

**North Berwick Board of Selectmen Minutes January 21, 2020**

**NORTH BERWICK BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES  
JANUARY 21, 2020**

**Present:** Chairman Cowan, Selectman Glemmo, Selectman Johnson, Jr.,  
Selectman Johnson, Sr., Selectman Hall

**Also Present:** Dwayne Morin, William Hall, Scott Strynar, Larry Wick, Stan Cowan

Chairman Cowan opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

**1. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Review and Approve Minutes of January 7, 2020**

Chairman Cowan stated that under the Section of Public Input, the first sentence currently reads, "...regarding the recreation retail availability in town.". It should read, "...regarding the recreation cultivation availability in town.".

Selectman Johnson, Jr. motioned to approve the minutes of January 7, 2020 as amended. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

**4. Unfinished Business:**

**B. Streetlight Project:** Update

Dwayne stated that he is meeting with them tomorrow to go over some outstanding issues. They will also start looking into adding lights at the intersections that are currently missing some.

**C. Boston Post Cane:** Award to New Recipient

Dwayne stated that they are going to be doing the ceremony on Friday at 1:00 to present the Boston Post Cane. It will be at the mill in their Rec room.

**Reminders: Next Board of Selectmen's Meeting** – Feb. 4, 2020 – 6:30 pm Municipal Building

## **2. Public Hearing – 6:35 – Junkyards – Wick and Hall**

Chairman Cowan read the Legal notice into the minutes.

Public Hearing  
Town of North Berwick, Maine  
Automobile Junkyard Permits

The Town of North Berwick Board of Selectmen will be holding a Public Hearing on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 6:35 p.m. in North Berwick Municipal Building Room 212 for a hearing on the applications of Larry Wick and Francis Hall Family Trust for an Automobile Junkyard Permit. This Public Hearing is being held pursuant to Title 30-A M.R.S.A. § 3754.

The Public is invited to attend this Public Hearing.

Dwayne stated that they did not receive an application from the Hall's so the Board will only have to act on the application for Larry Wick. He stated that he will have to contact the Hall's to set up another Public Hearing. Selectman Johnson, Jr. asked how long they had before it becomes invalid. Dwayne stated that they have 6 months and they are already about 2 months in.

Dwayne stated that they have had no issues with the Wick junkyard. He has checked with the CEO and the Police Chief and they have had no issues as well.

There was no public comment.

Chairman Cowan closed the Public Hearing at 6:37 pm.

Selectman Galemmo motioned to approve the Junkyard permit for Larry Wick. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

## **4. Public Input**

There was no public comment at this time.

## **6. New Business:**

### **C. Planning Board:** Reappointment of Scott Strynar as member

Dwayne stated that Scott Strynar's appointment expired on December 31, 2019 and he would like to be reappointed to the Planning Board.

Selectman Hall motioned to approve the reappointment of Scott Strynar to the Planning Board for a 3 year term and the expiration date of December 31, 2022. Selectman Galemmo seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

**A. Audit:** Discuss FY19 Audit with Auditors

William Hall from RHR Smith & Company was present to discuss the audit. He started going over the audit. The first 3 pages is the Independent Auditor's Report. He stated that the opinion that we have is the opinion that we want. It is not an adverse opinion and it is a non-qualified opinion. Mr. Hall said that this means that with all of the information that is audited, they do not expect any fraud and all of the numbers have been represented fairly. Pages 4 through 11 are the Management's Discussion and Analysis. This is the part where, if Dwayne wanted to put some information in, this is where he would do it. He stated that we currently use the boiler plate that they created many years ago and a lot of the figures and numbers are on those pages and are also represented in the statements and schedules that follow it.

Mr. Hall stated that when they talk about the General Fund it refers to our Operating Fund. It has all of our departments in it and all of the tax money that comes in. On 6/30/19, we had \$4.5 million in assets. Most of this was liquid cash in the amount of \$4.1 million as well as taxes of \$259,000, liens of \$40,000 and other A/R at \$75,000. We have liabilities of \$585,000 with Deferred Inflows being at \$192,000. This leaves our Fund Balance at \$3.7 million of which \$3.1 million is Unassigned and \$643,000 is Assigned. Mr. Hall stated that they usually recommend that towns have 60 to 90 days of surplus. This allows us to have cash to pay the bills and not do any short term borrowing and it is a good budget tool. Dwayne told the Selectmen that we are currently running at about 110 days.

Mr. Hall stated that on page 18 of the audit is the actual expenses and revenues for FY19. The General Fund took in \$11.2 million which was mostly from property taxes and other intergovernmental revenues. The expenses were at \$11.04 million. Most of this was for Education at \$5.7 million and Public Safety at \$1.7 million. We had a net change to the good in the Fund Balance of \$302,000. It went from \$3.4 million to \$3.7 million.

