

# **NORTH BERWICK SELECT BOARD MINUTES JANUARY 23, 2024**

**Present:** Chairperson Glemmo, Selectperson Johnson, Jr., Selectperson Cowan,  
Selectperson Johnson, Sr., Selectperson Hall

**Also Present:** Dwayne Morin, Rebecca Reed, Mark Reed

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**2. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF JANUARY 9, 2024**

Selectperson Hall motioned to approve the Minutes of January 9, 2024 as amended.  
Selectperson Johnson, Jr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

**3. PUBLIC INPUT**

N/A

**4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**A. VERIZON: Update on Project**

Dwayne indicated that the system is up and running. There are still some punch list items that they are addressing.

**B. REFERENDUM QUESTIONS: Final Zoning Amendments for Town Meeting**

Dwayne stated that the draft referendum questions have been put together for the Planning Board Public Hearing on January 25, 2024. There is a question on housing law and the solar energy definition change.

**Reminders: Next Select Board's Meeting – February 6, 2024, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.-  
Room 212  
Budget Committee – January 31, 2024 – 6:30 P.M. – Room 212**

**5. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. POLICE DEPARTMENT: APPROVAL OF TRANSFER OF  
FORFEITURE ASSETS**

Dwayne indicated that the Police Department was part of a DEA drug bust that resulted in the forfeiture as assets and the DEA would like to share the assets with the Town. Normally the DEA keeps the cash for themselves but because North Berwick did most of the leg work, they are going to share the cash with the Town. Dwayne stated it is about \$1,600.00 that will be going to the Town. In order to do so, the Select Board must approve the transfer of forfeiture.

Selectperson Cowan motioned that we approve the transfer of forfeiture assets from the DEA to the Town. Selectperson Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

**B. BUDGET FY25: Review Preliminary Budget FY25, Establish Employee  
COLA**

Dwayne stated that he has been working on the budget and have a proposed budget that is coming in around 6.5% higher than last year and utilizing approximately \$350,000 of undesignated funds. This will result in a tax rate increase of approximately 15 cents on the mil rate. For budgeting purposes, he has utilized a 4% increase in salaries with a few positions seeing a higher rate to maintain competitiveness within the area. He stated he continues to work on the budget and will do so even through the budget committee process to maintain a level of service while keeping a hold on the increases to taxpayers. Dwayne indicated he is going to recommend using a significant portion of undesignated surplus as they are one-time expenses.

Regarding COLA, Dwayne stated that with the release of the CPI in January, the CPI for 2023, which we typically base our COLA increase on, came in at 3.2%. The Police contract calls for this figure to be utilized as the contract is a 3% floor with a 5% ceiling or whatever the CPI-W was for the past year. For non-contracted employees, last year the Town utilized a 6.5 % COLA when in fact CPI was 7.5%, which is what the Police contract afforded the employees. The Board needs to decide if they wish to hold to the 3.2% COLA or increase it. Dwayne will recommend that COLA be increased to 4% for employees.

Selectperson Hall motioned to establish Employee COLA to 4%. Selectperson Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

Dwayne indicated that our overlay target is \$3.14 million and we are at \$3.4 million right now. He stated we probably will be in the high \$300's for overlay.

**C. TOWN REPORT: Cover and Dedication**

Dwayne stated that it is that time of year to decide on a Town Report cover and dedication. He provided a draft cover of the sunrise on Bauneg Beg Mountain. One of the most important events of last year was the purchase of the final hill of Bauneg Beg Mountain and Dwayne suggested it would be appropriate to have the cover honor that achievement. There was also some discussion about the dedication.

**D. TAX COMMITMENT FY23: Foreclosure List**

Dwayne indicated that the Town has sent out our tax Lien foreclosure list and currently there are fourteen properties. Dwayne stated he is aware of at least two individuals who will be turning in poverty abatement requests for the Board's consideration. The Board will need an executive session for these individuals and that will take place at the end of tonight's meeting. The deadline is February 20, 2024.

Regarding the Abbott property, Dwayne stated there are deed restrictions and the most we could ever get out of it is two additional house lots. Chairman Galemme suggested asking the Agriculture Committee for their ideas on the property.

**E. FIRE DEPARTMENT: FORESTRY GRANT & EMERGENCY REPAIR OF GARAGE DOOR OPENER**

Dwayne stated they were able to obtain a forestry grant in the amount of \$2,347.50 and we budgeted to match that so this will now save the town money. The grant needs to be accepted in order to go forward.

Selectperson Hall motioned that the Town approve the grant from the Maine Forest Volunteer Fire Assistance Program. Selectperson Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

Dwayne stated that one of the garage doors at the substation caught on fire and burned up a week ago and needs to be replaced at a cost of \$2,735.00. Dwayne stated there is sufficient funds to cover it and he will have Brian move forward with that repair.

**F. FEMA: UPDATE OF THE FLOODPLAIN ORDINANCE**

Dwayne indicated that FEMA is making all towns update the Floodplain Ordinance. The last time it was updated was 1997. We have to be part of the Floodplain Program to obtain FEMA. It is not used often in this Town as we have resource protection in place. We will have to vote on this in April as it has to be in effect by July 17, 2024.

**6. OTHER BUSINESS - EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Selectperson Cowan motioned to go into Executive Session at 7:42 p.m. and come out of Executive Session at 8:00 p.m.

**7. REVIEW AND APPROVE WARRANTS AND CORRESPONDENCE:**

Warrant:	January 16, 2024	- \$ 16,946.42
Warrant:	January 23, 2024	- \$ 866,194.87

Selectperson Hall motioned to approve the warrant for January 16, 2024 in the amount of \$16,946.42 and the warrant for January 23, 2024 in the amount of \$866,194.87. Selectperson Cowan seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

**8. ADJOURNMENT:**

Selectperson Cowan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm. Selectperson Johnson, Sr. seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

Respectively Submitted,  
Jennifer Berard, Stenographer

Original to Town Clerk

Chairperson:

Charles Galemmo



Selectperson:

Jonathan Hall

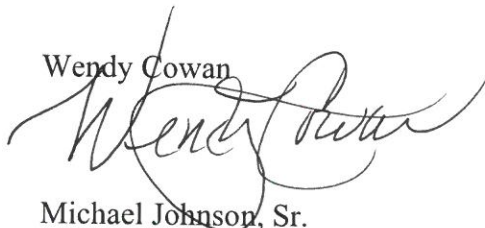


Selectperson:

Michael Johnson, Jr.

Selectperson:

Wendy Cowan



Selectperson:

Michael Johnson, Sr.