was due to Pratt. Dwayne stated that on page 52, it shows our SAD 60 information and what our percentages will be next year. Next year, Berwick will be at 33.82%, Lebanon will be at 29.33% and we will be at 36.85%. These are preliminary numbers so there could be some changes.

D. Cemetery Trustees: Bob Glidden Request to Complete Amelia Small's Term

Dwayne said that he received a call today from Bob Glidden. He is interested on filling out Amelia Small's term. Amelia had been elected but then left town. Dwayne said that she had either 1 or 2 years left on her term. He has asked Mr. Glidden to complete an application for the Board to consider.

7. Other Business:

Dwayne stated that there are letters from the County Commissioners in their packet. On November 6th, they are going have their American Foundation Tribute. They invite all of the Tribute winners from the County to the County Commissioners office for their meeting to recognize them.

8. Review and Approve Warrants and Correspondence:

Warrant:	September 24, 2019	- \$	0.00
Warrant:	October 1, 2019	- \$	94,089.94

Selectman Galemmo motioned to approve the Warrant of October 1, 2019 for the amount of \$94,089.94. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

7. Other Business – Executive Session – Legal

Selectman Galemmo motioned to go into Executive Session at 7:40 pm and to come back out at 8:10 pm. Selectman Hall seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

9. Adjournment:

Selectman Glemmo motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 pm. Selectman Hall seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

Respectively Submitted,
Susan Niehoff, Stenographer

Original to Town Clerk

Chairman: Wendy Cowan

Selectman: Jonathan Hall

Selectman: Michael Johnson, Jr.

Selectman: Charles Glemmo

Selectman: Michael Johnson, Sr.