Page 20 through 22 of the audit represents our Enterprise Fund which is our Pay-Per-Throw Program. It has an unrestricted net position of \$235,000. Mr. Hall stated that our program is very healthy and is one of the healthies that he has seen in Southern Maine. In 2019 it made \$11,259. Dwayne stated that he believes that they will probably break even this year and then they will start plateauing down. He stated that the goal was to keep the bag costs at one price for at least 5 years and it now looks like we will go 14 years before we need to raise the price on the bags.

Mr. Hall stated that, starting on page 23, it has the Notes to the Financial Statements. Note 1 is a generalized note that gives all of the terminology and understanding of what some of the words might mean. He told the Selectmen that if they were ever to read this document, they should start on Note 1 because it will give you a little bit of an understanding. Note 2 represents our cash. It shows where and what type of accounts our cash is in such as checking, savings or money market accounts. Note 3 is the Capital Asset breakdown and Note 4 would be our general Long Term debt. He stated that the Notes to Financial Statements break down areas into more detail for the amounts shown in the statements.

Mr. Hall stated that the Schedules started on page 61. Schedule 1 is a budget to actual comparison. The Revenues came in at \$398,000 of excess of what was budgeted. Almost all of that amount was from charges for services at a total of \$415,000 over what was budgeted. We saved \$569,000 in expenses. The only expense that went over budget was Public Works by \$17,000. Dwayne stated that this was due to the Winter Highway budget. On page 69 of the audit, it breaks down the revenue that we were just discussing even further followed by a breakdown of the expenses. On pages 73 and 74 is a summary of our special revenues and permanent funds. The schedules that follow break down every single one of our special revenues. We have 4 of them which are the Town Hall, Equipment Fund, TIF Fund and Caleb Foundation Fund. All of them are in the positive. The Equipment Fund has \$345,000 in it which is a pretty good amount to have in a reserve account.

Next are the Permanent Funds which include the Hobbs Fund, Greenleaf Endowment, Hanson Fund, Cemetery Fund and Heating Fund. All of these are in the positive. Most of them are sitting in their own bank accounts and they are all tied to whatever purpose they are being used for. The Cemetery Fund has \$217,000. On pages 82 and 83 it breaks down the fixed assets more. On the last pages of the document is something that we have to do for the Federal Government because we are a Yellow Book Audit. This is because we have a USDA Rural Development Loan.

Mr. Hall stated that we are pretty healthy and we are doing very well.

## **5. Unfinished Business:**

### **A. Linscott Road: Intersection Realignment**

Dwayne stated that the last time they met and discussed Linscott Road, things were going very well. The engineer had recommended that we apply for the MPI program because they thought that we would be a very good candidate. However, on Wednesday, we received the comments back from the traffic engineer on our design that is causing some issues. Dwayne stated that when we were going to move the intersection, we didn't think that we could meet State standards for the site distance but we were going to increase site distance. They had recommended that we put the intersection where we designed to put it and they have come back and said that we need to meet site distance. Our engineers went back out to look at it. There are 2 different site distance tables. They did the one that is less restrictive which is 360 feet. We had 390 feet. We sent this back to the State and they told us that we need 445 feet.

Dwayne stated that the engineers have been working for the past 2 weeks to see if we can meet the requirements or to figure out what to do if we can't meet them. Today they determined that we can meet the requirements with a site distance of 443 feet. Dwayne pulled the site plans up for the Selectmen to review. He stated that in the first turn lane that is turning left, we get 443 feet in the middle of this lane. He said that they need to see a car at 3½ feet above the pavement. He stated that they can't see a car there right now because of all of the vegetation that is located there. In order to get this done, they will need to remove a bunch of trees.

Dwayne stated that the other comment that the State mentioned was that they are wondering if we can get a 3<sup>rd</sup> turning lane in at the location that we want the intersection. The engineers designed a 3<sup>rd</sup> turning lane so we are able to get one in. The State wanted to make sure that there was room for the lane to swing back in before the bridge so they don't have to do any modifications to the bridge because that would be extremely expensive. Dwayne stated that they will be able to do it with striping of the road without having to do any improvements to the road. He stated that by setting it up this way, it might actually help to calm traffic in this area. Dwayne stated that they have been pushing for years to have the speed limit moved to the other side of the intersection and the State will not do it. He said that he wants to put a raised island there instead of just the striping to help with the traffic flow.

Dwayne stated that the plans are with the State right now and they should be getting back to him within the next couple of days. He stated that because of some of the changes it will increase the cost of the project. We are going to apply for the MPI grant. Right now, it looks like the cost of the project will be around \$430,000 which includes the property acquisition. Under the impact program, the town would have to guarantee that we could come up with \$215,000. He thinks that our costs will most likely be around the \$125,000 to \$130,000 area. He stated that if we get accepted into the MPI program, it actually adds costs to the project. One of the big costs is because we need to have an engineer on site when we are building it. The engineer has to come out and stake it, be there when we are putting down the gravel and make sure that we do everything according to the plan. The engineer has to stamp it and send it to the DOT stating that it was built according to the plans that we submitted. The engineering costs are an additional \$20,000. Dwayne said that they will do sporadic inspections and not have them on site all of the time.

Chairman Cowan asked if we would be able to replant some vegetation and put them a little further back from the road. Dwayne said that they couldn't. It will always have to be vegetation free.

Dwayne stated that the proposal that we made on the land swap is still not final but he was told today that it was looking good. He was told that they were going to appraise the land and send out people to see it but they are now saying that they are not going to do that. It is a simple land swap. Dwayne said that he is meeting with the Weaver's on 1/31 to go over the home costs. The Turnkey house that they were interested in costs \$127,000. They would then need to get the sewer and water line in but that cost covers hooking up of the lines. We also need to do a half foundation and a driveway.

**D. Budget FY21: Discuss Budget for FY21, Review and Approve Salaries for FY21**

Dwayne stated that the first thing that they need to talk about is the salaries for the upcoming year. One of the things that he has looked at this year is knowing where the labor market is within our area to see if we are competitive with other towns. He is recommending a 3% cost of living increase. He stated that the cost of living this year was 2.3%. The budget that he is proposing has a 3% wage increase but if the Board wants to go lower, he can change the figures. There are some positions that he is looking to change for more than 3%.

Dwayne said that they did the cost changes for Administration a few years ago and we seem to be tracking pretty well. The only one that he is looking to increase at a higher percentage is Lisa Corcoran and it would be about a 6% increase. They are saving money because Rebecca is not making the same amount of money that Marianne was making because of her tenure so we should still be okay. The CEO is going from \$67,045 to \$69,500. The other big increases are going to be on the Highway Department. It would be \$1.00 per hour increase for the employees and it would be \$1.35 per hour increase for Mike. Kristie at Parks & Rec will go from \$47,175 to \$49,200. The Police salaries are a result of the new contract that we signed. There is a 3% for the Transfer Station. Dwayne stated that they will do an increase to the Fire Department because they have not had an increase in 5 years. We will add \$50 per month to their stipend.

Dwayne stated that the Rescue Squad put in their budget and they did not ask for any increases for their employees. He said that it is hard to find EMT's and Paramedics due to wages so he would like to increase their wages by \$.50 per hour. It would go from \$14.00 to \$14.50 per hour for EMT's and from \$19.25 to \$19.75 per hour for Paramedics. Selectman Galemme asked if this makes us more competitive with other towns. Dwayne said that it does. For EMT's, the wage is about \$14.00 to \$15.00 per hour and for Paramedics, it is about \$18.50 to \$22.00 per hour. He stated that we have a good staff and would like to keep them around.

Selectman Galemme motioned to accept the Town Manager's recommendations for the salary increases. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

Dwayne stated that the budget that he is working on right now is about a 5.5% increase from last year. He said that this seems like a lot but if you take out the acquisition of the property on Linscott Road, our increase would be .73%. The amount that we will need from taxation is exactly 3% or about \$82,500 right now. He stated that we have set some pretty significant overlays for the past few years so we have significant reserves to cover an increase. He said that, in the last 3 years, we have gone from \$2.3 million in savings to \$3.3 million in savings.

Dwayne stated that the Town Office is up about 5.94% and a lot of that is due mostly to salaries. He stated that that our audit costs have gone up. We were paying \$8,000 per year for the audit. The next 3 year proposal is to go to \$8,900 per year. This is mainly because there are changes and we have to do a lot of different reporting. He said that 3 years ago our audit used to be about 50 pages long and this year it is 85 pages long. Another cost increase is with our attorneys. For the first time in 14 years, they are increasing our cost per hour. We have been paying \$125 per hour for our legal services and they are asking to go to \$150 per hour. He said that the attorneys that we use usually have a base rate of \$350 per hour so we are getting a good deal. The Selectmen budget is holding steady. The Code Enforcement office is up about 6% primarily due to salary and health benefits.

Dwayne stated that he got some numbers from South Berwick regarding the accessor costs. On the South Berwick side it will be about a 3.7% increase. We also have an increase in our tax mapping. We were budgeting about \$3,000 per year for tax mapping but it seems like it has been going up so we will budget \$3,500 for this year. The Planning Board and ZBA stay the same. There is some good news regarding the insurances. They are down almost 2%. The big change is for our Workers Comp. He stated that we had a few rough years for Workers Comp claims.

Those claims are now gone so we dropped our MOD. Our MOD had risen as high as 1.3 but we are back down to .9. He stated that our HRA was up a little bit. He usually replenishes what we spent the year before. Last year he replenished \$10,000 and this year it will be \$12,000. We are required to keep a minimum of \$50,000 in that account and right now we are at \$57,000. Dwayne stated that he dropped the General Assistance budget from \$7,500 to \$5,000. He said that we haven't come close in many years. Conservation Commission is staying the same at \$1,000 per year.

Dwayne said that we are seeing an increase in the costs of the Police Cruisers. We are going from about \$37,000 to about \$42,000. They are staying with the gas model and not going for the Hybrid. There is no purchase for equipment for the Fire Department but they are starting to put money away for a new piece of equipment. In 3 years, we will be buying a new pumper so we are going to start putting \$40,000 per year starting this year. We are just continuing to put \$50,000 for the new Fire Station. We are maintaining the budget for roads but we will shift things around because of the Linscott Road project. We will be making the last payment on our loader for the Public Works Department and looking to buy a new sidewalk machine. They are still trying to decide what kind to get. The trackless is more expensive and has a poly body instead of a metal body. There is about a \$9,000 difference between the trackless and the McLean. We have the last payment on our ambulance for \$33,400. The right of way purchase is added at a cost of \$180,000. We are going to replace some doors at the Transfer Station for a cost of \$1,500. Our CIP is up about 15.3% but if you take out the \$180,000 we are actually lower than last year.

Dwayne will continue to budget Winter Public Works at \$150,000. He stated that we are doing well right now with this budget. The rest of Public Works is up about 5% which is mostly salary related. We had been budgeting \$40,000 for maintenance but we increased that this year to \$45,000. The Transfer Station is at about a .91% increase over last year. We are down about 6% for Social Service agencies this year because a lot of them never submitted their request.

Dwayne stated that there is an increase with the Police Department of about 5.5% which is primarily due to the structure of the new contract. Fire Department is at about a 7% increase which is basically due to the salary increases. Rescue Squad is at a \$12,500 increase. They actually only requested a 1.4% increase but if they approve the salary increase then it would be about a 4.5% increase. There are huge savings for the Streetlight budget. Hydrants are staying the same. He spoke with the Water District and they are going to hold the cost for now. We will have a 5 year increase for Dispatch and then it will start to level off. Animal Control is flat at \$20,000. There is an increase of about 4.9% for Parks and Rec. The reason for the increase is because they have to do some maintenance for the playgrounds. The Library requested about a 4% increase. It is mostly attributed to wages due to the increase in minimum wage and salaries.

The Historical Society decreased a little bit because their project cost for this year is not as expensive as the project cost from last year. The Outside Agencies budget is up just a little bit mostly due to Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission. They went up 3% on their dues. Cemetery will hold steady at \$15,800. Eastern Trail is the same at \$3,500. The only Debt that we have is for our Municipal Building and that stays the same. We were going to take the

money for the swings out of Impact Fees but he thinks that they can make it work with the money that we have in the budget.

Dwayne stated that there was a Draft Warrant for the Selectmen to review and approve. He kept it just like the ones in the year's past.

**B. Liquor Licenses: Review and Approve Johnson Seafood and Steak Permit**

Dwayne stated that Johnson Seafood and Steak is requesting to renew their Liquor License. They do not have to do a Public Hearing because they are past the time frame where they needed to do so. Dwayne has talked to the Police and the CEO and there have been no issues.

Selectman Galemmo motioned to approve the renewal of the Liquor License for Johnson Seafood and Steak. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

**D. ZBA: Reappoint Gregg Drew and Louis Thibodeau as Members**

Dwayne stated that Gregg Drew and Louis Thibodeau have submitted their applications to be reappointed to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Selectman Galemmo motioned to approve to reappoint Louis Thibodeau and Gregg Drew to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Selectman Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

**E. Annual Report: Cover and Dedication**

Dwayne stated that they needed to start thinking about the Town Report and decide what they wanted for a cover and who they wanted to dedicate it to. He has put the Maple Street map on the cover as the Board had discussed at a previous meeting. He stated that they need to decide who they want to use for the dedication. They have to come to a decision before the end of February.

**7. Other Business**

Dwayne stated that he received another letter from Flora Murray regarding the Mill Field vendor situation. She is still very upset about not being able to be a vendor at the festival. She also sent a list of the food that she makes. She would like for the Selectmen to respond to her. The Board stated that they had sent a letter to her already with the explanation that they considered this matter closed.

**8. Review and Approve Warrants and Correspondence:**

Warrant:	January 14, 2020	- \$	0.00
Warrant:	January 21, 2020	- \$	732,150.44

Selectman Galemmo motioned to approve the Warrant of January 21, 2020 for the amount of \$732,150.44. Selectman Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

**9. Adjournment:**

Selectman Galemmo motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 pm. Selectman Johnson, Jr. 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 Galemmo

Selectman: Michael Johnson, Sr.